Research for Better Teaching
Buffalo (NY) School District
Documentation of District Program (2011-13)
Part 1: Program Description

Research for Better Teaching (RBT) was contracted to work in the Buffalo School District beginning in May 2011. This work continued through the 2012-13 school year. Broadly stated, the purposes of the RBT work in Buffalo were to:

- Develop school administrators who were skilled in instructional leadership based on new administrator evaluation rubrics
- Develop teachers who achieved "Effective" or "Highly Effective" ratings under the new teacher evaluation rubrics
- Establish functional data teams in all schools to support effective use of student data for instruction

The ultimate purpose of the RBT work in Buffalo was to improve teaching and learning to improve student academic performance on state assessments.

Initial Planning & Engagement Activities

Planning for the RBT project in Buffalo began in response to interest in RBT services expressed by several key district administrators. Debra Sykes, Associate Superintendent for School Innovation and Turnaround, was one of the key district administrators expressing initial interest in RBT services. Sykes emerged as the key district contact and one of the key district advocates for the RBT project until she was forced to resign her position by the Superintendent in November 2013.

Initial phone conversations and written communications between district and RBT leadership to develop the RBT project occurred in late 2010 and early 2011. In May 2011, this planning culminated with the establishment of an initial cooperative agreement between RBT and the district. These cooperative agreements were subsequently renewed and expanded. Further on-site planning occurred later May 2011 between district administrators and the RBT lead consultant for the project (Kathy Spencer) to develop more specific implementation plans.

In order to develop greater understanding and interest in the RBT work among district stakeholders and staff, Nancy Love and Aminata Umoja from RBT conducted several presentations during 2011. This included presentations on the RBT data team program to the School Board and school administrators. In addition, RBT senior staff (Jon Saphier and Nancy Love) presented the keynote at the district's administrators retreat prior to the 2011-12 school year.

RBT Courses & Workshops

Program for School Data Teams. RBT conducted the Data-Driven Inquiry (DDI) course for school-based data teams and other district staff. The course consisted of 6 full days of training on using data to improve student results. In addition, RBT consultants conduct 4 site visits to

observe and provide feedback to each school-based data team. All participating staff were eligible to receive district professional development credits. RBT also awarded graduate credit through Fitchburg State College and awarded its own certificate of completion for those participants who attended and successful completed all course requirements. The course was delivered by three RBT consultants (Judy Duffield, Sue McGregor, and Aminata Umoja).

RBT conducted the course for 6 cohorts of school and district staff. The first two cohorts began in May 2011. The third and fourth cohorts begin in March 2012. The fifth and sixth cohorts began in January 2013.

- Cohort 1 included 38 school staff (teams from 4 high schools), 8 district staff, and 13 staff developer/support teachers
- Cohort 2 included 50 school staff (teams from 5 elementary schools and 1 secondary school), 5 district staff, and 6 staff developer/support teachers
- Cohort 3 included 51 school staff (teams from 8 elementary schools and 1 secondary school), 4 district staff, and 2 staff developer/support teachers
- Cohort 4 included 43 school staff (teams from 7 elementary schools and 2 high schools), 2 district staff, and 1 staff developer/support teacher
- Cohort 5 included 57 school staff (teams from 9 elementary schools and 2 high schools)
- Cohort 6 included 52 school staff (teams from 7 elementary schools, 1 secondary schools, and 2 high schools) and 3 district staff

Across all 6 cohorts, RBT served 291 school staff (teams from 36 elementary schools, 3 secondary schools, and 10 high schools), 22 district staff, and 22 staff developer/support teachers in DDI courses.

According to the cooperative agreements and RBT memos to the district, the goals for the DDI course were to:

- Create a data team in each school, led by a data coach who has participated in training and coaching in the process of data-driven inquiry
- Build capacity in Buffalo Public Schools to use data collaboratively, continuously and effectively to improve teaching and learning
- Develop a common vision, language, and approach to collaborative inquiry in participating schools

According to RBT trainers, participant attendance among the school teams across all cohorts was relatively high. Staff who missed specific sessions were given the opportunity to make up the session with another cohort and most took advantage of that opportunity. Attendance by district staff and staff developer/support staff was somewhat more inconsistent but still relatively high.

Telephone interviews with 8 school administrators in Spring 2013 about this course were relatively positive. All had teams who participated in the course and 7 of the administrators participated directly in the course. All 7 who participated spoke positively about the course.

Administrators employed different strategies to implement the data program in their schools. Some established school-wide data teams while other sought to involve all staff in the data program (either through faculty meetings or grade level meetings). Those who employed a school-wide strategy reported mixed results – with some data teams using the process with

fidelity and other "just going through the motions." One administrator who employed a school-wide strategy reported that teams using the process with fidelity seemed to be making greater gains in improving student academic results based on her observations.

Administrators reported two types of changes as a result of the implementation of the DDI program through school-based data teams.

- Administrators observed changes in the adult culture of their school. There was a greater emphasis on sharing instructional information and ideas among administrators, coaches, and teachers. In addition, this communication was more "transparent and public."
- Administrators also reported changes in the nature of discussions about instruction among teachers. Discussions made greater use of student data rather than "personal hunches" to inform decisions about instruction, re-teaching, and differentiation. Use of common data results also led to greater consensus among teachers about instructional decisions.

