

**PERFORMANCE IMPACT ANALYSIS: DESEGREGATION FUNDING
REALLOCATIONS TO SUPPORT “LEARNING LOSS” POSITIONS FUNDED BY
THE *ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY SCHOOL EMERGENCY RELIEF (ESSER) FUND.***

I. PROPOSED ACTION

Under the third phase of the *Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief* (ESSER) fund, all school districts that received funding were required to spend a minimum of 20% of funding provided to address areas of learning loss related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) was required to spend a minimum of \$34.5 million to support measures related to learning loss in students across the district. The district identified various ways to invest in areas that focused on learning loss. Learning loss investments were focused on specific positions at every school. These were: Counselors, Curriculum Service Providers (CSP), Math Interventionists, Multi-Tiered System of Support Facilitators (MTSS), Reading Interventionists, Response to Intervention (RtI) Teachers, Social Workers, and Teacher Assistants. As of November 30, 2023, these positions accounted for 231-FTE totaling nearly \$13 million in salary and benefits costs for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

With the ESSER program ending by September 30, 2024, the district has evaluated student achievement data to identify specific learning loss positions to continue funding beyond the life of the ESSER program. The specific positions that have been determined will continue to be supported beyond the 2023-24 fiscal year are: Math Interventionists, Reading Interventionists, and Response to Intervention (RtI). All other positions will either be absorbed into existing funding available at school sites or will enter the position transfer portal. Beginning in January 2023, the district began a process to evaluate existing desegregation funds across departments to determine where reallocations of desegregation resources may be possible to support these learning loss positions. The proposed desegregation reallocations total approximately \$5.1 million. These reallocations will take effect on July 1, 2024.

II. ISSUES

The ESSER grant provided funds to school district to implement learning loss strategies and interventions to help mitigate the academic learning that was lost by students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Public schools were required to focus on interventionists that were evidenced based, as defined by *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*. The activities were required to address students'

academic, social, and emotional needs and to address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable student populations, including each major racial and ethnic group, children from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, gender, and migrant status, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care.

According to a recent study by McKinsey & Company (2023), Arizona students had an average of 12.1 weeks of learning delay based on the performance quartiles from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessment (p.18). The level of learning loss experienced by students as a result of the COVID-19 caused more than 20 years of academic progress in reading and math to be completely erased. The focus of the various learning loss strategies implemented by the district was to not only mitigate the levels of academic delays that students experienced, but to begin creating strategies that were embedded in daily instruction to accelerate the gains that were lost during the height of the pandemic.

The results from the Arizona Academic Achievement Assessment (AASA) from Spring 2023, gave the district a true insight into the impact of these learning positions on student achievement. School letter grades assigned by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) showed the progress that schools have made, especially with the investments from ESSER on learning loss strategies and positions. One third of schools increased their letter grade and nearly half maintained their same letter grade. Nearly two-thirds of TUSD schools received a letter grade of an “A” or “B” and no schools received an “F.” In the 2021-22 school year, the one school that received an “F” jumped **three** letter grades in the 2022-23 school year and received a “B.” The school experienced a 72% increase in the total points earned in one year. To continue to sustain this level of academic achievement, the district recognizes the fact that these intervention positions at the classroom level have the potential to continue to provide the progress necessary to continue making greater progress.

III. OBJECTIVES

The identified learning loss positions correlate with the academic achievement needs of students that are part of the original Desegregation order – African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and English learner students. The district is proposing desegregation funding allocations from the following department and with corresponding amounts:

DEPARTMENT	AMOUNT
Curriculum Development	\$200,000
Equity, Diversity and Inclusiveness	\$622,138
Human Resources	\$1,000,000
Legal Services	\$595,224
Multicultural Curriculum	\$25,000
Operations	\$100,000
Technology Services	\$800,000
Transportation	\$2,147,000
GRAND TOTAL	\$5,489,362

The district is proposing the option to support Rtl and Teacher Interventionist positions because of their direct impact on student academic achievement, particularly with the protected classes (i.e., African American students, Hispanic/Latinx Students, and English Learner [EL] students). The funding would focus on positions existing and filled, it would not create new Rtl and Teacher Interventionists.

IV. USP PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Each department affected by the reallocations has identified where it will need to reduce expenditures to accommodate the total reallocation for the purpose of supporting these positions. The Desegregation budget is currently capped at the 2008-09 fiscal year budget limit, therefore the costs for any new programs or initiatives must be funded through a reallocation of existing funds to ensure that the district remains within the statutory budget limit.

The services provided within the targeted departments will continue through a new funding source or at a reduced capacity level. The affected departments will be impacted as follows:

- 1. Curriculum Development:** reduce components of the Reading Recovery program and professional development materials and budget. Components will be refocused under the *Move On When Reading* (MOWR) funds provided to the district through the State's funding formula for MOWR.
- 2. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusiveness:** positions will be eliminated within the department. The funding provided to the department for specific services and programming will be redirected to other critical areas like the African American Student Services Department and Mexican American Student Services Department.

3. **Human Resources:** these funds are targeted at recruitment incentive stipends in areas like Exceptional Education, Make the Move, Teacher Diversity, Dual Language, and Math/Science positions. The department evaluated the effectiveness of each of these stipends and will refocus its efforts to support incentives in areas that are more closely related to the needs of the district and the intent of the Post-Unitary Status Plan (PUSP).
4. **Legal Services:** the funds for the department will be moved to the Litigation Recovery fund, which will allow the district to continue to fund the department and the work they do at the same level.
5. **Multicultural Curriculum:** the targeted reductions are around supplies, professional development registrations and travel, and instructional aids. The funding for these items will be allocated from existing funding sources that have a specific focus on professional development with an emphasis on culturally relevant curriculum.
6. **Operations:** the recent passage of a voter-authorized bond program will allow the district focus on refurbishing and revitalizing the infrastructure of all district campuses. This will also allow non-Desegregation Capital Outlay to be used for preventative maintenance that will include focusing on schools with high concentrations of African American and Mexican American/Latinx students.
7. **Technology Services:** the department will refocus its efforts around more centralized services for technology support versus the current decentralized model using teacher technology liaisons (TTL). The use of virtual training and customer service has made the need for TTL's less necessary, and the stipends have become an unsustainable expense.
8. **Transportation:** currently, all school bus drivers are split-funded 50% from non-Desegregation Maintenance & Operations and 50% from Desegregation Maintenance & Operations. After evaluating the number of students who are using student transportation as part of the Desegregation plan for incentive or magnet purposes, it was determined that the Desegregation Maintenance & Operations budget will be decreased to 40% and the non-Desegregation side will be equal to 60%. This is merely a shifting of dollars, but the number of staff will remain the same.

