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By

Efraín Olivo, Jr.

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THE TURNAROUND CHALLENGE: THE ROLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY ON
SCHOOL TURNAROUNDS: THE CASE OF TWO MAJOR SUBURBAN TEXAS
PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

A Dissertation Proposal Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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A Doctoral Thesis for the Degree
Doctorate of Education
Professional Leadership

By

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Olivo, Jr. Efrain. "The Turnaround Challenge: The Role of Accountability on School Turnarounds: The Case of Two Major Suburban Texas School Districts"

ABSTRACT

On January 8, 2002, the U.S. Congress passed Public Law 107-110, No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001: Improving the Academic Achievement Of the Disadvantaged. The purpose of NCLB is "to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind" (P.L. 107-110, 20 USC 6301, p. 1, Jan. 8, 2002). Over the next 10 years, schools nationwide faced daily challenges of educating children to meet the rigorous standards of NCLB (Le Floch, Martinez, O'Day, Stecher, Taylor & Cook, 2007; Thim, Hassel, & Redding, 2008). Unfortunately, many states had many schools labeled as low-performing and mired in chronic failure as identified in 5000 United States failing schools (National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2011). In an effort to address this achievement shortfall, the Obama Administration made "turnaround" a major priority by issuing the School Turnaround Learning Community (STLC) program in July 2011, including school improvement grants, alignment of existing federal resources, and ESEA flexibility (Manwaring, 2010; STLC, 2012).

There are many studies on school improvement and the effectiveness of school reform (Dana Center, 2002; Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2012; Morrison Institute for Public Policy, 2006; Taylor, 2002); however, there are few studies that have examined the long-term successful turnaround scale up efforts of struggling schools in high poverty, high-minority communities (Calkins, A., Guenther, W.H., Hess, F.M., Kendrick, R. H., 2008). There are some case studies on the turnaround successes of

elementary schools, but no major studies on turnaround successes in the secondary schools focusing on the role of the principal as a school turnaround leader. While education has created some academic progress for the low-income, the greatest challenge to literacy in the U.S. is how to educate poor and minority children while closing the achievement gap between high-poverty, high-minority students and majority students (Calkins, A., Guenther, W., Belfiore, G., & Lash, D., 2010; Elmore, 2004; Hill, 2006; Reyes & Rodriguez, 2009). A recent study (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2012) on the outcome-based estimates of principal value-added to student achievement revealed a significant variation in principal qualities that appear to be larger for high-poverty schools.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore the role of accountability on school turnarounds in two major suburban Texas public school districts. It explored the relations between Texas accountability status and race, and economic status for the sample schools using 2010-2011 Texas Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS). The relations were explored between state and federal (NCLB) accountability ratings, and economic status and race for the sample schools for 2010-2011. Finally, the study explored relations between principal characteristics and student achievement in two major suburban Texas public school districts. This study addressed correlational research between: 1. Accountability and student characteristics; 2. Accountability and school characteristics; and, 3. Accountability and student achievement.

This quantitative study used correlational research to determine the relation between school accountability, the independent variable, and dependent variables of race, and economic status, and student achievement. This study sought to understand which

variables relate to turnaround accountability status using Texas Education Agency (TEA) accountability data and the state NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) data (TEA, 2011).

A survey method was used to gather school and principal data which were analyzed using simple statistics and frequencies (Babbie, 1990; Fink & Koseoff, 1998; Mellenbergh, 2008; Scheaffer, Mendenhall, & Ott, 1990). The survey was used to collect information on principal and school background characteristics. Archival data for Texas accountability and federal accountability were retrieved from the TEA Accountability Rating System (AEIS). Correlational analyses were conducted between two major suburban Texas public school districts. Correlational relations were analyzed for state and federal accountability ratings, and economic status and race for the sample schools for 2010-2011.

For this study, the three most significant relations found to the $p < .01$ level were: 1. Enrollment percentages of certain student groups related to lower or higher Texas and federal school accountability; 2. Student achievement in math and reading by certain student groups related to lower or higher federal accountability; and, 3. The more economically disadvantaged students enrolled in a school, the lower the Texas accountability. The last finding in this study was the most significant. While NCLB was created to close the achievement gap, these data show that economic status relates to lower student achievement as measured by state and federal accountability.

Findings from this study cannot be generalized to draw conclusions about the role of state or federal accountability in school turnarounds or identification for improvement on subsequent student achievement.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“If we are to put an end to stubborn cycles of poverty and social failure, and put our country on track for long-term economic prosperity, we must address the needs of children who have long been ignored and marginalized in chronically low-achieving schools, ...States and school districts have an opportunity to put unprecedented resources toward reforms that would increase graduation rates, reduce dropout rates and improve teacher quality for all students, and particularly for children who most need good teaching in order to catch up.” (Duncan, E., 2009).

The Law and The Policy

On January 8, 2002, the U.S. Congress passed Public Law 107-110, No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (No Child Left Behind Act, [NCLB], 2002). The purpose of NCLB is “to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind” (NCLB, 2002, p. 1). Title VI of NCLB, Flexibility and Accountability provided flexible funding for states to develop additional state assessments and standards. Title I, Part A of NCLB, mandated provisions for improving basic programs operated by local education agencies. Title I requires state plans and accountability ratings, including challenging academic content standards, academic subjects at least of mathematics, reading or language arts, and science, adequate yearly progress (AYP), and sanctions and rewards for improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged. According to the policy in Section 1111, AYP includes annual objectives for continuous and substantial improvement for the achievement of the following subgroups: economically disadvantaged students; students from major racial and ethnic groups; students with

disabilities; and students with limited English proficiency. Additional AYP indicators include graduate rates for students who graduate with a regular diploma in the standard number of years. The state may use the indicator data for corrective action or restructuring. NCLB provides states with the flexibility to develop a timeline for AYP, including that all students will meet or exceed the State's proficient level by 2014 (No Child Left Behind Act, [NCLB], 2002). The NCLB policy concludes that all students in every state will be proficient by 2014.

Background

The history of school accountability may be identified with the National Commission on Excellence In Education (1983), *A Nation At Risk*, declaring that our future was jeopardized by a rising tide of mediocrity. According to Elmore (2008), the condition paved the path for a period of school reform evident from 1980 to 2008. States sustained a high level of involvement to develop policy reaching into the schools and classrooms and to adjust state accountability systems (Elmore, 2004). Performance-based accountability using test scores became a central reform theme that is robust over time (Elmore, 2004). During the period of the 1990s, many states developed test-based accountability that provided the models of accountability reform that defined the characteristics of NCLB in 2002 (Dee & Jacob, 2010). NCLB forced every state in the country with a test-based accountability system to enact accountability systems (Dee & Jacob, 2010).

NCLB accountability has some roots in Clinton administration's 1994 Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) (Sunderman & Kim, 2007). The IASA and NCLB are reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. IASA

mandated that challenging standards apply to all students, including those receiving Title I. The federal plan required that states develop content and performance standards, adopt annual assessments to measure student progress against those standards, and hold schools accountable for the achievement of all students. IASA introduced adequate yearly progress linked to student performance on assessments (Sunderman & Kim, 2007). The Clinton accountability plan did not have the enforcement of the NCLB. States were allowed to define adequate yearly progress goals and local districts to use their own authority to take corrective actions against schools (Sunderman & Kim, 2007).

In 2001, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was reauthorized as Public Law 107-110, No Child Left Behind. NCLB accountability mandates that states:

- Emphasize equal educational outcomes
- Impose timelines for improving student achievement
- Add subgroup accountability
- Mandate specific sanctions for schools not performing well that relies on exit strategies or the transfer of money away from public schools
- Expand the testing requirements to all students in public schools and establish a timeline for implementing the new tests
- Define proficiency as test scores in reading and mathematics (Sunderman & Kim, 2007, p. 1062).

National Context

Public school systems across the nation are under increasing public scrutiny from all stakeholders. Politicians are dictating to public schools what will be taught and how it

will be assessed. According to LeFloch, Boyle, & Therriault (2008), the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) took aim at the nation's persistent achievement gap by asserting that all students must demonstrate grade-level proficiency-as defined by states-in math and reading by the year 2014. The mandated proficiency standards have created a sense of urgency across America as states made public low performing schools a key priority, necessitating that failing schools be turned around. Since the inception of NCLB, states have developed new, more rigorous accountability policies. Arsen et al (2003) point to one key consequence of the new policies being the identification of schools where student performance fell below acceptable standards, in other words the identification of struggling schools. These stronger school accountability measures have led to the increasingly high identification of under-performing schools.

NCLB policy compels school districts to restructure schools deemed as chronic failures. The policy has initiated a reform movement to turn around schools from underperforming to high achieving environments (NCLB, 2001); however, "High-performing classrooms and schools, especially in communities with high proportions of low-income minority children, are still the rare exception rather than the rule" (Elmore, 2004, p. 3).

Title I, Part A of NCLB, mandated provisions for improving basic programs operated by local education agencies. It requires state plans (sec. 1111) and accountability ratings, including challenging academic content standards (sec. 1111[b][1][D]), academic subjects at least of mathematics, reading or language arts, and science (sec. 1111[b][1][C]), adequate yearly progress (AYP) (sec. 1111[b][2][A]), and sanctions and rewards (sec. 1111[b][2][A][iii]). According to Section 111, AYP

includes annual objectives for continuous and substantial improvement for the achievement of the following subgroups (sec. 1111[b][2] [C] [v] [II]): economically disadvantaged students (sec. 1111[b][2] [C] [v] [II][aa]); students from major racial and ethnic groups (sec. 1111[b][2] [C] [v] [II][bb]); students with disabilities (sec. 1111[b][2] [C] [v] [II] [cc]); and students with limited English proficiency (sec. 1111[b][2] [C] [v] [II] [dd]).

School principals are responsible for strict new NCLB accountability policies that mandate for 100 percent school proficiency by 2014. A key consequence of these policies has been accountability ratings, including challenging academic content standards (sec. 1111[b][1] [D]), academic subjects at least of mathematics, reading or language arts, and science (sec. 1111[b][1] [C]), adequate yearly progress (AYP) (sec. 1111[b] [2] [A], and sanctions and rewards (sec. 1111[b][2] [A] [iii]). The sanctions for schools rated as failing schools, including school closures, have created urgency for principals to turn around chronically failing schools.

According to the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), states are responsible for developing and implementing a single, statewide State accountability system. NCLB also requires that each state accountability system shall include sanctions and rewards. The State must hold local educational agencies accountable for student achievement and that students make adequate yearly progress in accordance with the State's definition (No Child Left Behind Act, [NCLB], 2001). While NCLB provides a federal policy and funding for closing the achievement gap for low-income children, the policy was only instituted in 2002 with the passage of Public Law 107-110 NCLB, formerly ESEA of 1965 (NCLB, 2001). The Texas Accountability policy was instituted in 1984 when the

Texas Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 72. In Texas, HB 72 enacted major reforms of the state public school accountability system.

NCLB mandates provisions for local educational agencies to use State academic assessments and other indicators described in the State plan to review annual progress to determine whether the school is making adequate yearly progress. In Section 1116, Academic Assessment and Local Educational Agency (LEA) and School Improvement (NCLB, Sec.1116, p. 54), NCLB defines a process that school districts must use to “publicize and disseminate the results of the annual review” (Sec. 1116, (a) (1) [C]. Section 1116 (b) outlines an identification process and a timeline for schools in the restructuring/school improvement stage or a school that fails for two consecutive years to make adequate yearly progress. The LEA must notify parents in the community that the school is in failure of meeting adequate yearly progress. The notification of school failure is accompanied with a note to parents that their children have a school choice right or the right to transfer from the failing school to a charter school or any other public school that has space (NCLB, 2001). While the school is provided with restructuring resources and technical assistance, the failure notice may also deplete it of its highest achieving students. Continued failure or failing to meet AYP may result in school restructuring, reconstitution, and school closures with options for charters, other non-profit organizations, and for-profit contractors to take over the failed schools (NCLB, 2001).

The main impetus of NCLB was to close the achievement gap between groups of students by requiring greater accountability of states and its schools. Each state was required to implement the federal accountability requirements of AYP; thus, each state had to submit for approval to the U. S .Department of Education a *Consolidated State*

Application Accountability Workbook (AYP Workbook) (2011-2012) that describes the state's AYP calculations. Federal regulations require that AYP report three indicators for each campus in the state: Reading/English Language Arts (Reading/ELA), Mathematics, and an Other Measure. The Reading ELA and Mathematics indicators consist of the performance and participation components, taken from assessments in Reading/ELA and Mathematics for all students in grades 3–8 and 10. The AYP performance and participation information is summed across grades 3–8 and 10 and reported for the total number of students and each student group (African American, Hispanic, white, economically disadvantaged, special education, and limited English proficient). The district and campus performance rate is based on test results for students enrolled for the full academic year (students enrolled on the date of testing who were also enrolled on the fall enrollment snapshot date). The participation rate is based on participation in the assessment program of all students enrolled on the day of testing. AYP Reading/ELA and Mathematics indicators are evaluated for the total number of students and each student group that meets the minimum size criteria. In addition to Reading/ELA and Mathematics, AYP evaluates one Other Measure, either Graduation Rate (Secondary Schools) or Attendance Rate (Elementary Schools). According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA, 2011), the federal accountability standards (AYP) for 2010 – 2011 are 80 percent for Reading/ELA and 75 percent for Math.