Program for Administrators. RBT conducted the Observing and Analyzing Teaching (OAT) course for school and district administrators. The course consisted of 7 full days of training on instructional leadership. In addition, RBT consultants conduct one site visit per participant in groups of two with detailed feedback on written work. All participating staff were eligible to receive district professional development credits. RBT also awarded graduate credit through Fitchburg State College and awarded its own certificate of completion for those participants who attended and successful completed all course requirements. The course was delivered by two RBT consultants (Kathy Spencer & Harriet Scarborough).

RBT conducted the course for 5 cohorts of school and district administrators and supervisors. The first two cohorts began in September 2011. The third and fourth cohorts begin in February 2012. The fifth cohort began in August 2012.

- Cohort 1 included 39 participants
- Cohort 2 included 31 participants
- Cohort 3 included 34 participants
- Cohort 4 included 33 participants
- Cohort 5 included 21 participants

Across all 5 cohorts, RBT served 158 school and district administrators and supervisors in OAT courses.

According to the cooperative agreements and RBT memos to the district, the objectives for the OAT course were to:

- Develop the capacity of leaders to use a common language and concept system to communicate credibly and convincingly about teaching and learning
- Study high-leverage areas of the knowledge base on teaching in order to develop leaders' capacity as valuable resources for teachers
- Analyze and communicate the connection between teacher decisions and actions and student learning
- Expand the formal and informal leaders' capacity within the Buffalo Public Schools to influence teacher's teaching and thus to have a positive impact on student performance

- Articulate and communicate high standards and expectations for teaching and learning and to pursue those standards humanely and tenaciously
- Examine multiple data sources to provide a comprehensive picture of a teacher's practice
- Fulfill substantively and responsibly any requirements for documentation associated with the instructional leader's role

According to participant surveys administered during and after the course, school and district leaders in all cohorts reported relatively high levels of satisfaction with the course. However, 12 district and school administrators who were interviewed about their participation in the OAT program suggested that participant response to the course was somewhat mixed. Estimates of level of participant engagement in course sessions varied from 50% to 75% of the participants being effectively engaged on a regular basis. The lower engagement estimates related to the earlier cohorts and the higher estimates related to the later cohorts. At the same time, several administrators reported that they often "struggled" to complete the outside assignments for the course and estimated that a substantial majority of course participants expressed similar experiences.

Despite concerns expressed about the course homework requirements, all 12 administrators interviewed about the OAT course spoke positively about the experience. One school administrator characterized the OAT course as the "best program she had ever taken." One of the district administrators characterized that OAT course as "very critical for effectively preparing principals and supervisors to function effectively under the new teacher evaluation system." This perception was echoed by a majority of the interviewed school administrators.

Almost all of the interviewed school administrators reported that the frequency of classroom observations was influenced primarily by the requirements of new teacher evaluation system and not by their participation in the OAT course. However, two school administrators reported conducting a greater number of informal classroom visits (unrelated to the requirements of the teacher evaluation system) in order to apply what they had learned during the OAT course.

All of the interviewed school administrators reported positive changes in the nature of their classroom observations and the content of their communication with teachers. Administrators consistently reported that their observations were "more focused" or were "informed by a better understanding of effective teaching strategies." In their feedback to teachers, administrators consistently reported that they were "more specific", "more objective", and "more focused on students." Individual administrators also reported that:

- Teachers were "more willing to engage in discussions about instruction"
- Teachers were more likely to "reflect on their practices"
- Teachers were "less defensive" and "more open to suggestions delivered in this way"

One school administrator also reported that discussions with colleagues improved because they had a common language and framework on instruction gained through the OAT course.

Program for Faculty. RBT conducted the Studying Skillful Teaching (SST) course for Buffalo teachers. The course was conducted by two RBT consultants (Judy Duffield and Sue McGregor). According to RBT staff, the focus of program was on

- Addressing lesson design (alignment of mastery objectives)

- Understanding and using formative assessments (with criteria for success)
- Increasing the teaching repertoire to better match the needs of students, requirements of the curriculum, and the classroom context

RBT conducted the course with 4 cohorts. Including 3 cohorts of teachers and one cohort of literacy and math coaches. The first two cohorts (involving teachers) begin in June 2012. The third cohort (for coaches) began in August 2012. The fourth cohort (involving teachers) began in January 2013. Participation in the cohorts by faculty was voluntary. Across all 4 cohorts, RBT served:

- 86 teachers (from 14 elementary schools, 1 secondary school, and 5 high schools)
- 50 literacy and math coaches (from 33 elementary schools, 2 secondary schools, and 4 high schools)
- 12 district staff

According to RBT memos to the district, the objectives of the SST course were for participating teachers to:

- Learn and use a common language and concept system to communicate credibly and convincingly about teaching and learning
- Study and apply the knowledge base on teaching to day to day practice
- Strengthen courage and conviction to make a difference for each and every student
- Examine beliefs about intelligence and achievement and apply those insights to changes in teaching practices that promote a growth-mindset
- Become more culturally proficient in teaching practices
- Expand teaching repertoires through experimentation and reflection on results
- Use data about student learning day-to-day through operationalizing the "Plan, Teach and Reflect" cycle
- Foster a culture of professional conversation about teaching and learning

In interviews with 8 school administrators, they reported relatively limited overall impact of the SST program on teaching practices in their schools. Three factors contributed to this conclusion. First, participation was voluntary and teachers who most needed to change their practices did not volunteer to take the course. Second, relatively few teachers in each school had participated in the course. In some schools, none had participated. Third, coaches who had participated in the program were not clear on how to share their learnings with teachers in their schools. Some chose to be pro-active in that effort, but others did not.