V. IMPACT ANALYSIS: IMPACT ON PROTECTED CLASSES (AFRICAN AMERICAN, HISPANIC/LATINX, INCLUDING EL STUDENTS)

A. Impact on Effectiveness of USP Program or Activity

As part of the PUSP, both magnet and non-magnet schools are required to develop school integration and academic achievement plans. As part of the district's magnet plan, all magnet schools are required to develop and adopt a magnet plan based on best practices, which include: (1) providing quality Tier 1 core instruction; (2) delivering a guaranteed and viable curriculum (integrating the magnet theme); and (3) providing supplemental Tier 2 interventions. At non-magnet schools, the school was required to develop non-magnet academic plans to their Title I or school improvement plan. These plans are monitored by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) and detail strategies that each school will take to improve instruction and academic achievement. Among the strategies to improve academic achievement are: academic instructional specialists or certified academic tutors to support classroom instruction; pull-out English language arts and Math intervention sessions; progress monitoring for student reading, uninterrupted blocks of Reading and Math Blocks. These require qualified educators in the classrooms that can focus on literacy and math interventions with students for both magnet and non-magnet schools, with an eye towards integration and incorporating their magnet theme as part of these strategies.

B. Impact on Other District Programs or Obligations under the USP

Below are presented anticipated impacts, if any, to the effectiveness of any other USP program or activity:

1. **Compliance and Good Faith:** no expected impact on compliance monitoring and reporting requirements.
2. **Student Assignment:** no expected impact on school boundaries, magnet schools, and applications. The Magnet Department is specifically excluded from any of the proposed reallocations.
3. **Transportation:** no expected impact on student transportation services. While the funding around transportation will shift between Desegregation and non-Desegregation Maintenance & Operations funding, the level of services will remain the same.
4. **Administrative and Certified Staff:** The positions required by the PUSP will remain the same. We do not anticipate changes to programs focused on recruitment and hiring. Currently, the racial/ethnic makeup of the 8 impacted

positions are: 2 African American, 3 Hispanic/Latino, 1 American Indian/Alaska Native, and 2 White, not Hispanic/Latino. The impacted positions are administrative in nature. However, the make up of the recommended Rtl and Interventionist positions are all certified with the following racial/ethnic makeup: 1 American Indian/Alaska Native, 6 Asian, 5 African American, 17 Hispanic/Latino, and 40 White. The reduction of the positions will not negatively impact the racial/ethnic makeup of the district's staff due to the retention of the more diverse certified staff.

5. **Quality of Education:** these reallocations will serve to retain Response to Intervention (Rtl) and Interventionists with a specific design to support stronger academic growth in core content areas with students who are identified as minimally proficient. African American and Mexican American students had approximately 20% growth in proficiency in English language Arts and Math. These positions have a direct benefit to support the PUSP's goal of increasing dropout prevention, create a stronger classroom environment for student engagement, and a stronger focus on meaningful targeted interventions. Finally, the reallocation of budget capacity from the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusiveness Department will move funds from a primarily administrative department to expand direct services in the African American Student Services Department and Mexican American Student Services Department.
6. **Discipline:** no expected impact on discipline outcomes. All of the supports for disciplinary processes remain in place, in particular by maintaining Restorative Practice Facilitator positions with other funds.
7. **Family and Community Engagement (FACE):** no expected impact on FACE structures or programs.
8. **Extracurricular Activities:** no expected impact on participation in extracurricular activities.
9. **Facilities and Technology:** no expected impact on facilities or technology. Although the stipends for Teacher Technology Liaisons (TTL) positions will be eliminated, technology support for school staff is enhanced as training and support materials are available online. Moreover, the district has invested in implementing a new online service ticketing system to support the technical needs of the schools.
10. **Accountability and Transparency:** no expected impact on accountability and transparency efforts.

C. Data Sources & Assumptions

The analysis for these recommendations are based on the *Arizona Academic Standards Assessment (AASA)* in grades 4-8. The analysis focused on the Math and English Language Arts (ELA) of the students in the 2022-23 school year. The study reviewed 72 elementary, K-8 and middle schools where 52 schools had Interventionists/RtI Teachers and 20 school did not have these positions. The analysis matched the students in the two school groups so that they had equivalent ethnic backgrounds, AASA performance levels and socioeconomic status. The amount of growth in ELA and Math is calculated using the A-F Letter Grade AASA Student Growth Percentile (SGP) as the measure. However, it should be noted that there are additional factors that influence student achievement. The analysis did not control for complex school, classroom or individual effects which can also contribute to changes in student performance.

The characteristics of the students included 1,298 students in grades 4-8, where the schools had access to an Interventionist/RtI Teacher, and 938 students that did not have access to these positions. The students that were included had the following characteristics:

- Two years of AASA scores in ELA and/or Math (i.e., 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years).
- Scored minimally proficient in ELA and/or math in the 2021-22 school year.
- Remained enrolled at the same school all year in the 2022-23 school year.

The study included all students who met the above criteria, regardless of whether they received ongoing services from an Interventionist/RtI teacher. However, the assumption is that minimally proficient students were most like to have received these services. Students show low, average, or high growth in ELA and Math from the 2021-22 school year to the 2022-23 school year.

VI. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

As part of the PUSP, both magnet and non-magnet schools were required to develop school integration and academic achievement plans. As part of the district's magnet plan, all magnet schools a required to develop and adopt a magnet plan based on best practices, which include: (1) providing quality Tier 1 core instruction; (2) delivering a guaranteed and viable curriculum (integrating the magnet them); and (3) providing supplemental Tier 2 interventions. At non-magnet schools, the school was required to develop non-magnet academic plans to their Title I or school improvement plan. These plans are monitored by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) and detail strategies that each school will take to improve instruction and academic achievement. Among the strategies to improve academic achievement are: academic

instructional specialists or certified academic tutors to support classroom instruction; pull-out English language arts and Math intervention sessions; progress monitoring for student reading, uninterrupted blocks of Reading and Math Blocks. These require qualified educators in the classrooms that can focus on literacy and math interventions with students for both magnet and non-magnet schools, with an eye towards integration and incorporating their magnet theme as part of these strategies.

