Analysis of DIBELS Survey Beta Usability Questionnaire
Technical Report No. 9

Kelly A. Powell-Smith

Ruth A. Kaminski

Roland H. Good

Dynamic Measurement Group

Suggested Citation

Powell-Smith, K. A., Kaminski, R. A., & Good, R. H. (2011). Analysis of *DIBELS Survey Beta Usability Questionnaire* (Technical Report No. 9). Eugene, OR: Dynamic Measurement Group.

Author Note

The authors thank the faculty, staff, students, and parents of participating schools for their effort and support during the course of this study. Correspondence regarding this manuscript should be addressed to Kelly A. Powell-Smith, Dynamic Measurement Group, 132 E. Broadway, Suite 636 Eugene, OR 97401; Email: kpowellsmith@dibels.org.

Introduction

DIBELS data are collected routinely for many schools as part of ongoing, school-improvement efforts in reading. DIBELS are meant to be used in a preventative model focused on student outcomes (i.e., the Outcomes-Driven Model). The measures are indices of critical early literacy skills, specifically, Phonemic Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, Reading Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. Student scores on the DIBELS measures are compared to benchmarks that are predictive of healthy reading development. When the scores suggest that reading development is not on track (i.e., falling short of the benchmark goals), additional support can be provided to maximize the likelihood that the student will be successful, and thus preventing later reading difficulties or failure.

Sometimes, however, students may not be successful at reaching early literacy benchmarks and continue to struggle in developing reading skills. Some of these students may be identified as needing specialized instruction (e.g., special education or Title 1 services) or other additional instructional support beyond what is typically provided in the core curriculum (i.e., supplemental intervention). Using DIBELS to make instructional decisions for these students may be more challenging because the students are in remedial status, and DIBELS is organized primarily for prevention. While the measures can be used to identify instructional needs of these students, using the system in this way requires advanced knowledge, skills, and guidance.

The purpose of DIBELS Survey is to provide educators with guidelines and decision

rules for using the DIBELS measures to identify a student's instructional level and appropriate level for progress monitoring, to set goals, and make instructional decisions. DIBELS Survey is used to determine how a student performs on reading tasks compared to the expectations at different grade levels. Thus, DIBELS Survey involves “testing back” in the DIBELS materials. For example, if Suzie is in fourth grade and performs below expectations for her grade level, DIBELS Survey can be used to determine how she performs relative to expectations at lower grade levels. This information is useful for setting appropriate goals for Suzie, identifying appropriate progress monitoring material for Suzie, and determining primary skills of instructional opportunity for increasing Suzie’s overall reading skills. This information also may help to pinpoint areas for further assessment to determine specific instructional needs.

Typically, DIBELS Survey would be used with students who have not reached the prior benchmark goals and continue to struggle in acquiring basic early literacy skills. DIBELS Survey also may be used with students who score in the at-risk range during benchmark assessment as a way to obtain additional information useful for instructional planning and goal setting. Thus, DIBELS Survey fits within the *Plan Support* step of the Outcomes-Driven Model.

The practice of a Survey-Level Assessment (SLA) is not new in education and has been described relative to Curriculum-based Evaluation (see Howell & Nolet, 2000) and Curriculum-based Measurement (see Shinn, 1998). The SLA process typically involves testing in successively lower-level materials until a point is found at which the student performs successfully, or until the lowest-level materials have

been administered. DIBELS Survey facilitates this process for educators by providing testing materials, describing procedures for where to begin and end testing in the sequence of measures, and providing guidelines for setting goals and monitoring student progress.

DIBELS Survey is intended to be used as a guideline for making decisions about progress monitoring, instruction, and goal setting. DIBELS Survey is not intended to be used as an exhaustive diagnostic assessment tool. As with all DIBELS measures, professional judgment is required. In addition, users of DIBELS Survey must be trained in the administration and scoring of DIBELS measures in addition to obtaining specific training in the use of DIBELS Survey.

Purpose of the Study

The DIBELS Survey Beta study was designed to address the following research questions:

1. What is the feasibility, ease of use, and user satisfaction with DIBELS Survey?

2. What are user's opinions regarding the utility of the DIBELS Survey to inform instruction?

3. What is the reliability of decision-making based on the DIBELS Survey (e.g., instructional-level determinations)?

This technical report addresses research questions 1 and 2. The methods described in this report pertain to this portion of the study only. Please see *DIBELS Survey Beta* (Technical Report No. 8) for information relative to research question 3.

Method

Participants

Sixty-one teachers and examiners of participating children completed questionnaires to examine usability of DIBELS Survey. These teachers and examiners were from 28 schools across 10 districts in 8 states. These 8 states represented 3 of the 4 Census Bureau Regions (Midwest, South, and West). Demographic data for each school is displayed in Table 1. These demographic data indicate that schools were located in areas including remote and fringe rural, distant towns to mid- and large-size suburban locations, as well as both small and large cities. School size ranged from 202 to 951 students. Student-to-teacher ratio ranged from 12:1 to 24:1. A majority (78%) of the schools were eligible for Title 1, with free and reduced lunch rates ranging from 2% to 94%. A wide range of ethnicity was represented by the schools as well. One rural remote school had an almost entirely Native American student population (98%), while another remote town school had a 61% Native American student population. Two participating schools, one in a large city and one in a small city, had primarily Hispanic students (87% and 94%, respectively). Six of the mid-size city schools and two of the schools located in large suburban areas had a majority of Black students with percents ranging from 70% to 99%. The remaining 14 schools had a majority of white students with percents ranging from 61% to 97%. These 14 schools cut across a wide range of locales including rural, suburban and city areas (see Table 1 for detail).

To preserve anonymity, limited demographic data were collected on the personnel (e.g., teachers and examiners) who completed the DIBELS Survey

Usability Questionnaire. Respondents were asked to indicate their school district and their role in the school district. No further demographic data were collected. Of the 61 personnel who completed the usability questionnaire, 36% (n = 22) identified themselves as teachers, including special education, Title 1, and literacy lead teacher. Another 27% (n = 18) were related services personnel, such as school psychologists, school psychologist interns, psychologist assistants, speech pathologists, and intervention specialists. Twenty percent (n = 12) were reading support personnel such as DIBELS co-coordinator, literacy leader, literacy specialist, reading coach, or reading specialist. Other support staff comprised 11% (n = 7) of this sample, including assessment specialist, early childhood support staff, program consultant, and intervention aide. Finally, 5% (n = 3) of the sample were administrators.

Measures

DIBELS Survey Usability Questionnaire. This 12-item questionnaire was developed in-house and is similar to other questionnaires used to evaluate new DIBELS-related measures and products. The questionnaire includes statements like, “The DIBELS Survey assessment guidelines were easy to follow,” “DIBELS Survey is helpful in planning reading instruction,” and “I would recommend DIBELS Survey to others.” For 11 of the items, respondents were asked to rate items on a six point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). The questionnaire also included an open-ended response item.

