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An Analysis of Third Through Fifth Grade Teachers' Research-Based Instruction and Assessment Practices Implemented in Rural School Settings in Western Pennsylvania

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ONLY COVER PAGES AND ABSTRACT ARE AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME

AN ANALYSIS OF THIRD THROUGH FIFTH GRADE TEACHERS'
RESEARCH-BASED INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES
IMPLEMENTED IN RURAL SCHOOL SETTINGS IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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The purpose of this study is to identify the self-reported research-based instructional and assessment practices used by third through fifth grade teachers among rural school environments in Western Pennsylvania which have attained Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) pursuant to statewide assessments. Specifically, this study examines the research-based instructional and assessment practices teachers reported using to improve students' reading and mathematics achievement and the frequency in which these practices are purportedly used in rural school settings. In addition, this study investigates the challenges these teachers reported encountering when implementing research-based instructional and assessment practices.

A total of 38 schools participated in the study. The school districts that were selected met two criteria: identified as a rural school district in Western Pennsylvania by the National Center for Education Statistics (2007) and obtained AYP status pursuant to the PSSA scores in the 2010 – 2011 school year. Data collected for this study included the teachers' responses to the *Research-Based Practices: Instruction and Assessment Survey*. Results of the data analysis show that research-based practices are being implemented in rural classrooms to improve achievement in reading and mathematics. The challenges that were revealed for rural teachers when implementing research-based instructional and assessment practices included: time, limited resources, differentiated instruction, student-to-teacher ratio, and assessment tools.