A strategy implemented with the use of ESSER III funds was placing Reading Intervention Teachers, Math Intervention Teachers, and Response to Intervention (Rtl) at various schools in the district. The primary task for these positions is to accelerate math and reading skills by working extensively with students. These educators frequently consult with core teachers to design and plan interventions. They support classroom teachers to help identify students eligible for interventions, but also to diagnose reading and math strengths/weaknesses to make their skills with appropriate techniques and materials.

The district's Assessment and Evaluation (A&E) Department conducted an exploratory study to determine the impact of intervention teachers on student achievement using the math and English Language Arts (ELA) scores from the 2022-23 *Arizona Academic Standards Assessment (AASA)* to review the impact of these positions. In the 2022-23 school year, there were approximately 100 interventionists and Rtl teachers in grades 4-8, serving approximately 52 schools in TUSD. The essential question for the study was: do schools with Interventionist/Rtl teachers have higher growth among Minimally Proficient (MP) students than schools without the position? A complete presentation of the study conducted by A&E is attached to this PIA as "Appendix A."

The results of the study indicated that:

1. Minimally Proficient (MP) students without access to an interventionist/Rtl teacher in grades 4-8 showed high growth compared to students with access to these interventionist/Rtl teachers. In ELA, the growth for those without access to these positions was 21%, but the growth for those with access was over 29%. In Math, the growth for those with access was 26%, but the growth for those with access was over 33%
2. The percent of MP students in grades 4-8 with low growth in ELA was lower (38%) for those students with an interventionist versus those without access (46%). However, high growth among those with access to these positions was much higher than those with access (29%) versus those without access (21%).
3. In Math, low growth among those without interventionists was 42%, whereas those with interventionists was 34%. The high growth for those

with interventionists was 33%, but lower (26%) for those without interventionists.

4. When you review the ethnic/racial ethnic backgrounds of the different groups, the results continue to be even stronger:

a. In ELA:

Racial/Ethnic Group	High Growth with Interventionist	High Growth without Interventionist
African American	32%	26%
White	29%	23%
Hispanic/Latinx	28%	21%

b. In Math:

Racial/Ethnic Group	High Growth with Interventionist	High Growth without Interventionist
African American	36%	30%
White	33%	29%
Hispanic/Latinx	32%	26%

VII. CONCLUSION

Although the role of an Interventionist/Rtl teacher can vary from site to site, schools with these positions in place showed greater levels of higher growth among MP students, especially in the middle school grades. The study would suggest that Interventionist/Rtl teachers support schools to achieve high growth among more MP students than schools without this position. Moreover, the over 20% increase in high growth for minimally proficient students in African American and Hispanic/Latinx students makes an even greater compelling case that the services of the specialized teaching positions will continue to foster positive growth in the students. The student growth percentile is determined by how a student with two consecutive school years of AASA scores ranks in comparison to their peers across the State in the same grade who earned the same scale score in the first year. The *growth* metric is very different from *proficiency*. This provides a compelling data-driven case to continue funding these intervention positions after the ESSER grant funding has expired.

Date: January 23, 2024

Prepared by: Ricky Hernández, Chief Financial Officer

Reviewed and Approved: _____

An Exploratory Study on the Impact of Intervention Teachers using 2022-23 AASA Math and ELA Scores

Assessment & Evaluation

January 16, 2024

Governing Board Presentation

Purpose of Presentation

To review the impact of Intervention Teachers on student growth in ELA and Math.

To assess the difference in student growth between:

- Schools with Intervention/RTI Teachers
- Schools without Intervention/RTI Teachers

To make recommendations based on the impact of Intervention Teachers

2022-23 Interventionist and RTI Teachers

- Total Gr. 4-8 Teachers = 100
 - RTI Teachers: N=46
 - ELA Interventionists: N=37
 - Math Interventionists: N=17
- Total K through 8 Schools with an Interventionist and/or RTI Teacher = 52
- The role of Interventionist/RTI teachers may vary from site to site.





Primary tasks of Interventionist Teachers and RTI Teachers

Accelerates math and reading skills by working extensively with students.

Consults frequently with core teachers to design and plan interventions.

Identifies students eligible for intervention services.

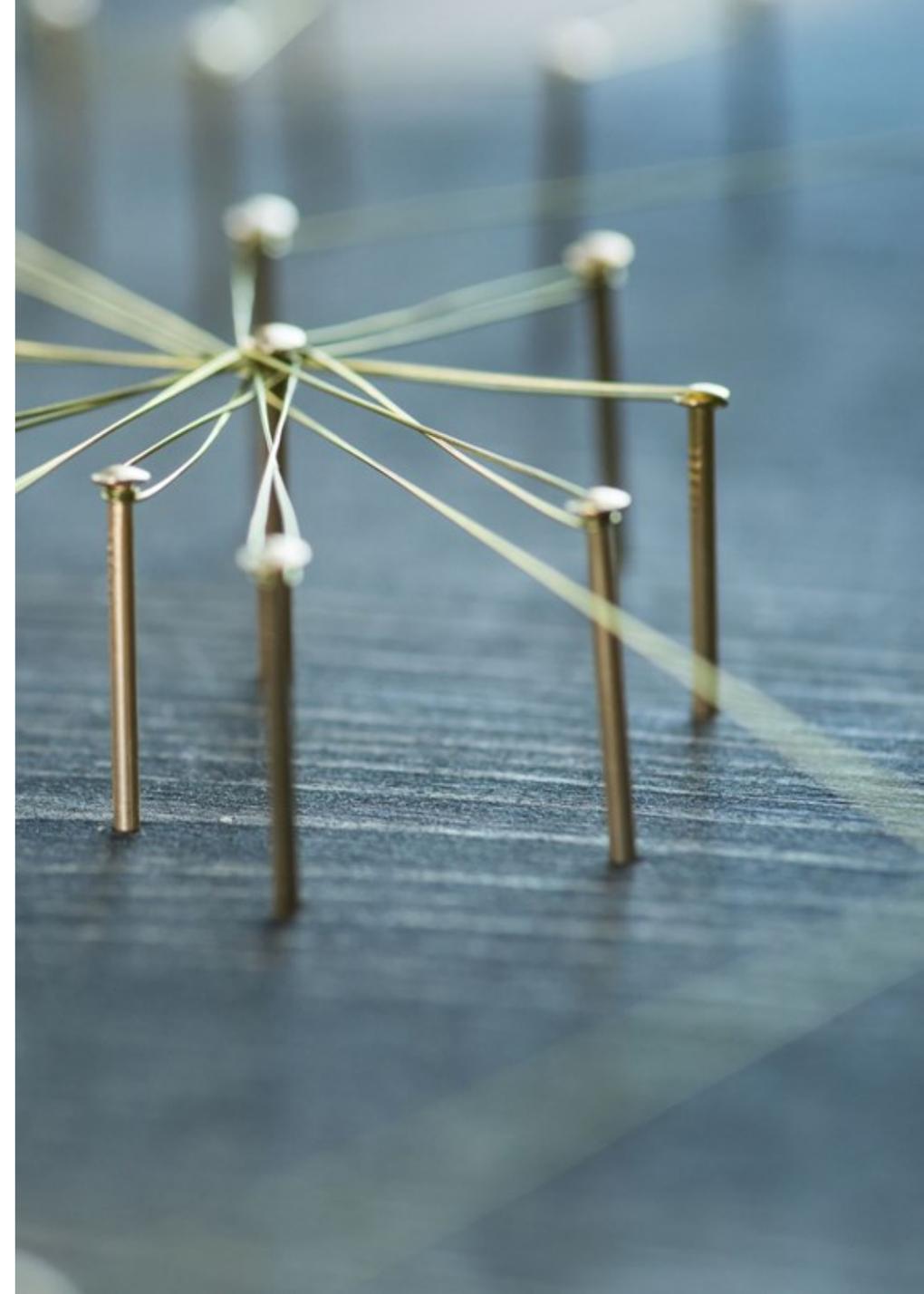
Diagnoses reading/math strengths and weaknesses and matches these skills with appropriate techniques and materials.