Federal accountability is the requirement that NCLB (2001) set forth for states that required State Education Agencies (SEA) to develop a state plan with standardized assessments for approval to the United States Department of Education (USDOE). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2014) the NCLB definition for AYP is

the requirement that each state is to define adequate yearly progress (AYP) for schools, within the parameters set by NCLB. The NCLB parameters are performance standards for percent proficient defined as AYP targets that states are then held accountable for meeting. The state of Texas responded to the NCLB requirements by developing a set of state activities for meeting these requirements; thus, the creation of the Texas state system of accountability that is aligned to the federal accountability of AYP. The state accountability assessment measure used in Texas to meet AYP, for all districts and campuses is as follows: all students and each student group (African American, Hispanic, white, economically disadvantaged, special education, and limited English proficient) meeting minimum size requirements must meet (1) either the performance standard for percent proficient or performance gains criteria, and (2) the standard for participation in the assessment program.

State Context

Senate Bill 7 was passed to ensure that none of Texas' school districts had more than a set amount of property wealth per student. Those districts that exceed the set limit, can choose among several options for giving away some wealth, including merging tax bases with one or more property-poor districts; sending money to the state; contracting to educate students in other districts; consolidating voluntarily with one or more districts, or moving some taxable property to another district's tax rolls.

In addition to establishing financial equity for schools districts, the bill also created the state's well-regarded education accountability system. The Texas model was used for the 2001 federal education plan, No Child Left Behind. The Texas accountability system measures and holds schools and districts accountable for student performance on

assessment tests and dropout rates. Campuses and districts each year receive an accountability rating based on the percentage of all students and the four student groups (White, Hispanic, African American and economically disadvantaged) that pass the state's assessment tests at grades three through eleven. The rating also considers the overall student dropout rate and each individual student group.

Texas students continue to be held to ever-increasing accountability standards through more rigorous curriculum and graduation requirements, and implementation of a new, tougher statewide assessment test, including the provision that third-grade students must pass the test, along with their coursework, to be promoted. In the future, additional grades will be required to pass the test, along with coursework, to be promoted to the next grade. Texas principals are also being held to increasing accountability standards by being placed in roles where they are given greater managerial responsibilities of their school. School principals must balance their managerial responsibilities with that of their accountability and instructional leadership responsibilities.

In 1993, the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 7 intended to establish school district finance equity, but in addition the legislation created the state's education accountability system which became the model for NCLB (2001). The Texas accountability system measured and held school and districts accountable for student performance and other measures like dropout rates. Schools and districts received a yearly accountability rating based on the percentage of all students and student subgroups (White, Hispanic, African American and economically disadvantaged). Students were tested in grades three through eleven. In 1997 Texas adopted the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in curriculum. Other accountability standards included

rigorous curriculum, graduation requirements, and the implementation of tougher statewide assessment tests, including the provision that third-grade students pass the tests and course to be promoted to the next grade (TEA, 2014).

Over the years, Texas used statewide assessments to measure student learning, including Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS) test in 1979. The state accountability system was overhauled using the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Test (TAKS) in 1999. However, in 2002, like all other states Texas was required to develop a state plan that included accountability ratings, challenging academic content standards for academic subjects at least of mathematics, reading or language arts, and science to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP) (NCLB, 2001). To determine the Texas accountability rating label, the Texas accountability system evaluates indicators of performance, including assessment results on the state standardized assessment instruments as well as longitudinal completion rates and/or annual dropout rates. The Texas accountability system rates Texas schools and districts using the following system: Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable, and Academically Unacceptable.

Beginning in 2003, a new assessment, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), was administered and used as the basis to determine if Texas schools meet AYP. The Texas state accountability system assigned ratings to every campus and district in the Texas public education system. Ratings established under the newly designed system were first issued in the fall of 2004.

According to TEA (Accountability Manual, 2011), *Student Groups* are defined as the following:

- Any student group with fewer than 30 students tested is not evaluated;

- If there are 30 to 49 students tested within the student group and the student group comprises at least 10 percent of All Students, it is evaluated; and,
- If there are at least 50 students tested within the student group, it is evaluated.

Using the data collected by the Texas accountability system, TEA reports to the U. S. Department of Education TAKS collected data on each public school (TEA, 2011). The federal accountability system is then applied to each school's TAKS data for math and reading, and to each student group, to see if the school met the AYP targets. According to the Texas Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook (TEA, 2011), AYP requirements are met if the percent proficient for all students and each student group meets or exceeds the AYP targets. Subsequent AYP thresholds increased every year, until, at the end of 2014, all students in the state are achieving at the proficient level on state assessments in reading and math (TEA website, 2014).

In 2011-12 Texas transitioned to the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). In addition to STAAR, Texas introduced the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for English language arts, mathematics, social sciences, and science incorporated into the TEKS (TEA website, 2014).

District Context

NCLB required State Education Agencies (SEA) to develop a state plan with standardized assessments for approval to the United States Department of Education (USDOE). Once approved as an authorized state assessment, the Local Education Agency (LEA) administers the assessment in order to measure Adequate Yearly Progress

(AYP) (NCLB, Title I, 2001). If schools do not meet the state administered federal AYP standards, there are punitive measures set in motion.

The NCLB AYP standards are the federal accountability response to eliminating student achievement gaps due to literacy deficiencies in states across the country. According to the Texas State Literacy Plan (TSLP), grade level literacy refers to acquiring the reading, writing, math, oral communication, and group-process skills at the grade which is proportional to a student's age (TSLP is a blueprint that makes the state's literacy goals and strategies transparent and provides a needs assessment based on implementation stages, action steps, research, and resources that communities can use to improve their literacy outcomes).

In Texas, school accountability for historically-low-performing schools is framed in state policy grounded in the campus improvement plan set of objectives approved by the local board of education and implemented by the school principal. A highly effective principal can increase his or her students' scores up to 10 percentile points on standardized tests in just one year (Waters, Marzano & McNulty 2003). Principal effectiveness is a principal's ability to impact student achievement (Murphy, et al., 2010). Therefore, it is incumbent upon a school principal to be an effective campus instructional leader in order to affect positive school accountability with regards to meeting state and federal proficiency standards.

Statement of the Problem

The challenge of NCLB is to improve education for the worst performing schools in the United States. After almost three decades of reform (Elmore, 2004) and two decades of accountability reform (Hill, 2006), the research shows that American

education does not know how to provide effective schools for millions of poor and minority students. In 2008, 19 percent of all children under the age of 18 were classified as poor with blacks and Latinos exceeding the average (Institute for Research on Poverty, 2009).

Black and Latino students are approximately two to three years behind their white peer on standardized test (McCartney, 2010). In some urban areas, 30 percent of low-income African American students read below the tenth percentile (Hill, 2006). Half of all poor, immigrant, and minority children never earn regular high school diploma (Hill, 2006, p.1). In 50 of the largest cities in the U.S. only fifty-three percent of students graduate from high school (McKinsey, 2010). Failing schools graduate students to the next level with skills and knowledge deficits that all but cripple their chances of future success (Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, & Lash, 2007).

Policy makers and educators alike have wrestled with the challenge of turning around the nation's most troubled schools for the past 40 years. Review of literature on turnaround schools indicates that while education has created some academic progress for the low-income, the greatest challenge to literacy in the U.S. is how to educate poor and minority children while closing the achievement gap between high-poverty, high-minority students and majority White students (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2012; Edmonds, 1977; Elmore, 2004; Reyes & Rodriguez, 2009). According to Elmore (2004, p. 3), after 30 years of school reform the variability in student performance in core content areas by demographic group remains persistently large. The gap in achievement among student groups remains persistently high in schools despite the plethora of school reform initiatives. "High-performing classrooms and schools, especially in communities

with high proportions of low-income minority children, are still the rare exception rather than the rule.” (Elmore, 2004, p. 3).

Gaining insights into what school leaders do successfully to turnaround a low performing school becomes critical. Under the best of circumstances, turning a low performing school around is a complicated task because of the difficulty in identifying a wide range of effective leadership attributes.

Schools exist that have raised the achievement levels of disadvantaged students and attributes of effective schools have been identified (Killion & Hirsh, 2011).

However, despite the strong findings on the attributes of effective schools, the methods by which previously low performing schools become effective and high performing, remains puzzling.

In 2005-2006, nationally NCLB identified 5000 failing schools that in 2010 would become chronically failing (Calkins, Guenther, Hess, & Kendrick, 2008).

According to the Center on Education Policy (Dietz & Roy, 2010) about one-third of U.S. public schools did not make AYP based on tests administered in 2008-09:

- in nine states and the District of Columbia, at least half the public schools did not make AYP in 2008-09;
- in a majority of the states (34 including D.C.) at least one-fourth of the schools did not make AYP; of the 90,663 public schools that reported AYP results, 29,586 or 33% failed to make AYP;
- the percentage of public schools not making AYP varied greatly by state, from 5 percent in Texas to 77 percent in Florida;

- these differences among states do not necessarily reflect the quality of schools; rather, they are due to state variations in state standards, tests, cut scores for proficient performance on those tests, and methods of calculating AYP (Dietz & Roy, 2010).

The research shows the demographics of chronically failing schools include intensive poverty levels and high minority students. According to Elmore, after 30 years of school reform, there are no “breakthroughs” or dramatic “turnarounds” in the improvement of low-performing schools. There are, however, predictable periods of significant improvement, followed by periods of relative stasis, no development or decline, followed again by periods of improvement. The schools *in need of improvement* and schools in the eventual *restructuring* category of under-performance will continue to rise exponentially as the NCLB 2014 deadline for 100 percent proficiency is reached. Closing a public school, transferring students to other schools, and displacing professional and non-professional staff is a drastic measure for our nation’s most troubled schools; thus, turning around schools is the best option. The scope of the turnaround challenge is enormous as acknowledged by the NCLB through its adequate yearly progress.

States and school districts have proposed a myriad of ways for low performing schools to be turned around. Theoretically, politicians, professors, and the general public feel that by implementing certain prescribed measures, a school can be turned around from low performing to high performing. Educational models by professors or top-to-bottom housecleaning by politicians have been proposed (Paulson, 2008). The problem with theoretical models or proposed political solutions is that they are proposed from the

outside looking in. Once inside the educational world of a struggling school, one is able to see the human factor that gets in the way of what appears to be simple reform. Turning schools around is tougher work than what state and district policy mandates lead one to believe.

Need for the Study

The history and conditions of chronically low-performing schools have created a need to focus on these schools and seek meaningful ways to turn them around into successful sites for minority and low-income children. Elmore's research from 1996 through 2004 suggests that school reform cannot be imposed through artificial constructs developed by outside policy-makers. Instead, change must begin from the inside, with a commitment by educators to develop the knowledge, structures and practices at the heart of the instructional core.

Educators and policymakers continue to search for the formula that might work as they examine practices ranging from effective schools efforts, to new curriculum, to current best practices models. There are much data pointing to the abysmal performance of many of the nation's urban secondary schools, but little research on how to turn these same schools around. Thus, there exists a crucial need to examine what schools and school leaders on the brink of failure have done to effectively turn their school around into a high achieving place of learning.

Impact of the Study

This study produced new knowledge on school accountability and student characteristics.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore the role of accountability on school turnarounds in two major suburban Texas school districts. This research study explored the relations of student characteristics of race, economic status, school size on Texas accountability. This study also explored the relations of student characteristics of race, economic status, school size, and student achievement on federal accountability. This study sought to understand which variables to relate to turnaround accountability status using Texas Education Agency (TEA) accountability data and the state NCLB AYP data (TEA, 2011). This study also explored the relation between principal qualities/characteristics on student achievement in two major suburban Texas public school districts.

Research Questions

This study answered the following research questions:

1. What is the relation between achievement and the qualities of turnaround secondary school principals for two major suburban school districts in Texas?
2. What is relation between NCLB/state accountability accreditation and the qualities of turnaround secondary school principals for two major suburban school districts in Texas?
3. What is relation between NCLB/state accountability accreditation and Wealth per Student for two major suburban school districts in Texas?

Definition of Key Terminology

1. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) (sec. 1111[b] [2] [A]) – IN GENERAL.-Each State plan shall demonstrate that the State has developed and is implementing a

single, statewide State accountability system that will be effective in ensuring that all local educational agencies, public elementary schools, and public secondary schools make adequate yearly progress as defined.

2. Chronically Low Performing – is defined as schools that NCLB defines as a school failing to make AYP for five consecutive years. The school must develop a restructuring plan which goes into action if the school fails to make AYP for a sixth consecutive year (No Child Left Behind, Sec. 1116, 20, U.S.C.A. §6301-6578; 2002).
3. Economically Disadvantaged – The percentage of economically disadvantaged students is calculated as the sum of the students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or are eligible for other public assistance, divided by the total number of students. Economically Disadvantaged is the measure used for student poverty. This measure is based on the 2011 U.S. Department of Agriculture income of \$40,793 for a family of four to qualify for Free-and-reduced priced lunch (Southern Education, 2014). It should be noted that the U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) poverty rate may be different from the district free-and-reduced priced lunch poverty rate because USCB does not include data for children under the age of 15 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).
4. Free and Reduced Lunch – is defined as children from households whose incomes are at or below eligibility guidelines as set forth by the Texas Department of Agriculture. Eligibility may be based on total income and size (i.e., number of household members) of a participant's household. The state also defines

economically disadvantaged as the percentage of students eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced-price lunch program or for other public assistance.