Procedures

Data collection for this study occurred during winter and spring of the 2007-2008 school year. Prior to data collection, the district and the selected elementary schools approved the project. A project description was provided to all participating schools, teachers, other educational support personnel, and parents of student participants. Teachers and other educators who administered and scored DIBELS Survey were recruited with the assistance of an on-site coordinator (e.g., Title I Teacher, Principal). Examiner participants were all trained in the DIBELS Survey procedures via webcast. These trainings were approximately 75-90 minutes in length. Each training included an introduction to DIBELS Survey, a discussion of its purpose and where it fits in the Outcomes-Driven Model. Next, the measures included were described. The procedures for conducting DIBELS Survey were presented and discussed including where to begin testing and when to stop. In addition, setting goals and determining appropriate progress monitoring levels were discussed. Case examples were presented and participants were allowed to practice answering questions based upon the data presented. These questions included those about what should be the focus of instruction, whether additional diagnostic information should be collected, what material is most appropriate for progress monitoring, and how often monitoring should occur. Finally, the logistics of the study were presented and discussed, and time was allowed for questions and answers. A total of 7 trainings were conducted.

At the conclusion of the study, teachers and other educators at each school site who (a) administered and scored DIBELS Survey, and/or (b) had experience using

the Survey data collected completed the DIBELS Survey Usability Questionnaire. The 12-item questionnaires were completed via the Internet using a third-party web site designed to deliver online questionnaires and surveys." Participants were sent the link (URL) to the questionnaire and completed it at a time convenient to them during the spring of 2008.

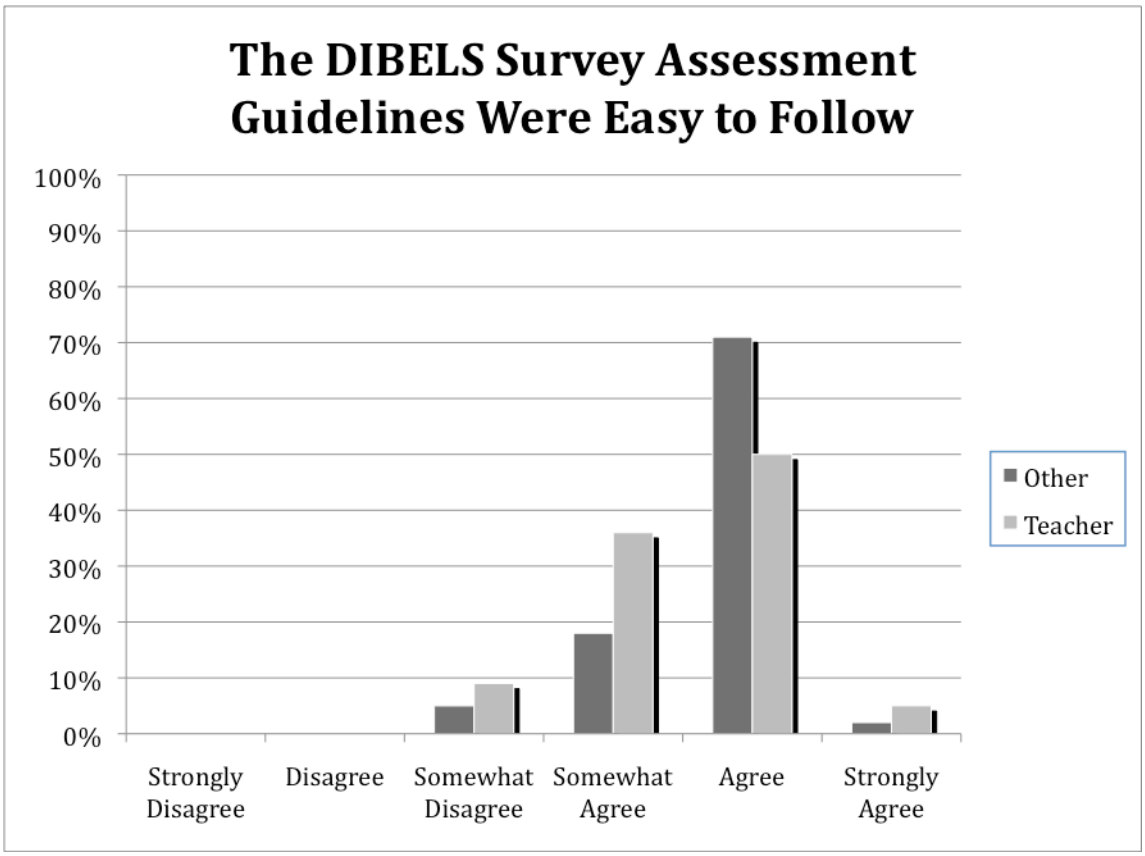
Results

Usability Questionnaire data were examined in three ways. First, descriptive statistics (e.g., means, standard deviations) were calculated for all respondents to each question. These data are displayed in Table 2 for the 61 participants who completed the questionnaire. Some participants did not respond to some items, resulting in a reduced sample size for some of the items as shown in Table 2. In addition, descriptive statistics are reported along with the results of the second analysis.

In the second analysis, the percent of participants responding to each rating on each item was examined. To conduct this analysis, respondents were split into two groups; one group was comprised of all those who identified themselves as teachers (n = 22) and the second group was made up of all other respondents (n = 39). Results of this analysis are reported by question.

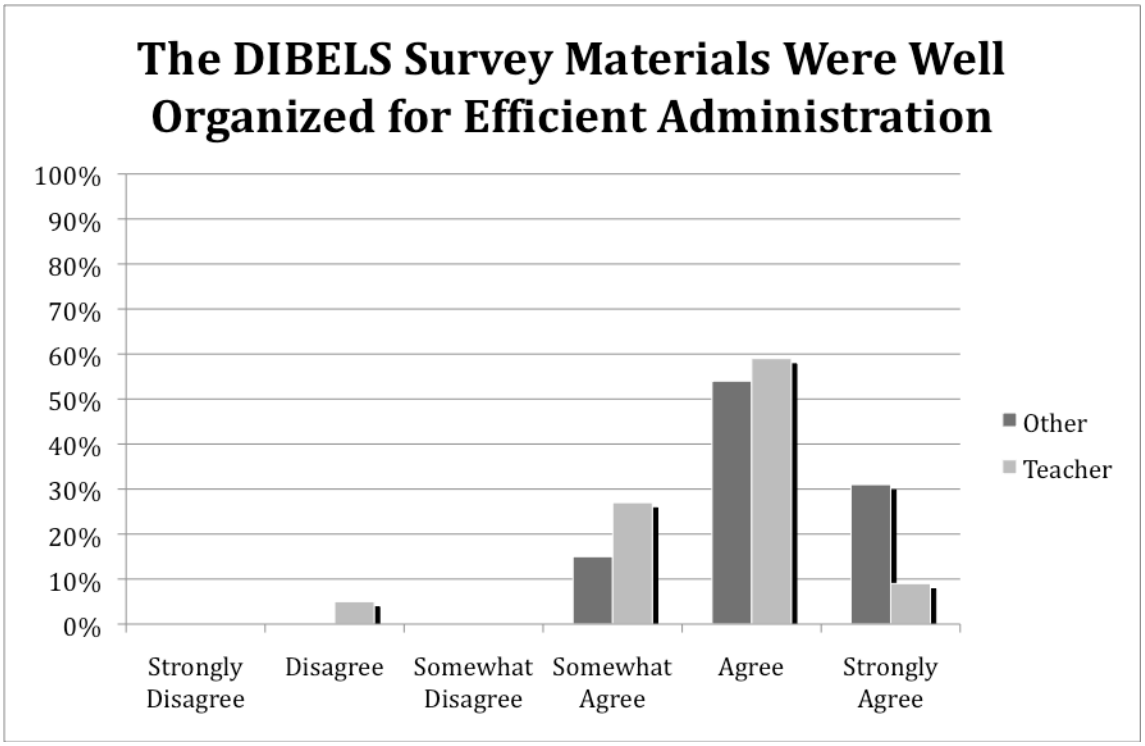
Item 1: *The DIBELS Survey assessment guidelines were easy to follow.*

Sixty participants responded to this question. The mean response was 4.7 indicating general agreement with this statement. Four respondents--two teachers and two others--indicated they disagreed somewhat with this statement. However, the largest percentage of responses for both groups agreed with this statement.