Study Methods

Research Question: Do schools with Interventionist/RTI teachers have higher growth among Minimally Proficient (MP) students than schools without the position?

Study Conditions

- 72 Elementary, K8, and Middle schools were used in this study:
 - 52 schools have Interventionist/RTI Teachers.
 - 20 schools do not have Interventionist/RTI Teachers.
- This study matched the students in the two school groups so that they had equivalent ethnicities, AASA performance levels, and Socio-Economic Status.
- The amount of growth in ELA and Math is calculated using the A-F Letter Grade AASA Student Growth Percentile (SGP) as the measure.
- Many factors influence student academic performance. This exploratory study did not control for complex school, classroom, or individual effects which can also contribute to changes in student performance.



Student Characteristics

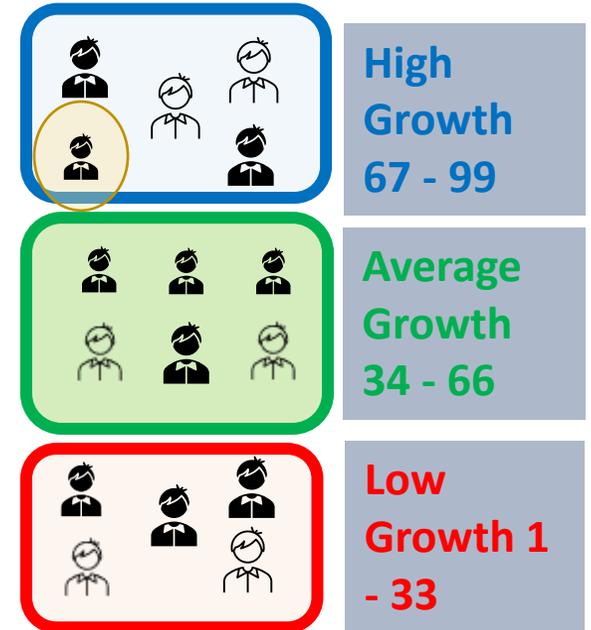
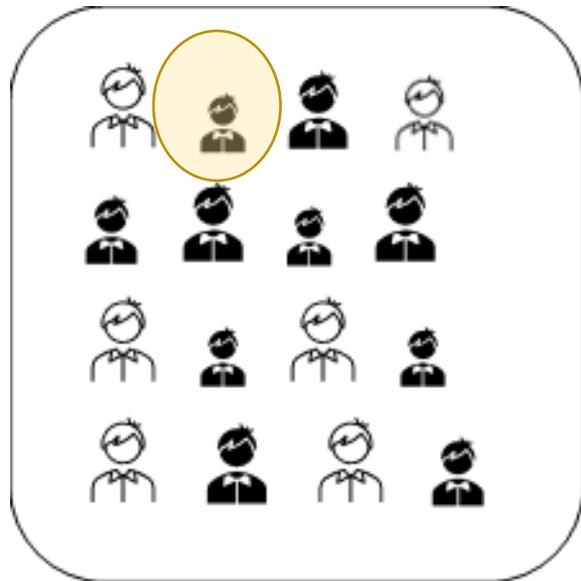
- Number of students in grades 4 - 8 who were included in the study:
 - Schools with Intervention/RTI Teacher(s) = 1,298
 - Schools without Intervention/RTI Teacher(s) = 938
- To be included in this study, students must have:
 - 2 years of AASA scores in ELA and/or Math (2021-22 and 2022-23).
 - Scored Minimally Proficient in ELA and/or Math in 2021-22.
 - Stayed enrolled at the same school all year in 2022-23.
- This exploratory study included all students who met the above criteria, regardless if they received ongoing services from Interventionist/RTI teachers. However, the assumption is that MP students were most likely to have received these services.
- Students show low, average, or high growth in ELA/Math from 2021-22 to 2022-23.



What is the A-F Letter Grade Student Growth Percentile (SGP)

Student Growth Percentile is determined by how a student with two consecutive years of AASA scores ranks in comparison to their peers across the state in the same grade who earned the same scale score in the first year.