5. Instructional Core – subjects that are tested for state accountability ratings (No Child Left Behind, Title IX, Section 9101[11]).
6. In Need of Improvement - If a school misses AYP for a second consecutive year, it is identified as “in need of improvement.”
7. Low Performing – a school rated as “Unacceptable” according to state academic standards or “Acceptable” but all indicators pointed to a soon to be “unacceptable” school by district academic standards (Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 39, Subchapter E, Accreditation Interventions and Sanctions).
8. NCLB accountability ratings – is defined by the ratings of Met or Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under NCLB (No Child Left Behind, Sec. 1111[b][2][C]).
9. NCLB accountability ratings (sec. 1111[b][1] [D]) – (b) ACADEMIC STANDARDS, ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY- (1) CHALLENGING ACADEMIC STANDARDS- (D) CHALLENGING ACADEMIC STANDARDS- Standards under this paragraph shall include —
 - (i) challenging academic content standards in academic subjects that —
 - (I) specify what children are expected to know and be able to do;
 - (II) contain coherent and rigorous content; and
 - (III) encourage the teaching of advanced skills; and

(ii) challenging student academic achievement standards

that —

(I) are aligned with the State's academic content standards;

(II) describe two levels of high achievement (proficient and advanced) that determine how well children are mastering the material in the State academic content standards; and

(III) describe a third level of achievement (basic) to provide complete information about the progress of the lower-achieving children toward mastering the proficient and advanced levels of achievement.

10. Principal Quality - Professional development program that positively impact principals' learning of leadership practices that are linked to student achievement (McREL, 2012).

11. Restructuring - Local Education Agency (LEA) must prepare a plan to carry out one of the following options: Reopen school as charter school, replace principal and staff, contract for private management company of demonstrated effectiveness, state takeover, or any other major restructuring of school governance (NCLB, 2001).

12. Sanctions and Rewards (No Child Left Behind, Sec. 1111[b][2] [A] [iii]) – “Each State accountability system shall - include sanctions and rewards, such as bonuses and recognition, the State will use to hold local educational agencies and public

elementary schools and secondary schools accountable for student achievement and for ensuring that they make adequate yearly progress in accordance with the State's definition under subparagraphs (B) and (C).

13. School Leadership – the identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination and use of social, material, and cultural resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning, (Murphy, et al., 2010)
14. State/District academic standards – are defined as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), which are the state standards for what students should know and be able to do (Texas Education Agency, 2012).
15. Student Achievement – is defined as academic achievement as measured by standardized test scores.
16. Student Learning – is defined as students achieving desired learning outcomes.
17. Texas accountability ratings – To determine ratings under the standard accountability procedures, the accountability rating system for Texas public schools and districts uses three base indicators: spring performance on the TAKS assessment, the Completion Rate I [Graduates and Continuers], and the annual Dropout Rate for grades 7–8. Under Alternative Education Accountability procedures, registered Alternative Education Campuses and charter operators are evaluated based on three base indicators: spring performance on the TAKS assessment (plus the July, October, and March retest administrations), the Completion Rate II [Graduates, Continuers, and General Educational Development (GED) Recipients], and the annual Dropout Rate for grades 7–12.
18. Texas Education Agency (TEA) school accountability ratings:

- a) *Exemplary* – All subjects and student groups must score at 90% or greater.
- b) *Recognized* - All subjects and student groups must score at 80% or greater.
- c) *Academically Acceptable* – All subjects and student groups must score at 70% or greater in Reading, Writing, and Social Studies; student groups must score at 65% or greater in Math; and, student groups must score at 60% or greater in Science.
- d) *Academically Unacceptable* – Any subjects and/or student group scoring below 70% in Reading, Writing, and Social Studies; student groups scoring below 65% in Math; and, student groups scoring below 60% in Science.

19. Turnaround Schools – According to Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, & Lash (2007), turnaround is different from school improvement because it focuses on the most consistently under-performing schools and involves dramatic, transformative change.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore the role of accountability on school turnarounds in two major suburban Texas public school districts. This section reviews the literature on school accountability, turning around chronically low-performing schools, the effects of accountability on school principals and accountability, instructional core and accountability, and the problems identified in accountability.

NCLB: Effective Schools and Accountability

The requirements of NCLB accountability rating criteria became a mandate for effective principals and teachers. Demanding NCLB federal policy have been the impetus for 25 states to craft legislation and policy to recruit, prepare, and support high quality school leaders (Vitaska, 2008). State policy needs to ensure that today's leaders have the skills, knowledge and support required to guide the transformation of schools to meet higher standards and new requirements for progress (Vitaska, 2008). Nationally, recent state laws have outlined the following policies:

- Roles, responsibilities and authority;
- Statewide leadership standards;
- Preparation and program accreditation;
- Mentoring and induction;
- Licensure and certification;
- Professional development;
- Assessing leader effectiveness;
- Compensation and incentives; and

- Governance structures issues.

There are many studies on school improvement and the effectiveness of school reform; however, there are few studies that have examined the long-term successful turnaround of struggling schools in high poverty, high-minority communities and the role of the principal as an instructional leader. According to Taylor (2002) "High expectations" or teaching all children to agreed-upon (state and local) standards so that they will be successful at the next grade level, site-based management for reaching consensus with faculties on "what works," school and classroom change strategies that address school and district mission statements, and data-guided decision making - all became part and parcel of good school reform programs.

Herman et al. (2008) found that school turnaround work involves quick, dramatic improvement within three years and that school improvement is marked by steady, incremental improvement over a longer period of time. Herman et al. (2008) also found out that turnaround schools collect data to identify and track gaps in student learning or behaviors that get in the way of learning, such as poor attendance patterns or discipline problems, so they can be addressed strategically.

Role of the Principal in Accountability

As a school leader, one must be able to analyze what the culture of the school is like and be able to adjust his/her leadership style to fit what is going on at the school and ultimately lead to school improvement. This is certainly the case if a school leader takes on a low performing school with aspirations of turning it around. Every school has a culture and it can be improved upon by a school leader's direct actions. School culture is an important, but often overlooked, aspect of successful schools. School culture may be

the missing link – a link that has much more to do with the culture of the school than it does with elaborate curriculum alignment projects, scrimmage tests, and the latest buzz-word reform efforts – in the school improvement conundrum (Wagner & Hall-O’Phalen, 1998).

Beyond analyzing school culture, a principal must get to the root of what makes a school low-performing, student achievement. A New Leadership (2009) outlines five categories of effective leadership actions critical to transformative results: 1) ensuring rigorous, goal and data-driven *learning and teaching*; 2) building and managing a high-quality *staff* aligned to the school’s vision of success for every student; 3) developing an achievement and belief-based *school-wide culture*; 4) instituting *operations and systems* to support learning; and 5) modeling the *personal leadership* that sets the tone for all student and adult relationships in the school.

Highly effective principals are able to take the five categories of effective leadership actions to turn around schools. However, a basic questions still remains, why are some principals more effective than others? The answer is difficult to derive. Marzano, McNulty, and Waters (2005), believe that the distinguishing factor between effective and ineffective school leadership lies in student achievement. Marzano outlines twenty-one responsibilities all school principals should be cognizant of as they go about their daily routines. The research indicates that where there are effective schools, typically one finds effective leaders. What has been difficult to grasp is what exactly effective school leaders do daily that makes them effective. There is little information about how effective school leaders create, develop, implement, or sustain processes which drive high student achievement.

The New Leaders for New Schools report (2009) states that approximately 25% of a school's impact on student achievement is attributable to principal effectiveness. Thus the report advocates for an evidence-based, three-pronged approach to defining principal effectiveness: 1) gains in student achievement, 2) increasing teacher effectiveness, and 3) taking effective leadership actions to reach these outcomes. The report goes on to state that "...schools making breakthrough gains are led by principals who have carved out a radically new role for themselves, including responsibility for school-wide practices to drive both student achievement and teacher effectiveness (A New Principalship, 2009, p.5)."

As a federal policy, NCLB targeted the role of school principals and school teachers by converging its purpose on the educational needs of low-achieving children in highest poverty schools in the U.S (P.L. 107-110, Title I, Section 1001, 2001). While the state was the legal authority and conduit for the policy, it was the principal and teachers who were responsible for the implementation. The state is responsible for developing accountability ratings to accompany challenging curriculum standards for academic subjects to include at least mathematics, reading or language arts, and science (P.L. 1007-110, sec. 1111[b][1] [D]). It is the principal and teachers who must deliver the curriculum content while providing meaningful student learning. The turnaround schools challenge then lies squarely on the shoulders of effective school leaders, mainly the school principal. School principals are the key providers of a school's direction. They set the tone of excellence that provides a source of motivation to guide and inspire school staff.

An effective leader does this by being passionate about their job, honest and upfront with staff, as well as involving teachers in decisions that affect them and the

school. According to Leithwood (1992), transformational leadership emphasizes personal traits to introduce organizational change. There are no easy answers when it comes to school leadership because true leadership is an extremely personal matter. However, throughout the school leadership research it became evident quickly that turning a school around requires leaders who have a vision, keep their focus on teaching and learning, and foster a collaborative culture in which teachers and staff can continue to grow professionally.

NCLB targeted low-performing schools and the organizational environments of low-performing schools, including curriculum standards, testing of standards, role of principals and role of teachers (P.L. 107-110, 2001, Title I, Part A, Subpart 1, Sec. 1111. [4] State Plans). The research on school leadership shows that leadership is a crucial factor in school success (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). School leadership can account for about 25 percent of the differences in students learning (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Waters, et al., 2003). The research from leadership in private organizations affirms that the right leadership is just one of the multiple factors, but a crucial one in turnarounds (Rhim, Hassel & Redding 2007). The more current research shows that second only to teachers, school principals are the single most important, school-related factor that contributes to student achievement (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2010, May; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007; Drago-Severson, 2007, 2004b; Eide, Goldhaber, & Brewer, 2004; Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013; Leithwood, et al., 2004; Horng, Kalogrides, Loeb, 2009, May; Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010, May; Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Murphy, et al., 2010, 2008; Myung, Loeb, & Horng, 2011, May; Vitaska, 2008).

In an era of school accountability, principals matter and are important contributors to the effectiveness of schools. Horng, Kalogrides, and Loeb (2009) state that effective principals influence a variety of school outcomes, including student achievement, through their recruitment and motivation of quality teachers, their ability to identify and articulate school vision and goals, their effective allocation of resources, and their development of organizational structures to support instruction and learning. Research shows that principals should be instructional leaders in order to positively affect school accountability performance. According to Grissom, Loeb & Master (2013), time spent on teacher coaching, evaluation, and developing the school's educational program predict positive achievement gains. Grissom & Loeb (2011) found that a principals' organization management skills, consistently predicts student achievement growth and other success measures. The scope of the principal role in school accountability and what they do on a daily basis is difficult to quantify; however, research on principals being a critical factor in school success is unequivocal.

Role of the Middle School in Accountability

In a study conducted with 4,000 middle schools in California, researchers analyzed student outcomes on standards-based state accountability tests in English/language arts and mathematics with controls for student background (Williams, & Kirst, 2010; Kirst, Haertel, Levin, Padia, & Balfanz, 2010). The study concluded that districts and schools with practices that reflect an intense focus on improving middle-grade student outcomes are higher-performing with primarily low-income students or primarily middle-income students (Williams & Kirst, 2010; Kirst, Haertel, Levin, Padia, & Balfanz, 2010). The middle schools placed a high priority on ensuring that every

student did well on the state's standards-based exams in math and English/language arts ensuring that students were prepared to pass the state's high school exit exam and that students were college ready (Williams & Kirst, 2010; Kirst, Haertel, Levin, Padia, & Balfanz, 2010). Responsibility for successful middle schools was shared with the district, the principal, and teachers; however, the study did not confirm that any particular school organization of instruction was superior to another in its association with improved student outcomes (Williams & Kirst, 2010; Kirst, Haertel, Levin, Padia, & Balfanz, 2010).

In a study of middle school configurations in New York City, it was reported that when students move to a middle school (or a junior high), their academic achievement, as measured by standardized tests, declines in both math and English relative to their counterparts who continue to attend a K-8 elementary school (Rockoff, & Lockwood, 2010). The study affirmed that student achievement for middle school (5-8 or 6-9) configurations continued to decline throughout middle school, persisting through the 8th grade. This study did not address the issue of K-8 overage children created by school retention policies.

While NCLB accountability targets elementary, middle, and high schools, middle schools offers the best opportunity to identify students at risk of academic failure and get them back on track to succeed in high school according to Williams & Kirst (2010). Historically, middle school configurations have been the debate of appropriate grade configurations (for example, K-8, 6th-8th, 5-8, 6-9). Educators have argued for the best configuration using development theory, philosophy, and academic rigor; however, the reality was that in many cases the decision on which configuration to use was based on

the facilities available (Williams & Kirst, 2010). Middle school accountability and success in high school have increased the need to understand middle school configurations using curriculum content and other student-outcomes-based research.

Role of Instructional Content in Accountability

There are many definitions of instructional core; nevertheless, NCLB narrows the instructional core to those subjects that are tested for state accountability ratings. While accountability standards narrow the instructional core to the academic subjects tested by the state accountability system, research reminds us that teaching and instructional core should be the focus of education rather than standardized testing, changing curricula, faculty room politics, overbearing or aloof administrators and shrinking school budgets (Elmore, City, Teitel, & Fiarman, 2010). The essential interaction between teacher, student, and content create the basis of learning and the first place to look to improve student learning (Elmore, City, Teitel, & Fiarman, 2010).

Rothstein (2008) asserts that NCLB narrowly holds schools accountable for basic skills like math and reading while excluding the many other accomplishments expected from schools. Rothstein (2008) surveyed people and established the following areas: basic skills, academic outcomes/critical thinking/reasoning, appreciation of arts/literature, preparation for skills work, emotional health, physical health, good citizenship, and social skills/work ethic. Rothstein favors an accountability system aligned with the National Assessment of Educational Progress test which provides a quantitative approach incorporated with in-class inspections that provide a truer and broader accountability system (Anderson, 2008).