Among teachers who had participated in the SST program, administrators did report some changes. Several administrators noted that these teachers were talking to each other more about instruction and using a common language and common concepts in those discussions. Administrators also reported "pockets of change" in instructional practices among the participating teachers.

Other RBT Services & Activities

School Visits. RBT consultants conducted two types of site visits. The first were associated with the RBT data team program and included 4 visits per school team. During these visits, RBT consultants observed data team meetings and provided feedback and coaching to the data teams

to improve future work. The second type of site visits were associated with the RBT leadership program and include one site visit for each participating administrator. During these visits, RBT consultants conducted co-observations with the administrators, compared and discussed the observations with the administrators, and debriefed with teachers on the observations.

Both sets of site visits were generally well-received by participants. In fact, several of the school administrators interviewed for the project evaluation expressed an interest in having additional site visits to support implementation of all the RBT programs.

Consultation to District Leadership Team. Jon Saphier (founder and president of RBT) met several times during the course of the project with a team of district and school administrators from Buffalo. The intent was for Saphier to provide training, coaching, and guidance to the team in the effective development and implementation of a district-wide improvement plan that would incorporate and sustain the RBT project.

The original team included the district superintendent, the 3 community superintendents, a district administrator (Debra Sykes), several principals, and a union representative. During the course of the project, the team experienced several personnel changes which undermined the continuity of the team and limited the impact of Saphier's assistance.

Of even greater significant, the Interim Superintendent and later the new district superintendent chose not to participate on this team. This created major questions regarding its role in the district's planning and decision-making process. In fact, two other decision-making teams ultimately emerged in the district – one involving the Superintendent's "cabinet" and the other organized by Debra Sykes at the suggestion of the state.

Although Saphier's work with the time ultimately had little direct impact on the operation of the district, it appears that there may have been some indirect benefits from this work. Several district and school administrators who served on this team reported learning valuable lessons from their work with Saphier. They also reported applying those lessons in work with colleagues and on other district and school teams either in the same position or in new positions within the district.

Assistance to District Data Team. A district data team was established to complement the various school-based data teams supported through the RBT data program. The district data team received training and coaching from Nancy Love during multiple visits beginning in summer 2012 and continuing in spring 2013. Training and assistance provided by Love to the district data team was similar to the training provided to the school teams under the DDI program.

District Planning. Throughout the course of the project, Kathy Spencer (lead consultant for RBT on this project) met regularly with district administrators monitor project implementation, identify and address any problems with arose with the implementation, and plan for future RBT services. The primary contacts for Spencer in these planning meetings were Debra Sykes (Associate Superintendent for School Innovation and Turnaround), Marianne Dixon (SIG Grant Coordinator), and Crystal Benton (Director of Professional Development).

Systemic Conditions Affecting RBT Services

District Leadership. One of the most significant factors affecting the operation of RBT in Buffalo related district leadership. According to RBT staff and consultants, there was strong support and advocacy for RBT services among mid-level district managers. This was reinforced in interviews with Buffalo district administrators. While upper-level decision-makers in the district expressed ostensible support for RBT work, their knowledge of and involvement with RBT services was very limited and they rarely took active steps to support the work. This situation remained unchanged despite a transition from the original superintendent to an interim superintendent to the current superintendent.

There were also broader issues related to district leadership that directly and indirectly affected RBT's work in Buffalo. RBT staff and consultants working in Buffalo have reported that district leadership simply does not function effectively as a team. After the former superintendent left, individuals rarely met as a group. Roles and responsibilities were not clearly defined – leading to confusion and conflict. There was a lack of clear and consistent practices at the district level to guide the development and implementation of an effective district-wide improvement plan. As a result, district decisions were often reactive rather than reflective or carefully planned.

Leadership turnover was also seen as a disruptive condition. There was a turnover in the district superintendent and in several other key district administration positions (some that remain unfilled). During the interviews, several administrators pointed to these leadership changes as "preventing the district from moving forward" because it meant "you had to repeatedly start over again with different people at the table."

District Plans & Priorities. RBT consultants and Buffalo administrators interviewed for the evaluation all reported the existence of multiple programs and initiatives (in addition to the RBT work) ostensibly designed to improve education in the district. School administrators particularly reported a lack of coordination among these initiatives and provided examples where these initiatives interfered with RBT training or program implementation in the schools.

- One principal reported that he couldn't involve the teachers he wanted in the data team training because of other district requirements.
- Another principal had difficulty scheduling data team meetings because members were pulled out for district initiatives – often with little notice.
- Another principal was unable to use faculty meetings or grade level meeting time for data team meetings (as she intended) because the district mandated use of most of the time for other training activities.
- Still another principal reported that the requirements of multiple initiatives on his faculty prevented him from using RBT strategies to focus on instructional change

Lack of communication between district administration and the schools regarding the RBT project also affected the RBT work in the district. Schools participating in the RBT project never received copies of the cooperative agreements between the district and RBT. Nor were they notified of the provisions of the agreements or of their responsibilities under the agreement. The same was true for some of the district offices with staff participating in RBT programs. As a result, neither the district nor the participating schools fulfilled their responsibilities under the

agreements. In addition, participating schools often did not understand how the various RBT programs connected and supported each other.