The Growth metric is very different from Proficiency



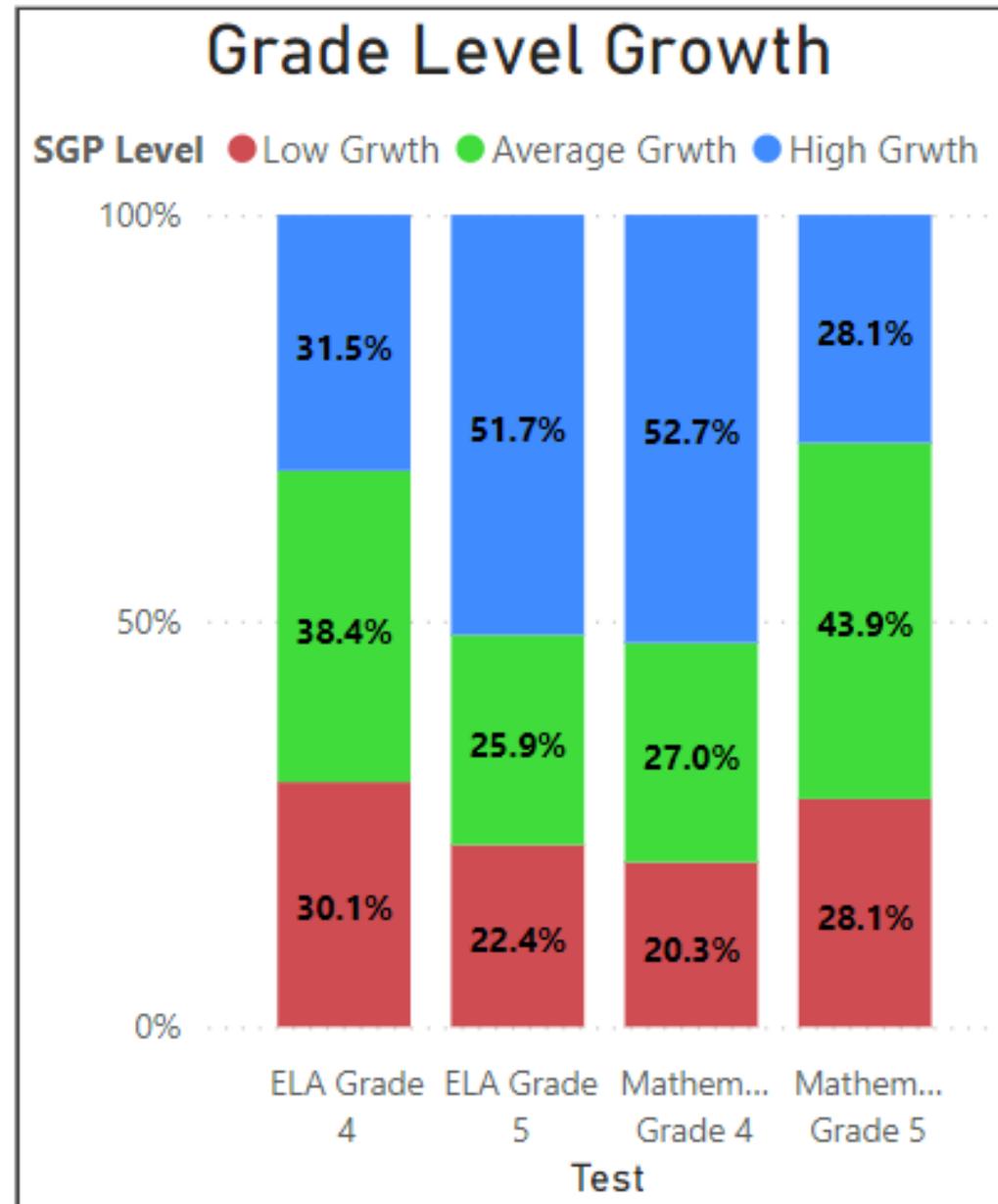
All students statewide who are in the same grade who earned the same scale score. (Year 1)

All students statewide ranked (1-99) by the new scale score earned the following year. (Year 2)

SGP shows a school's distribution of low, average, and high growth in ELA and Math.

This example shows how the levels of growth might look for Minimally Proficient students by Grade at a School.