Problems identified with NCLB are that high stakes test can narrow the curriculum by pushing instruction toward lower order cognitive skills and distorting the meaning of scores (Klein, Hamilton, McCaffrey & Stetcher, 2000). Some studies have suggested that teaching to the test may produce inflated passing rates and that tests having been made easier over time by lowering state standards (Haney, 1999; Peterson, & Lastra-Anadón, 2010). More current concerns are that states are setting proficiency bars in such a way that they are low-balling expectations and have lowered the bar for students in 4th and 8th grade reading and math (Peterson & Lastra-Anadón, 2010; Walberg, & Oestreich, 2010).

According to Spillane (2001), there is a need to examine how school leaders bring resources that develop and improve mathematics, language arts, and science education. Spillane (2001) argues that for school leaders to lead change in mathematics, language arts, and science involves the activation of material resources, the development of teachers' and school leaders' human capital and the development and use of social capital. The research shows that teachers in low-income, African American and Latino elementary schools treat mathematics and science education as non-essential content in comparison to the need for basic literacy and basic math targeted and tested in meeting state and federal testing requirements. Teachers assume that minority and low-income students do not have the home and community support for mathematics and science instruction; consequently these important content areas are not emphasized in the elementary school.

Spillane (2001) focused on leadership for instruction by comparing resources for leadership in mathematics, science, and literacy in school. Leadership is defined as

identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination, and use of human, social, and material resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of instructional innovation. The resource uses three categories of resources for leadership, include financial resources as identified in time and human capital, and social capital as grounded in distributed leadership theory (Spillane, 2001). Human resources are defined as individual knowledge, skills, capabilities and expertise that become resources available to the organization. The study found that improvement in science education in a school was grounded in the principal's leadership for a successful science program. The principal focused on identifying and developing science resources in the faculty including hiring a science coordinator with a background in science education, the support of science fairs, a double period for science, and a school science program. Resources were developed by coordinating with outside organizations to do science staff development. While it is important to start with school leaders who have knowledge and expertise in science, teaching, learning, and leading change, the creation and allocation of social capital and a financial resource are also important. Resources come from the knowledge possessed by individual organizational members, including principals, assistant principals, and teachers as leaders (Spillane, 2001).

Role of Effective Schools in Accountability

The effectiveness of schools has been well documented for decades. There are numerous studies showing certain schools are effective at raising achievement of disadvantaged students. The following major studies found what high achievement in schools looks like. The Morrison Institute for Public Policy at Arizona State University

(2006) concluded that high achievement in schools with a mostly Latino, mostly poor student enrollment were driven by the following six elements:

- a clear bottom line,
- ongoing assessments,
- a strong and steady principal,
- collaborative solutions,
- selecting a program and sticking to it, and
- personalizing interventions to suit each student's needs.

The Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas (2002) found that highly effective middle schools with high poverty levels were driven to succeed and had the following in common:

- hold high expectations for all students,
- dedicated to collaborative environments,
- committed to supporting teaching and learning through
 implementing thoughtful organizational structures and
 building the capacity of the system,
- pay attention to individual students and provide extra services
 and support beyond those traditionally offered by schools,
- understand how their school improvement efforts are affected
 by the larger context surrounding them,
- intentionally and thoughtfully implement elements which lead
 to school improvement, and
- use different approaches to school improvement.

The Mass Insight Education Research Institute (2007) found that school turnaround entails the following:

- recognition of the challenge,
- dramatic, fundamental change,
- urgency,
- supportive operating conditions,
- new-model, high capacity partners, and
- new state and district structures.

Taylor (2002) summarizes years of research on highly effective schools and concludes the schools have:

- a clearly stated and focused mission,
- a safe and orderly climate,
- high expectations for students, teachers, and administrators,
- opportunities to learn and high levels of student time-on-task,
- instructional leadership by all administrators,
- frequent monitoring of student progress, and
- a positive home/school relationship.

An Educators' Guide to Schoolwide Reform (1999) states that comprehensive school reform must address all aspects of school effectiveness, including rigorous curriculum and high standards, efficient school governance, solid community-school partnerships, on-going professional development, up to date technology and increased parent involvement. Schools must also negotiate their efforts with the outside world-- districts, states, and local communities.

Summary

The challenge in U.S. public education is clearly to turn around low-performing schools and the achievement of low-income, African-American, Hispanic, and English-Language-Learning students. Turning around failing schools is a monumental task which requires attention to many details. Some of these details are outlined by the numerous roles discussed in this chapter. The role of effective schools in accountability is that they have practices that should be comprehensive and not prescriptive in nature. The primary role of the principal in accountability is that they are able to examine the state of their school and fine-tune their leadership style to fit the need of their school. This will assist in obtaining the best possible results. In essence, school principals can become more effective school leaders if they practice being a reflective practitioner.

In this study, research suggests that the role of the middle school in accountability is critical in the continued success of many students. Middle schools determine if a student will enter high school with the academic preparation for a college-and career-ready path. The role of instructional content is also a critical factor in a school's accountability. Teachers must be willing to change their daily approach, the way they teach, and constantly evaluate the content of their teaching if turning around a failing school is going to be successful. Lastly, comprehensive school reform must address all aspects of school effectiveness, including rigorous curriculum and high standards, efficient school governance, solid community-school partnerships, on-going professional development, up to date technology, and increased parent involvement.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of accountability on effective school turnarounds in two major suburban Texas public school districts. The study originally started down the path to explore the relations between Texas accountability ratings, race, and economic status, as well as exploring between No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) federal accountability ratings and race, and economic status for the sample schools. The archival data used originated from the 2010-2011 Texas Education Agency's Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS). School principal characteristics that may affect school turnaround accountability status were also investigated, but due to circumstances beyond the study's control (i.e., the unreliability of the survey data), the study course was altered. The original purpose of this study intended to address the following research questions:

1. What is the relation between achievement and the qualities of turnaround secondary school principals for two major suburban school districts in Texas?
2. What is relation between NCLB/state accountability accreditation and the qualities of turnaround secondary school principals for two major suburban school districts in Texas?
3. What is relation between NCLB/state accountability accreditation and Wealth per Student for two major suburban school districts in Texas?

However, original intent of the study was not met. Since the original intent of the study was not met, the study shifted focus and sought to understand which variables were related to turnaround accountability status using Texas Education Agency accountability

data and the state NCLB AYP data (TEA, 2011). For this study, the Texas accountability rating system for Texas public schools was referred to as state accountability or Texas accountability when presenting and discussing relations between variables. Also, NCLB law (2001) was referred to as NCLB accountability, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) accountability or federal accountability when used to present and discuss relations between variables in this study.

Part One: Correlational Methods

Part one of this study identified state and federal accountability school ratings for 93 sample schools using TEA policy and the NCLB law (2001). In order to address the research questions, a quantitative, correlational research design was implemented to describe the relations between student characteristics of race, economic status, and school size on Texas accountability. This study also explored the relations of student characteristics of race, economic status, school size, and student achievement on federal accountability. Archival data used was also extracted from the 2010-2011 Texas Education Agency's Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS). Part two of this study investigated school principal characteristics that may affect school turnaround accountability.

Accountability data were defined using Texas accountability and federal accountability policy (Texas Education Code, Chapter, Chapter 39, 2011; Title 19 TAC §97, 2011; NCLB, 2002). This study used Texas accountability data provided by the Texas Education Agency website for 2010-2011. Federal accountability data were also provided by the Texas Education Agency website for 2010-2011. The Texas definition for federal accountability was provided in chapter one and chapter three. Federal

accountability requires the use of archival student achievement data for math and reading from the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) 2010-2011 Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) website database. For this study, the federal accountability system was used because when reviewing the Texas accountability data, it was noted that only two schools in the study sample were rated as Academically Unacceptable under Texas accountability. Yet, under the federal accountability system requiring that schools and districts meet AYP academic goals in math, reading/language arts, seventeen schools were unacceptable. According to the Texas Commissioner of Education rules, in order to meet the Texas accountability system for 2010-2011, Texas schools had to meet the proficiency standards of 65 percent for math and 70 percent for reading for all students and measureable student groups taking the TAKS assessments. In order to meet the NCLB AYP federal requirements for 2010-2011, Texas schools had to meet the proficiency standards of 75 percent for math and 80 percent for reading for all students and measureable student groups taking the TAKS assessments. The incongruence in the Texas accountability system and the NCLB AYP accountability system led to dual systems in meeting student achievement standards in the two major suburban Texas public school districts.

These data were used to measure correlations between Texas accountability and school percentage of race, as well as the percentage of economically disadvantaged students. The TEA AEIS (2010-2011) data with math and reading achievement was used to measure correlations between Federal accountability and the percentage of race, economically disadvantaged students, and achievement. In the research process, the

following research questions were developed to investigate the relation between accountability and student factors.

1. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and the enrollment percentage of race?
 - a. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and the enrollment percentage of African American students?
 - b. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and the enrollment percentage of Asian students?
 - c. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and the enrollment percentage of Hispanic students?
 - d. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and the enrollment percentage of White students?
2. What is the relation between federal school accountability and the enrollment percentage of race?
 - a. What is the relation between federal school accountability and the enrollment percentage of African American students?
 - b. What is the relation between federal school accountability and the enrollment percentage of Asian students?
 - c. What is the relation between federal school accountability and the enrollment percentage of Hispanic students?
 - d. What is the relation between federal school accountability and the enrollment percentage of White students?

3. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment?
 - a. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 500 to 1,000 students?
 - b. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 1,001 to 1,500 students?
 - c. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 1,501 to 2,000 students?
 - d. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment of over 2,000 students?
4. What is the relation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment?
 - a. What is the relation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 500 to 1,000 students?
 - b. What is the relation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 1,001 to 1,500 students?
 - c. What is the relation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 1,501 to 2,000 students?
 - d. What is the relation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment of over 2,000 students?
5. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and student economic background?

6. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student economic background?
7. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math and reading?
 - a. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math?
 - b. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading?
8. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math by race?
 - a. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math by African American students?
 - b. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math by Asian students?
 - c. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math by Hispanic students?
 - d. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math by White students?
9. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading by race?
 - a. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading by African American students?

- b. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading by Asian students?
- c. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading by Hispanic students?
- d. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading by White students?

Research Design

The study was divided into two parts. For part one of this study, correlational analyses were used to show the relations between student characteristics of race, economic status, school size on Texas school accountability. Correlational analyses were also used in this study to explore the relations of student characteristics of race, economic status, school size, and student achievement on federal (AYP) accountability.

Specifically, this study used correlational analyses to show the relation between race and state accountability, and race and federal accountability. State accountability ratings were used as defined by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). One variable for this study was the district accountability rating given to the LEA by the Commissioner of The Texas Education Agency. In 2000, the Texas Accountability Manual adopted the policy for the Commissioner of Education (COE) Rule 19 of Texas Administrative Code §97.1001, accountability rating system. The rule gave legal standing to the rating process and procedures. The state assigned one of the four rating labels from highest to lowest - Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable, and Academically Unacceptable. The accountability ratings were assigned to school districts and to schools. According to TEA (2011), generally, campuses earn ratings by achieving performance that meets absolute

standards or by demonstrating sufficient improvement toward the standard. In addition to evaluating performance for all students, the performance of individual groups of students is evaluated. The student groups are defined as the major ethnic/racial groups and economically disadvantaged. All of the evaluated groups had to meet the criteria for a given rating category. The *Texas Education Agency Accountability Manual* (TEA, 2011) states the following as the definitions of the Pre-House Bill 5 school accountability ratings:

- A. *Exemplary* – All subjects and student groups must score at 90 percent or greater.
- B. *Recognized* - All subjects and student groups must score at 80 percent or greater.
- C. *Academically Acceptable* – All subjects and student groups must score at 70 percent or greater in Reading, Writing, and Social Studies; student groups must score at 65 percent or greater in Math; and, student groups must score at 60 percent or greater in Science.
- D. *Academically Unacceptable* – Any subjects and/or student group scoring below 70 percent in Reading, Writing, and Social Studies; student groups scoring below 65 percent in Math; and, student groups scoring below 60 percent in Science.

For federal accountability, AYP ratings of “*Meets AYP*” and “*Missed AYP*” were used when analyzing relations between race and federal accountability.

Correlational analyses were used to show the relations between state accountability and enrollment by race, as well as federal accountability and enrollment by race. Using

SPSS, relations were explored between state accountability and the enrollment of African American, Asian, Hispanic, and White student groups. SPSS was also used to explore relations between federal accountability and the enrollment of African American, Asian, Hispanic, and White student groups. Correlational methods are defined as research methods that involve collecting data in order to determine the degree to which relations exist between two or more variables or an independent variable and a dependent variable. Correlational research is defined as research that involves collecting data in order to determine the degree to which a relation exists between two or more variables (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). This study used correlational analyses to describe the relations between the variables of student characteristics of race, economic status, school size, and student achievement on Texas accountability and federal accountability. Each of these variables was analyzed using SPSS to find their relation to state and federal school accountability.

In defining economic status for this study, a review of the two state definitions for economic status was provided. According to TEA AEIS, Free-and-reduced lunch is defined as children from households whose incomes are at or below eligibility guidelines as set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) (USDA, 2014). Eligibility may be based on total income and size (i.e., number of household members) of a participant's household. The state also defines economically disadvantaged as the percentage of students eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced-price lunch program or for other public assistance. Using economically disadvantaged allowed this study to focus on a more accurate level of a school's poverty level. On the other hand, Free and Reduced Lunch is often a smaller percentage of a school's economically

disadvantaged population as it offers the possibility of students or family household members the option to not participate in the National School Lunch Program. Reasons for non participation in the Free and Reduced lunch program vary widely. Relations between economically disadvantaged and state accountability and between race and federal accountability were explored.