In addition to not communicating, district leadership was also seen as not listening – either to mid-level district administrators or to those in the schools. One district administrator reported that there was actually widespread support for continuing and expanding RBT work among the "grassroots" (administrators and faculty in the school) and district administrators – but that high-level district administrators were simply unaware of the interest and support. This view was echoed by one of the school administrators interviewed who reported frustration due to failed efforts to convey messages about how to support better implementation of RBT programs in the schools.

These communication issues were not specific to RBT's work with the district but rather a more general district problem. The RBT lead consultant reported that messages to the state department of education were often unclear or non-responsive and resulted in regular "crises" between the district and the state. Similarly, communication and guidance from the district to the school were often disjointed and confusing and exacerbated a sense of mistrust between schools and district leadership.

District Policies. During the 2012-13 school year, the new negotiated teacher evaluation system (Annual Professional Performance Review, APPR) was not implemented until May. Due to the late implementation, several school administrators who participated in the OAT training reported that they simply did not have enough time to implement what they had learned in that course. Even without the late start, the new system did not take into account the additional time needed for supervisors to conduct the kind of classroom observations, document reviews, and communication with teachers recommended by RBT in its course. Finally, the negotiated agreement only covered the 2012-13 school year. As a result, administrators were unable to make plans to implement OAT practices during the following year due to the continuing uncertainty.

Unions. The unions had little direct involvement with the RBT project. They were represented on the leadership team that worked with Jon Saphier. However, that team apparently had little real influence on the development and implementation of school improvement plans in the district (including plans related to the RBT work).

The unions are seen as having demonstrated an ongoing resistance to change in the district and as having a difficult relationship with the district. These conditions did have some limited impact on RBT work in the district. The administrators union unsuccessfully opposed RBT course requirements involving outside readings and homework. Requirements in the agreement with the teachers union increased the cost of SST course implementation due to requirements around substitute teacher use and stipend payments.

Schools. Most Buffalo schools appear to have a focus on compliance rather than quality. According to the RBT lead consultant, schools were generally well-run but lacked instructional depth or an appropriate belief system about student achievement. According to both district and school administrators, most schools "put on a good show" of meeting project requirements but

remain committed to the status quo. They also report that the district has done little to change the culture of compliance to one that requires genuine engagement in the change process.

State Role. Due to the large number of struggling schools in Buffalo, the state department of education was heavily involved with the district. However, there was a lack of coordination between state and district improvement efforts. This had a direct effect on RBT work. At times, there were logistical conflicts between state-mandated activities and efforts by schools to implement what they learned in RBT programs. In some cases, there were direct conflicts between messages conveyed by state staff or trainers and those conveyed by RBT consultants.

The new state assessment system also created a short-term complication for assessing the impact of RBT services in Buffalo. The new assessment system was based on the Common Core and student results were not comparable to results from the previous system. This made the process of identifying changes more complicated and less definitive.

Resources. The RBT work was apparently funded through multiple funding streams, including Race to the Top Funds (received by the state from the Federal government), state school turnaround funds, and Federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds. Substantive or reporting requirements associated with any of these funding programs did not appear to affect either the design or implementation of the RBT work. However, internal conflicts between district and union leadership apparently jeopardized the SIG funds for a period of time which created some uncertainty about the scope of RBT services that would be funded. Ultimately, it appears that this issue was resolved with affecting RBT work.

Lessons Learned

- Unified and informed district leadership is very important to effective and sustained implementation of RBT services and may need to be developed by RBT (or other partners) before RBT work should begin in a district

- Failure to coordinate school improvement plans can create impediments to RBT training activities and program implementation and even result in conflicts between RBT and other service providers

- Failure to communicate implementation plans related to RBT work to participating district offices and schools makes it very difficult for these schools and offices to effectively implement, coordinate, and sustain RBT programs

- Inconsistent or non-supportive district policies related to teacher evaluation can substantially limit the capacity of most administrators to effectively implement strategies and practices presented in the OAT course

- Long-term plans for ensuring all school faculty participate in SST courses (rather than relying upon voluntary participation) are necessary to create the opportunity for substantial change in teaching practices

Part 2: Program Evaluation

Description of Survey

The online survey was administered in July 2013 after administrators had completed the OAT program. The survey was completed by 72 of 137 administrators who received email invitations (52.5% response rate). The survey asked administrators to (1) assess the impact of the OAT course of their own practice and behavior, (2) report on the work and effectiveness of any data teams in their schools, (3) assess the impact of the SST course on teachers in their school, and (4) assess the overall impact of RBT programs on their school.