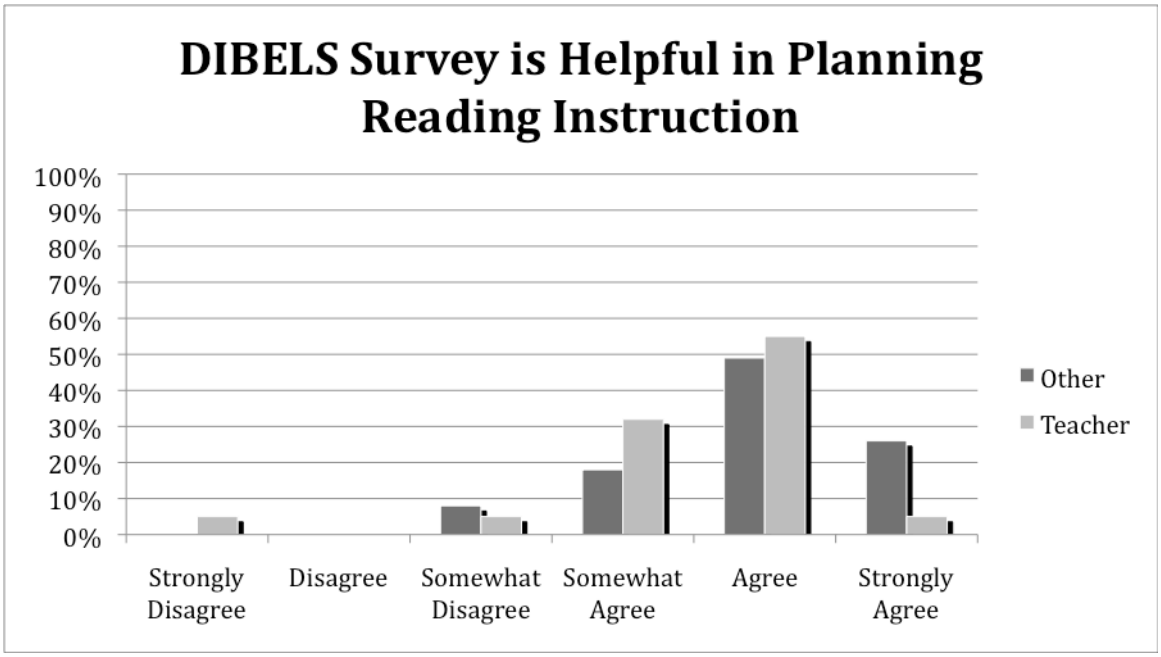
Item 2: *The DIBELS Survey materials were well organized for efficient administration of the measure(s).*

Sixty-one participants responded to this question. The mean response was 5.0 indicating agreement with this statement. The majority of respondents in both groups agreed with this statement. About 30% of those in the "Other" category strongly agreed with this statement. One teacher disagreed with this statement.



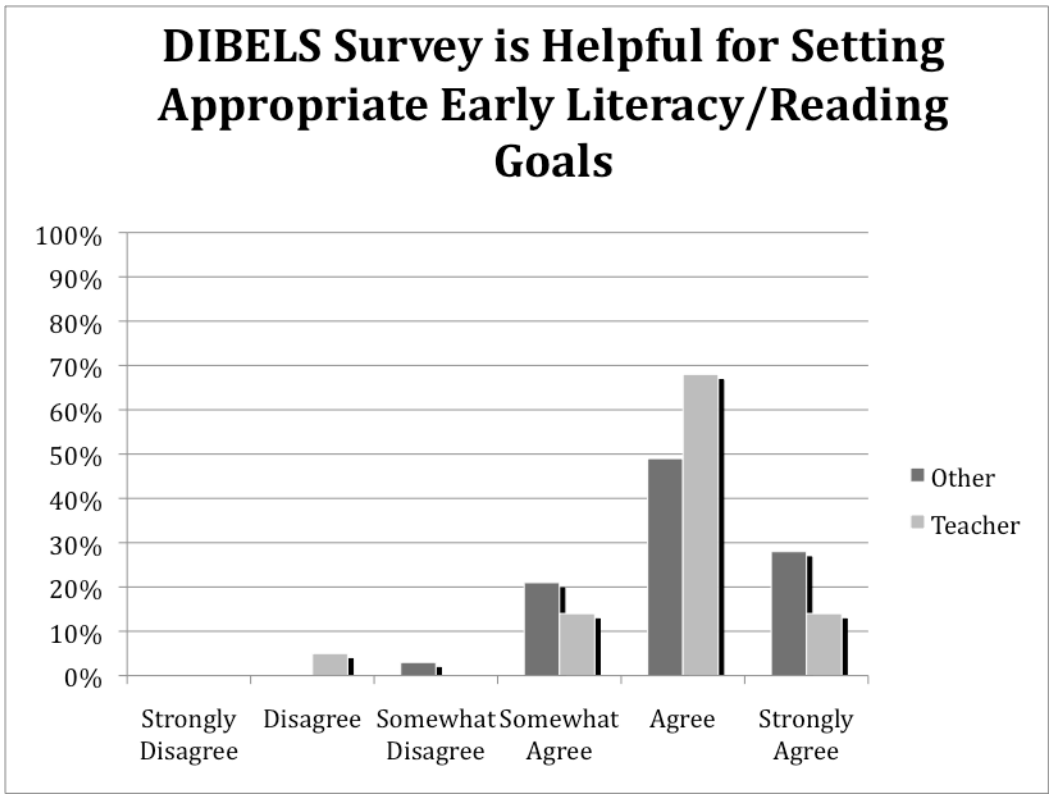
Item 3: *DIBELS Survey is helpful in planning reading instruction.*

Sixty-one participants responded to this question. The mean response was 4.8, indicating general agreement with this statement. While the largest percentage of responses for both groups agreed with this statement, greater variability in responses to this statement was found.