Part Two: Survey Research

While part one of this study used TEA archival data to look for relations between accountability and economic status and accountability and race, part two of this study used a survey instrument to explore relations between principal characteristics and accountability that may affect school turnaround status.

This study investigated principal characteristics/qualities in turnaround schools in two major two major suburban Texas school districts in Central and West Texas. A twenty-one question survey (see Appendix A) was developed and administered to 37 secondary school principals from two major suburban Texas school districts. Survey responses were quantitatively analyzed using simple statistics and frequencies (Babbie, 1990; Fink & Koseoff, 1998; Mellenbergh, 2008; Scheaffer, Mendenhall, & Ott, 1990). The aggregate range of school principal demographics (race/ethnicity, undergraduate major, graduate degree, principal certification, and years of experience) sought to collect data that would describe qualities of the participants.

Participants

A convenience sample was used in this study of two major suburban Texas public school districts. All campuses in the two Texas school districts were studied for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The sample consisted of 94 schools in the archival data set and

37 principal participants for the survey in two major suburban Central and West Texas school districts with distinct demographics and comparable schools and student achievement. Participation by principals in this study was completely voluntary. The method for obtaining the sample of participants is a convenience sampling of populations of secondary schools in two Texas school districts. The participant districts in the archival data set were purposefully selected because they represented two different demographics of students while considered large suburban Central and West Texas school districts as labeled by the TEA.

Instrument

The survey instrument was developed to gather data on principal characteristics (Babbie, 1990; Fink & Koseoff, 1998; Mellenbergh, 2008; Scheaffer, Mendenhall, & Ott, 1990). A cover letter was written to increase the possibility of the return rate. The letter was brief and conveyed the purpose of the research, the voluntary participation, and the protection of the subjects participating. The survey was placed in an electronic format in an enticing format with legible and simple and efficient check-off processes. As stated by Gall and Gall (2003), the instructions were brief, clear, in bold print, and organized in a logical sequence. The survey started with a few warm-up questions on the subject's educational background and certification. Negatively stated or double-barreled items were avoided.

The survey was used to collect data from two groups of principals from two major suburban Texas school districts. The principal survey was designed with questions of one answer or multiple answer choices. Since this was an online survey, data collection used the internet via Survey Monkey as the process of collecting participant responses. The

internet survey process has the advantage of speed of return and accuracy, and the protection of human subjects over paper and pencil mail questionnaires (Gall & Gall, 2007). Each participant was informed of the purpose of the study and provided with a consent form (see Appendix B), approved by the participating research school district and the University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (UHCPHS) office.

The survey instrument was developed with the input of experienced secondary school principals who are leaders or former leaders and teachers of turnaround schools. The survey review committee was developed using a snowball affect with one principal or teacher referring another who meets the criteria of former turnaround school leader. The group made recommendations and reviewed all survey items. All survey questions were collected from principal and teacher recommendations. The dissertation chair guided the survey development process. Reliability, as defined by Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012, p. 112), is the degree to which scores obtained with an instrument are consistent measures of whatever the instrument measures.

The survey was administered to the principals of two Texas districts to explore principal characteristics against student achievement in math and reading. The Principal Survey – Turnaround Challenge contained twenty-one questions which provided information on principal background, characteristics/qualities, school characteristics, and student achievement. Principals were also asked about their ethnicity, institution of higher learning where graduate degree and principal certification were earned, and undergraduate major held. The survey also collected some demographic information of principals, as well as number of years of experience as a principal and number of years of

experience as a principal at their current school. The survey attempted to provide descriptive information on principals, and schools that completed and returned the survey by September 1, 2014. The results of the principal survey will be discussed in chapter four.

Procedures for Correlational Data Collection

Archival data were collected from the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) data for the school year 2010-2011 and the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) data for school year 2010-2011 provided by TEA website. A list of the schools in the two major suburban Texas public school districts was obtained from the Texas Education Agency AEIS data for the 2010-2011 school year also provided for by the TEA website. The data gathered for the two Texas school districts were stored in a data table created to organize the archival data from the TEA website.

District demographic data were obtained from the TEA AEIS website (2010-2011). According to the TEA website, districts in Texas are categorized in nine district type categories as follows: major urban, major suburban, other central city, other central city suburban, Independent town, non-metropolitan: fast growing, non-metropolitan: stable, and charter school districts. For purposes of this study two Texas districts categorized as major suburban districts were selected. According to TEA, there are 78 major suburban school districts in Texas. A major suburban district is one that does not have the criteria for classification as a major urban, is contiguous to a major urban district, and has an enrollment that is at least three percent that of the contiguous major urban district or at least 4,500 students (TEA, 2010-2011). The district must also be in the same count as a major urban district (TEA, 2010-2011). Using the TEA AEIS data (2010-

2011) data Table 1 shows the demographics for the two suburban school districts used as a sample for this study. It is noted that while both districts are categorized by TEA as suburban, they are demographically very different.

For the purposes of this study, some differences between the two major suburban Texas public school districts will be discussed as District A and District B. District A is centrally located in Texas contiguous to a major urban/college/university area while District B is near the Texas border. District A is highly affluent with some economically challenged pockets, while District B is situated in an economically challenged area of Texas and has some affluent pockets, but is mainly surrounded by poor rural border town school districts. Demographics for the two Texas school districts included in this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Two Texas School District Demographics 2010-2011

	Enrollment Number	Economically Disadvantaged	African American	Hispanic	White	Asian
District A	44,590	30%	9%	30%	45%	11%
District B	42,287	75%	2%	91%	6%	1%

State and federal accountability ratings were also explored by this study.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2014), the NCLB definition for AYP is the requirement that each state define adequate yearly progress (AYP) for school districts and schools. In defining AYP, each state sets the minimum levels of improvement in measurable terms of student performance. Each school is then given a federal accountability rating of *Meets (or Missed) AYP* as set forth in NCLB law (NCLB, 2001). The Pre-House Bill 5 school district accountability ratings for the state of Texas were:

Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable, and Academically Unacceptable

(TEC 39.051, 2011; Title 19 TAC §97, 2011).

Texas accountability ratings for the two sample districts are presented in Table 2. The *Other* column includes schools that were rated under the TEA Alternative Education Accountability (AEA) measure which includes schools that served students as an alternative education setting (e.g. online learning) and/or disciplinary alternative education program (i.e. mandatory or optional responses to misbehavior) for students.

Table 2

Texas Accountability Ratings for 2010-2011

	Number of Schools	E	R	AA	AU	Other
District A	49	18	16	10	2	3
District B	44	7	25	9	0	3

Note. E = Exemplary, R = Recognized, AA = Academically Acceptable, AU = Academically Unacceptable

Federal accountability ratings for the two sample districts are presented in Table 3. The data were reported in December of school year 2011 - 2012 from the Texas Education Agency to the U.S. Department of Education.

Table 3

Federal Ratings for 2010-2011

	Number of Schools	Meets AYP	Missed AYP	Not Rated
District A	49	36	8	5
District B	44	31	9	4

The data reported by the USDOE to states like Texas has to be distinguishable in order for each state to be able to focus in on the areas of weakness. The USDOE providing a report of schools that Meet AYP or Missed AYP would not suffice for states

to focus in on areas of weakness. Table 4 for 2010 – 2011 not only shows the schools that Meet or Missed AYP for the two major suburban Texas public school districts, but also provides the reason a school failed to meet the federal accountability standard of proficiency.

Table 4

Federal Ratings Reason Missed AYP for 2010-2011

	Missed AYP	Math	Reading	Math & Reading	Other
District A	8	2	3	2	1
District B	9	2	7	0	0

Archival Data

This study used the TEA identified academic school year of 2010-2011 and all archival data used in the study were gathered from the TEA website (TEA, 2011). The TEA website also provided the 2011 AEIS and federal AYP accountability data for this study. The academic 2010 – 2011 school year was selected because it was the last official year for TAKS to be administered in the Texas Schools. It was also the last year that TAKS data would be used to assign Texas schools state accountability ratings under the TAKS system. Using the 2010 – 2011 school year TAKS data allowed the use of common data years. The TEA 2010 – 2011 data for the two major suburban Texas public school districts was gathered and organized for correlational analysis between state and federal accountability against enrollment and enrollment percentage by student groups.

Data Analyses for Correlations

The archival data was transferred to and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Correlation analyses using SPSS were used on the archival

data for the questions. SPSS was used to determine if statistically significant differences existed between Texas school accountability and student characteristics of race, economic status, and school size. SPSS was also used to determine if statistically significant differences existed between federal school accountability (AYP) and student characteristics of race, economic status, school size, and student achievement.

Specifically, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) or the Pearson R (pr) test was used to compute bivariate correlations in SPSS. In this study, the bivariate correlations were computed to examine the relations between enrollment against state and federal accountability, as well as the enrollment percentage of race by student groups against state and federal accountability for the two major suburban Texas public school districts.

Data Collection Procedures for Survey

A survey method was used to gather school and principal data (Babbie, 1990; Fink & Koseoff, 1998; Mellenbergh, 2008; Scheaffer, Mendenhall, & Ott, 1990). For this study, an on-line survey was used to collect information on principal and school background characteristics. The on-line survey was sent to the principals and administrators of the 37 secondary schools in the two major suburban Texas public school districts. Approvals from the two participating school districts and the University of Houston were obtained following protocol for research on human subjects (See Appendices C, D & E).

The participants completed the voluntary participation form before they completed the survey. Each purposely-selected participant received an electronic copy of the informed consent letter, written in English, explaining the purpose of the research, the

time period for the research, confidentiality, what data will be collected, and where the data will be stored. The survey instruments were delivered by e-mail, once with two reminders, one week apart, to non-responders. The participant will provide consent to complete the survey after reading the electronic letter attached to the email and logging on. Principals responded to open-ended questions and Likert-scale questions by clicking on “radio buttons”. After completing the survey, the teachers and principals clicked a “SUBMIT” button, which transferred their answers to the web server. If any questions were not completed, the survey directed the participant to return to unanswered questions. The answers to these questions were only available to the researcher and the web server.

Data Analyses for Survey

Data collected using the Survey Monkey on-line questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution. A data table was created to organize the survey data collected. The survey data was analyzed for principal backgrounds, characteristics, and qualities such as the institution of higher learning for undergraduate major, graduate degree, principal certification, as well as years of experience.

Summary

The study originally planned on exploring the role of accountability on effective school turnarounds by surveying 37 secondary principals in two major suburban Texas public school districts. The survey intended to explore the relations between Texas accountability ratings, race, and economic status, as well as exploring between No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) federal accountability ratings and race, and economic status for the sample schools. Due to the unreliability of the survey data collected, the focus of the study shifted to a correlation research design. Archival data from the 2010-2011 Texas

Education Agency's Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) was used to gather Texas accountability and federal (AYP) ratings for the two Texas public school districts.

The focus shifted from using a secondary principal survey to answer three research questions to a correlational study exploring relations between Texas and federal (AYP) accountability ratings, and the various independent variables. Quantitative research methods utilizing SPSS were used to explore the relations between student characteristics of race, economic status, and school size on Texas accountability. This study also explored the relations of student characteristics of race, economic status, school size, and student achievement on federal accountability. The data collected from the survey was analyzed and reported as descriptive statistics. Chapter four, part two, will discuss the problems encountered in gathering those data.

Although the focus on how to explore the role of accountability on effective school turnarounds in two major suburban Texas public school districts changed, the purpose of the study remained the same. Chapter four, part one, will present the findings for Texas accountability, federal (AYP) accountability, characteristics of race, economic status, school size, and student achievement studied.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore the role of accountability on school turnarounds in two major suburban Texas public school districts. This study sought to understand which variables related to turnaround accountability status using Texas Education Agency (TEA) 2010-2011 Texas accountability and the state NCLB AYP data (TEA, 2011). Finally, the study focused on the relation between principal characteristics and student achievement in two major suburban Texas public school districts.

The study goal was to gather data on principal qualities/characteristics using a survey administered to 37 secondary school principals in the two suburban school districts. In gathering the data to identify turnaround schools and principal qualities/characteristics it became evident that valid and reliable data were not available directly from the principal survey. Consequently, questions one and three were eliminated except for partial responses in part two. Part two of chapter four will discuss the problems encountered in gathering those data.

In the research process, the study focus shifted from using a secondary principal survey to answer three research questions to a correlational study exploring relations between Texas and federal (AYP) accountability and student factors. The student factors investigated in this study were student characteristics of race, economic status, school size, and student achievement. Although research methods and study design changed, the

purpose of the study remained to explore the accountability on school turnarounds in two major suburban Texas public school districts.

Part One

In part one of chapter four, Texas accountability, federal accountability, student race, school size, and student economic background were studied. Question three *“What is relation between NCLB/state accountability accreditation and the qualities of turnaround secondary school principals for two major suburban school districts in Texas?”* was changed to questions one through six as presented. The following were the research questions:

1. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and the enrollment percentage of race?
 - a. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and the enrollment percentage of African American students?
 - b. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and the enrollment percentage of Asian students?
 - c. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and the enrollment percentage of Hispanic students?
 - d. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and the enrollment percentage of White students?
2. What is the relation between federal school accountability and the enrollment percentage of race?
 - a. What is the relation between federal school accountability and the enrollment percentage of African American students?

- b. What is the relation between federal school accountability and the enrollment percentage of Asian students?
 - c. What is the relation between federal school accountability and the enrollment percentage of Hispanic students?
 - d. What is the relation between federal school accountability and the enrollment percentage of White students?
3. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment?
- a. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 500 to 1,000 students?
 - b. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 1,001 to 1,500 students?
 - c. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 1,501 to 2,000 students?
 - d. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment of over 2,000 students?
4. What is the relation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment?
- a. What is the relation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 500 to 1,000 students?
 - b. What is the relation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 1,001 to 1,500 students?