Participant Assessment of RBT Programs

Percentage Distribution of Participant Responses Regarding OAT Program			
RATING	Quality of RBT Program	Level of Personal Engagement with Program	Level of Group Engagement with Program
Very High	57%	43%	21%
High	30%	48%	49%
Moderate	13%	9%	26%
Low	0%	0%	4%

Mean Ratings by Subgroups of Administrators Regarding OAT Program				
		Program Quality	Personal Engagement	Group Engagement
Workplace	District	6.55	6.40	5.95
	High School	6.71	6.29	5.86
	K-8 School	6.27	6.29	5.63
Experience as Administrator	3 Yrs or Less	6.47	6.26	5.79
	4 to 10 Yrs	6.30	6.15	5.59
	11 Yrs or More	6.40	6.60	5.75
Self-Reported Attendance	Attended All	6.38	6.35	5.73
	Missed One	6.62	6.38	5.85
Differences in mean ratings exceeding 0.20 should be considered meaningful but small. Differences exceeding 0.50 should be considered moderate.				

Impact of OAT Program on Administrators

Impact of OAT Program on Administrator Knowledge & Capacity				
	Very High	High	Moderate/ Low	Mean Rating
Understanding a common language and concept system about teaching & learning	30%	61%	9%	4.21
Understanding of the knowledge base on teaching, particularly high-leverage areas	27%	58%	15%	4.10
Noticing & diagnosing impact of critical practices within complex reality of	30%	58%	12%	4.16
Interpreting the connection between teacher decision-making & student learning	43%	45%	12%	4.28
Defining high standards for teaching & learning	42%	43%	15%	4.24
Speaking credibly and convincingly about teaching & learning	33%	55%	12%	4.18
Writing credibly and convincingly about teaching & learning	38%	61%	12%	4.26
Investing leadership effort strategically in areas and activities that have great impact on teaching quality & student performance	36%	48%	16%	4.20

Impact of OAT Program on Administrator Behavior & Practices				
	Very High	High	Moderate/ Low	Mean Rating
Humanely and tenaciously pursuing high standards and expectations for teaching and learning by faculty and staff	33%	55%	12%	4.18
Serving as a knowledgeable and valuable resource to teachers around the knowledge base on teaching and high-leverage teaching practices	28%	54%	18%	4.07
Examining multiple data sources to provide a comprehensive picture of a teacher's practice	31%	44%	25%	4.01
Substantively and responsibly fulfilling any requirements for documentation associated with the role of instructional leader	25%	54%	21%	4.04
Communicating regularly, credibly, and convincingly with supervisors, colleagues, and others about teaching and learning	27%	49%	24%	4.02

Impact of OAT Program on Frequency of Classroom Observations & Quality of Feedback to Teachers				
	Substantial	Moderate	Limited	Mean Rating
During the last year, how did the frequency of your classroom visits and informal observations of teachers change?	39%	43%	18%	4.15
During the last year, how much did the quality of your feedback to teachers on their instructional practices change?	49%	45%	6%	4.37

Impact of RBT Program on School Data Teams

Frequency of School Data Team Meetings During 2012-13			
	K-8 Schools	High Schools	All Schools
Once a month or more (11+ times annually)	30%	33%	31%
Almost once a month (7-10 times annually)	33%	33%	33%
Every other month (3-6 times annually)	37%	33%	36%

Administrator Assessment of Data Team Effectiveness				
RATING	Once a month or more (11+ times annually)	Almost once a month (7-10 times annually)	Every other month (3-6 times annually)	All Teams
Very High	17%	0%	0%	5%
High	33%	0%	0%	11%
Moderate	42%	75%	85%	68%
Low	8%	25%	15%	16%
Mean Rating	5.33	4.33	4.16	4.60

Frequency of Types of Data Team Activities			
	Regularly	Several Times	Once/ Never
Analyze state assessment results	36%	44%	20%
Analyze district or school assessment results	47%	53%	0%
Identify goals to improve teaching and learning	50%	47%	3%
Develop common assessments	31%	28%	41%
Review and analyze student work	40%	49%	11%
Identify types of errors students are making in their work	36%	53%	11%
Design reteaching strategies	35%	51%	14%
Reflect on the impact of reteaching strategies on student learning	32%	54%	14%
Discuss and use research to inform plans for improving teaching and learning	38%	51%	11%
Share best practices	47%	44%	9%

Frequency of Data Team Activities by Frequency of Data Team Meetings				
	Once Per Month or More (11+)	Less Than Once Per Month (7-10)	Every Other Month (3-6)	All Teams
Analyze state assessment results	3.33	3.25	2.83	3.14
Analyze district or school assessment results	3.67	3.42	3.33	3.47
Identify goals to improve teaching and learning	3.58	3.42	3.42	3.47
Develop common assessments	2.83	2.67	2.85	2.78
Review and analyze student work	3.58	3.00	3.31	3.30
Identify types of errors students are making in their work	3.42	2.92	3.33	3.22
Design reteaching strategies	3.58	2.92	3.08	3.19
Reflect on the impact of reteaching strategies on student learning	3.42	3.00	3.08	3.16
Discuss and use research to inform plans for improving teaching and learning	3.33	3.08	3.31	3.24
Share best practices	3.42	3.33	3.33	3.36

