



## **Virginia's Tiered System of Supports (VTSS/RtI) Pilot Program: Report of Program Year Five: AY 2012-13**

A Report prepared for the Virginia Department of Education

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**Table of Contents**

1.0 Executive Summary .....	4
2.0 Background and Purpose.....	6
3.0 Student Achievement .....	7
3.1 VTSS Elementary Schools.....	7
3.2 VTSS Middle Schools .....	8
3.3 VTSS Secondary Schools (Baseline, Planning Year).....	9
3.4 Interpreting Achievement Differences.....	9
4.0 VTSS Program Implementation.....	10
4.1 VTSS Successive Refinement by Partner Organization .....	10
4.2 Division and School Planning for VTSS.....	11
4.3 The Implementation of VTSS Components .....	12
4.4 The Use of Business Process Re-Engineering.....	14
4.4.1 Teachers and Business Process Re-Engineering.....	14
4.4.2 School Administrators and Business Process Re-Engineering .....	16
4.5 VDOE’s Provision of State-Wide Professional Development.....	18
4.6 VTSS Costs and Referrals.....	19
4.7 Student Attitudes and Beliefs.....	19
5.0 Sustained Effects for Pilot Schools.....	21
6.0 Commendations and Recommendations .....	23
6.1 Commendations.....	23
6.2 Recommendations.....	24
7.0 Methods .....	24
8.0 About Interactive, Inc.....	25
Appendix A Roster of Evaluation Study Schools.....	27
Appendix B Survey Responses.....	29
Teacher questionnaire items with response category percentages.....	29
Administrator questionnaire items with response category percentages .....	32
Division Representative questionnaire items with response category percentages...	34
Student questionnaire items with response category percentages.....	39

**Virginia’s Tiered System of Supports (VTSS/RtI) Pilot Program:  
Report of Program Year Five: AY 2012-13**

**List of Tables**

Table 1 VTSS versus Comparison Schools by SOL Curriculum Areas .....	4
Table 2 Grade Levels and Curriculum Topics Where VTSS Is Currently Being Implemented .....	4
Table 3 VTSS/RtI State and Local Responsibilities 2008-2013.....	10
Table 4 Grade Levels and Curriculum Topics Where VTSS Is Currently Being Implemented .....	12
Table 5 Grade Levels and Curriculum Topics Where VTSS Is Planned to Be Implemented .....	12
Table 6 VTSS Components by Amount of Implementation .....	13
Table 7 VA DoE-Provided Statewide VTSS Trainings:.....	19

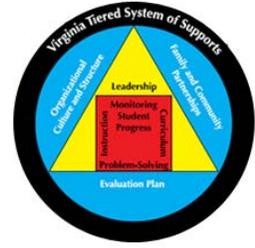
**List of Figures**

Figure 1 Elementary Schools SOL Score Differences.....	7
Figure 2 Pilot Schools SOL Score Differences.....	8
Figure 3 Middle Schools SOL Score Differences .....	8
Figure 4 Secondary Schools SOL Score Differences.....	9
Figure 5 Support for Teachers .....	22

# Virginia's Tiered System of Supports (VTSS/RtI) Pilot Program: Report of Program Year Five: AY 2012-13

## 1.0 Executive Summary

**Introduction.** The Virginia Tiered System of Supports promotes school improvement to volunteer school divisions through professional development and coaching. Virginia Tiered System of Supports (VTSS) was originally launched in 2007 to encourage the practices originally developed for special education – *Response to Interventions* (RtI) – to be applied to general education populations. VTSS has grown to as many as 90 schools because teachers and administrators appreciate its practical assistance, student outcomes and low cost. This reports the results of a four-year longitudinal analysis of student, teacher and school results from Interactive, Inc.'s third-party mixed-methods and quasi-experimental documentation.



**Achievement.** The 2012-13 achievement for the VTSS schools is shown in the table below. In contrast to propensity-score matched comparison schools, VTSS elementary schools did better in English Language Arts and Science and VTSS middle schools did better than the comparison group in English Language Arts and Math (differences are shown in SOL scale score points).

**Table 1 VTSS versus Comparison Schools by SOL Curriculum Areas**

VTSS versus Comparison Schools by SOL Curriculum Areas 2012-13 (“+” indicates scale score advantage for VTSS)			
	English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science
Elementary	+10	-4	+4
Middle	+4	+5	-7

The next table identifies the history and the future of VTSS. The large penetration of elementary schools is as noticeable as is the so far slight penetration of secondary schools. “Behavior” too remains a work in progress and particularly in the upper grades.

**Table 2 Grade Levels and Curriculum Topics Where VTSS Is Currently Being Implemented**

Grade Levels and Curriculum Topics Where VTSS Is Currently Being Implemented as Identified by Division Representatives (DQ 6)				
	Elementary	Middle	Secondary	(N)
Reading	100%	67%	27%	29
Math	100%	57%	14%	24
Behavior	75%	50%	13%	11

**Teachers and VTSS.** Teachers reach the following positive and summative judgments about VTSS:

- Eighty-two percent of the teachers conclude that “VTSS is helpful for instruction in basic skills.”
- Three-quarters report that they have been part of a team that “analyzes student performance “and decides on student placement and instruction...”
- Three-fourths endorse changing instructional groups in the middle of the year.

- In the past, classroom teachers have deferred to specialists for “pupil diagnosis and referral. Seven out of ten teachers in Virginia’s VTSS pilot accept that responsibility as part of their professional duties.
- Similarly, teachers are finding time to do that work as teams: asked about the extent to which they agreed that “Decisions about diagnosing *my students* (emphasis supplied) were made by a group of teachers, rather than just me...” 59% agreed and another 15% strongly agreed.
- Fifty-seven percent of teachers believe that VTSS has made a “major difference in students this year” (emphasis supplied).
- More than half of the teachers (53%) conclude that their school is ready to serve as a model for VTSS: the same proportion credit their colleagues as being “VTSS experts.”

Teachers have the following concerns about VTSS. First, they remain intent on getting more professional learning about VTSS. It is worth noting that 78% of the participants in Department sponsored training endorse the utility of those sessions. Second, teachers believe that student behavior management is central to the remaining agenda: only about a third of the group conclude that “VTSS was helpful for non-academic areas like behavior management this year.”

***Building administrators and VTSS.*** A super-majority – 86% – of the building administrators report VTSS as one of their “top three priorities for the year.” And, the building administrators modified their own leadership to accommodate VTSS. For example, “If a class was not performing, I increased my supervision of that teacher this year” – 81% said ‘Yes’ and “I changed my personnel supervision and evaluation procedures to reflect the demands that VTSS made on teachers...” – 63% said ‘Yes.’



***Costs.*** Two divisions report decreases in referrals of 10% or less; two report decreases between 10% and 25%; and one reports decreases between 25% and 50%. Three division representatives said VTSS was less than 5% of the general Special Ed budget and one person said it was between 5% and 10% of that budget.

***Students and VTSS.*** The premise of RtI is that students can get help, quickly if not in fact before they need it. Seventy-nine percent of the students affirm that, yes, “If I was having trouble with my school work, I would want to get extra help.” And, exactly the same vote of confidence was rendered by the 79% of students who said, “Every time I asked for help, my teacher helped me.” Two-thirds wanted that extra help “...from my teacher rather than from another teacher.”

***Sustained effects from the original group of pilot schools.*** Seventy percent of the teachers who now have five years of experience with the initiative think that VTSS has “made a major difference for my students this year.” This group of teachers has also begun to extend VTSS from academic to other applications. A little more than half say that “VTSS was helpful for non-academic areas like behavior management.” VTSS gets a big vote of confidence from these teachers: 94% think that VTSS is “more helpful” than PBIS.

**Future developments.** Almost three-quarters of the administrators conclude that “This school should have both VTSS and PBIS.” And, four out of five administrators conclude that their school has the resources to “...add another new program like PBIS.”

## 2.0 Background and Purpose

Beginning in 2007, the Virginia Department of Education provided orientation training and an invitation to schools and divisions that might wish to participate in a program piloting *Response-to-Intervention* (RtI) services. The Department selected 15 schools and launched the pilot in 2008-09, a year devoted to capacity-building and planning. By 2011-12 the program enrolled 23 divisions and 91 schools that had volunteered themselves into the pilot and that had been screened and selected by the VADOE. That was a six-fold increase. This report analyzes the 2012-13 academic year accomplishments of 19 divisions including 76 schools<sup>1</sup>: some divisions and schools have achieved the program’s purposes and moved on, others have been encouraged not to continue.



The Department describes RtI as follows:

*RtI is a comprehensive student-centered assessment and intervention framework used to identify and address individual student difficulties before referral to special education. In using the RtI approach, students receive research-based intervention and assessment. Rather than waiting for a student to fail, interventions and assessments are designed to meet the needs of each student with individualized instruction.*

For 2012-13, the VTSS initiative is in its fifth year. This reports the results of a four-year longitudinal analysis of student, teacher and school results from Interactive, Inc.’s third-party mixed-methods and quasi-experimental documentation. Interactive, Inc. is a nationally-recognized evaluator of 200+ education programs and is listed on the US Department of Education’s *Registry of Outcomes Evaluators*.