- c. What is the relation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 1,501 to 2,000 students?
 - d. What is the relation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment of over 2,000 students?
- 5. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and student economic background?
- 6. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student economic background?
- 7. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math and reading?
 - a. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math?
 - b. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading?
- 8. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math by race?
 - a. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math by African American students?
 - b. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math by Asian students?
 - c. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math by Hispanic students?

- d. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math by White students?
9. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading by race?
- a. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading by African American students?
 - b. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading by Asian students?
 - c. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading by Hispanic students?
 - d. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading by White students?

For purposes of chapter four, part one, Texas accountability, federal accountability, race, school size, student economics will be defined using the definitions provided in chapter two.

Impact of Research Findings

Question One: *“What is the relation between Texas school accountability and the enrollment percentage of race?”* This question was subdivided into the four major student groups (African American, Asian, Hispanic, and White) in the two major suburban Texas public school districts.

- a. Relation between Texas school accountability and the enrollment percentage of African American students in the two Texas districts.

The finding for question 1a was that enrollment percentage of the African American student group was not statistically significant with regards to Texas accountability. For this study, it means that the number of African American students enrolled in school had no impact on the Texas accountability rating received.

- b. Relation between Texas school accountability and the enrollment percentage of Asian students in the two Texas districts.

The finding for question 1b was that enrollment percentage of the Asian student group was not statistically significant with regards to Texas accountability. For this study, it means that the number of Asian students enrolled in school had no impact on the Texas accountability rating received.

- c. Relation between Texas school accountability and the enrollment percentage of Hispanic students in the two Texas districts.

The finding for question 1c was that enrollment percentage of the Hispanic student group was not statistically significant with regards to Texas accountability. For this study, it means that the number of Hispanic students enrolled in school had no impact on the Texas accountability rating received.

- d. Relation between Texas school accountability and the enrollment percentage of White students in the two Texas districts.

The finding for question 1d was that enrollment percentage of the White student group was not statistically significant with regards to Texas accountability. For this study, it means that the number of White students enrolled in school had no impact on the Texas accountability rating received.

Question Two: “*What is the relation between federal school accountability and the enrollment percentage of race?*” This question was subdivided into the four major student groups (African American, Asian, Hispanic, and White) in the two major suburban Texas public school districts. For this study on question two, three of the four student group correlations showed statistically significant findings for federal school accountability and enrollment percentage (see Table 5). These findings show that federal school accountability was impacted by the enrollment percentage of student groups for the two Texas school districts in this study.

Table 5

Federal Accountability by Race

Accountability	African American	Asian	Hispanic	White
Federal	.50*	.47	-.66**	.65**

Note. Correlations marked with an asterisk (*) were significant at $p < .05$. Correlations marked with an asterisks (**) were significant at $p < .01$.

- a. Relation between federal school accountability and the enrollment percentage of African American students in the two Texas districts.

The finding for question 2a revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between the enrollment percentage of African American students and federal school accountability. For this study of two Texas school districts, it means that a moderate correlation exists that as the number of African American students enrolled increased, then the federal school accountability also increased.

- b. Relation between federal school accountability and the enrollment percentage of Asian students in the two Texas districts.

The finding for question 2b was that no statistically significant correlation between the enrollment percentage of Asian students and federal school accountability was found. For this study, it means that the number of Asian students enrolled in a school had no impact on the federal accountability rating received.

- c. Relation between federal school accountability and the enrollment percentage of Hispanic students in the two Texas districts.

The finding for question 2c revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between the enrollment percentage of Hispanic students and federal school accountability was found. For this study of two Texas school districts, it means that a moderately high correlation exists that as the number of Hispanic students enrolled increased, then the federal school accountability decreased.

- d. Relation between federal school accountability and the enrollment percentage of White students in the two Texas districts.

The finding for question 2d revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between the enrollment percentage of White students and federal school accountability was found. For this study of two Texas school districts, it means that a moderately high correlation exists that as the number of White students enrolled increased, then the federal school accountability also increased.

Question Three: *What is the relation between Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment?* The finding for this question revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment as a whole. Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment were moderately correlated, $r(93) = -.39, p < .01$. This means that for this

study as the overall enrollment of students goes up, Texas school accountability went down. As the question was subdivided into the four different sizes to see if specific sizes could determine the tipping point for Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment for questions 3a through 3d, the size classification yielded the following findings:

- a. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 500 to 1,000 students?

The finding for question 3a was that school size or school enrollment between 500 to 1,000 students was not statistically significant with regards to Texas school accountability. For this study, it means that school size between 500 to 1,000 students did not impact the accountability rating a school received from the state of Texas.

- b. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 1,001 to 1,500 students?

The finding for question 3b was that school size or school enrollment between 1,001 to 1,500 students was not statistically significant with regards to Texas school accountability. For this study, it means that school size between 1,001 to 1,500 students did not impact the accountability rating a school received from the state of Texas.

- c. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 1,501 to 2,000 students?

The finding for question 3c was that school size or school enrollment between 1,501 to 2,000 students was not statistically significant with regards to Texas school accountability. For this study, it means that school size between 1,501 to 2,000 students did not impact the accountability rating a school received from the state of Texas.

- d. What is the relation between Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment of over 2000 students?

The finding for question 3d was that school size or school enrollment of over 2,000 students was not statistically significant with regards to Texas school accountability. For this study, it means that school size over 2,000 students did not impact the accountability rating a school received from the state of Texas.

Question Four: *What is the relation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment?* The findings revealed that there was no statistically significant correlation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment.

- a. What is the relation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 500 to 1,000 students?

The finding for question 4a revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 500 to 1,000 students. There was a low correlation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment, $r(57) = .27$, $p < .05$. This means for this study that as the enrollment of students in a school was between 500 to 1,000 students, schools tended to meet federal accountability.

- b. What is the relation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 1,001 to 1,500 students?

The finding for question 4b was that school size or school enrollment between 1,001 to 1,500 students was not statistically significant with regards to federal school

accountability. For this study, it means that school size between 1,001 to 1,500 students had no impact as to whether the school met federal accountability.

- c. What is the relation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 1,501 to 2,000 students?

The finding for question 4c was that school size or school enrollment between 1,501 to 2,000 students was not statistically significant with regards to federal school accountability. For this study, it means that school size between 1,501 to 2,000 students had no impact as to whether the school met federal accountability.

- d. What is the relation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment of over 2,000 students?

The finding for question 4d revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment of over 2,000 students. There was a strong correlation between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment, $r(8) = -.72$, $p < .05$. This means for this study that as the enrollment of students in a school was over 2,000 students, schools failed to meet federal accountability.

Question Five: *What is the relation between Texas school accountability and student economic background?* The finding for this question revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between Texas school accountability and student economic background. Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment were moderately correlated, $r(89) = -.32$, $p < .01$. This means that for this study as the overall enrollment of economically disadvantaged students goes up, Texas school accountability went down.

Question Six: *What is the relation between federal school accountability and student economic background?* The finding for this question revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between federal school accountability and student economic background. There was a low correlation between federal school accountability and student economic background, $r(84) = -.22, p < .05$. This means that for this study as the overall enrollment of economically disadvantaged students goes up, federal school accountability went down.

Question Seven: *What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement?* This question was subdivided into federal school accountability and math, and federal school accountability and reading in the two major suburban Texas public school districts.

- a. What is the relation between federal school accountability and math?

The finding for question 7a revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between federal school accountability and math. There was a moderate correlation between federal school accountability and math, $r(84) = .46, p < .01$. For this study of two Texas school districts it means that as math scores increased, then federal school accountability also increased.

- b. What is the relation between federal school accountability and reading?

The finding for question 7b revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between federal school accountability and reading. There was a moderate correlation between federal school accountability and reading, $r(84) = .46, p < .01$. For this study of two Texas school districts it means that as reading scores increased, then federal school accountability also increased.

Question Eight: *What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math by race?* This question was subdivided into the four major student groups (African American, Asian, Hispanic, and White) in the two major suburban Texas public school districts. For this study on question eight, two of the four student group correlations showed statistically significant findings for federal school accountability and student achievement by race (see Table 6). These findings show that federal school accountability in math was impacted by the student achievement by race for the two Texas school districts in this study. This means for this study that as the enrollment of Hispanic and White students in a school went up, student achievement in math tended to go up with regards to federal accountability.

Table 6

Federal Accountability & Math Achievement by Race

Federal Accountability	African American	Asian	Hispanic	White
Math	.13	.18	.48**	.30**

Note. Correlations marked with an asterisks (**) were significant at $p < .01$.

- a. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math by African American students?

The finding for question 8a was that no statistically significant correlation between the student achievement in math by African American students and federal school accountability was found. For this study, it means that African American student achievement in math had no impact on whether the school met federal accountability.

- b. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math by Asian students?

The finding for question 8b was that no statistically significant correlation between student achievement in math by Asian students and federal school accountability was found. For this study, it means that Asian student achievement in math had no impact on whether the school met federal accountability.

c. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math by Hispanic students?

The finding for question 8c revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between the student achievement in math by Hispanic students and federal school accountability. For this study of two Texas school districts, it means that a moderate correlation exists that as more Hispanic students achieved in math, then federal school accountability also increased.

d. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in math by White students?

The finding for question 8d revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between the student achievement in math by White students and federal school accountability. For this study of two Texas school districts, it means that a slightly moderate correlation exists that as more White students achieved in math, then federal school accountability also increased.

Question Nine: *What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading by race?* This question was subdivided into the four major student groups (African American, Asian, Hispanic, and White) in the two major suburban Texas public school districts.

- a. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading by African American students?

The finding for question 9a was that no statistically significant correlation between student achievement in reading by African American students and federal school accountability was found. For this study, it means that African American student achievement in reading had no impact on whether the school met federal accountability.

- b. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading by Asian students?

The finding for question 9b was that no statistically significant correlation between student achievement in reading by Asian students and federal school accountability was found. For this study, it means that Asian student achievement in reading had no impact on whether the school met federal accountability.

- c. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading by Hispanic students?

The finding for question 9c revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between student achievement in reading by Hispanic students and federal school accountability. There was a moderate correlation between federal school accountability and reading, $r(84) = .54, p < .01$. For this study of two Texas school districts it means that as Hispanic students achieved in reading at the 80 percent or higher proficiency level, then federal school accountability also increased.

- d. What is the relation between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading by White students?

The finding for question 9d was that no statistically significant correlation between the student achievement in reading by White students and federal school accountability was found. For this study, it means that White student achievement in reading had no impact on whether the school met federal accountability.

Part Two

Part two of chapter four will discuss the problems encountered in gathering data on principal qualities/characteristics using a survey administered to 37 secondary school principals in the two suburban school districts. In gathering the data to identify turnaround schools and principal qualities/characteristics it became evident that valid and reliable data were not available directly from the principal survey. Consequently, questions one and three were eliminated except with partial responses in part two. Question one *“What is the relation between achievement and the qualities of turnaround secondary principals?”* was the question that propelled the principal survey.

The study goal of the original question two was to gather data on principal qualities/characteristics using a survey administered to 34 secondary school principals in the two suburban school districts. The return rates became a problem for gathering reliable data. Twenty four useable surveys were returned and considered legitimate and valid for this study. Six additional surveys were returned but were considered unusable. The unusable surveys were partially complete with major portions of the survey blank or the respondents chose not to complete the survey altogether. With 24 returned and usable surveys out of 34 secondary schools, the response rate was 70.59 percent. The response rate was too low to measure significance; consequently, data gathered were used to report simple statistics such as principal background and characteristics, school characteristics, and student achievement and make recommendations for future studies.

Of the principals who responded to the survey, many provided information on their student achievement data that was inconsistent with the TEA data presented in the TEA Website (2010-2011). It was assumed that principals would provide accurate and truthful data representing their campus and data during their tenure as principals. The data reported did not identify any turnaround campuses. The data reflected schools with successful achievement. The data reported by the survey respondents did not reflect the TEA AEIS (2010-2011) Texas campus accountability data which showed that while only two campuses in District A were rated as unacceptable campuses identified for campus turnaround, eight campuses in District A and nine Campuses in District B did not meet AYP under the federal accountability policy. In addition the federal accountability system reported that four campuses in District A and five campuses in District B were not rated. The low response rate to the survey and the reported data combined with TEA AEIS reported data were limitations in the survey method and will be discussed in chapter five.

This section will discuss some of the simple statistics emerging from the survey findings. Since the return rate on this survey was too low, it can only be verified that these data apply to the 24 secondary schools in this sample of suburban school districts. Findings from this survey cannot be generalized to any other secondary schools or districts. In question two of the survey there were 24 responses, with 50 percent indicating they received their graduate degree from a university geographically connected to their school district. In question four of the survey, there were 24 responses, with 41 percent indicating they received their principal certification from a university not geographically connected to their district. In question three, respondents were asked to identify their undergraduate major as a resource that school leaders bring to lead

instructional and achievement changes in mathematics, language arts, and science education (Spillane, 2001). In responding to this question, 23 of the 24 respondents provided data. Of the 23 respondents, 35 percent responded that they received their undergraduate major in education. Only nine percent responded that science or English/Language Arts were their undergraduate majors. While 17 percent responded they held an undergraduate major in the area of social studies, it was surprising to note that zero percent responded as having a math undergraduate major. Another 23 of 24 principals responded to the question of their school's percentage on free and reduced lunch students. It was interesting to note that 57 percent of the principals responded to having less than 75 percent of their student population on free and reduced lunch. Of the two major suburban Texas public school districts, one district shows an average of 30 percent of their students as economically disadvantaged students, while the other district averages 75 percent economically disadvantaged students. In responding to the question on principal tenure, twenty-two or 77 percent responded that they have been a principal from one to ten years. Of those same twenty-two respondents or 86 percent stated that they have been principal from one to ten years at same school.