Impact of RBT Programs on Schools & Teachers

School Administrator Assessment of RBT Impact on Teachers				
	Very High/ High	Moderate	Low/ None	Mean Rating
Applying the knowledge base on teaching to their day-to-day practices	31%	46%	23%	3.03
Applying the knowledge base on teaching to their lesson design and implementation	33%	41%	26%	3.03
Presenting clear and worthy mastery objectives and criteria for student success	38%	28%	34%	3.03
Using language and strategies to enable students to put forth effective effort	33%	38%	29%	3.00
Employing culturally proficient practices in their teaching	23%	49%	28%	2.87
Employing an expanded teaching repertoire	36%	38%	26%	3.05
Developing and using systems for providing ongoing feedback to students on their performance	29%	37%	34%	2.89
Providing opportunities for students to revisit or extend learning based on formative assessment results	28%	41%	31%	2.95
Using a variety of data on student learning to inform a cycle of planning, teaching, and reflecting on lessons	41%	33%	26%	3.08
Communicating regularly, credibly, and convincingly with supervisors, colleagues, and others about teaching and learning	37%	37%	26%	3.05

Impact of RBT Programs on Schools According to School Administrators				
	Very High/ High	Moderate	Low/ None	Mean Rating
Quality of teaching practices	50%	43%	7%	3.55
Climate and culture	36%	59%	5%	3.39
Level of student engagement in learning	32%	56%	12%	3.33
Student academic performance	32%	56%	12%	3.26

Part 3: Program Impact on Individual Schools

The following tables present administrator assessment of the impact of RBT programs on individual Buffalo schools. Assessments are based on administrator responses to an online survey and phone interviews with selected individual administrators.

The online survey was administered in July 2013 after administrators had completed the OAT program. The survey was completed by 72 of 137 administrators who received email invitations (52.5% response rate). The survey asked administrators to (1) assess the impact of the OAT course of their own practice and behavior, (2) report on the work and effectiveness of any data teams in their schools, (3) assess the impact of the SST course on teachers in their school, and (4) assess the overall impact of RBT programs on their school.

Telephone interviews were conducted with 8 district and school administrators. This included school administrators identified by RBT staff as being particularly active or successful in the implementation of RBT programs in their schools. Topics discussed in the interview were similar to those included in the online survey.

Administrator Assessment of Secondary School Data Teams (2013)				
School	**Grade Levels**	**Meeting Frequency**	**Activity Frequency**	**Effectiveness**
PS 156 Olmstead School	5-12	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
PS 192 Academy for Visual & Performing Arts	5-12	High	Moderate	Moderate
PS 198 International Prep School	5-12	High	Moderate	Moderate
PS 206 South Park HS	9-12	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
PS 301 Burgard HS	9-12	High	High	High
PS 304 Hutchinson Central Tech HS	9-12	High	High	High
PS 305 McKinley HS	9-12	Low	Moderate	Low
PS 307 East HS	9-12	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

Administrator Assessment of Program Impact on Leadership & Teaching Practices in Secondary Schools (2013)			
School		**Leadership Practices**	**Teaching Practices**
PS 156 Olmstead School	5-12	High	Low
PS 192 Academy for Visual & Performing Arts	5-12	Moderate	Moderate
PS 198 International Prep School	5-12	Moderate	Moderate
PS204 Lafayette HS	9-12	Moderate	Low
PS 206 South Park HS	9-12	Moderate	NO INFO
PS 304 Hutchinson Central Tech HS	9-12	High	High
PS 305 McKinley HS	9-12	High	High
PS 307 East HS	9-12	High	High

Administrator Assessment of Overall Program Impact in Secondary Schools (2013)				
School	**Grade Levels**	**Impact on Teaching**	**Impact on Student Performance**	**Impact on School**
PS 156 Olmstead School	5-12	High	High	Moderate
PS 192 Academy for Visual & Performing Arts	5-12	Moderate	Moderate	Low
PS 198 International Prep School	5-12	Moderate	Moderate	Low
PS204 Lafayette HS	9-12	Low	NO INFO	Low
PS 304 Hutchinson Central Tech HS	9-12	High	High	High
PS 305 McKinley HS	9-12	Moderate	Moderate	Low
PS 307 East HS	9-12	High	Moderate	Low

Administrator Assessment of Elementary School Data Teams (2013)				
School	**Grade Levels**	**Meeting Frequency**	**Activity Frequency**	**Effectiveness**
PS 3 D'Youville Porter School	PK-8	Moderate	High	Moderate
PS 6 Elementary School of Technology	PK-8	Low	Low	Moderate
PS 18 Pantoja School	PK-8	High	Moderate	High
PS 19 Native American Magnet School	PK-8	High	Moderate	Moderate
PS 27 Hillery Park Elementary	PK-8	Moderate	Moderate	Low
PS 30 Sedita Academy	PK-8	Moderate	Moderate	Low
PS 32 Bennett Park Montessori	PK-8	Moderate	Low	Moderate
PS 33 Bilingual Center	PK-8	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
PS 37 Daniel Futures Prep School	PK-8	Low	Moderate	Moderate
PS 39 MLK Multicultural Institute	PK-8	High	Moderate	Moderate
PS 42 Occupational Training Center	Alt	Moderate	High	Moderate
PS 53 Community School	PK-8	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
PS 59 Drew Science Magnet	3-8	Low	Moderate	Moderate
PS 61 ECC	PK-4	Low	High	Moderate
PS 64 Olmstead School	PK-4	High	High	High
PS 65 Roosevelt ECC	PK-4	Low	Moderate	Moderate
PS 67 Discovery School	PK-8	High	High	High
PS 74 Hamlin Park School	PK-8	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
PS 76 Badillo Bilingual Academy	PK-8	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
PS 80 Highgates Heights	PK-8	Low	Low	Low
PS 81 School	PK-8	High	High	High
PS 89 Wright School of Excellence	PK-8	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
PS 90 Drew Science Magnet ECC	PK-2	Low	Moderate	Moderate
PS 94 West Hertel Academy	PK-8	High	Low	Low
PS 95 Waterfront Elementary	PK-8	Low	Moderate	Moderate
PS 97 Austin School	PK-7	Low	Moderate	Moderate
PS 99 Makowski ECC	PK-4	High	High	Moderate