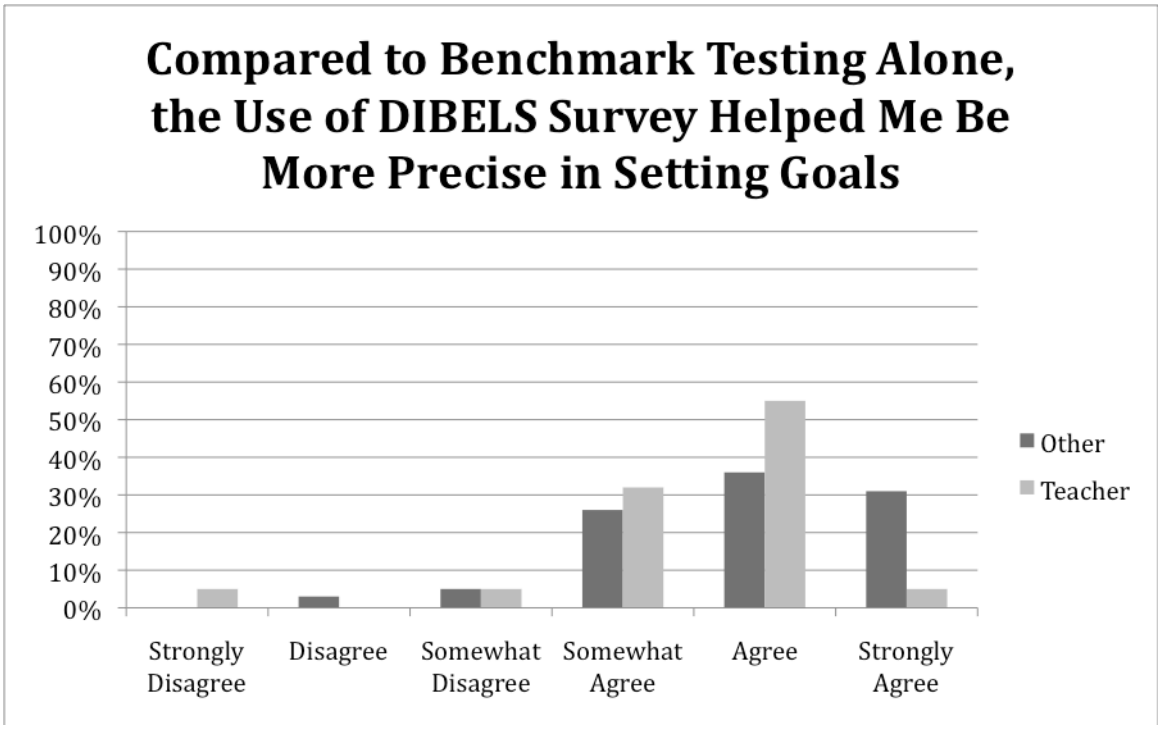
Item 4: *DIBELS Survey is helpful for setting appropriate early literacy/reading goals.*

Sixty-one participants responded to this question. The mean response was 5.0 indicating general agreement with this statement. In addition, the largest percentage of responses for both groups were in the "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" ratings.



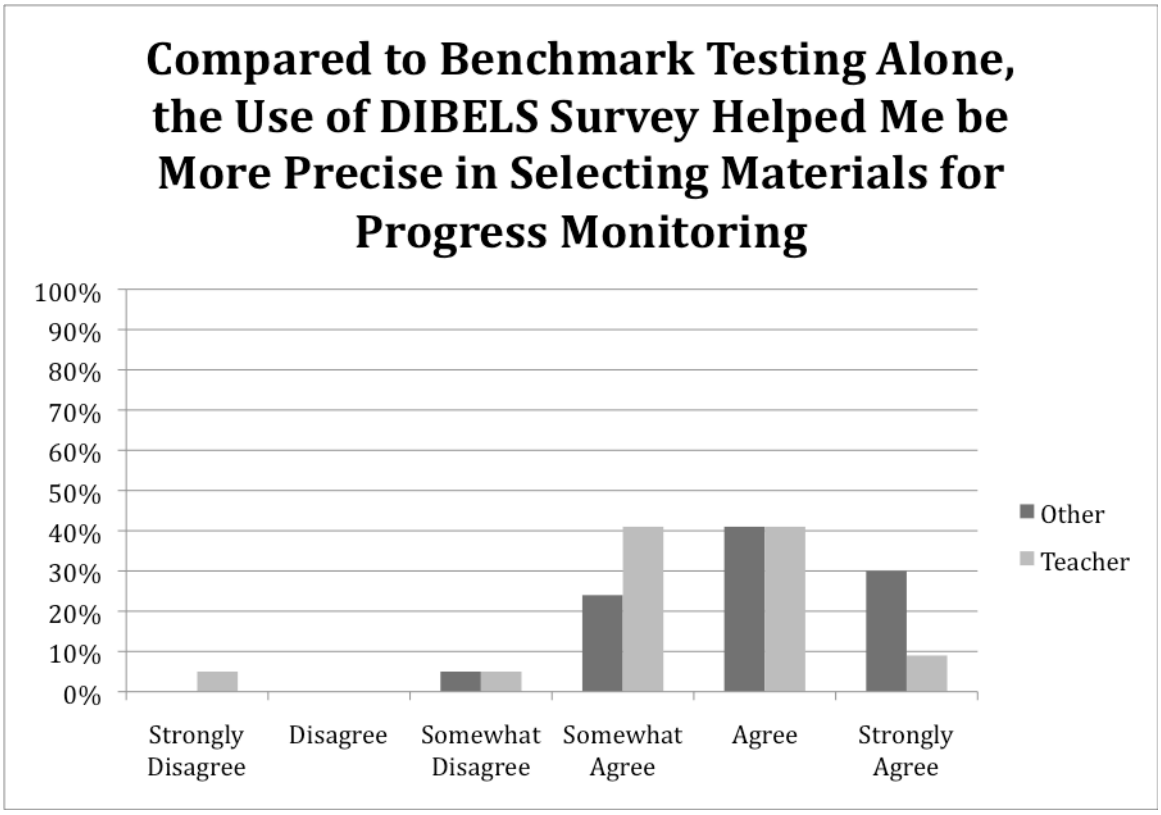
Item 5: *Compared to Benchmark testing alone, the use of DIBELS Survey helped me be more precise in setting goals.*

Sixty-one participants responded to this question. The mean response was 4.7 indicating general agreement with this statement. Again, while the largest percentages of responses for both groups were in the "Somewhat Agree" to "Strongly Agree" range, five respondents indicated some disagreement with this statement.