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore the role of accountability on school turnarounds in two major suburban Texas public school districts. This chapter presented the findings of the relations between Texas accountability ratings, race, and economic status. Findings on relations between federal accountability ratings, race, and economic status were also presented for the two Texas districts. Findings from correlational analyses and from the principal survey exploring the relation between

principal characteristics and student achievement were also presented. Chapter five will discuss recommendations for the findings in chapter four, parts one and two.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore the role of accountability on school turnarounds in two major suburban Texas public school districts. This study sought to understand which variables related to turnaround accountability status using Texas Education Agency (TEA) 2010-2011 Texas accountability and the state NCLB AYP data (TEA, 2011). The study focused on the relation between principal characteristics and student achievement in two major suburban Texas public school districts. In this chapter the results of the data analyses are discussed.

Part One: Discussion

Part one of chapter five discusses the findings for Texas accountability, federal accountability, student race, school size, and student economic background and makes recommendations for future research. Question two *“What is relation between NCLB/state accountability accreditation and the qualities of turnaround secondary school principals for two major suburban school districts in Texas?”* was changed to ask *“What was the relation between accountability and student characteristics of race, school size, and economic status for two major suburban school districts?”* Texas accountability, federal accountability, race, school size, student economics were defined using the definitions provided in chapter two.

Accountability data were defined using Texas accountability and federal accountability policy (Texas Education Code, Chapter 39, 2011; Title 19 TAC §97, 2011; NCLB, 2002). This study used Texas accountability data provided by the Texas

Education Agency website for 2010-2011. Federal accountability data were also provided by the Texas Education Agency website for 2010-2011. The Texas definition for federal accountability was provided in chapter one and chapter three. Federal accountability requires the use of archival student achievement data for math and reading from the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) 2010-2011 Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) website database. The federal accountability system was used because when viewing Texas Accountability, it was noted that under Texas accountability only two schools in the sample were rated as Academically Unacceptable. Yet, under the federal accountability system requiring that schools and districts meet AYP academic goals in math, reading/language seventeen schools were unacceptable. According to the Texas Commissioner of Education rules, in order to meet the Texas accountability system for 2010-2011, Texas schools had to meet the proficiency standards of 65 percent for math and 70 percent for reading for all students and measureable student groups taking the TAKS assessments. In order to meet the NCLB AYP federal requirements for 2010-2011, Texas schools had to meet the proficiency standards of 75 percent for math and 80 percent for reading for all students and measureable student groups taking the TAKS assessments. The incongruence in the Texas accountability system and the NCLB AYP accountability system led to dual systems in meeting student achievement standards in the two major suburban Texas public school districts (Title 19 TAC, §97).

The data derived from this study provided evidence of significant relations between Texas accountability and student characteristics, school size, and economic status. Evidence of other significant relations between federal accountability and student characteristics of race, school size, and economic status for two major suburban school

districts were provided. The purpose of this is to discuss the results of the research, the impact the study had, any limitations of the study, and recommendations for future studies. Part two of chapter five will discuss the results of the survey methods used in this study. Part one of chapter five discusses the findings of this study and possible implications for the most significant relations.

Part One: Findings

For this study, there were significant relations between student characteristics of race and federal accountability. There was a significant positive relation, $r(84) = .50, p < .05$, between enrollment percentage of the African American student group and federal school accountability. The data for this question supported a significant relation that as the enrollment percentage of African American students in these two major suburban Texas public school districts increased so did the federal accountability of the school attended. The data show that the more African American students in these suburban schools, the more likely that the schools will meet AYP. This is an important finding because the data show that while this population represents a low enrollment it had the power to increase meeting the federal AYP accountability criteria.

A significant negative relation, $r(84) = -.66, p < .01$, also existed between enrollment percentage of the Hispanic student group and federal school accountability. The data for this question supported a significant relation that as the enrollment percentage of Hispanic students in these two major suburban Texas public school districts increased, then the power to meet federal AYP accountability for the school decreased. This finding is important because the Hispanic population in District A was 30 percent, while in District B the Hispanic population was the majority in the district at 91 percent.

These data suggested that in District A, Hispanic students were a major impact on decreasing the district's ability to meet the federal school accountability, while in District B Hispanic students increases the district's ability to meet federal AYP school accountability.

Like the Hispanic student group, there was a significant positive relation, $r(84) = .65, p < .01$, between enrollment percentage of the White student group and federal school accountability. The data for this question supported a significant relation showing that as the enrollment percentage of White students in these two major suburban Texas public school districts increased, meeting the federal AYP accountability also increased. This finding was important because the White population in District A was the majority in the district at 45 percent, while in District B the White population was only 6 percent. These data suggest that in District A, White students were a major factor in meeting federal AYP accountability. In District B White students increased the district's ability to meet the federal AYP school accountability. It may be assumed that the suburban white population in these two Texas districts increased the possibility to meet federal AYP accountability.

In looking at school size or school enrollment and Texas accountability, significant relations were discovered. There was a significant negative relation, $r(93) = -.39, p < .01$, between Texas school accountability and school size or school enrollment. The data for this question supported a significant relation that as the school size or school enrollment in these two major suburban Texas public school districts increased, then the Texas school accountability rating decreased. A more in depth look at this question was explored to see if the data would indicate at which school

size/enrollment this would be more likely to occur for Texas school accountability. The further exploration into this question led to school size/enrollment being segmented into increments of 500 to 1,000 students, 1,001 to 1,500 students, 1,501 to 2,000 students, and over 2,000 students. Research questions 3a through 3d provide the results of this inquiry.

Also, a significant positive relation, $r(57) = .27, p < .05$, between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment between 500 and 1,000 students existed. The data for federal accountability supported a significant relation that as the school size or school enrollment remained between 500 and 1,000 students, then federal school accountability increased. The significance of these data suggests that for federal accountability to be positive, the school size/enrollment would need to remain between 500 to 1,000 students. While we cannot make any implications the data say that for this sample of schools size between 500 to 1000 students increases the school's ability to meet federal AYP accountability.

A significant negative relation, $r(8) = -.72, p < .05$, between federal school accountability and school size or school enrollment of over 2,000 students was discovered. The data for this question supported a significant relation that as the school size or school enrollment in these two major suburban Texas public school districts went over 2,000 students, then the school's ability to meet federal school accountability decreased. The significance of these data suggests that the ability to meet federal accountability decreases in schools with a school size over 2,000 students.

Student economic background affected Texas school accountability. There was a significant negative relation, $r(89) = -.32, p < .01$, between Texas school accountability and student economic background. The data for this question supported a significant

relation for this study. Texas school accountability ratings decreased as the number of economically disadvantaged students increased. Clearly the data in this study show that student economic background is significant factor in Texas school accountability ratings. As the number of low income students increases the school's Texas accountability rating decreases.

The implication of this finding is that for this study the persistence of the achievement gap is prevalent despite the efforts of Texas and NCLB federal policy and funding for closing this gap for low income children. Future policy and practice should continue to focus on closing the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students.

As with Texas accountability, federal accountability was impacted by student economic background. There was a significant negative relation, $r(84) = -.22, p < .05$, between federal school accountability and student economic background. The data for this question supported a significant relation showing that as the number of economically disadvantaged students increased the school's ability to meet federal school accountability decreased.

The implication of this study's finding remains that the persistence of the achievement gap is prevalent despite the efforts of NCLB federal policy and funding for closing this gap for low income children. As stated previously, future policy and practice should continue to focus on closing the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students.

Research questions 7a and 7b looked at the relation between federal accountability and student achievement in reading and math. There was a significant

positive relation, $r(84) = .46$, $p < .01$, between federal school accountability and student achievement in math. The data for this question in the study supported a significant relation that as math scores increased, then so did the school's ability to meet the federal school accountability increased for these two Texas districts. There was also a significant positive relation, $r(84) = .46$, $p < .01$, between federal school accountability and student achievement in reading. The data for this question in the study supported a significant relation that as reading scores increased, then so did the school's ability to meet the federal school accountability also increased for these two Texas districts. The implication of this study's finding is that future policy and practice in schools must continue to focus on math and reading instruction to continue to meet federal accountability.

This study also looked at how a school's ability to meet federal accountability was impacted by characteristics of race with regards to student achievement in math and reading. There was a significant positive relation, $r(84) = .48$, $p < .01$, between federal school accountability and student achievement in math by Hispanic students. For this study, the data for this question supported a significant relation that as the student achievement in math by Hispanic students increased, did the school's ability to meet federal school accountability also increased. The implication is that because of the size of the Hispanic population in both these Texas school districts, their student achievement is crucial to federal school accountability. Future policy and practice in each of the districts should focus on meeting the educational needs of the Hispanic student group in math as it will drive the success of the two major suburban Texas school districts in meeting federal accountability

There was also a significant relation, $r(77) = .30, p < .01$, between federal school accountability and student achievement in math by White students. For this study, the data for this question supported a significant relation that as the student achievement in math by White students increased, then so did the federal school accountability for these two Texas districts. The implication is that because the White population is an affluent majority in District A and an affluent pocket in District B, their student achievement in math is crucial to federal school accountability in both districts. Future policy and practice in each of the districts should focus on continuing to meet the educational needs of the White student group in math as it will continue having an impact on the success of the two major suburban Texas school districts in meeting federal accountability

With regards to student achievement in reading, there was a significant relation, $r(84) = .54, p < .01$, between federal school accountability and Hispanic students. For this study, the data for this question supported a significant relation that as the student achievement in reading by Hispanic students increased, then so did the school's ability to meet the federal school accountability increased for these two Texas districts. The implication is that because of the size of the Hispanic population in both these Texas school districts, their student achievement in reading is also crucial to federal school accountability. As previously stated, future policy and practice in each of the districts should focus on meeting the educational needs of the Hispanic student group in reading as it will drive the success of the two major suburban Texas school districts in meeting federal accountability

Part Two: Survey Discussion & Findings

The study was able to provide some data on principal characteristics/qualities, including principal undergraduate degrees and graduate degrees. Survey respondents were asked to identify their undergraduate degrees as a resource that school leaders bring to lead instructional and achievement changes in mathematics, language arts, and science education (Spillane, 2001). In responding to this question 23 of the 24 respondents provided data. Those data were aligned with their district AEIS achievement data. The data in the survey showed that the principals' undergraduate major often times did not match the school's struggling academic area. The survey also indicated that 2 of the 23 respondents held an undergraduate major in the areas of math and science. Student achievement in math and science are concerns in education. This study showed that principals in these two major suburban Texas public school districts did not have an educational background in math and science. Educational background gives a principal a base of knowledge to work from as they lead their school.

The archival data showed that the schools with principals who had an undergraduate degree in English/Language Arts, tended to have higher student achievement in reading than in math; however, their resources did not extend to English-Language Learners. Several of the principals with degrees in English/Language Arts did not meet AYP because of ELL students' inability to meet AYP accountability. There were no principal respondents that had an undergraduate degree in math. The respondents responded that they often times received their graduate degree from a university geographically connected to the district of employment; however, that was not the case when they received their principal certification. The importance of this study's findings

leads to consideration for the development of school leaders as a human capital resource through principal certification programs. This can help enhance a principals' effort to lead instruction change in mathematics, language arts, and science education.

Future policy consideration needs to be given to providing additional training in the areas math and science educational endorsements for individuals in teacher training programs. This will help prepare teachers that end up becoming future principals leading schools that may be struggling with student achievement in math and science.

Limitations of this Study

Limitations to this present research fell into three categories: (a) sample selection, (b) sample size, and (c) instrumentation. The first limitation of this study was the use of a convenience sample which is not representative of the population; consequently, the results of this study cannot be generalized. Limitations of the sample selection included a small sample size. Inferences drawn from small samples make it questionable to generalize these results to a larger population. The initial selection of this study's participants of secondary principals was another limitation. A survey was sent to thirty-seven secondary principals, with only twenty-four secondary principals responding. Although it was a small sample size and the response rate was even smaller, it was not an option to resubmit the survey to all principals in the two Texas districts to increase sample size.

This research study had limitations with the instrumentation. Survey methods are a self-report measure designed for quantitative research and currently the most accepted instrumentation methodology for these purposes; therefore, according to the research the survey was the appropriate psychometric tool for this research project. However, the

research shows that self-report measures may not provide an accurate portrayal of reality and may unintentionally reflect bias on the part of the participant. In some cases the respondent may respond with what he/she thinks the researcher wants to hear. According to Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun (2012), research limitations for quantitative studies are that the researcher is detached from the study and that facts and feelings are separate. Survey data present problems when respondents self-select which questions to answer and which questions to leave unanswered.

The use of correlational methods was also a limitation of this study. Correlational research determines that a prediction from one variable to another variable may be made; therefore, implying that the two variables are related. Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, (2012), state that the researcher is cautioned that two variables can be associated without there being a causal relation between the variables. Therefore, the researcher cannot make causal conclusions from correlational findings because all the alternative explanations for correlational findings cannot be ruled out.

Conclusions

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore the role of accountability on school turnarounds in two major suburban Texas public school districts. The data analyses were redirected from focusing solely on the survey instrument as the source of data for this study to data analyses of the 2010 - 2011 TEA archival data for the two major suburban Texas public school districts. Data analyses of the archival data in this study provided the relations on the role of accountability on school turnarounds in two major suburban Texas public school districts. There were two schools that did not meet a proficient standard on Texas accountability, while there were seventeen schools that did

not meet the proficient standard in federal accountability. This study has contributed more evidence in needing to clarify the dueling state and federal accountability systems. The impact of having dueling systems is that all constituents receive mixed signals on the success of their community school. Under one accountability system, a school may be meeting the standard, while under the other accountability system, it may not.