The report begins with a discussion of achievement. One of the distinguishing characteristics of VTSS and its predecessor RtI was a concentration of systematic and comprehensive, step-wise implementation. VDOE’s support for the original and successive cohorts included attention to business process re-engineering as appropriate for this teaching/learning intervention. The next section describes various aspects of VTSS and its implementation. We next consider student attitudes and opinions from the VTSS schools and then the special case of the continuing original pilot schools. This Year 5 Pilot report ends with commendations and recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> There are 66 schools in the 19 cohorts being analyzed for this year plus 10 schools from the original pilot group.

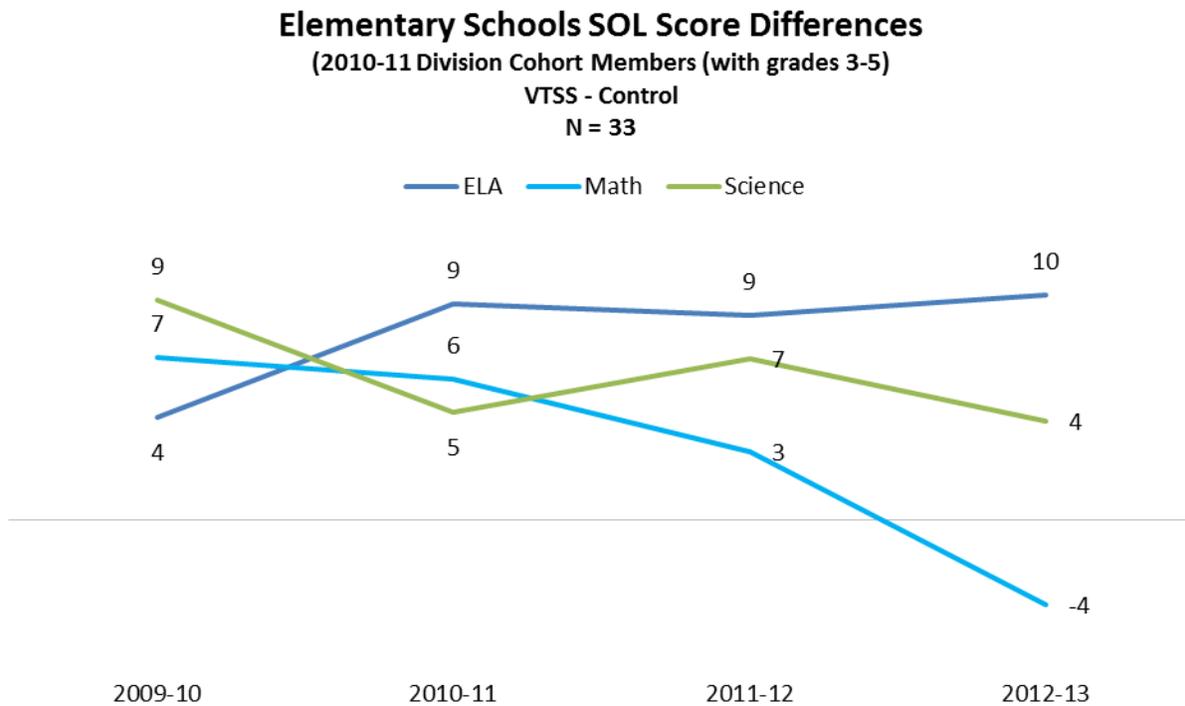
### 3.0 Student Achievement

We examined achievement by grade level organization and by tested curriculum topics for each academic year beginning with 2009-10. The achievement of schools participating in VTSS was compared to otherwise similar Virginia schools that we propensity-score matched using (1) ELA scores for the year prior to VTSS (2008-09), (2) school size, (3) grade-level configuration, and (4) percentage of special education students enrolled. The discussion below describes achievement in the elementary, middle and secondary school grades.

#### 3.1 VTSS Elementary Schools

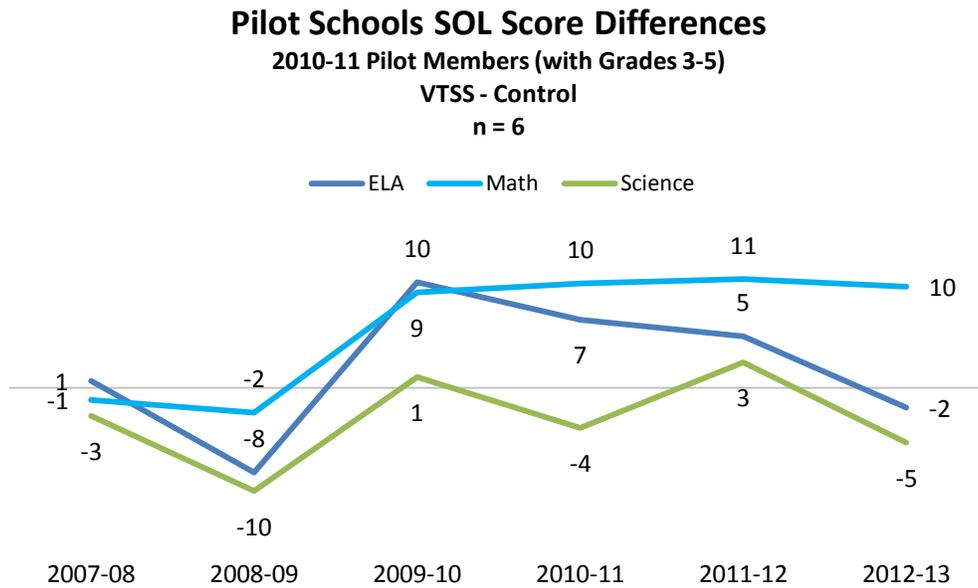
The next table compares the achievement of the schools that have been in VTSS since 2010-11 (the most ‘mature’ group) with their propensity-score matched cohort. The 33 VTSS schools in this analysis are those that enroll grades 3-5 (not schools with other, mixed grade configurations). For 2012-13, this group of VTSS-participating schools outperforms the comparison group by 10 points on the SOL ELA tests and by 4 points on the SOL Science test. They under-perform the comparison group by 4 points on Math.

Figure 1 Elementary Schools SOL Score Differences



The second table for VTSS elementary schools shows the comparative performance of the six schools from the original pilot group that remain in the program. Schools in the group gained significantly in the early years of VTSS/RtI; they have maintained those gains in Math (a ten point advantage); but not in ELA or Science.

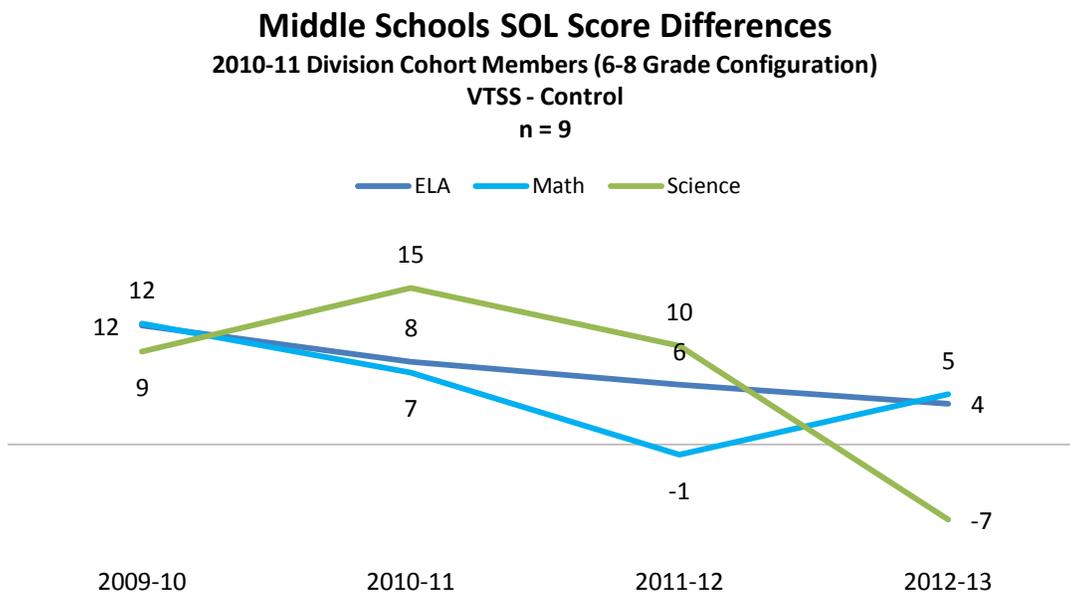
Figure 2 Pilot Schools SOL Score Differences



### 3.2 VTSS Middle Schools

The table depicting middle school achievement compares the nine VTSS schools with a grades 6-8 configuration to their propensity-score matched peers. These VTSS schools outperform their comparison group by five SOL points in Math and by four SOL points in English Language Arts. The comparison schools outperform this group of VTSS middle schools in Science.