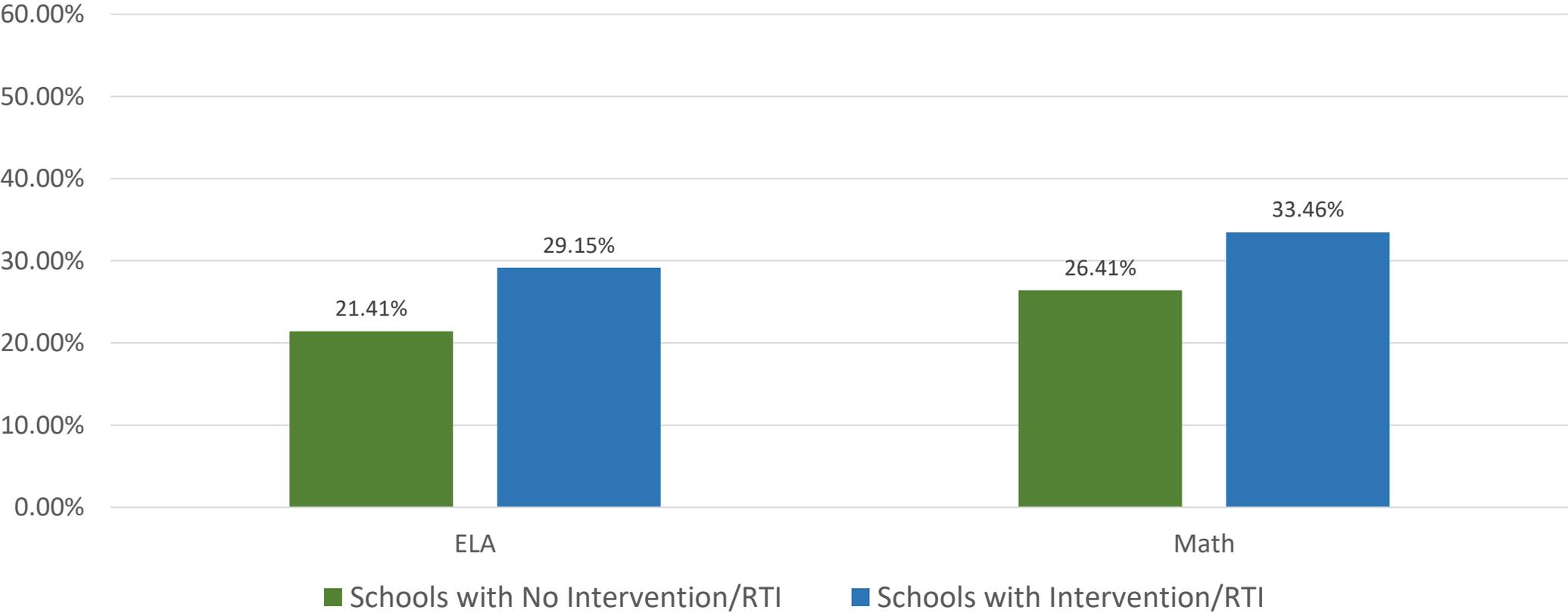
Minimally Proficient Students



Probability Estimation Results

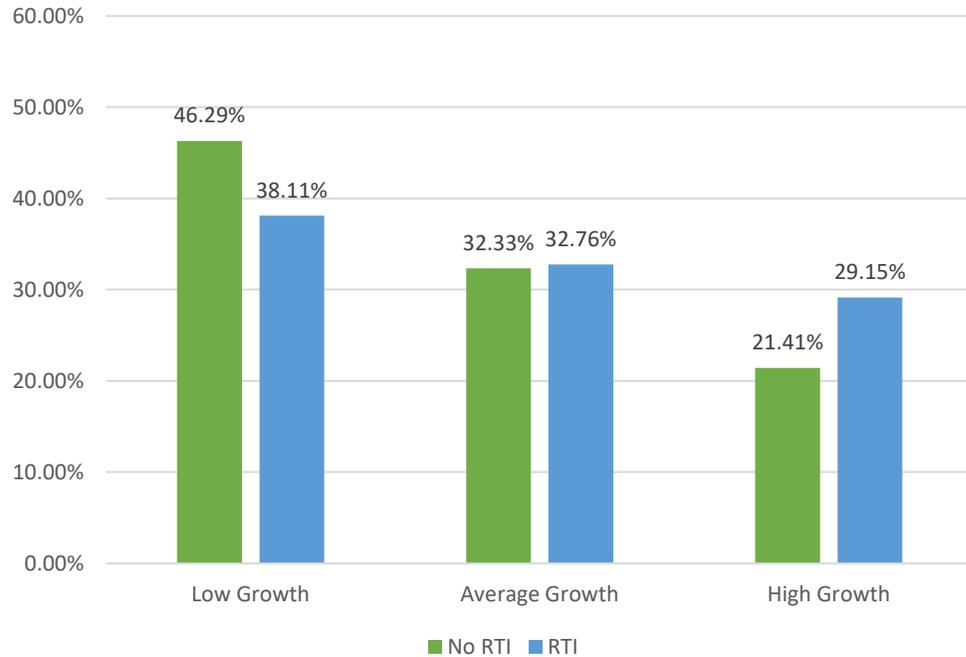
Research Question: Do schools with Interventionist/RTI teachers have higher growth among Minimally Proficient (MP) students than schools without the position?

Percent of Prior Year (PY) Minimally Proficient Students in **Grades 4 – 8 who Showed High Growth** in Schools with and without Intervention/RTI Teachers in 2022-23.
Controlled for Ethnicity, AASA Performance, GATE, ExEd, ELL, and Income

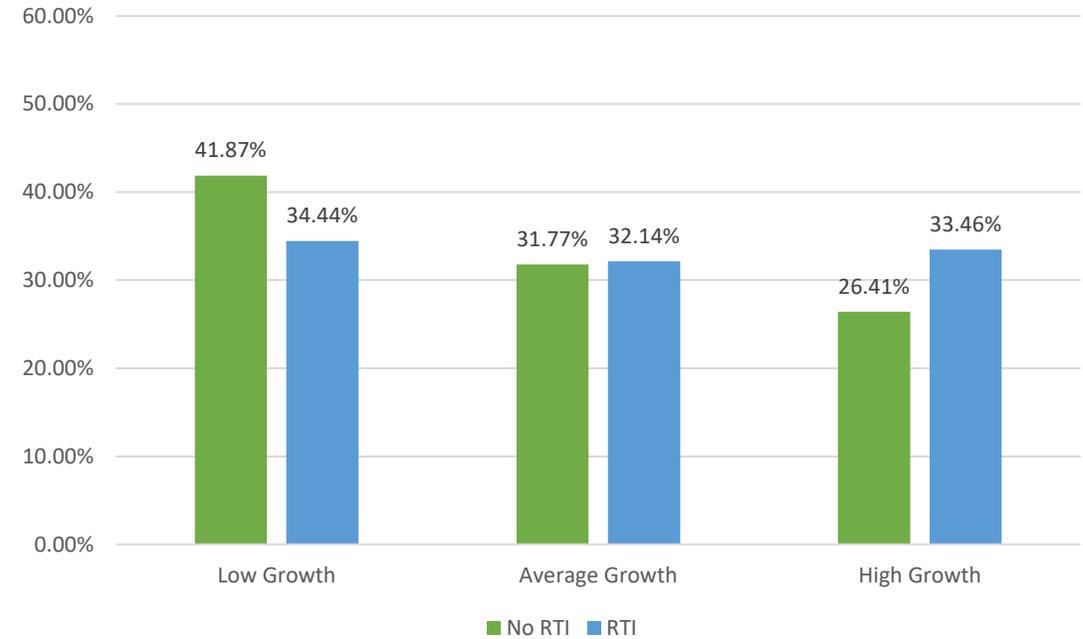


Percent of PY MP Students in **Grades 4 – 8** in Schools With and Without Intervention/RTI Teachers in 2022-23 *Controlled for Ethnicity, GATE, ExEd, ELL, AASA Performance, and Income.*