Administrator Assessment of Program Impact on Leadership & Teaching Practices in Elementary Schools (2013)			
School	**Grade Levels**	**Leadership Practices**	**Teaching Practices**
PS 3 D'Youville Porter School	PK-8	Moderate	Low
PS 6 Elementary School of Technology	PK-8	High	High
PS 17 ECC	PK-4	Moderate	NO INFO
PS 19 Native American Magnet School	PK-8	High	Moderate
PS 27 Hillery Park Elementary	PK-8	Low	Low
PS 30 Sedita Academy	PK-8	Moderate	Low
PS 32 Bennett Park Montessori	PK-8	High	High
PS 33 Bilingual Center	PK-8	High	Moderate
PS 37 Daniel Futures Prep School	PK-8	High	Moderate
PS 39 MLK Multicultural Institute	PK-8	High	NO INFO
PS 42 Occupational Training Center	Alt	High	NO INFO
PS 53 Community School	PK-8	High	Moderate
PS 54 Blackman ECC	PK-4	High	Low
PS 59 Drew Science Magnet	3-8	Low	Moderate
PS 61 ECC	PK-4	High	High
PS 64 Olmstead School	PK-4	High	High
PS 65 Roosevelt ECC	PK-4	High	Low
PS 67 Discovery School	PK-8	Low	Moderate
PS 74 Hamlin Park School	PK-8	High	Moderate
PS 76 Badillo Bilingual Academy	PK-8	High	High
PS 80 Highgates Heights	PK-8	Low	Low
PS 81 School	PK-8	Moderate	High
PS 89 Wright School of Excellence	PK-8	High	Low
PS 90 Drew Science Magnet ECC	PK-2	High	Moderate
PS 94 West Hertel Academy	PK-8	Moderate	Low
PS 95 Waterfront Elementary	PK-8	Low	Low
PS 97 Austin School	PK-7	Moderate	Moderate
PS 99 Makowski ECC	PK-4	Moderate	Moderate

Administrator Assessment of Overall Program Impact in Elementary Schools (2013)				
School	**Grade Levels**	**Impact on Teaching**	**Impact on Student Performance**	**Impact on School**
PS 3 D'Youville Porter School	PK-8	Moderate	Low	Low
PS 6 Elementary School of Technology	PK-8	High	Moderate	Low
PS 17 ECC	PK-4	Moderate	Moderate	Low
PS 19 Native American Magnet School	PK-8	Moderate	Moderate	Low
PS 27 Hillery Park Elementary	PK-8	Low	Low	Low
PS 30 Sedita Academy	PK-8	Moderate	Low	Low
PS 32 Bennett Park Montessori	PK-8	High	High	High
PS 33 Bilingual Center	PK-8	Moderate	Moderate	Low
PS 37 Daniel Futures Prep School	PK-8	Moderate	Moderate	Low
PS 39 MLK Multicultural Institute	PK-8	High	High	High
PS 42 Occupational Training Center	Alt	High	Moderate	Low
PS 53 Community School	PK-8	High	High	High
PS 54 Blackman ECC	PK-4	High	Moderate	Moderate
PS 59 Drew Science Magnet	3-8	High	High	High
PS 61 ECC	PK-4	High	High	High
PS 64 Olmstead School	PK-4	High	High	Moderate
PS 65 Roosevelt ECC	PK-4	Moderate	Moderate	Low
PS 67 Discovery School	PK-8	High	Moderate	Moderate
PS 74 Hamlin Park School	PK-8	High	High	High
PS 76 Badillo Bilingual Academy	PK-8	Moderate	Low	Low
PS 80 Highgates Heights	PK-8	High	High	Moderate
PS 81 School	PK-8	High	High	High
PS 89 Wright School of Excellence	PK-8	High	High	Moderate
PS 90 Drew Science Magnet ECC	PK-2	Moderate	Moderate	Low
PS 94 West Hertel Academy	PK-8	Moderate	Moderate	Low
PS 95 Waterfront Elementary	PK-8	High	Moderate	Low
PS 97 Austin School	PK-7	Moderate	Moderate	Low

Part 4: Program Impact & Student Assessments

This analysis compared the reported impact of RBT training programs on Buffalo elementary schools with changes in school-wide results on the state assessments in ELA and Math. Program impact was categorized for data team operation and effectiveness, leadership knowledge & practice, teaching practices, teaching quality, student academic performance, and overall school improvement efforts. Program impact was derived from administrator responses to an online survey and phone interviews with selected individual administrators.