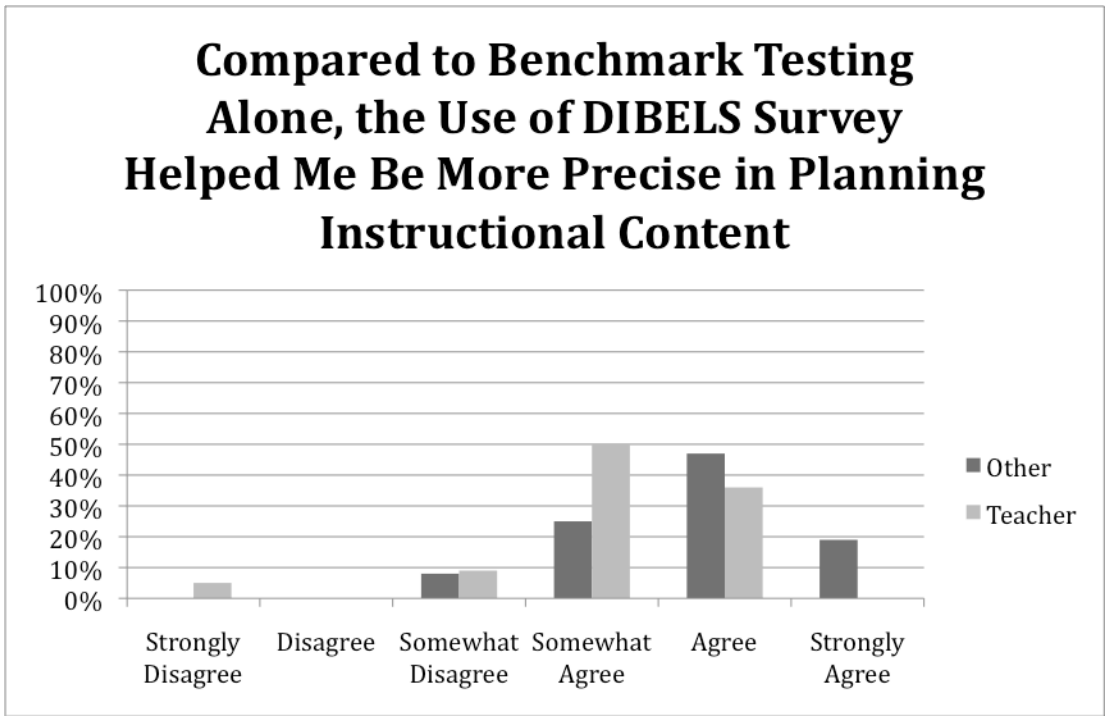
Item 6: *Compared to Benchmark testing alone, the use of DIBELS Survey helped me be more precise in selecting materials for progress monitoring.*

Fifty-nine participants responded to this question. The mean response was 4.7, indicating general agreement with this statement. The largest percentages of responses for both groups were in the "Somewhat Agree" to "Strongly Agree" range.



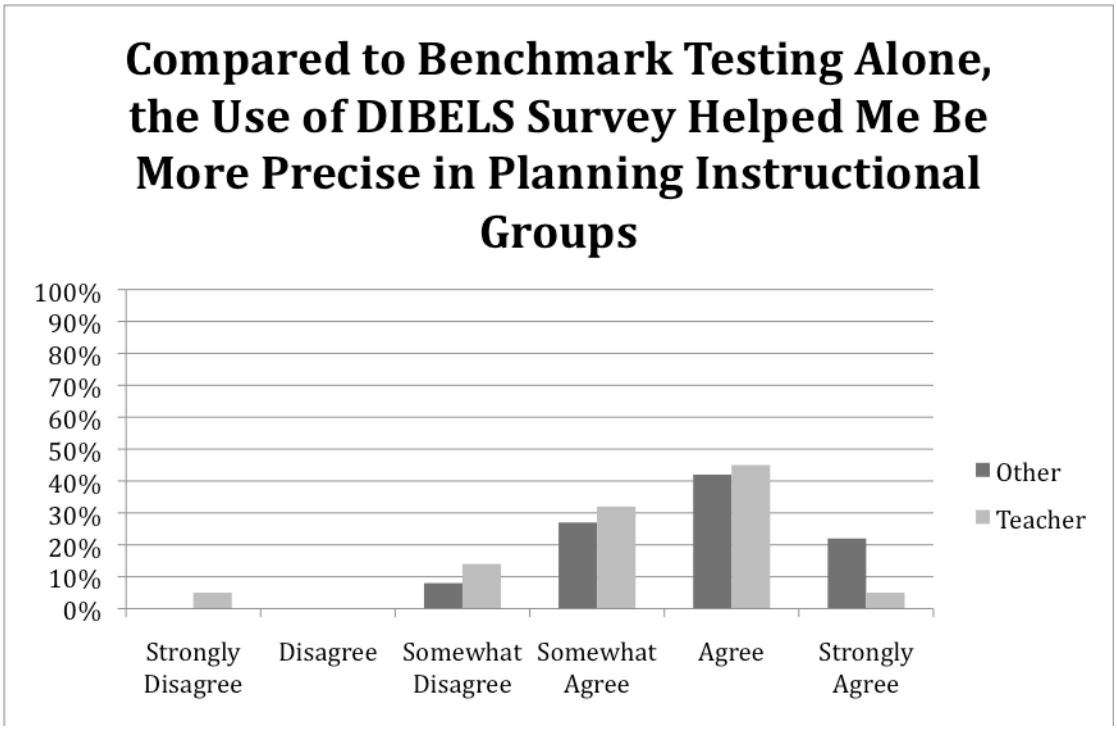
Item 7: *Compared to Benchmark testing alone, the use of DIBELS Survey helped me be more precise in planning instructional content.*

Fifty-eight participants responded to this question. The mean response was 4.5, indicating general agreement with this statement, but receiving a slightly lower rating than many of the other items. No teachers in the sample gave this statement a "Strongly Agree" rating and three teachers indicated disagreement with this statement. In contrast, six of those in the "Other" group strongly agreed with this statement.



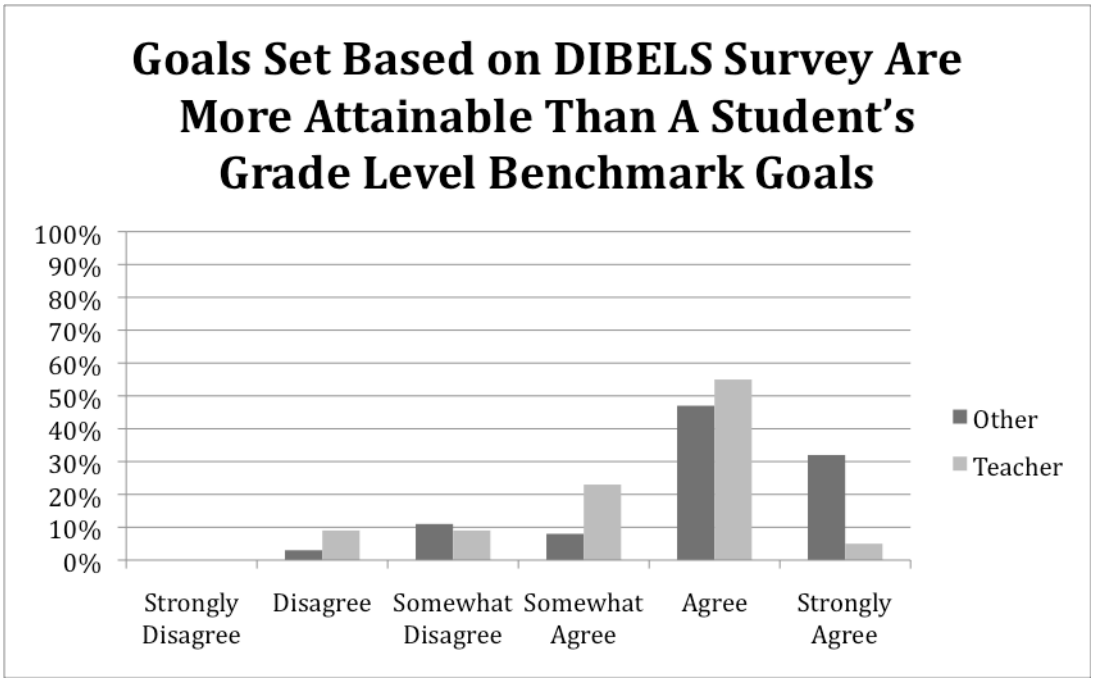
Item 8: *Compared to Benchmark testing alone, the use of DIBELS Survey helped me be more precise in planning instructional groups.*

Fifty-eight participants responded to this question. The mean response was 4.6, indicating general agreement with this statement. The highest percentage of respondents in both groups agreed with this statement.