ELA

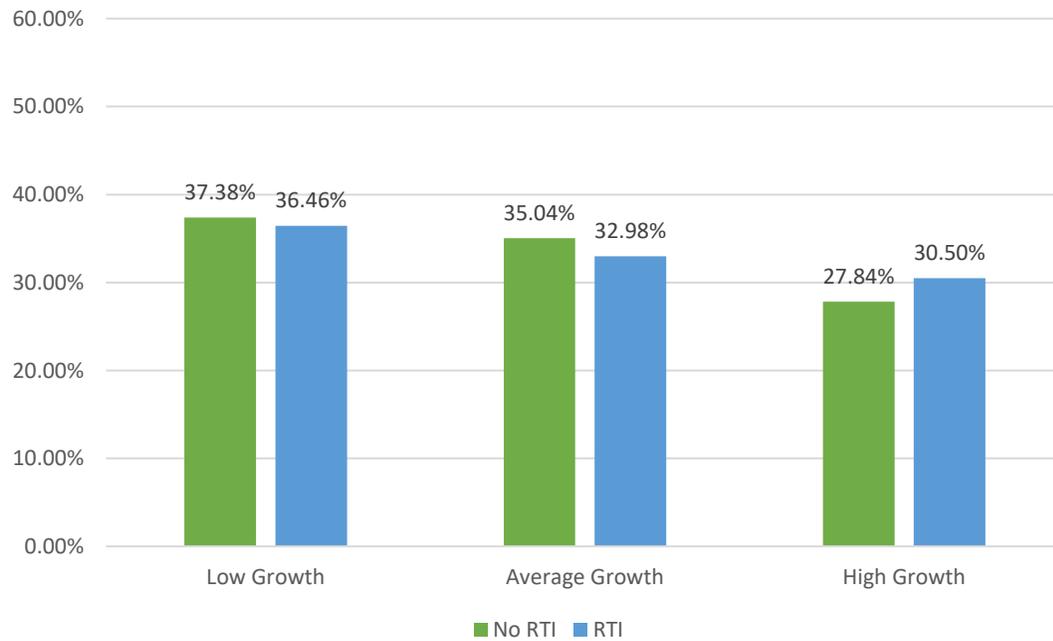


Math

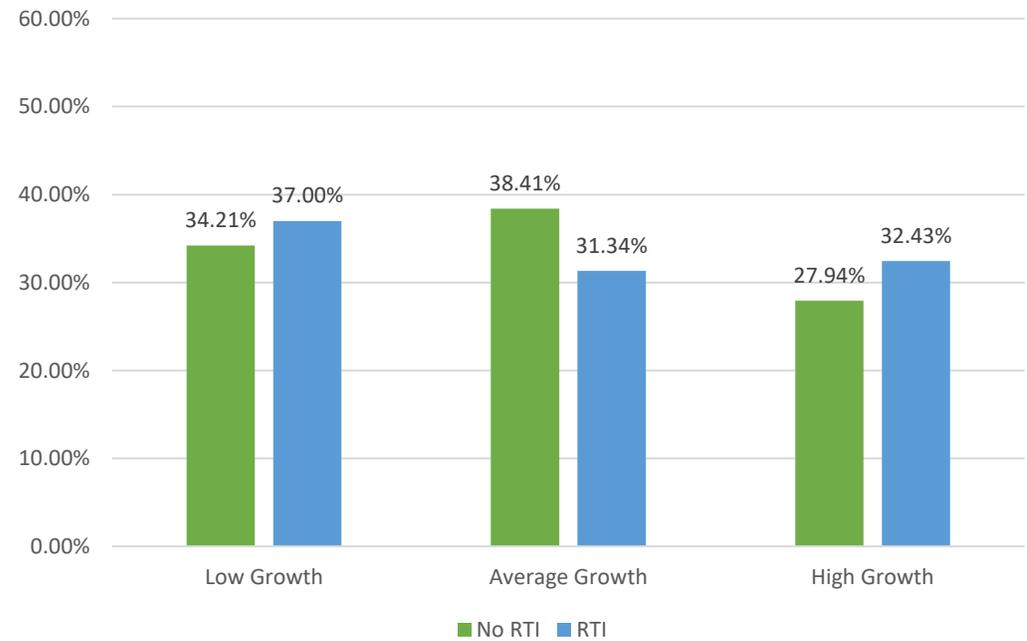


Percent of PY MP Students in **Grades 4 – 5** in Schools
With and Without Intervention/RTI Teachers in 2022-23
Controlled for Ethnicity, GATE, ExEd, ELL, AASA Performance, and Income.