The online survey was administered in July 2013 after administrators had completed the OAT program. The survey was completed by 72 of 137 administrators who received email invitations (52.5% response rate). The survey asked administrators to (1) assess the impact of the OAT course of their own practice and behavior, (2) report on the work and effectiveness of any data teams in their schools, (3) assess the impact of the SST course on teachers in their school, and (4) assess the overall impact of RBT programs on their school.

Telephone interviews were conducted with 8 district and school administrators. This included school administrators identified by RBT staff as being particularly active or successful in the implementation of RBT programs in their schools. Topics discussed in the interview were similar to those included in the online survey.

Program impact was compared to changes in school-wide results on the state assessments in ELA and Math from 2011 to 2012 and from 2011 to 2013. In order to assess progress made by a school in achieving student proficiency in each test, a simple index was calculated based on the percentage of students in each of the four performance categories. A score of 100 meant that all students had achieved the highest level of proficiency while a score of 25 meant that all students were at the lowest level of proficiency. This index was based on the CPI, an index created by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

There was an added complication when comparing results from 2011 to 2013 because the state instituted a new state assessment based on the Common Core. This meant that 2013 results were not directly comparable to 2011 results. In order to assess growth over time for schools between these two tests, district-wide results were used as a baseline for each school.

Based on this analysis, schools identified as having the most active or most effective data teams had greater gains from 2011 to 2012 and from 2011 to 2013 in both ELA and Math. This was <u>not</u> the case for the other areas of program impact examined in this analysis. These results could mean that improvement in leadership and teaching did not results in improvement in student test performance in these schools. However, it is possible that these results mean that administrators were not always accurate in reporting or assessing program impact in their school – with some underestimating its impact and others overestimating it.

The following tables (related to data team activity and effectiveness) consistently show high levels of activity or effectiveness associated with larger positive changes in school-wide state test results. Differences presented on these tables are both statistically significant and meaningful.

Data Team Effectiveness & Changes in School-wide State Assessment Results				
	ELA Assessment		Math Assessment	
	Change from 2011 to 2013	Change from 2011 to 2012	Change from 2011 to 2013	Change from 2011 to 2012
High	+4.2	+0.7	+1.1	-0.5
Moderate	-4.0	+0.2	-2.8	-1.1
Low	-3.7	+0.2	-7.4	-1.7

Frequency of Data Team Meetings & Changes in School-wide State Assessment Results				
	ELA Assessment		Math Assessment	
	Change from 2011 to 2013	Change from 2011 to 2012	Change from 2011 to 2013	Change from 2011 to 2012
High	+1.5	+1.1	0.1	+0.5
Moderate	-4.7	0	-7.2	-1.4
Low	-5.0	-0.4	-1.8	-0.6

Frequency of Data Team Activities & Changes in School-wide State Assessment Results				
	ELA Assessment		Math Assessment	
	Change from 2011 to 2013	Change from 2011 to 2012	Change from 2011 to 2013	Change from 2011 to 2012
High	+1.6	+0.5	0	-0.2
Moderate	-4.6	+0.3	-4.2	-0.6
Low	-1.3	-0.1	-3.1	-0.5

The tables on the following pages (related to other types of program impact) do not demonstrate any consistent trends. In fact, schools reporting the highest impact in these areas generally showed lower gains or greater declines in school-wide state test results when compared to schools reporting lower impact.

Program Impact on Leadership Knowledge/Practices & Changes in School-wide State Assessment Results				
	ELA Assessment		Math Assessment	
	Change from 2011 to 2013	Change from 2011 to 2012	Change from 2011 to 2013	Change from 2011 to 2012
High	-2.8	-0.2	-3.6	-1.6
Moderate	-2.0	+1.0	-0.9	+0.9
Low	-1.3	+0.7	+0.5	+1.2

Program Impact on Teaching Practices & Changes in School-wide State Assessment Results				
	ELA Assessment		Math Assessment	
	Change from 2011 to 2013	Change from 2011 to 2012	Change from 2011 to 2013	Change from 2011 to 2012
High	+1.5	-0.1	+0.1	-0.4
Moderate	-3.8	+0.6	-3.1	-0.8
Low	-3.2	+0.2	-3.2	-0.6

Program Impact on Teaching Quality & Changes in School-wide State Assessment Results				
	ELA Assessment		Math Assessment	
	Change from 2011 to 2013	Change from 2011 to 2012	Change from 2011 to 2013	Change from 2011 to 2012
High	-2.1	-0.4	-5.3	-2.6
Moderate	-4.1	+0.4	-0.9	+0.2
Low	+0.6	+0.8	-0.2	+0.9

Program Impact on Student Academic Performance & Changes in School-wide State Assessment Results				
	ELA Assessment		Math Assessment	
	Change from 2011 to 2013	Change from 2011 to 2012	Change from 2011 to 2013	Change from 2011 to 2012
High	-2.1	-0.4	-4.5	-2.3
Moderate	-3.6	+0.3	-1.4	+0.1
Low	-0.8	+0.8	-0.4	+0.6

Program Impact on School Improvement Efforts & Changes in School-wide State Assessment Results				
	ELA Assessment		Math Assessment	
	Change from 2011 to 2013	Change from 2011 to 2012	Change from 2011 to 2013	Change from 2011 to 2012
High	-1.4	-0.5	-1.4	-2.0
Moderate	-5.3	-0.3	-3.0	-0.4
Low	-1.7	+0.8	-1.7	+0.3