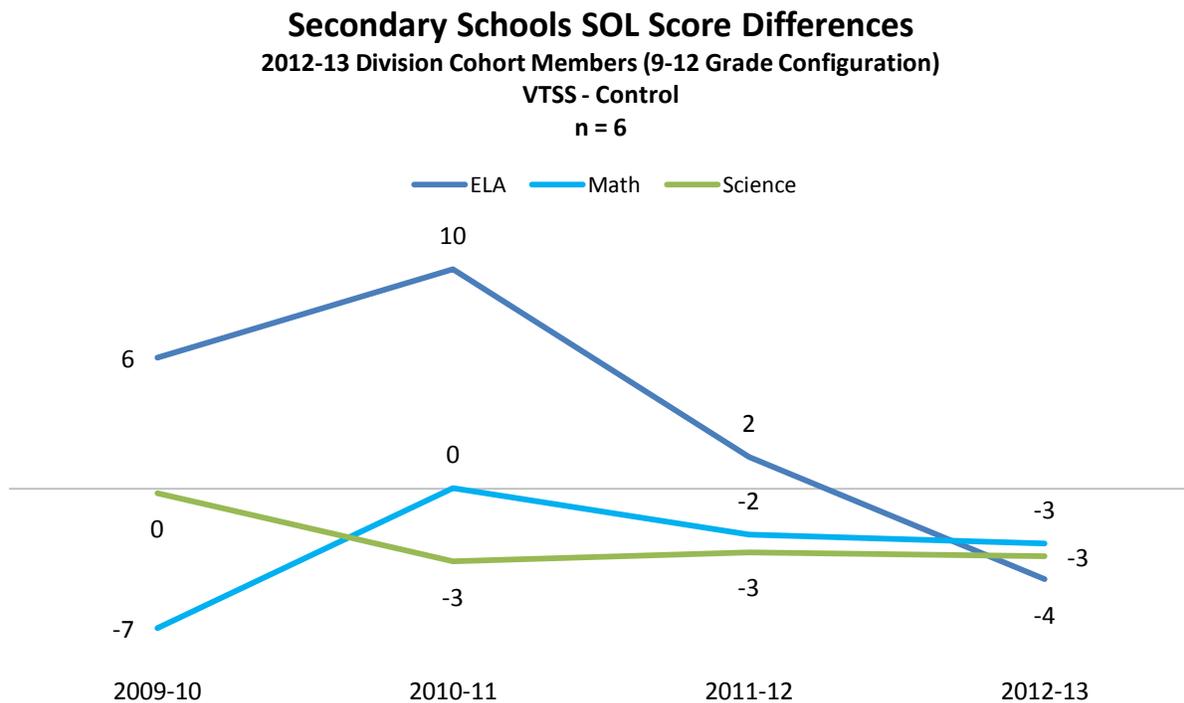
Figure 3 Middle Schools SOL Score Differences



### 3.3 VTSS Secondary Schools (Baseline, Planning Year)

The year being analyzed – 2012-13 – is the first year that high schools have had the opportunity to participate in VTSS. The high schools whose performance is displayed were those that were identified by their divisions as “participating” in VTSS. It is more accurate to describe these schools as sites for “planned participation” since professional development, monitoring and deployment of the several operating components of VTSS has not yet begun. As shown in the two tables below, the VTSS high schools do not perform as well as the comparison group (the “9-12 grade configuration” group). On other evidence reported in this analysis, the VTSS components have not yet taken effect in the secondary schools.

Figure 4 Secondary Schools SOL Score Differences



### 3.4 Interpreting Achievement Differences

The achievement advantages associated with VTSS were most pronounced with the original cohort of pilot schools and in their second year of the program, between 2008-09 and 2009-10. The intervention of VTSS/RtI in that early stage had several characteristics: (1) VDOE was directly responsible for training, supporting and oversight of the schools; (2) the members were part of a small, closely-identified and visible group; and (3) the original schools had extra resources, for example, small technology budgets for which federal funding has not been continued. VTSS in its fifth year is now larger and more diffuse and supported to varying degrees by local, divisional resources. Nonetheless,

- Elementary and middle schools continue to outperform but with varying patterns within curriculum topics.
- On this evidence, it may be that the VTSS middle schools may be better able than the elementary schools to preserve their relative advantage.

- VTSS is designed to help divisions and schools improve their student achievement and performance. As that is accomplished, jurisdictions that volunteered themselves into the program can ‘graduate’ from it. One division with nine higher-achieving schools, relative to other schools in the program, withdrew from VTSS during 2012-13 and that affected the pilot program’s overall achievement.
- For elementary and middle schools, the achievement of the VTSS and of the propensity-score matched group declines at the same time that the state introduced revised SOL tests for first, Math (between 2010-11 and 2011-12) and second, English Language Arts and Science (between 2011-12 and 2012-13).
- The implementation of VTSS in the secondary schools is not yet sufficiently mature to make a difference in achievement.

## 4.0 VTSS Program Implementation

### 4.1 VTSS Successive Refinement by Partner Organization

In the early years, the Department directly supported individual schools but, as demand for RtI increased the Department shifted to support for school divisions that in turn supported schools. The table below reviews VADOE’s successive refinements to the program and contrasts the Department’s roles with those of the Divisions and schools.

Table 3 VTSS/RtI State and Local Responsibilities 2008-2013

<b>VTSS/RtI State and Local Responsibilities 2008 – 2013</b>	
<b>The Virginia Department of Education...</b>	<b>The Participating Divisions and Schools...</b>
<b>Pilot Year One 2008-09</b>	
Designed the pilot and selected schools	Identified candidate schools and prepared applications
Provided capacity-building, problem-solving school visits by a full-time Department specialist	Planned for school-wide implementation of the RtI process
Recruited expert speakers, meeting space, and refreshments	Began to implement components of RtI process
Paid for progress monitoring tools/software via a grant to each pilot school	Paid for travel and lodging for school and division professional development participants
<b>Pilot Year Two 2009-10</b>	
Continued the DoE full-time specialist	Made revisions to their RtI process
Continued to provide training with expert speakers	Continued RtI implementation
Recruited, trained and deployed RtI coaches to provide on-site assistance to individual schools	Accepted coaching services
Third-party, external statewide evaluation (Evaluation year one)	Cooperated with data collection requests
<b>Pilot Year Three 2010-11</b>	
Invited divisions to apply and participate in the RtI initiative	Planned for division-wide implementation of the RtI process (new cohort divisions)
Continued the DoE full-time specialist	Made revisions to their RtI process and continued with RtI implementation (pilot schools)
Continued to provide training with expert speakers	Worked with coaches provided by the DoE
Recruited and deployed RtI coaches to provide on-site assistance to individual schools and new cohort divisions	Cooperated with state-provided coaches
Evaluation year two	Cooperated with data collection requests

Pilot Year Four 2011-12	
Continued DoE full-time specialist	
Drafted revisions to support programs, e.g., the <i>Benchmarks</i>	
Continued statewide training	Covered cost of participation from local sources
Continued RtI coaches focused on divisions rather than on schools	Provided capacity-building to schools and classrooms
Continued formative and summative evaluation: evaluation year three	Cooperated with mixed-methods data collection
Pilot Year Five 2012-13	
Continued DoE full-time specialist	
Continued statewide training	Covered cost of participation from local sources
Introduced regionally-based training	
Continued RtI coaches focused on divisions	Provided capacity-building to schools and classrooms
Added material related to <i>Positive Behavior Intervention Supports</i>	
Continued formative and summative evaluation: evaluation year four	Cooperated with mixed-methods data collection

#### 4.2 Division and School Planning for VTSS

In 2011-12, VDOE began transitioning to VTSS supporting services from the participating divisions with less direct support from the Department. We interviewed 16 central office administrators who had been identified as key contacts by and for the participating divisions.

More than half of the divisions (9 of the 16 responding, 56%) were in the process of division-wide implementation and another 5 (31%) reported that they had been implementing VTSS, division-wide for more than a year. Two divisions described themselves as ‘piloting in a limited number of schools or grades.’ (DQ 2<sup>2</sup>)

As part of the transition to a division-delivered VTSS program, the Virginia Department had created and distributed a set of *Benchmarks* assembled and codified from the results of its previous trainings and best practice recommendations. Three out of four divisions said ‘Yes,’ they had a “defined VTSS process:” one-fourth said they did not (DQ 3). We asked about the proportion of the central office staff that had been trained about VTSS.

- One-fourth or fewer 20%
- One-fourth to one-half 33%
- One-half to three-quarters 33%
- More than three quarters 13% (DQ 4).

<sup>2</sup> For statements that are derived from self-report web-survey questionnaires and/or from interview protocols, we show the source of the data: the questionnaires are reproduced in the appendix. “DQ” indicates ‘division representative;’ “TQ” indicates ‘teacher questionnaire;’ “AQ” indicates ‘building administrator’ questionnaire; and “SQ” indicates ‘student questionnaire;’ each with the appropriate item number.

In light of how specialized central offices are, that two-thirds of the central offices report a fourth to three-fourths of the staff having been trained in any single intervention is a vote of confidence and progress.

The next table identifies the history and the future of VTSS. The large penetration of elementary schools is as noticeable as is the so far slight penetration of secondary schools. “Behavior” too remains a work in progress and particularly in the upper grades.

**Table 4 Grade Levels and Curriculum Topics Where VTSS Is Currently Being Implemented**

<b>Grade Levels and Curriculum Topics Where VTSS Is Currently Being Implemented as Identified by Division Representatives (DQ 6)</b>				
	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>(N)</b>
Reading	100%	67%	27%	29
Math	100%	57%	14%	24
Behavior	75%	50%	13%	11

The table below identifies division planned implementation again by curriculum topic and organizational level. “Behavior” is clearly identified as are secondary school applications.

**Table 5 Grade Levels and Curriculum Topics Where VTSS Is Planned to Be Implemented**

<b>Grade Levels and Curriculum Topics Where VTSS Is Planned to Be Implemented as Identified by Division Representatives (DQ 7)</b>				
	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>(N)</b>
Reading	77%	85%	62%	29
Math	92%	83%	58%	24
Behavior	91%	91%	64%	11

More than 90% of the reps say they are deploying three tiers of VTSS/RtI: one uses four tiers (DQ 13).

**4.3 The Implementation of VTSS Components**

The next table displays the components that division reps reported having successfully implemented or planning to implement. We note that the component most commonly identified as ‘being implemented fully’ is very ambitious – universal screening done three-times a year. A minority of districts manage “collaborative meetings” and “problem-solving” (items 5 and 6) and still fewer have been able to apply technology to the VTSS-related data management burden (item 7).

Table 6 VTSS Components by Amount of Implementation

VTSS Components by Amount of Implementation as Identified by Division Representatives: Most-to-Least Chosen (DQ 8 & 9)			
	Fully Implemented	Partly Implemented	To be Implemented In 2013-14
1. A common universal screening assessment is used for students at least three times a year	60%	40%	-
2. Data are collected, analyzed and used to guide decisions with instruction and intervention	53%	47%	-
3. Research-based academic interventions are available for students not successful with the general curriculum	47%	53%	-
4. Assessments are used to monitor progress frequently for students receiving interventions	47%	47%	7%
5. Collaborative meetings are held regularly and attended by all division, school and/or grade level staff to discuss student work and progress	47%	53%	-
6. A problem-solving approach is used to assist staff in identifying effective interventions and instructional strategies for struggling students	33%	67%	-
7. Software is used to input and collect data and monitor student progress	33%	47%	20%

The division reps reported the following uses of VTSS (from most-to-least chosen): (1) 93% to identify students for early intervention and support; (2) 85% for students receiving special education services; and (3) 60% to identify students for special education services (DQ 5). Compared to the teachers' interpretation of VTSS (teachers largely interpret VTSS in connection with general education), the central office representatives are more oriented to special education applications.

If implementation was less than the division expected, we asked why? What was the problem? (DQ 10) By far the most frequently cited obstacle (14 out of 15 respondents) was "weak core instruction." The division representatives comments usually centered on SOL scores. However, while low SOL scores were always linked in division representative comments to weak core instruction, good SOL scores prompted concern about teachers being complacent and thinking that "if scores are good, my teaching must be good." During the interviews, about half the division representative said their teachers did not recognize their core instruction as being a problem. Various reasons were given for this attitude: for example, (1) good SOLs equal good instruction; (2) too many students below grade level; or (3) curriculum or lessons not aligned with standards. The division representatives consistently believed that teachers don't recognize that their core instruction is a potential source of weakness. Only a few division representatives said that the VTSS program (e.g., universal screens, data reviews) was helping teachers recognize and improve their core instruction. This last observation may reflect weak data handling capabilities in the divisions, more than teachers' willingness to use VTSS to improve instruction.

In instances where implementation had fallen short, the division representatives identified two obstacles – (1) insufficient teacher training and (2) a “lack of intervention resources” as somewhat of an obstacle. The teachers join the division reps in asking for more training – the remaining question is, from what source? Ten of the division reps wanted more “resources for data analysis;” nine wanted “resources for progress monitoring;” and eight wanted “resources for instruction,” perhaps teachers, perhaps other resources such as curriculum. Increasing personnel dedicated to VTSS is challenging in the current fiscal environment. Curriculum may be a self-correcting problem in that, as time goes on, VTSS/RtI may be successively incorporated in budget requests.



When asked about other “obstacles to VTSS implementation (DQ 11), only one individual cited “lack of direction from the State” and one individual said “State Education Agency licensure/certification provisions.” Half the group said they needed more training for division-level staff; two out of three cited “leadership difficulties” (although we could not tell where the “leadership” was lacking – at the district level or the school level or both). “Buy-in” from school administrators, particularly new administrators, was cited by some division representatives as critical to successful implementation and continuation.

#### **4.4 The Use of Business Process Re-Engineering**

The Virginia Department of Education has launched and subsequently supported this initiative with unusually comprehensive and detailed attention to the activities that have in other jurisdictions distorted or disabled the implementation of new programs. VDOE’s set of recommendations and requirements was styled ‘business process re-engineering’ and included attention to planning time, support from principal, specialists, division communication, consensus, changes in teacher supervision, etc.

##### **4.4.1 Teachers and Business Process Re-Engineering**

*Teachers’ conclusions about VTSS.* VTSS and its predecessor RtI are comprehensive departures from conventional practice, from business as usual. They require teachers to re-think and re-fashion much of their professional practice including pupil diagnosis, pupil grouping, lesson prescription, lesson presentation and inter-professional coordination among adult roles. Given those great expectations, the historically most-likely prediction of faculty reception would range from resistance to mere compliance. On the evidence of this analysis, VTSS is different.

The responding teachers reach the following positive and summative judgments about VTSS:

- Eighty-two percent of the teachers conclude that “VTSS is helpful for instruction in basic skills” (TQ 31).
- Three-quarters report that they have been part of a team that “analyzes student performance “and decides on student placement and instruction...” (TQ 02).
- Three-fourths endorse changing instructional groups in the middle of the year (TQ 33).
- In the past, classroom teachers have deferred to specialists for “pupil diagnosis and referral. Seven out of ten teachers in Virginia’s VTSS pilot accept that responsibility as part of their professional duties. (TQ 13)

- Similarly, teachers are finding time to do that work as teams: asked about the extent to which they agreed that “Decisions about diagnosing *my students* (emphasis supplied) were made by a group of teachers, rather than just me...” 59% agreed and another 15% strongly agreed (TQ 15).
- Fifty-seven percent of teachers believe that VTSS has made a “major difference in students this year” (emphasis supplied, TQ 24).
- More than half of the teachers (53%) conclude that their school is ready to serve as a model for VTSS (TQ 03) and the same proportion credit their colleagues as being “VTSS experts” (TQ 01).
- More than half the group (56%) conclude that “I had the print materials I needed to be successful with VTSS this year” (TQ 07). And, about the same size group report that they have the print materials they need to be successful with special ed students (TQ 11).
- And, in a continuing turn-around from the early days of the RtI pilot, six out of ten teachers say they’ve got the “computer-related technology to be successful with VTSS.” (TQ 09) The same question, specific to special education students drew a 53% assent (TQ 12).
- Almost half, 47% of the group, believe that it is practical to test all their students every month (TQ 28).

**Teachers, administrators and VTSS.** We asked the teachers to report the support for VTSS by their school’s administrators. Four out of five teachers reported that “The principal leads and promotes VTSS implementation in my school.” (TQ 08) Three out of four teachers report that their school had a VTSS leadership team (TQ 10). One fourth of the group strongly agree that VTSS was one of the top three priorities for the year: another half of the respondent group agreed. Taken together, three-fourths of the faculty report that VTSS is a priority in their school (TQ 04).



Moreover, the practice of supervision continues to change: we posed the statement, “If students were not performing, I was required to show supervisors evidence that I had changed my instructional process at least quarterly:” fully 62% report that requirement: another 13% strongly agreed (TQ 16).

We asked teachers if they were in a school where “teachers get told” or where “teachers get asked;” 58% said, they ‘got told’ (TX 20). Interestingly, most teachers have no choice about taking part in VTSS (82%, TQ 17) – and they still implement it, wholeheartedly and comprehensively.

**Teachers and the data demands of VTSS.** VTSS is data-rich, data-heavy at least when it is practiced faithfully. Almost two-thirds of the group rejected the proposition that “I already know what my students need without having to constantly assess them” (TQ 35): in effect, two-thirds of the group endorse frequent testing. Similarly more than half the teachers rejected the proposition that “We already have more data than we can use in this school.” (TQ 32)

Sixty-one percent of the responding teachers say they have changed the way they keep “student records (assessment scores, courses attempted discipline referrals).” (TQ 18)

A super-majority of teachers affirmed that they had the time to implement VTSS (85%, TQ 19). About a third of the group report that “The press of other business kept us from finding time to plan as a faculty for VTSS this year.” Fortunately, two-thirds did not have that problem (TQ 05) Forty-four percent of the group say that they have “enough planning time to look at student records on a quarterly basis” (TQ 14).

A central objective for RtI/VTSS is to apply evidence-based instruction, originally developed in a special education context, to all students. If VTSS/RtI is aimed at the improvement of all students performance, teachers ‘get it.’ We asked a series of questions about special education. Teachers overwhelmingly rejected the assertion that “‘VTSS’ is the same thing as ‘IEP’” (TQ 29). Ninety percent of teachers reject that idea that “‘VTSS should be used for students with disabilities, not for general education students” (TQ 24). Eight of ten teachers reject the proposition that “Tier 3 students should be in self-contained classrooms” (TQ 27) and 70% reject the idea that “Tier 3 students should be grouped only with other similarly classified students (TQ 26). Half the teachers said that they had “already been doing everything possible” for special needs students (TQ 22).



Fifty-eight percent of teachers believe that “This school has done everything it can to improve the academic achievement of special education students:” 15% strongly agree; another 43% agree (TQ 37).

The *Standards of Learning* have occupied a lot of the agenda for schools and classrooms. But, only 10% of the teachers take the position that, “If my teaching is aligned to the SOL’s, nothing more should be required of me” (TQ 25).

### ***Teachers’ concerns about VTSS***

- Teachers remain intent on getting more professional learning about VTSS. Two-thirds want more (TQ 06).
- Behavior management is as central as it is the remaining agenda. Only about a third of the group conclude that “VTSS was helpful for non-academic areas like behavior management this year” (TQ 30).
- While 75% of teachers conclude that “professional development from the division is helpful” (TQ 39), a fourth of the teachers also report that they have “to wait a long time to see an instructional specialist or a coach from the Division” (TQ 38).
- We asked for teacher responses to the statement, “In this school, curriculum decision making was being concentrated with administrators and specialists” (TQ 23). Responses split the group 53% ‘yes’ and 47% ‘no.’
- At the same time virtually ALL teachers agree that “My students need more time learning and less time spent testing:” 45% strongly agree with that (TQ 36).

### **4.4.2 School Administrators and Business Process Re-Engineering**

***Building administrators and VTSS.*** A super-majority – 86% – of the building administrators report VTSS as one of their “top three priorities for the year” (AQ 04). Still, 15% of the

administrators in nominally “pilot VTSS schools” did not put VTSS at the top of their lists, a measure of either distraction or perhaps indifference.

A fourth of the administrators, said that the “press of other business kept us from finding time to plan as a faculty this year” (AQ 05). But, contrarily, when asked to respond to the item, “I did *not* (emphasis supplied) have time to implement VTSS this year” only 7% (two individuals) agreed (AQ 12).

Administrators echo the teachers’ observations about the improvement in technology installed base and it’s possible contribution to VTSS: 90% agree that the school “...had the technology necessary to support VTSS this year” (AQ 06).

***Building administrators, teachers and VTSS.*** When the administrators were asked to rate the VTSS-related expertise of their teachers – actually of “any” of their teachers – fewer than half conclude that “any” of their teachers could be rated as “expert” (AQ 01). Only 5% are firm in their belief that they have VTSS experts on their faculties. Similarly, only 10% of the administrators strongly agree that “This school is ready to serve as a model for other schools interested in implementing VTSS” (AQ 03). Another one-third ‘agree’ that it is.



We looked at the processes of adoption or of institutionalization. For example, 30% of the administrators reported that “Only a few of the teachers were enthusiastic about VTSS this year” (AQ 15). And, one administrator in five described their schools as a place where teachers “get told” as compared to “get asked” (AQ 13). About a quarter of the administrators report that, in their school, “curriculum decision making is concentrated with administrators and special experts.” Three-quarters report more widespread participation (AQ 17).

In another measure of the base of support for the VTSS initiative in the school, we asked, “The VTSS initiative was pushed by a small group in the school this year” (AQ 10). Four out of ten administrators said ‘Yes’: most said ‘No’. A super-majority of the administrators – 84% - reject the idea that they should wait for everyone to agree before any change is implemented (AQ 18).

A third of the administrators report that teachers have changed the way they keep student records (assessment scores, course attempted, discipline referrals) since last year (AQ 11): that fraction of the participating faculties should be, in effect, added to the teachers who’s prior practice has been transformed in previous years of VTSS.

***Building administrators and the demands of VTSS.*** There are high rates of universal screening at least at the beginning of the year: 87% report that practice at that point (AQ 02).

VTSS expects teachers to make important modifications in the way they do their work and those expectations have implications for how administrators supervise teachers. We asked two related questions and both drew positive, VTSS-supportive responses.

▶ “If a class was not performing, I increased my supervision of that teacher this year” – 81% said ‘Yes’ (AQ 07) and

▶ “I changed my personnel supervision and evaluation procedures to reflect the demands that VTSS made on teachers...” – 63% said ‘Yes’ (AQ 08).

Administrators have the responsibility to commit their schools to particular initiatives and that and other concomitants of the role influence most administrators toward projecting confidence about their judgment. The spirit of VTSS requires an unusual openness to data or evidence: the future direction of schooling becomes an empirical question illuminated by granular data. When we posed the statement, “We already know what works and doesn’t work in this school” no one ‘strongly agreed,’ 18% agreed, and 82% were more open to VTSS-supported inquiry and intervention (AQ 14).

Administrators were modest in responding to the assertion that “For special needs students, we had already been doing everything possible in this school:” 87% dissent and want to do more (AQ 16).



### ***Building administrators concerns about VTSS.***

About a fourth of the administrators reported that “Teachers have to wait a long time to see an instructional specialist or a coach from the Division” (AQ 09).

VTSS was initially launched with a focus on Response-to-Intervention (RtI) but has recently been supplemented or augmented with the closely related Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) which connect classroom instruction to classroom behavior. We asked a series of questions about the prospective addition of PBIS.

▶ Ninety-five percent of the administrators rejected the idea that “Our students do not need all these special programs like VTSS and PBIS” (AQ 22).

▶ Almost three-quarters of the administrators conclude that “This school should have both VTSS and PBIS” (72%, AQ 19).

▶ Only 5% (one individual) thought that “PBIS is more helpful than VTSS” (AQ 21).  
And,

▶ Four out of five administrators conclude that their school has the resources to “...add another new program like PBIS” (AQ 20).

We asked the division reps if VTSS had led to an improvement in their *Annual Measurable Objectives*. Two said ‘Yes,’ and all the others demurred on grounds of lack of data (DQ 14).

## **4.5 VDOE’s Provision of State-Wide Professional Development**

The Department continues to supplement Division-provided professional development with some state-provided sessions.

October 2012

- Top Ten Review of Evaluation (Alexandra Hart and Regina Pierce)
- Explicit Instruction: Key to Prevention and Intervention<sup>\*</sup> (Anita Archer)

Each of the two topics was provided in a two-session sequence. No participant evaluation data are available from this session.

April 2013

- The Path to Awesome: Problem Solving with a Multi-Tiered System(Sophia Farmer and Carolyn Lamm)
- Know Thy Impact: How Professional Learning with Evidence-based Instructional Practices Can Effect Student Achievement<sup>†</sup> (Diane C. Gillam And Kendall Hunt)
- Using a Balanced Literacy Approach to Jump-Start Student Achievement (Anne O'Toole)
- Got Problem Behavior? Choose Your Own Adventure: Navigating Critical Choice Points to Reach Your Destination (Butler Knight and Kara McCulloch)
- The Power of Interventions: Mathematics (Donna Stofco, Stephen Povlish, and Michael Bolling)
- The Content Literacy Continuum: A Complex Ecosystem to Address the Literacy Needs of All Students (Diane Gilliam and Kendal Hunt)

Table 7 VA DoE-Provided Statewide VTSS Trainings:

VA DoE-Provided Statewide VTSS Trainings: Participant Evaluations (% reporting)	
Overall, how would you rate the quality of this training?	April 2013
Very useful	27%
Useful	51%
Acceptable	20%
Poor	2%
<b>Total</b>	100%

#### 4.6 VTSS Costs and Referrals

We asked if VTSS had reduced referrals to special education (DQ 15). Four of the thirteen reps who responded said they didn't have the data to respond to that question. Another four said, 'No reduction.' But two divisions report decreases in referrals of 10% or less; two report decreases between 10% and 25%; and one reports decreases between 25% and 50%.

Two representatives said VTSS had increased staffing: one said it had decreased staffing (DQ 12). We asked how VTSS-related expenditures compared to "overall division special education expenditures" (DQ 16). Only four representatives could make that judgment. Three said VTSS was less than 5% of the general special ed budget and one person said it was between 5% and 10% of that budget. No one believed that VTSS had reduced the necessity of special education expenditures (DQ 17).

#### 4.7 Student Attitudes and Beliefs

Students were asked questions about their experience with school, their teachers, testing, and other students.

***Students and their experience of school.***

A third of the responding students reported “a lot of trouble with my school work this year” (SQ 14). Two-thirds thought that “School was pretty easy for me this year” (SQ 16). A follow-up question asked “Mostly, school was pretty easy for me this year” (SQ 23) and three-fourths said ‘Yes.’ The pace of instruction split the student group evenly: 49% agreed that “Sometimes the teacher went too fast for me” and 51% disagreed (SQ 9). When students were asked about instruction being too slow, only 36% identified that as a problem (SQ 13).

Students were asked about their colleagues, their peers, other students. Four out of five said, “Some kids in my class had a lot of trouble with their school work” (SQ 17). Fewer than half (47%) said that “Everybody in my class could do the work the teacher gave us this year” (SQ 22). Three-fourths said “Other students acting badly is a *big problem* in my class (emphasis supplied)” (SQ 24). Sixty-three percent report “My class got interrupted by other kids a lot” (SQ 7).



One signal of differentiation is the amount of small group work. Forty-four percent said “I mostly worked in groups in my class this year” (SQ 3). In response to the obverse of the “work in groups” question stated, “I mostly worked alone in my class this year” and that drew 54% assent (SQ 5).

Students agree with teachers that there is a lot of testing: 89% say, “I took a lot of tests this year” (SQ 1). We asked students how long it took to get tests back. Four out of ten said, “...it took a week to find out how I did” (SQ 6).

***Students and teachers.***

The majority of students – 70% – reported that “My teacher talked most of the time in class this year” (SQ 4).

With respect to students’ and teachers, the students concluded the following. Almost three-quarters (73%) reported that “My teacher treated everyone the same this year” (SQ 2). As with most responses from students, interpretation is artful. On the one hand, three-fourths of the students may be applauding their teachers’ even-handedness: it is also possible that a fourth of the group are observing differentiation and individualization of instruction. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents said “My teacher had favorite students” (SQ 8).

The premise of RtI is that students can get help, quickly if not in fact before they need it. Seventy-nine percent of the students affirm that, yes, “If I was having trouble with my school work, I would want to get extra help” (SQ 19). And, exactly the same vote of confidence was rendered by the 79% of students who said, “Every time I asked for help, my teacher helped me” (SQ 10). Two-thirds wanted that extra help “...from my teacher rather than from another teacher” (SQ 20). That preference was confirmed by responses to a second question, “I want help from my teacher, not from someone else” – 64% agreed (SQ 12). And 71% of the students wanted that extra help “...in my class rather than going to another room...” (SQ 21). A fourth of the group report going to another classroom for help (SQ 15). Twenty-nine percent report that

they "...had to move to different classrooms a lot" (SQ 11). And only 4% report that "there are less than 10 kids in my class" (SQ 18).

## 5.0 Sustained Effects for Pilot Schools

Ten schools remain from the original group of 15 that began piloting RtI in 2008-09. Those schools are:

1. Occohannock ES/Northampton County
2. Petsworth ES/Gloucester County
3. Mary Williams ES/Prince William County
4. Sandy Hook ES/Shenandoah County
5. Beverly Manor ES/Augusta County
6. Albert Harris ES/Martinsville City
7. Pulaski ES/Pulaski County
8. Marion Primary/Smyth County
9. Chase City ES/Mecklenburg County
10. Prince Edward ES/Prince Edward County.



*Continuing effects of the RtI pilot.* Despite the fact that this group of schools is in their fifth year with first, RtI and more recently VTSS, nine out of ten teachers<sup>3</sup> report: (a) that VTSS was one the administration's top three priorities for the year (PT 5); and (b) that "the principal leads and promotes VTSS implementation" (PT 9). Eight of ten report that the school continues to have a VTSS leadership team (PT 11). Asked if, in their school, "curriculum decision making is concentrated with administrators and specialists," 43% say 'Yes, concentrated' while 57% say, 'No, decentralized' (PT 24).

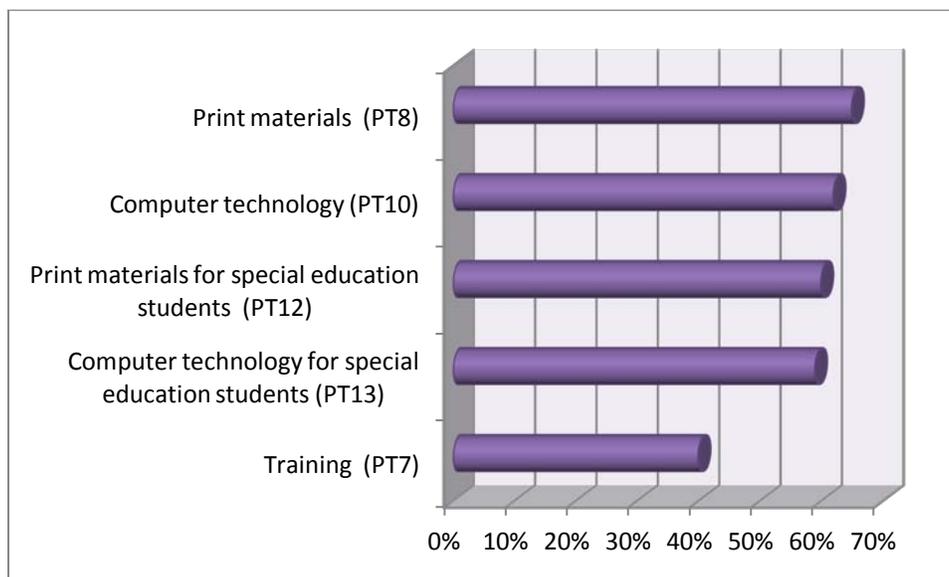
The context of these schools has remained constant. In these schools, VTSS is more likely required than voluntary: 82% say they did not have a choice (PT 18). Half report that they are in a school where teachers "get told" more than "get asked" (PT 21). With respect to supervision: four out of five teachers agree that, "If students were not performing, I was required to show supervisors evidence that I had changed my instructional process at least quarterly" (PT 17). The teachers are nonetheless positive about VTSS: three-fourths are in favor of being a model for others interested in VTSS – three-fourths agree (PT 4). Sixty percent of the original group teachers regard their colleagues as VTSS experts (PT 2). These teachers accept responsibility for going beyond the SOLs: 95% reject the statement, "If my teaching is aligned to the SOLs, nothing more should be required of me" (PT 26).

*Support for teachers.* We posed a series of statements: "In order to be successful with VTSS, this year I have had all the necessary..." (%s agreeing)

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<sup>3</sup> We had responses from 175 teachers from the original pilot schools, generally evenly distributed among the grades Kindergarten through grade 6.

Figure 5 Support for Teachers



These teachers do not use time as an excuse not to plan: 75% reject that (PT 6). Only 5% report that “I did not have time to implement VTSS this year” (PT 20). And more than half (56%) report sufficient planning time to “look at student records on a quarterly basis” (PQ 15).

We asked questions about the provision of services from the division. Most teachers “did not have to wait a long time to see an instructional specialist or coach from the division” (82%) (PT 39) and the same proportion (82%) judged professional development from the division to be “helpful” (PT 40).

*The Perceived scope of VTSS/RtI:* In the original pilot schools, teachers overwhelmingly reject restricting VTSS to students with disabilities (95%) (PT 25). Ninety-five percent of the teachers reject the statement, “VTSS is more about special education than core instruction” (PT 35). And, about the same percent affirm that “VTSS is helpful for instruction in basic skills” (PT 32).

Nine out of ten teachers from the original pilot group reject the ideas that: (a) “‘VTSS’ is the same thing as ‘IEP’” (PT 30); and (b) “Tier 3 students should be in self-contained classrooms” (PT 28). And four out of five believe that “Tier 3 students should NOT be grouped only with other similarly classified students (PT 27).

We measured the felt need for improvement in special education. The statement, “For special needs students, we had already been doing everything possible in this school” split the group – 46% agreed, 54% disagreed (PT 23). And, a similar item, “This school has done everything it can to improve the academic achievement of special education students” drew 56% agreement and 44% disagreement (PT 38).

*Assessment, diagnosis and grouping.* In some jurisdictions teachers are resistant to detailed student assessment data. Sixty-one percent of teachers from the original group believe

that it is practical to test “all my students every month” (PT 29). Student record keeping has also changed and become stable in the new practice – 40% say they have not changed how they keep records; 60% say, ‘Yes,’ there were changes in the last year (PT 19).

We posed two statements about testing to this group: (a) “I already know what my students need without having to constantly assess them” (PT 36); and (b) “We already have more data than we can use in this school” (PT 33) – 69% rejected the first statement – they want more information; and 61% rejected the second statement – they will accept more data. Teacher responses to the following statement are predictable – “My students need more time learning and less time spent testing” – 92% agree, one-third, strongly agree (PT 37).

In the original pilot schools, responsibility for pupil diagnosis has largely passed to teachers. Eighty-five percent report being on team to analyze student performance and placement (PT 3). Four of five report that they were responsible for that this year, not specialists (PQ 14). And 94% say that “Decisions about diagnosing my students were made by a group of teachers, rather than just me this year” (PT 16).



And, teachers report themselves willing follow through on the consequences of assessment and to change instructional groups in the middle of the year (PT 34).

*Student outcomes.* Seventy percent of the group think that VTSS has “made a major difference for my students this year” (PT 22). This group of teachers has begun to extend VTSS from academic to other applications. A little more than half say that “VTSS was helpful for non-academic areas like behavior management “ (PT 31).

*VTSS and PBIS.* Finally, in light of VDOE’s prospective supplementing VTSS/RtI with PBIS, we asked some related questions. Half thought that “This school should have both VTSS and PBIS” (PT 44). VTSS gets a big vote of confidence from these teachers: 94% think that VTSS is “more helpful” than PBIS (PT 43). Although 87% of the original pilot group teachers believe that their students need special programs “like VTSS and PBIS” (PT 42%), more than a third said that adding PBIS would be more than they could manage (37%) (PT 41).

## 6.0 Commendations and Recommendations

### 6.1 Commendations

The growth and continuing interest in VTSS among the state’s school divisions and schools is due to the program’s outcomes but also to the stability of support that divisions and schools have had from the Virginia Department of Education. The results are remarkable from a program that has neither the carrot of external funding nor the stick of regulations, monitoring and sanctions. This volunteer program, supported with a concentrated group of expert coaches is a model for school improvement and would benefit from more visibility.

And, given the limited resources that support this state-wide initiative, the fidelity of the implementation is remarkable and due to the continuous application of business process re-engineering features in, for example, the *Benchmarks* and the coaches handbook.

### 6.2 Recommendations

- Convene a focus group of experienced and successful high school administrators to critique features of VTSS initiation, implementation and institutionalization that may be unique to the secondary school culture and environment.
- Continue to operationalize professional learning and support at the building, faculty level, e.g., a school building-specific “facilitators manual” for use by teacher leaders.
- Coordinate and share resources with other improvement initiatives, e.g., PBIS and school improvement.
- Draft, test and distribute a score card for divisions and schools to monitor their own implementation.
- Consider recognizing and honoring the schools that have implemented VTSS at a defined level of fidelity, perhaps with a VDOE/VTSS banner for display in the school.

## 7.0 Methods

This is a quasi-experimental, longitudinal and mixed methods analysis of the student, teacher and school outcomes associated with VTSS/RtI. This analysis tracked the progress of two groups: (1) ten schools that are in their fifth year continuing from the original 2008 group of pilot schools (the “pilot schools”); and (2) 66 schools that are in their third year of piloting VTSS/RtI (the “division cohort” schools).

The pilot schools were documented with (1) site visits for interviews and observations and (2) web-survey responses at the end of each year for teachers, administrators and students. Interactive, Inc. used the same data collection procedure as in previous years. We sent our requests directly to the principal and included in that message the web-addresses for each of the three surveys (the principals, teachers and students).



The division cohort schools were documented with (1) telephone interviews to division, central office leaders and (2) self-report web-survey responses from teachers, school and central office administrators and students. The telephone interviews are premised on the prior responses to the web-surveys by the individuals. For the division cohort, we have Spring 2013 web-survey responses from: 633 teacher respondents: about half were responsible for grades 2 – 5. Kindergarten teachers were well represented with 14%. There were no high school teacher respondents.

We had a total of 62 building administrators respond to our web-survey. Thirty-six were principals (58%); ten were assistant principals (16%); and 16 identified themselves as “other” (26%) deans, counselors, specialists.

We had complete survey responses from:

- 2,252 students from 32 schools
- 559 teachers from 41 schools
- 56 administrators 37 schools
- 16 division representatives from 14 divisions.

Despite repeated requests and from several sources, we had no student responses from 44 of the schools and no teacher responses from 35 schools.

Limits. Only 261 of the 2,252 students were from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade or above: 72% were from Grades 4-5. While the possibility of sample bias cannot be discounted it is the case that *RtI* is ordinarily applied first to the early grades and second the cooperating and volunteer schools provide more insight into VTSS/*RtI* dynamics than would be the case without their assistance.

For the analysis of student achievement data we used publicly-available whole-school averages for SOL tests. The study schools were analyzed in relation to a set of propensity score matched comparison schools (the matching procedure is described in the text above).

### 8.0 About Interactive, Inc.

**Interactive, Inc.** is listed on the US Department of Education’s Institute of Education Science’s *Registry of Outcome Evaluators* and was one of the Department’s contractors for a longitudinal, statewide documentation of the effects of technology on student achievement and school improvement. The firm’s 200+ past and present R&E sites and clients include:



State Departments of Education:	Corporations:
Arizona	Camelot for Kids
Idaho	Celt Corporation
Indiana	Compass Learning
New York	Dell Computers
Ohio	Edison Learning
Pennsylvania	e-Sylvan
Virginia	Global Scholar
West Virginia	Homeroom.com
City & County School Districts:	International:
Asbury Park, NJ	Houghton-Mifflin
Dallas, TX	K12, Inc.
Freeport, NY	LeapFrog
Harrison County School District Two, CO	Lightspan
Henrico, VA	Lightspeed
Houston, TX	National Institute for Excellence in Teaching
Lusk County, WY	Plato Learning, Inc.
Miami-Dade, FL	Pearson
Middletown, NY	Scholastic
New York City, NY	CDIH – Republic of Korea
Niobrara County, WY	Kyoto Computer Gakuin – KCGI - Japan
San Francisco, CA	

Interactive, Inc. is a full-service firm that provides third-party independent analysis of learning improvement. The firm specializes in direct measures of program results and in writing reports that are grounded and compelling. Interactive regularly helps its partners raise third-party project funding.

**Dale Mann, Ph.D.**, is Professor Emeritus at Columbia University (Teachers College and the School for International & Public Affairs) and Managing Director of Interactive, Inc. Since 1985, he has concentrated in developing and evaluating the gains from e-learning, a field in which Mr. Mann has been identified as one of America's ten most influential leaders.

Dr. Mann has been involved with school improvement since the 1960's when his Washington service included responsibility as Special Analyst for Education in the Executive Office of President Lyndon Johnson and work implementing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Dr. Mann is the author of books and articles on school reform including *Policy Decision Making in Education* and, *Making Change Happen?* He is the founding chair of the International Congress for School Effectiveness, an organization with members from 66 countries focused on improving schools for the most-needy children.

**Appendix A Roster of Evaluation Study Schools**

**2012 - 2013 RTI Evaluation Study Schools by Region and Division  
Schools Providing Survey Responses**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Division</b>	<b>School</b>
<b>Region 2</b>	Northampton County	Kiptopeke Elementary
<b>Region 3</b>	Richmond County	Richmond County Elementary
	Spotsylvania County	Brock Road Elementary
		Wilderness Elementary
	Gloucester County	Bethel Elementary
		Petsworth Elementary
<b>Region 4</b>	Prince William County	A. Henderson Elementary
		Ashland Elementary
		Buckland Mills Elementary
		Mary Williams Elementary
	Shenandoah County	Ashby Lee Elementary
		Sandy Hook Elementary
		Signal Knob Middle
		Strasburg High
		W. W. Robinson Elementary
	Madison County	Madison Primary
	<b>Region 5</b>	Augusta County
Beverley Manor Middle		
Charlottesville City		Walker Upper Elementary
Fluvanna County		Central Elementary
	Columbia & Cunningham Elementary	
<b>Region 6</b>	Martinsville City	Albert Harris Elementary
		Martinsville Middle
<b>Region 7</b>	Bristol City	Joseph B. Van Pelt Elementary School
		Washington and Lee Elementary
	Buchanan County	Hurley Elementary/Middle
		Riverview Elementary/Middle
		Russell Prater Elementary
		Twin Valley Elementary /Middle School
	Dickenson County	Clintwood Elementary
Ervinton Elementary		

Region	Division	School
		Longs Fork Elementary School
		Sandlick Elementary
	Pulaski County	Dublin Elementary
		Snowville Elementary
	Smyth County	Chilhowie High
		Marion Primary
<b>Region 8</b>	Halifax County	Clays Elementary
		Cluster Springs Elementary
		Meadville Elementary
		Scottsburg Elementary
		South Boston Elementary
	Lunenburg County	Victoria Elementary
	Mecklenburg County	Bluestone Middle
		Chase City Elementary
		Clarksville Elementary

## Appendix B Survey Responses

### Teacher questionnaire items with response category percentages

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I don't think any of my colleagues could be described as "VTSS experts."	6%	41%	45%	8%
2. I have been part of a team that analyzes student performance and decides on student placement and instruction this year.	27%	48%	15%	9%
3. This school is ready to serve as a model for other schools interested in VTSS.	9%	44%	40%	7%
4. VTSS was one of the top three priorities for this school's administration this year.	24%	62%	13%	1%
5. The press of other business kept us from finding time to plan as a faculty for VTSS this year.	5%	27%	57%	11%
6. I have had all the training I need to be successful with VTSS.	2%	32%	56%	10%
7. I had the print materials I needed to be successful with VTSS this year.	4%	52%	38%	6%
8. The principal leads and promotes VTSS implementation in my school.	17%	64%	16%	3%
9. I had the computer-related technology I needed to be successful with VTSS this year.	5%	54%	36%	5%
10. This school had an VTSS leadership team this year.	18%	59%	21%	3%
11. I had the print materials I needed to teach special education students this year.	5%	51%	37%	7%
12. I had the computer-related technology I needed to teach special education students this year.	5%	49%	37%	9%
13. In my school, pupil diagnosis and referral was mainly the responsibility of specialists this year.	3%	27%	59%	10%
14. I had enough planning time to look at student records on a quarterly basis.	4%	40%	37%	19%
15. Decisions about diagnosing my students were made by a group of teachers, rather than just me this year.	15%	69%	13%	2%

16. If students were not performing, I was required to show supervisors evidence that I had changed my instructional process at least quarterly.	13%	62%	24%	2%
17. I did not have a choice about participating in VTSS this year.	20%	62%	17%	1%
18. The way I kept student records this year (assessment scores, courses attempted, discipline referrals) has not changed since last year.	5%	34%	55%	6%
19. I did not have time to implement VTSS this year.	2%	15%	66%	18%
20. There are schools where "teachers get told" and schools where "teachers are asked." This school is in the "get told" group.	15%	43%	38%	4%
21. I am not persuaded that VTSS made a major difference for my students this year.	8%	35%	49%	8%
22. For special needs students, we had already been doing everything possible in this school.	9%	40%	46%	5%
23. In this school, curriculum decision making was concentrated with administrators and specialists.	9%	44%	44%	3%
24. VTSS should be used for students with disabilities, not for general education students.	2%	9%	65%	24%
25. If my teaching is aligned to the SOL's, nothing more should be required of me.	1%	9%	67%	23%
26. Tier 3 students should be grouped only with other similarly classified students.	4%	26%	54%	16%
27. Tier 3 students should be in self-contained classrooms.	3%	15%	58%	24%
28. Testing all my students every month was not practical this year.	13%	40%	42%	5%
29. "VTSS" is the same thing as "IEP."	0%	8%	58%	33%
30. VTSS was helpful for non-academic areas like behavior management this year.	4%	33%	52%	12%
31. VTSS is helpful for instruction in basic skills.	8%	74%	16%	2%
32. We already have more data than we can use in this school.	9%	39%	50%	2%

33. It is disruptive to change instructional groups in the middle of the year.	5%	19%	63%	13%
34. VTSS is more about special education than core instruction.	2%	12%	69%	18%
35. I already know what my students need without having to constantly assess them.	6%	32%	54%	8%
36. My students need more time learning and less time spent testing.	45%	50%	6%	0%
37. This school has done everything it can to improve the academic achievement of special education students.	15%	43%	37%	6%
38. I have to wait a long time to see an instructional specialist or a coach from the Division.	4%	20%	66%	10%
39. Professional development from the division is helpful.	7%	68%	19%	6%
40. In addition to VTSS, I could not add another new program like PBIS.	11%	40%	44%	4%
41. My students do not need all these special programs like VTSS and PBIS.	4%	16%	72%	8%
42. I think PBIS is more helpful than VTSS.	1%	10%	83%	6%
43. This school should have both VTSS and PBIS.	7%	34%	52%	8%

**Administrator questionnaire items with response category percentages**

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I don't think any of my teachers could currently be described as "VTSS experts."	18%	39%	39%	5%
2. We used universal screening to test all students at the beginning of the year.	66%	21%	6%	6%
3. This school is ready to serve as a model for other schools interested in implementing VTSS.	10%	31%	55%	5%
4. VTSS was one of my top three priorities for this year.	27%	59%	13%	2%
5. The press of other business kept us from finding time to plan as a faculty this year.	4%	20%	59%	18%
6. This school had the technology necessary to support VTSS this year.	20%	70%	9%	2%
7. If a class was not performing, I increased my supervision of that teacher this year.	20%	61%	20%	0%
8. I changed my personal supervision and evaluation procedures to reflect the demands that VTSS made on teachers this year.	11%	52%	38%	0%
9. Teachers have to wait a long time to see an instructional specialist or a coach from the Division.	5%	21%	55%	18%
10. The VTSS initiative was pushed by a small group in the school this year.	5%	38%	52%	5%
11. The way teachers keep student records (assessment scores, courses attempted, discipline referrals) has not changed since last year.	4%	29%	57%	11%
12. I did not have the time to implement VTSS this year.	2%	5%	55%	38%
13. There are schools where "teachers get told" and schools where "teachers get asked." This school is in the "get told" group.	2%	21%	57%	20%
14. We already know what works and doesn't work in this school.	0%	18%	75%	7%
15. Only a few of the teachers were enthusiastic about VTSS this year.	7%	23%	63%	7%

<b>16. For special needs students, we had already been doing everything possible in this school.</b>	2%	11%	71%	16%
<b>17. In this school, curriculum decision making is concentrated with administrators and special experts.</b>	2%	25%	64%	9%
<b>18. It is not realistic to wait for all the teachers to agree before we introduce a change.</b>	21%	63%	13%	4%
<b>19. This school should have both VTSS and PBIS.</b>	20%	52%	29%	0%
<b>20. In addition to VTSS, this school cannot add another new program like PBIS.</b>	2%	20%	63%	16%
<b>21. I think PBIS is more helpful than VTSS.</b>	0%	5%	93%	2%
<b>22. Our students do not need all these special programs like VTSS and PBIS.</b>	0%	5%	63%	32%

**Division Representative questionnaire items with response category percentages**

**1. At what stage is your division in VTSS implementation?**

#	Answer		%
1	Investigation		0%
2	Planning		0%
3	Piloting in a limited number of schools or grades		13%
4	In process of division-wide implementation		56%
5	Division-wide use for more than 1 year		31%
6	Not considering		0%
7	Other (please specify)		0%
	Total		100%

**2. Does your division have a defined VTSS process?**

#	Answer		%
1	Yes		75%
2	No		25%
	Total		100%

**3. What percentage of your central office/division staff has been trained on VTSS?**

#	Answer		%
1	None (0%)		0%
2	1%-24%		20%
3	25%-49%		33%
4	50%-75%		33%
5	75%-99%		13%
6	All (100%)		0%
	Total		100%

**4. Is your division using VTSS for:**

#	Question	Yes	No
1	Identification of students for early intervening services & supports?	93%	7%
2	Identification of students for special education services?	60%	40%
3	Support for students receiving special education services?	85%	15%

**5. For which grade levels and areas are you implementing VTSS? (Click all that apply for each level)**

#	Question	Elementary schools	Middle schools	High schools
1	Reading	100%	67%	27%
2	Math	100%	57%	14%
3	Behavior	75%	50%	13%

**6. For which grade levels and areas do you plan to implement VTSS in the next 12 months?**

#	Question	Elementary schools	Middle schools	High schools
1	Reading	77%	85%	62%
2	Math	92%	83%	58%
3	Behavior	91%	91%	64%

**7. Please indicate the most accurate implementation level(s) for the following VTSS components in your division:**

#	Question	Fully implemented	Partially implemented	Implementing in 2013-14	Planning	Not implementing
2	A common universal screening assessment is used for all students at least 3 times per year.	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%
3	Research-based academic interventions are available for students not successful with the general curriculum.	47%	53%	0%	0%	0%
4	Assessments are used to monitor progress frequently for students receiving interventions.	47%	47%	7%	0%	0%
5	Data are collected, analyzed and used to guide decisions with instruction and intervention.	53%	47%	0%	0%	0%

**8. Please indicate the most accurate implementation level(s) for the following VTSS components in your division:**

#	Question	Fully implemented	Partially implemented	Implementing in 2013-14	Planning	Not implementing
1	Software is used to input and collect data and monitor student progress.	33%	47%	13%	7%	0%
3	Collaborative meetings are held regularly and attended by all division, school and/or grade level staff to discuss student work and progress.	47%	53%	0%	0%	0%
4	A problem-solving approach is used to assist staff in identifying effective interventions and instructional strategies for struggling students.	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%

**9. How significant an obstacle have the following been to implementing VTSS in your division?**

#	Question	Not an obstacle	Somewhat an obstacle	Significant obstacle
1	Insufficient teacher training	0%	100%	0%
2	Lack of intervention resources	0%	93%	7%
3	Lack of resources for instruction	47%	53%	0%
4	Lack of resources for progress monitoring	40%	60%	0%
5	Lack of resources for data analysis	33%	67%	0%

**10. How significant an obstacle have the following been to implementing VTSS in your division?**

#	Question	Not an obstacle	Somewhat an obstacle	Significant obstacle
1	Lack of direction from the State	93%	7%	0%
2	State Education Agency licensure/certification provisions	93%	7%	0%
3	Leadership difficulties	33%	47%	20%
4	Insufficient training of division-level staff	47%	47%	7%
5	Weak core instruction	7%	60%	33%

**11. What impact has the implementation of VTSS had on building/division staffing in terms of employing more or fewer full-time staff?**

#	Answer		%
2	Increased staffing		67%
3	Reduced staffing		33%
5	Don't know yet		0%
	Total		100%

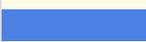
**12. What is the maximum number of tiers you are using or planning to use in your VTSS model?**

#	Answer		%
1	Two		0%
2	Three		93%
3	Four		7%
	Total		100%

**13. Has your VTSS implementation led to an improvement in Annual Measureable Objective (AMO)?**

#	Answer		%
1	Yes		14%
2	No		0%
3	Insufficient data at this time		86%
	Total		100%

**14. To what extent has VTSS reduced the number of referrals to special education since your division began implementation?**

#	Answer		%
1	Reduced 50% or more		0%
2	Reduced 26% to 49%		8%
3	Reduced 10% to 25%		15%
4	Reduced by less than 10%		15%
5	Has not reduced		31%
6	Insufficient data at this time		31%
	Total		100%

**15. How does VTSS expenditure compare to your overall division special education expenditure? VTSS expenditure is:**

#	Answer		%
1	Less than 5% of Special Education expenditure		75%
2	Between 5% and 10% of Special Education expenditure		25%
3	More than 10% of Special Education expenditure		0%
	Total		100%

**16. Has the implementation of VTSS reduced the dollar amount of Special Education expenditure in your division?**

#	Answer		%
1	Yes		0%
2	No		100%
	Total		100%

**Student questionnaire items with response category percentages**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1. I took a lot of tests this year.	89%	11%
2. My teacher treated everyone the same this year.	73%	27%
3. I mostly worked in groups in my class this year.	44%	56%
4. My teacher talked most of the time in class this year.	70%	30%
5. I mostly worked alone in my class this year.	54%	46%
6. After I took a test, it took a week to find out how I did.	39%	61%
7. My class got interrupted by other kids a lot.	63%	37%
8. My teacher had favorite students.	39%	61%
9. Sometimes the teacher went too fast for me.	49%	51%
10. Every time I asked for help, my teacher helped me.	79%	21%
11. I had to move to different classrooms a lot.	29%	71%
12. I want help from my teacher, not from someone else.	64%	36%
13. Sometimes the teacher went too slowly for me.	36%	64%
14. I had a lot of trouble with my school work this year.	32%	68%
15. Sometimes, I went to another classroom for help this year.	24%	76%
16. School was pretty easy for me this year.	65%	35%
17. Some kids in my class had a lot of trouble with their school work.	78%	22%
18. There are less than 10 kids in my class.	4%	96%
19. If I was having trouble with my school work I would want to get extra help.	79%	21%
20. I would rather have extra help from my teacher than from another teacher.	66%	34%
21. If I was going to get extra help on my school work, I would rather stay in my class than go to another room to work.	71%	29%
22. Everybody in my class could do the work the teacher gave us this year.	47%	53%
23. Mostly, school was pretty easy for me this year.	74%	26%
24. Other students acting badly is a big problem in my class.	74%	26%