ELA

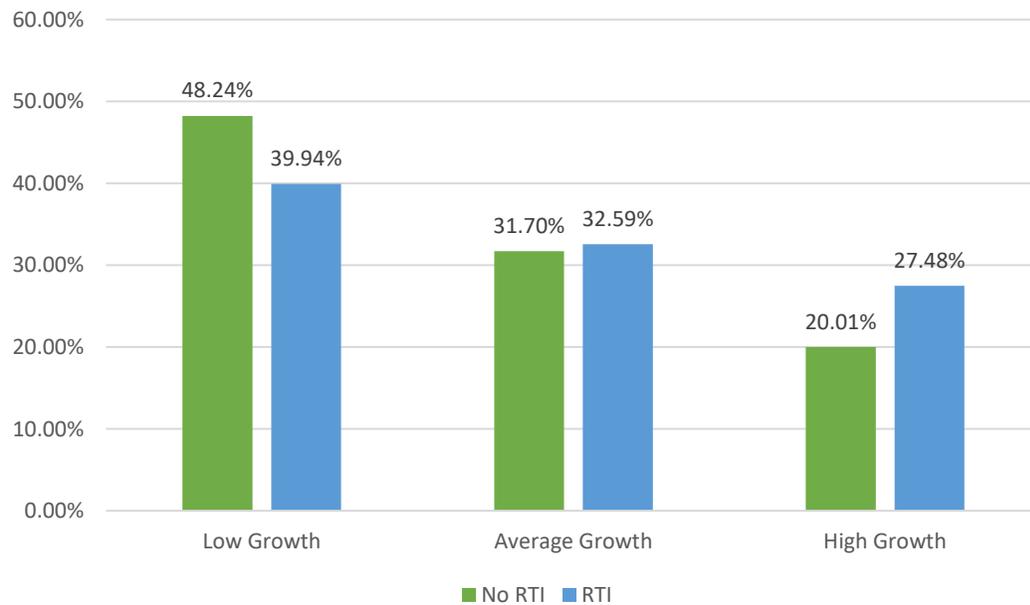


Math

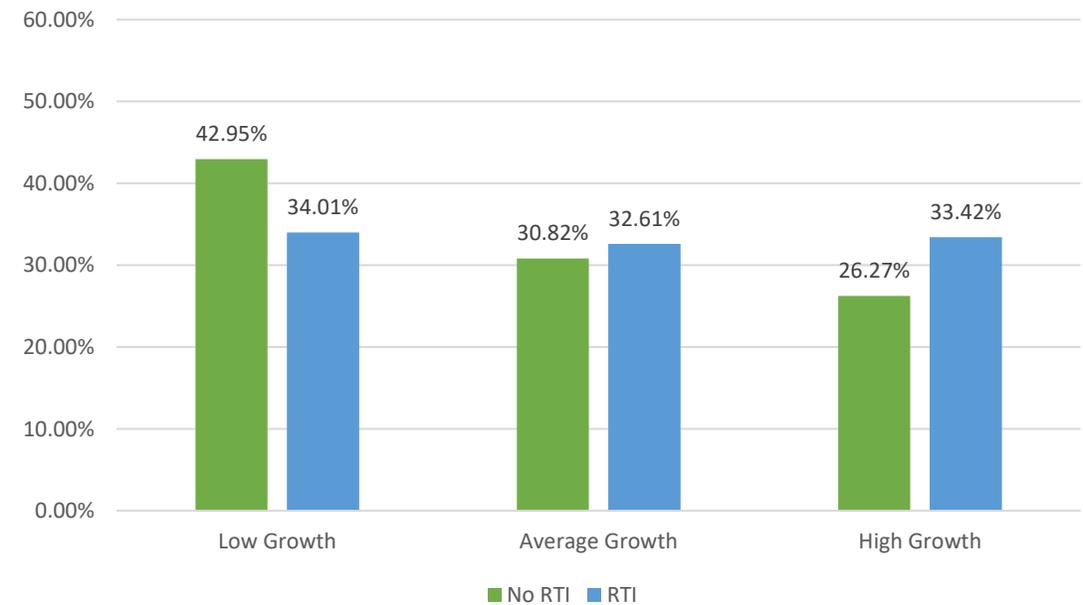


Percent of PY MP Students in **Grades 6 – 8** in Schools
With and Without Intervention/RTI Teachers in 2022-23 in ELA and Math
Controlled for Ethnicity, GATE, ExEd, ELL, AASA Performance, and Income.

ELA

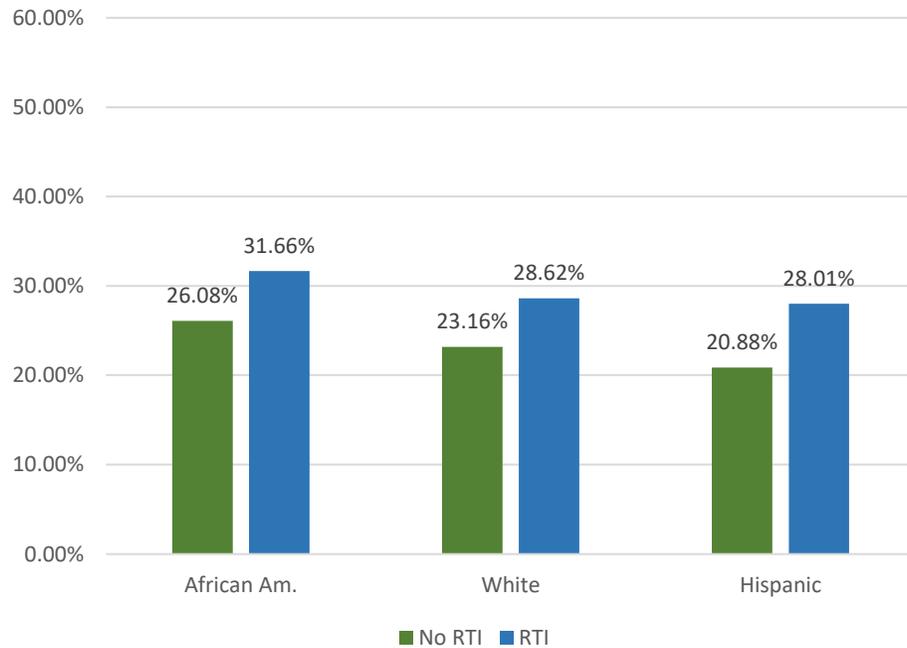


Math

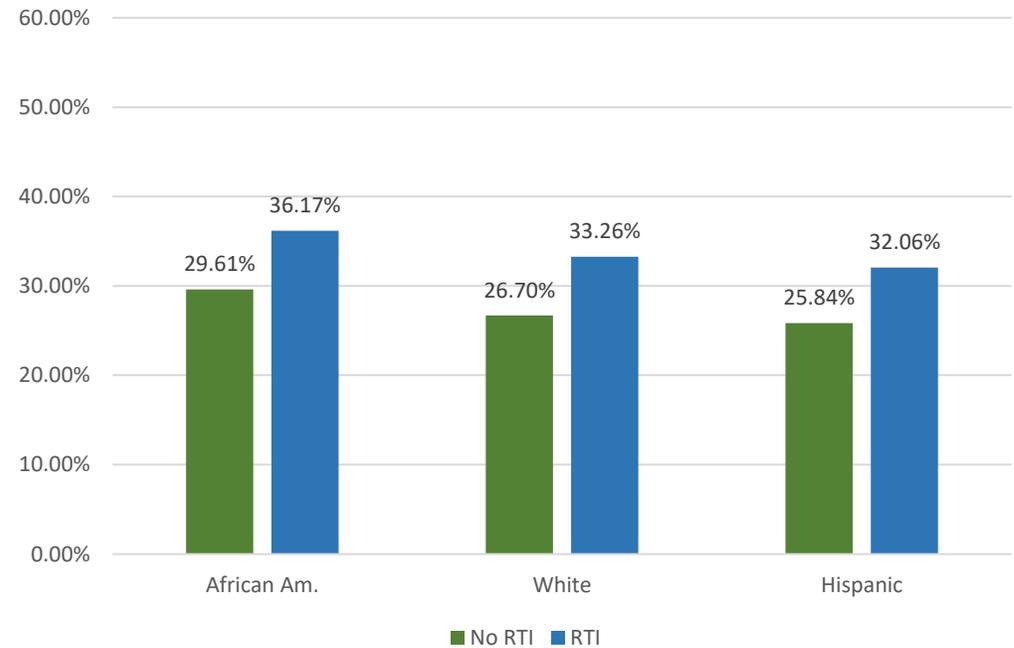


Percent of PY MP Students in **Grades 4 – 8 by Ethnicity who showed High Growth**
in Schools With and Without Intervention/RTI Teachers in 2022-23
Controlled for Ethnicity, GATE, ExEd, ELL, AASA Performance, and Income.

ELA



Math



Summary of the impact of Intervention/RTI Teachers



- The SGP measure provides meaningful data to understand levels of growth among our most struggling students.
- The role of an Interventionist/RTI teacher may vary from site to site. The role may be grade specific, subject specific, subgroup specific, or a combination of roles.
- Minimally Proficient (MP) students included in this exploratory study in schools with an Interventionist/RTI teacher may or may not have received ongoing intervention services.
- Even with the school-level variability, schools with an Interventionist/RTI teacher showed greater high growth among MP students, especially in grades 6 - 8.
- All MP students, regardless of ethnicity showed greater average levels of high growth with an Interventionist/RTI teacher at the school.
- MP students with high growth have the greatest potential to move into the Partially Proficient performance level.



Recommendations

- The results of this exploratory study suggest that Interventionist/RTI teachers support schools to achieve high growth among more MP students than schools without this position.
- The Interventionist/RTI position should continue to be funded after ESSER funding runs out.

Questions?