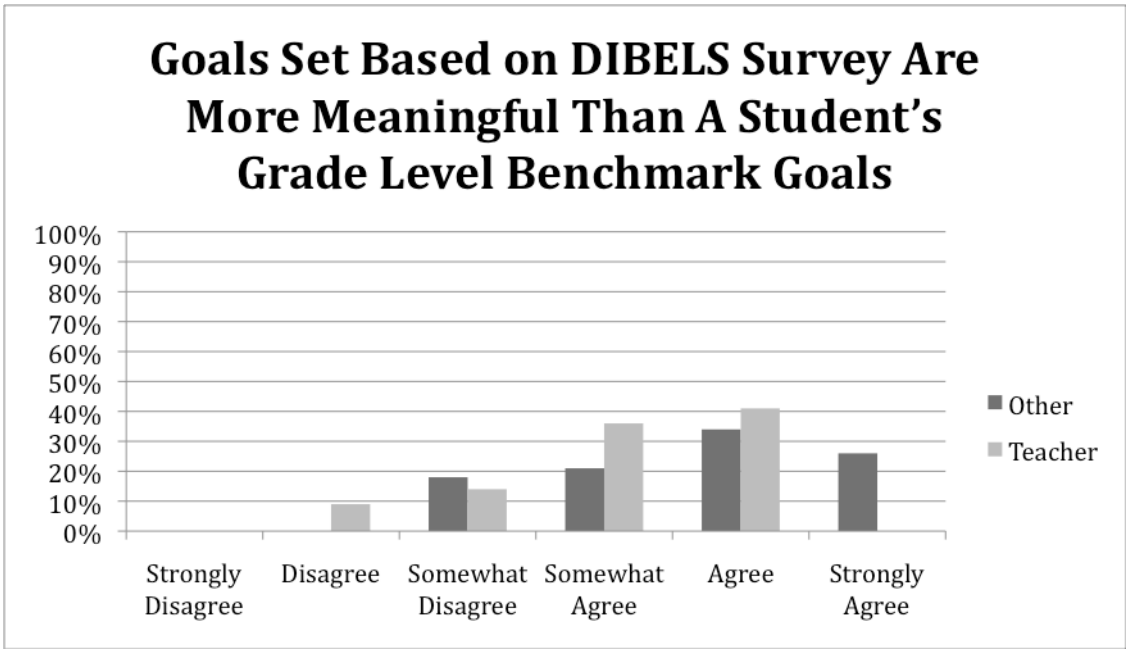
Item 9: *Goals set based on DIBELS Survey are more attainable than a student's grade-level Benchmark goals.*

Fifty-eight participants responded to this question. The mean response was 4.6 indicating general agreement with this statement. The highest percentage of respondents in both groups indicated some level of agreement with this statement. However, more (n = 5) of those in the "Other" group expressed some level of disagreement with this statement compared to items 1 through 8 on the questionnaire.



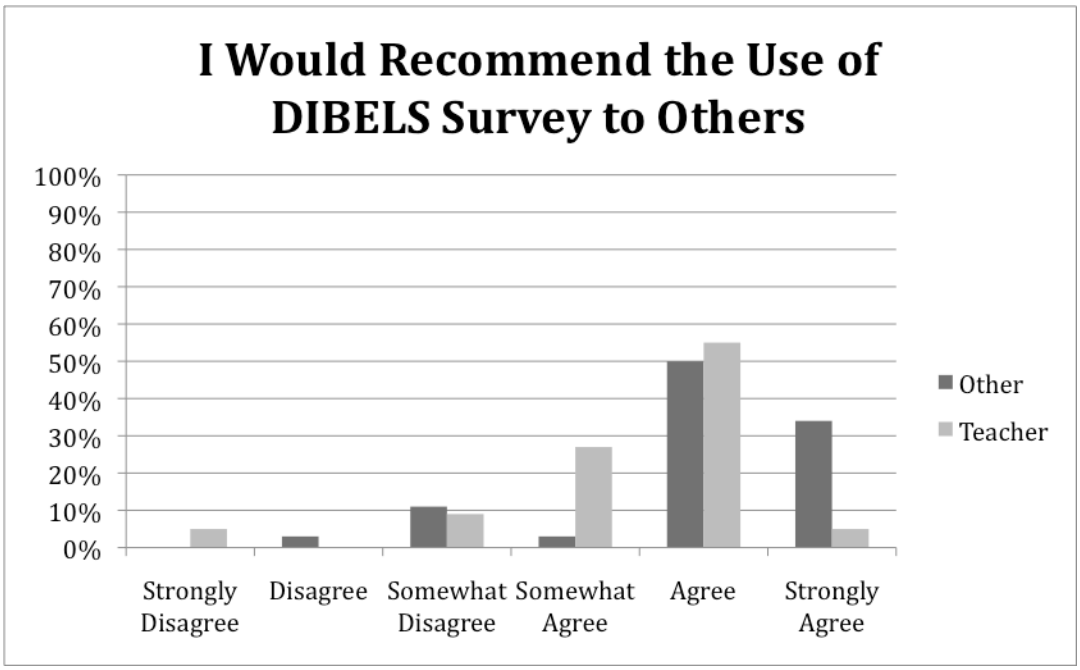
Item 10: *Goals set based on DIBELS Survey are more meaningful than a student's grade-level Benchmark goals.*

Sixty participants responded to this question. The mean response was 4.5 indicating general agreement with this statement. Consistent with this, finding, most respondents in both groups indicated some level of agreement with this statement. Two teachers disagreed, and three teachers indicated that they somewhat disagreed. Five respondents in the "Other" group indicated they somewhat disagreed. Two of these five from the "Other" group were administrators. Only three administrators were in the sample.



Item 11: *I would recommend the use of DIBELS Survey to others.*

Sixty participants responded to this question. The mean response was 4.8 indicating general agreement with this statement. The highest percentages of participants' responses are consistent with this conclusion. In particular, those in the "Other" group indicated they would recommend Survey to others. Three teachers and five of those in the "Other" group indicated some level of disagreement with this statement.



Third and finally, responses to the open-ended item on the survey, "*Please share with us any feedback you believe would make DIBELS Survey easier to administer, or that would make the information more meaningful for planning reading instruction and setting student goals,*" were examined and grouped into themes. Five themes were identified based upon the data obtained. These themes were: (1)

time, (2) structure, (3) implementation, (4) validity , and (5) general. These data are reported in Table 3. All anecdotal responses are reported verbatim.

Discussion

Summary of Findings

Across all items on the DIBELS Survey Usability Questionnaire high levels of agreement were found regardless of respondent group. For every survey item requiring a rating response, responses were clustered in the "Somewhat Agree," "Agree," and "Strongly Agree" ratings. However, items also were rated by some respondents with varying levels of disagreement ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Somewhat Disagree." A "Strongly Disagree" rating was given only on items 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11. Each of these "Strongly Disagree" ratings were given by a single respondent.

Some items on the DIBELS Survey Usability Questionnaire asked respondents to consider whether data from DIBELS Survey was useful for purposes beyond what might be considered typical usage by the respondents in this study. For example, items regarding instructional planning or instructional grouping might not have been considered as a primary use of Survey data. One of these, was item #7: *Compared to Benchmark testing alone, the use of DIBELS Survey helped me be more precise in planning instructional content.* For this item, stronger agreement with the usability of survey for this purpose was found among persons in the "Other" group. Personnel who noted strong agreement with this item included a school psychologist, a school psychologist intern, a literacy specialist, a reading coach, a program consultant, and a DIBELS co-coordinator. As consultants, these personnel work to develop

instructional plans for students in greatest need of support, and as such, may be in a position to acknowledge the potential of and benefit for using DIBELS Survey data for specific instructional purposes. They also may be more accustomed to mining DIBELS data for instructionally useful information.

Limitations

Like all studies, this study has limitations which affect the interpretation of the data. First, this study was designed to be descriptive and not experimental. The sample studied was comprised of teachers and other school personnel in schools that volunteered for this study. Thus, selection bias is a potential limitation. Given that schools volunteered their participation respondents might have been biased to respond positively. Alternatively, some respondents might have felt pressured to complete additional paperwork and responded more negatively as a result.

Another limitation is the relatively small size of the sample. The sample was drawn from a diverse set of schools across the country, which may have balanced this limitation somewhat. Also, we cannot separate trained examiner respondents from other respondents in the sample (e.g., those who didn't administer and score Survey, but used the information for decision-making). Knowing which respondents were examiners would allow us to determine if those who had the most experience with DIBELS Survey (i.e., those trained in it) provided different ratings (e.g., more positive or more negative) than those who did not administer and score Survey.

Finally, these questionnaire data are not a direct means of determining educator opinions about the usability of DIBELS Survey. Because the data were collected via an anonymous electronic questionnaire, there is no way to follow up with

respondents about why they responded in the manner in which they did. Focus group data could provide richer information such as why a particular response was given.

Implications

In this section, we describe the implications of this study. Primarily, we will focus on the use of the data to make changes to DIBELS Survey, resulting in a more efficient and user-friendly set of procedures. Each of the narrative remarks was carefully considered along with the data provided by the numeric ratings in making decisions regarding changes to DIBELS Survey.

In response to comments regarding the amount of time needed to complete the process, DIBELS Survey procedures have been streamlined. Streamlining the process involved reducing the amount of testing in successively lower-level materials to determine appropriate instructional and progress monitoring levels. Also, the criteria for skipping levels have been altered to reduce the likelihood of student frustration as well as the amount of testing needed.

In response to comments regarding the structure of DIBELS Survey, several changes have been made. Materials have been reorganized to improve the flow of testing. First Sound Fluency (FSF), the DIBELS Next measure replacing Initial Sounds Fluency (ISF), will be retained as part of DIBELS Survey. Additional examples of decision-making and goal-setting will be added to the DIBELS Survey Procedures Manual. In addition, procedures have been altered so that it is no longer necessary to calculate accuracy rates for Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) and Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF). This change should also save time. We

believe the procedural and structural changes noted here will result in a more simplified and straightforward process.

In response to comments regarding implementation, more information on how DIBELS Survey contributes to Response to Intervention (RtI) decision-making will be included in the DIBELS Survey Procedures Manual. In particular, the need to determine when out-of-grade level progress monitoring is appropriate will be discussed in the context of RtI.

In response to comments regarding the validity of DIBELS Survey, revised DIBELS Survey includes all newly developed reading passages. These passages meet the same passage specifications and have undergone the same validation process as the passages used in DIBELS Next. Passages used for DIBELS Survey will be unique to Survey. None of the passages used for DIBELS Survey will be the same as either the DIBELS Next Benchmark or progress monitoring passages. Finally, when discussing decision-making and goal-setting with DIBELS Survey, we will focus attention on the need to set ambitious goals using the highest level of material appropriate for progress monitoring.

References

Hintze, J. M., Christ, T. J., & Keller, L. A. (2002). The generalizability of CBM survey-level mathematics assessments: Just how many samples do we need? *School Psychology Review, 31*(4), 514-528.

Hintze, J. M., Shapiro, E. S., Conte, K. L., & Basile, I. M. (1997). Oral reading fluency and authentic reading material: Criterion validity of the technical features of CBM survey-level assessment. *School Psychology Review, 26*(4), 535-553.

Howell, K. W., & Nolet, V. (2000). *Curriculum-based evaluation: Teaching and decision making*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Shinn, M. R. (1989). *Curriculum-based measurement: Assessing special children*. New York: Guilford.

Shinn, M. R. (1989). Identifying and defining academic problems: CBM screening and eligibility procedures. In M. R. Shinn (ed.), *Curriculum-based measurement: Assessing special children, (pp. 90-129)*. New York: Guilford.

Shinn, M. R. (1998). *Advanced applications of curriculum-based measurement*. New York: Guilford.

Table 1. *School Demographic Characteristics*

	School Number									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Locale	City Large	Suburb Large	City Small	Suburb Large	-	Town Remote	Rural Remote	Town Distant	Town Distant	Town Distant
Grades Taught	PK - 4	KG - 5	KG - 5	KG - 5	-	PK - 5	PK - 5	PK - 4	PK - 4	KG - 7
Total Students	951	451	481	579	-	274	202	219	237	389
Student/Teacher Ratio	20.2	21.5	21.9	22.3	-	12.7	11.5	17.2	20.4	21.6
Title 1 Eligible	Yes	No	Yes	No	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free/Reduced Lunch	72%	24%	94%	2%	-	81%	77%	36%	67%	60%
Percent Female	50%	50%	45%	44%	-	51%	47%	41%	41%	52%
Student Ethnicity										
Am. Indian	1%	<1%	<1%	0	-	61%	98%	<1%	0	3%
Asian	1%	7%	1%	19%	-	<1%	0	0	0	2%
Black	5%	2%	2%	1%	-	0	0	4%	3%	<1%
Hispanic	84%	45%	94%	11%	-	34%	<1%	18%	26%	5%
White	9%	43%	2%	61%	-	5%	2%	65%	62%	89%

Table 1. *School Demographic Characteristics (continued)*

	School Number								
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Locale	Town Distant	Rural Distant	Town Distant	Town Distant	Suburb Large	Suburb Large	Suburb Large	Suburb Large	City Midsize
Grades Taught	KG - 7	KG - 8	KG - 8	6 - 9	KG - 6	7 - 8	KG - 5	KG - 5	PK - 5
Total Students	405	246	466	546	368	718	628	516	448
Student/Teacher Ratio	23.8	22.4	22.2	22.8	13.4	13.2	18.7	18.4	14.1
Title 1 Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Free/Reduced Lunch	71%	52%	73%	64%	44%	37%	22%	14%	N/A
Percent Female	46%	51%	53%	51%	43%	43%	48%	50%	48%
Student Ethnicity									
Am. Indian	2%	3%	3%	<1%	0	0	<1%	0	0
Asian	2%	2%	2%	<1%	1%	1%	<1%	2%	1%
Black	<1%	<1%	2%	1%	79%	70%	2%	<1%	77%
Hispanic	10%	4%	7%	7%	4%	4%	<1%	<1%	<1%
White	85%	91%	87%	90%	6%	18%	94%	97%	21%

Table 1. *School Demographic Characteristics (continued)*

	School Number								
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Locale	City Midsize	City Midsize	City Midsize	City Midsize	City Midsize	Rural Fringe	City Midsize	City Small	City Small
Grades Taught	PK - 5	PK - 5	KG - 5	PK - 5	PK - 5	KG - 5	PK - 5	KG - 5	KG - 5
Total Students	416	263	500	346	371	535	416	361	458
Student/Teacher Ratio	15.5	13.2	17.4	18.5	13.8	16.7	16.6	18.7	17.0
Title 1 Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Free/Reduced Lunch	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	36%	60%
Percent Female	48%	48%	46%	52%	46%	45%	47%	47%	47%
Student Ethnicity									
Am. Indian	0	0	<1%	<1%	0	<1%	<1%	1%	5%
Asian	0	0	6%	0	0	<1%	0	2%	1%
Black	73%	96%	26%	85%	99%	2%	96%	1%	2%
Hispanic	1%	0	5%	2%	<1%	<1%	<1%	6%	9%
White	25%	4%	63%	13%	1%	97%	4%	84%	78%

Note. Demographic data unavailable for school #5.

Table 2. *Survey User Satisfaction Ratings*

Item	N	Mean Rating (SD)
1. The DIBELS Survey assessment guidelines were easy to follow.	60	4.7(.68)
2. The DIBELS Survey materials were well organized for efficient administration of the measure(s).	61	5.0(.76)
3. DIBELS Survey is helpful in planning reading instruction.	61	4.8(.94)
4. DIBELS Survey is helpful for setting appropriate early literacy/reading goals.	61	5.0(.80)
5. Compared to Benchmark testing alone, the use of DIBELS Survey helped me be more precise in setting goals.	61	4.7(1.02)
6. Compared to Benchmark testing alone, the use of DIBELS Survey helped me be more precise in selecting materials for progress monitoring.	59	4.7(.98)
7. Compared to Benchmark testing alone, the use of DIBELS Survey helped me be more precise in planning instructional content.	58	4.5(.94)
8. Compared to Benchmark testing alone, the use of DIBELS Survey helped me be more precise in planning instructional groups.	58	4.6(.99)
9. Goals set based on DIBELS Survey are more attainable than a student's grade level Benchmark goals.	58	4.6(.99)
10. Goals set based on DIBELS Survey are more meaningful than a student's grade level Benchmark goals.	60	4.5(1.07)
11. I would recommend the use of DIBELS Survey to others.	60	4.8(1.07)

Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly Agree

Table 3. Narrative Responses by Theme and Respondent Type

	Respondent Type	
Theme	Teacher	Other
Time	• "I thought that it was a good tool to help guide reading instruction. My only problem always seemed to be TIME. It really doesn't take that long but when you start adding all of those things that only take a few minutes pretty soon you have hours of extra work when we are pressed for time already." • "It was very time consuming." • "The DIBELS Survey is a good tool for classroom goal instruction. My biggest problem was the "time" factor. "	• "I wish I had some ideas on how to streamline it because it is a labor intensive process." • "The Dibels survey assessment was helpful in grouping, planning instruction and goal setting, but I found the assessments labor intensive. I can make accurate estimates of which levels to test students without going through all the levels required by the survey. It is too much to ask to have classroom teachers do this for all students not scoring at benchmark. There comes a point where we replace teaching with assessing."
Structure	•	• "I would recommend reversing the order of the booklet so as you survey down, you are moving from left to right through the booklet as you would if you were reading a book." • "I believe more examples need to be given for decision-making and goal setting." • "If there was a way to give suggestions for instructional recommendations it would be very helpful. Even if they were very general ideas." • "I think that the use of DIBELS Survey should be combined with that of DIBELS Deep in order to know where to monitor progress and what skills need to be taught." • "The administration of First Sound Fluency is more user friendly to the staff and children than Initial Sound Fluency."

Table 3. Narrative Responses by Theme and Respondent Type (continued)

	Respondent Type	
Theme	Teacher	Other
Structure	•	• "It would be helpful to have a section and/or second page for pre/post assessments. We printed off a copy of the front page of the booklets and glued it on the back to use as a post-test. It would also be helpful to add a section for LNF. My group last year was 4th grade, but if I use with 2nd or 3rd grade, I may need to go back to LNF to establish a Mastery Level. We were able to find one SPED 4th grader whose Mastery Level was all the way back to PSF. This helped us design a program for her to work on NWF, and fill in those pre-reading gaps to allow her to build fluency. She was below grade level in reading, but was able to become more fluent at a 2.0 level." • "I had to read the instructions several times before I felt I had a fairly good understanding of the survey process. I think that anything that could be done to simplify the process would be helpful."
Implementation	• "I should have started the survey sooner in the school year. It did help me in planning my lessons more carefully and I liked seeing the progress my students made." • "Booklets should be purchased, not copied for the Survey."	• "It definitely helped to find an appropriate reading level for students. I think it would be beneficial if classroom teachers had an understanding of the process and how it can assist them in planning differentiated instruction." • "I do not feel that it is necessary to progress monitor weekly. I would rather spend more time on intervention and spread the progress monitoring out to 2-3 weeks so we could see more growth. The children get discouraged when it is done weekly and they don't make much progress." • "At this point of RTI coming to be, I have reservations of implementing or adding anything else to our teacher platter. The basics of RTI require a universal assessment and frequent progress monitoring and we have both of those in place already."

Table 3. Narrative Responses by Theme and Respondent Type (continued)

	Respondent Type	
Theme	Teacher	Other
Validity	• "Some of the passages are the same as in progress monitoring. The passages are irregular in their level of vocabulary and difficulty in reading for the same group of 3 readings. The results are too irregular to be reliable to determine groupings. Other assessments are being used that are more accurate, i.e., John's assessment is one that we like to use. DIBELS is very difficult to give one on one with a class of 35 or more. Too much time to give and progress monitor all the students that need it. Other assessments give us more information of what exactly the students need."	• "Goals determined by Dibels survey are sometimes too easy to attain when compared to benchmark goals. Can the criteria also take into consideration a student's individual reading style?" • "The FSF is a much stronger measure since on ISF guessing is easy and students at the beginning of the year are identified as benchmark and are not benchmark."
General	• I hope that we continue using the DIBELS Survey in the future and I have set a personal goal to make the time that is needed to make it a valuable tool in my classroom. Thank you for your help and I hope to work with the program in the future." • "I enjoyed the progress monitoring. I did it right during my regular reading classes." • "Giving the Dibels Survey and then setting each students' aim line was easy to follow. A chart of small group interventions for each instructional category where that particular student is at a point in time."	• "I would say not to assume everyone [all staff] is at the same level especially in planning instruction and setting goals for students. Next time, I will make sure I support all the adults where they are--so that students receive all the support this great tool has to offer!!" • "We had some questions since it was our first time, but I think that once we are proficient then it will be easier." • "I cannot wait for the survey to be available."

Note: Please see the Implications section of this report for actions taken to address the concerns listed in this table.