In comparing the correlation between Texas and federal accountability ratings and the variables of race and economic background, Hispanics, White, and Economically Disadvantaged student groups showed strong relations to student achievement in math and reading. The significant relations found point researcher in the direction on which to focus attention. This study concludes that race and economic background are significant for these two Texas school districts when correlated with Texas and federal accountability ratings. Future policy and practice should focus on closing the achievement gap between student subgroups in both race and economic status affecting state and federal accountability. Although these findings are not causal relations, it does provide areas of interest for further investigations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, recommendations for future research would be to:

1. Focus on developing school leaders as a human capital resource through principal certification programs to enhance efforts to lead instruction change in mathematics, language arts, and science education.

2. Focus on determining components of highly-effective professional development, specifically on math and science education for principals and principal certification.
3. Focus on identifying strategic hiring practices that would result in administrators that have the identified characteristics needed to turn around a failing school.
4. Focus on relations between student achievement, economic background of the student, and principal characteristics.

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APPENDIX A:
PRINCIPAL SURVEY

Principal Survey - Turnaround Challenge

1. Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)

- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Latino or Hispanic American
- ☐ White or Caucasian
- ☐ Multiple ethnicity or Other (please specify) _____

2. Where did you attain your graduate degree?

- ☐ Texas A&M University
- ☐ Texas State University
- ☐ Texas Tech University
- ☐ University of Houston
- ☐ University of North Texas
- ☐ University of Texas
- ☐ University of Texas at Arlington
- ☐ University of Texas at Dallas
- ☐ University of Texas at El Paso
- ☐ University of Texas at San Antonio
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

3. What was your undergraduate major?

- ☐ Business
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Engineering
- ☐ English/Language Arts
- ☐ Fine Arts/Music
- ☐ Foreign Languages/French/Spanish
- ☐ Math
- ☐ Science
- ☐ Social Studies/History
- ☐ Technology
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

4. Where did you receive your principal certification?

- ☐ Texas A&M University
- ☐ Texas State University
- ☐ Texas Tech University
- ☐ University of Houston
- ☐ University of North Texas
- ☐ University of Texas
- ☐ University of Texas at Arlington
- ☐ University of Texas at Dallas
- ☐ University of Texas at El Paso
- ☐ University of Texas at San Antonio
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

5. Socorro ISD can best be described as what kind of district? (Please choose only one type - the most accurate description)

- ☐ Charter School Districts. (open enrollment school district chartered by the State Board of Education)
- ☐ Independent Town. (located in a county with a population of 25,000 to 99,999 people)
- ☐ Major Suburban. (contiguous to a major urban school district and population of at least 4,550 students)
- ☐ Major Urban. (population of at least 750,000 students)
- ☐ Non-Metropolitan: Fast Growing. (has an enrollment of at least 300 students and the enrollment has increased by at least 20% over the past five years)
- ☐ Non-Metropolitan: Stable. (enrollment exceeds the median district enrollment for the state)
- ☐ Other Central City. (district is not contiguous to a major urban district; it is located in a county with a population of between 100,000 and 749,999; and, its enrollment is the largest in the county or at least 75 percent of the largest district enrollment in the county)
- ☐ Other Central City Suburban. (district is contiguous to another central city district; its enrollment is greater than 3 percent that of the contiguous other central city district; its enrollment exceeds the median district enrollment of 765 students for the state; it is located in a county with a population of between 100,000 and 749,999; and, its enrollment is at least 15 percent of the largest district enrollment in the county)
- ☐ Rural. (population of less than 300 students and annual growth rate of less than 20%)

6. What is the student population on your campus?

- ☐ 0 - 499
- ☐ 500 - 999
- ☐ 1000 - 1499
- ☐ 1500 - 1999

7. What percentage of student population is on Free/Reduced Lunch?

- ☐ Less than 25%
- ☐ 25% - 49%
- ☐ 50% - 74%
- ☐ 75% - 84%
- ☐ 85% - 94%
- ☐ 94% - 99%

8. Which two race/ethnicity student populations best describe your school? (Please choose two - one 70% or over student population AND one 30% or less student population)

- ☐ 31% - 100% - Black or African American
- ☐ 31% - 100% - Latino or Hispanic American
- ☐ 31% - 100% - White or Caucasian
- ☐ 31% - 100% - American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ 31% - 100% - Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ 0 - 30% - Black or African American
- ☐ 0 - 30% - Latino or Hispanic American
- ☐ 0 - 30% - White or Caucasian
- ☐ 0 - 30% - American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ 0 - 30% - Asian/Pacific Islander

9. Please check your Texas Education Agency campus accountability rating for the 2012 - 2013 school year:

- ☐ Met Standard
- ☐ Met Alternative Standard
- ☐ Improvement Required
- ☐ Not Rated
- ☐ Not Rated: Data Integrity Issues

10. Please check your Texas Education Agency campus accountability rating for each year of your principalship between 2008 and 2012 (only check for the years you were principal of your campus):

[illegible]

14. How long have you been a school principal? (Please choose only one.)

- ☐ less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 3-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ 10 or more years

15. How long have you been principal of your current campus? (Please choose only one.)

- ☐ less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 3-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ 10 or more years

16. What percentage of teachers on your campus are currently funded using Title I funds? (Please choose only one.)

- ☐ 0 - 25%
- ☐ 26% - 50%
- ☐ 51% - 75%
- ☐ 76% - 99%
- ☐ 100%

17. What percentage of teachers on your campus are currently funded using General funds? (Please choose only one.)

- ☐ 0 - 25%
- ☐ 26% - 50%
- ☐ 51% - 75%
- ☐ 76% - 99%
- ☐ 100%

18. Does your campus receive additional funding outside of Title or General funds as part of your yearly school budget?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

19. How much additional funding does your campus receive aside from Title and General funds? (Fund sources can include Foundations, Business Collaborations, Booster Clubs, etc...Please choose the amount which comes closest to what the campus receives annually.)

- ☐ None
- ☐ \$1 - \$10,000
- ☐ \$10,000 - \$20,000
- ☐ \$20,000 - \$30,000
- ☐ \$30,000 - \$40,000
- ☐ \$40,000 - \$50,000
- ☐ \$50,000 - \$60,000
- ☐ \$60,000 - \$70,000
- ☐ \$70,000 - \$80,000
- ☐ \$80,000 - \$90,000
- ☐ \$90,000 - \$100,000
- ☐ Over \$100,000

20. According to NCLB Section 1116 [§200.12(b)(40)], a campus that does not make AYP for the same indicator (reading, mathematics, attendance rate, or graduation rate) for two consecutive years, as AYP is defined by the State's accountability system, must be identified for school improvement. Please check below for any year in which your campus was identified. (Multiple years may be checked.)

- ☐ 2012-2013
- ☐ 2011-2012
- ☐ 2010-2011
- ☐ 2009-2010
- ☐ 2008-2009
- ☐ N/A

21. According to NCLB section §1116(b)(8), a campus that continues to miss its annual AYP achievement targets for several years (5-6 years) must develop specific restructuring plans to substantially raise the achievement of students. (A turnaround school is one in which it has not met AYP several years in a row as identified above.) For these campuses with the greatest need and commitment, Title funds are specifically used in the development of these restructuring plans. Please check for any year below in which the campus was considered a turnaround school. (This may be a campus in which you were hired to be the principal to turn the campus around.)

- ☐ 2012-2013
- ☐ 2011-2012
- ☐ 2010-2011
- ☐ 2009-2010
- ☐ 2008-2009
- ☐ N/A

APPENDIX B:
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

September, 2014

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
Consent to Participate in Research Study

The Turnaround Challenge: The Role of Accountability on School Turnarounds: The Case of Two Major Suburban Texas School Districts

You are being invited to participate in an exploratory quantitative research. The purpose of the proposed quantitative study is to explore how principal qualities affect turnaround policy in two major suburban public school districts in Texas. The study will answer the following research question, how do secondary school principal qualities affect the turnaround challenges in secondary schools in the areas of reading and math achievement while turning those schools around to meet the accountability requirements of NCLB in two major suburban school districts in Texas? This study will examine student characteristics, student achievement data, and principal survey data. This study is being conducted by Efrain Olivo, student of Dr. Reyes, from the College of Education at the University of Houston. This study is being conducted as part of a dissertation.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study as a member of a major suburban school district in Texas and as a campus with interests to participate.

There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research study. There are no costs to you for participating in the study. The information you provide will help to explore how principal qualities affect turnaround policy in two major suburban public school districts in Texas. The questionnaire will take about 10 minutes or less to complete. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but the information learned in this study should provide more general benefits. A summary of the findings will be provided to you by June 2014.

This survey is anonymous. Because this is a web-based survey, anonymity will be provided. Internet Protocol addresses will not be saved. As responses come in, they will be marked as a Normal Response in the Response Type field. There will be no name or email associated with them. This method does not track names or emails. No one will be able to identify you or your answers, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study. Should the data be published, no individual information will be disclosed.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. By completing the survey, you are voluntarily agreeing to participate. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason.

All the data for this study will be stored in a secured environment for three years at the University of Houston, 340 Farish Hall.

Efrain Olivo 3000 Colonial Parkway 281-235-5811	Dr. Augustina Reyes, Professor University of Houston, College of Education 4800 Calhoun, 340 Farish Hall Houston, Texas 77204 713-743-5026
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APPENDIX C:

TEXAS DISTRICT A APPROVAL LETTER



1311 Round Rock Ave | Round Rock, Texas 78664 | 512-464-5906

March 31, 2014

Efrain Olivo
3000 Colonial Parkway
Cedar Park, TX 78613

Dear Mr. Olivo,

Please be advised that the proposed research project, "The Turnaround Challenge: The Role Of Accountability On School Turnarounds: The Case Of Two Major Suburban Texas Public School Districts", is approved starting through 3/31/2014 through 6/30/14. This letter of approval will serve to formally acknowledge permission for you to proceed with the proposed study. Any unapproved changes to the procedure or instruments submitted to the Division of Research and Evaluation on 3/1/2014 or any violations of RRISD policy will result in nullification of this agreement.

The final decision for a school to participate resides with the campus principal. Participation is strictly voluntary, and schools may withdraw participation at any time, and for any reason. Principals may call 464-5906 to ask for the research application and any supporting documents needed to decide whether to participate in the study. Round Rock ISD requires documentation of active, informed consent from parents (for students under 18) and informed assent for students that are able to provide such assent. We require informed consent for students 18 and over. No student without documented consent may be surveyed, interviewed, videotaped or tested in any way.

The Division of Research and Evaluation continues to safeguard the valuable limited time that our students and staff have to participate in research activities; therefore, we ask that you be sensitive to this issue. We wish you the very best in your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Cathy Malerba", followed by a horizontal line.

Cathy Malerba, PhD
Associate Director,
Research and Evaluation

APPENDIX D:

TEXAS DISTRICT B APPROVAL LETTER



SOCORRO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Research and Evaluation

March 10, 2014

To Mr. Efrain Olivo:

This is to inform you that, upon reviewing the submitted documentation for your study titled "THE TURNAROUND CHALLENGE: THE ROLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY ON SCHOOL TURNAROUNDS: THE CASE OF TWO MAJOR SUBURBAN TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS" the Office of Research and Evaluation has determined that your project conforms to our District's standards regarding informed consent, privacy issues, and FERPA regulations and has approved your Research Request Proposal. Your IRB number is 154.

Please provide a copy of this form to administrators when soliciting their participation. The school administrator has the right to decline campus participation and any participation in this research is entirely voluntary and may be withdrawn at any point.

We understand that you will not use our District's name, or any other identifying information, when you publish your findings. We ask that you keep our department apprised of your progress through updates throughout your project's duration, and provide this office with a copy of your results upon completion.

If you require additional information, please feel free to call me at 915-937-0311 or e-mail me at kmendo05@sisd.net.

Sincerely,

Kelly Mendoza
Director of Research and Evaluation
Socorro Independent School District
12440 Rojas Drive
El Paso, TX 79928

APPENDIX E:

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON APPROVAL LETTER

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH

September 23, 2014

Mr. Efrain Olivo
Dean , Education

Dear Mr. Efrain Olivo,

Based upon your request for exempt status, an administrative review of your research proposal entitled "THE TURNAROUND CHALLENGE: THE ROLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY ON SCHOOL TURNAROUNDS: THE CASE OF TWO MAJOR SUBURBAN TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS" was conducted on August 7, 2014.

At that time, your request for exemption under **Category 2** was approved pending modification of your proposed procedures/documents.

The changes you have made adequately respond to the identified contingencies. As long as you continue using procedures described in this project, you do not have to reapply for review. * Any modification of this approved protocol will require review and further approval. Please contact me to ascertain the appropriate mechanism.

If you have any questions, please contact Samoya Copeland at (713) 743-9534.

Sincerely yours,



Kirstin Rochford, MPH,
CIP, CPIA Director,
Research Compliance

*Approvals for exempt protocols will be valid for 5 years beyond the approval date. Approval for this project will expire **September 22, 2019**. If the project is completed prior to this date, a final report should be filed to close the protocol. If the project will continue after this date, you will need to reapply for approval if you wish to avoid an interruption of your data collection.

Protocol Number: 14526-EX
316 E. Cullen Building Houston, TX 77204-2015 (713) 743-9204 Fax: (713) 743-9577 COMMITTEES
FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS.