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December 2017

STATE TAKEOVERS OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS: A REVIEW OF A CASE DISTRICT

A Doctoral Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

Doctor of Education
Professional Leadership

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In Partial Fulfillment
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Abstract

Background: School accountability as a reform strategy shows that states and cities are paving the way for school district takeovers across America. **Purpose:** The purpose of this mixed methods research study was to explore state and federal policies that drive school closures in Texas and to explore the effects of school closures using the case of one Texas school district. This research is based on the mindset that by holding school districts accountable for student performance, low performing districts should be closed and taken over by the state. When schools are closed or taken over, the assumption is that student performance will increase. **Methods:** Mixed methods research was used for this study. Policy research methods were used to identify federal and state school closure policies. Using quantitative research methods, archival Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) data were gathered to explore the effects of school closures on student academic performance. Qualitative methods were used to conduct interviews with a sample of administrators with knowledge of district takeovers. **Results:** The results showed that poor school governance, fiscal irresponsibility, and poor academic performance led to the target school district's takeover by the state. The findings also suggested that while a school district may be taken over for not meeting performance standards or failing to meet accreditation status, student performance was only moderately affected by the takeover. Specifically, little change in student performance over time was noted for the target high school in this project. **Conclusion:** The academic performance of the targeted school district that closed and merged with another school district due to performance issues did not perform significantly higher when compared to pre and post merger data. While

district closure may help resolve governance issues, it does not necessarily improve a school's academic performance.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Trends show that states and cities are paving the way for school district takeovers across America (Wong & Shen, 2003). In a recent article by Katz (2013), America has “takeover fever” as states are taking over cities and school boards. In the end, does it make any difference? Katz discusses the takeovers in the cities of Detroit, Michigan, Camden, New Jersey, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Katz (2013) points out that there are advantages to takeovers, including the unilateral ability to sell off public assets, change employee contracts without collective bargaining, get rid of employees without regard for civil service, and restructure debt. While the governmental bodies (i.e., cities or schools) continue to exist, the authority to manage the bodies transfers to private consultants with important titles like emergency managers or chief operating managers (Katz, 2013).

Table 1. 1

School Closures in America

Schools	# Closed	Rationale	Timeframe
Chicago, IL	100	Low Enrollment	10 years
Detroit, MI	44	Academic & Financial Reasons	-
Kansas City, Mo.	29	Declining Enrollment	2 years
Milwaukee, WI	20	27 Empty Buildings	2011
Philadelphia, PA	-	5 Member School Reform Commission	2001

Note. Philadelphia Research Initiative (2011)

Several reform strategies identified in the literature provide reasons for school and district takeovers. One reform strategy that districts are facing is stricter accountability standards (Davidson, Reback, Rockoff, & Schwartz, 2013). Accountability standards focus on achievement, fiscal instability and governance issues (Valencia, 1980; Wong &

Shen, 2003; Davidson et al., 2013). The use of accountability standards has increased school closures, school takeovers, and district takeovers to a national high (Weatherley, Narver, & Elmore, 1983). It is, therefore, important to identify the legal support for school and district takeovers and both the national and state contexts within which takeovers occur.

The following sections provide the statement of the problem of study, the national and state contexts within which that problem exists, the purpose of this current study, and the questions that were posed. Definitions of terms and a more extensive literature review follow.

Statement of the Problem

When the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) was reauthorized in 2001 as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title I, Part A, § 1116, the policy makers included a mandate whereby states were to construct accountability systems using standardized tests to measure student and subgroup proficiency rates in Math and English Language Arts (ELA). NCLB, held states responsible for proficiency of student subgroups, including low-income families, students with disabilities, students with Limited English proficiency, and students from all ethnic subgroups. Those schools that failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for any subgroup were targeted for sanctions, including school closures (NCLB, Title I, Part A, § 1116, 2001). In 2015, NCLB was reauthorized with many changes, including a title change to the Every Student Success Act (ESSA) and provided states the autonomy to leverage progress. Since the timeframe for this study occurred during NCLB, the focus of this study is on the state accountability system that was required under NCLB and how it coincides with school

takeover trends. Specifically, are increases in the number of takeovers be related back to accountability mandates? While takeovers occurred across the nation, the problem in this study focuses on the rationale for school takeovers in the State of Texas and the impact of the takeover of one district in Texas.

National Context of Accountability under NCLB

Federal, state, and local policies and procedures affect school closures. Historically, education in the United States (U.S.) is a state's right under (U.S.) Constitution. According the Tenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people." Since there is no mention of education in the U.S. Constitution, state governments govern, implement, and monitor the educational needs of the state (Kemerer & Walsh, 2000). For example, according to the Texas Constitution, Article VII, Sec. 1. SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE OF SYSTEM OF PUBLIC FREE SCHOOLS: "A general diffusion of knowledge being essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of the people, it shall be the duty of the Legislature of the State to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools."

However, the U.S. Constitution, General Welfare Clause, Article 1, § 8, Clause 1 provides for U.S. federal intervention rights which allows the federal government to intervene in public education when it meets the intent of the U. S. Constitution or when it is in the national interest. It is in the national interest to have literate citizens. In 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act increased the federal government's role in the education of all U.S. children (NCLB, Title I, Part A, § 1116, 2001). The concept of holding

schools accountable has been around since the late 1980s. As time evolved, additional or “New Accountability” measures appeared as a reform strategy. This thought mechanism relies heavily on legislative and executive action by policymakers. The more recent accountability standards for school districts call for more local responsibility as dictated by the state accountability plan required by NCLB (P.L 107-110). This law was enacted to close the achievement gap with stringent accountability standards along with school choice options so that no child is left behind. Though policies are filtered at the state level, school districts are responsible for implementing state reform requirements (Saiger, 2005). The federal accountability system is defined as “...a system driven by quotas and sanctions, stipulating the progression of underperforming schools through sanctions based on meeting performance quotas for specific demographic groups” (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009, p. 354; NCLB, 2001).

Nationally, thirty-three states have state takeover policies for school districts based on academic and fiscal reasons (Bowman, 2013). State takeover laws specify trigger factors for state involvement, specify escalating types of state involvement, specify the extent of the state’s authority at various levels, and detail provisions for terminating state takeover involvement (Bowman, 2013). While takeovers generally produce greater fiscal stability, they consistently are unable to produce academic gains. This is important to note as 51 to 74 percent of the district takeovers were for districts with largely minority or Black and Hispanic student enrollments (Bowman, 2013; De la Torre & Gwynne, 2009; Oluwole & Green, 2009).

The number of school districts and schools facing closure continues to grow across the nation (Toppo, 2012). For example, David Hoff of Education Week (2009)

indicated that nearly 30,000 schools in the U.S. failed to make AYP in the 2007-2008 school year. The overwhelming majority of these school districts and schools are majority-minority districts. During this same time period, there were 1109 Texas public schools that failed to meet federal accountability (TEA, 2009) as standards. The following section outlines the context in the State of Texas.

State Context in Texas

While NCLB (2001) enforced federal state accountability policies, it also gave the states the authority to develop state accountability plans that spelled out how the states would implement NCLB. “Accreditation focuses on how well (or poorly) a school meets or measures up to various standards and goals. These standards and goals are set by the state, an independent accrediting agency or both”. (Lawyers.com, 2013, para. 2). Each state develops its own decision regarding how schools become accredited. In Texas, Texas Education Code (TEC) governs public schools. The TEC relates to day-to-day operation of schools in terms of requirements by the State Board of Education (SBOE), the Texas Education Agency (TEA), local school boards and school district employees.

Prior to NCLB, in 1984, House Bill 72 (HB72) was a major Texas reform strategy for education. HB72 began the initial move toward pushing educational mandates back down to the district level because the top down approach was not determined to be successful. In 1995, the Texas Legislature revised the Texas Education Code (TEC), which gave local districts more autonomy in educating students. More importantly, it expanded the options for parents by paving the way for them to explore charter schools (Kemerer & Walsh, 2000).

More recently, the origin of TEC (2013) dates to 2006 when the 79th Texas Legislature passed House Bill (HB 1) which was codified in the Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 39, Public School System Accountability. HB 1 defined the Texas Plan for school district accreditation, sanctions and interventions for school districts, charter schools, and campuses. TEA adopted state rules to implement the Texas State Education Plan required for the implementation of NCLB.

Currently, subchapter 39.051 of the Texas Education Code (TEC, 2013) outlines accreditation of a school district in Texas. The commissioner (TEC, 2013) determines the criteria for accreditation statuses. In Texas Education Code 39.053, (a) the commissioner shall adopt a set of standards based upon the quality of student achievement (TEC, 2013). In the event a school district does not receive a favorable accreditation rating in Texas, the local education agency is subject to sanctions. A major sanction is “Not Accredited-Revoked” and when a school district receives this designation, the Commissioner of Education can order the school district and schools to close (TEC, 2013).

Texas has relied on two accountability systems since their inception in 1979. The current State of Texas school accountability system is the Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) which provides detailed student performance data on all public school districts and schools. Prior to the use of the TAPR, the Academic Excellence Indicator System, (AEIS) was used to measure student performance. While both accountability systems track student performance and determine sanctions based upon predetermined academic performance criteria, the TAPR includes two new postsecondary indicators.

Texas started tracking student performance with stricter accountability in 1979 with the advent of the Texas Academic Basic Skills (TABS) Test. In 1984, Texas legislature approved the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) test. The TEAMS was administered to determine student performance outcomes. This was a move from students learning basic skills to meeting minimum competency skills. In 1991, the State of Texas moved from showing proficiency on minimum skills to learning Essential Elements on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) Test. Eventually in 2001, the Texas Legislature moved to make accountability more rigorous by changing the Essential Elements to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills to be tested on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) and eventually tested on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) (TEA, 2013b).

While there have been four district takeovers since 1995 that resulted in district closure, there were an additional 13 public school districts (non-charter) in Texas facing accreditation challenges (TEA, 2013a). While district takeover and school closure are not problems exclusively felt in Texas, the focus of this study is on Texas schools.

The Texas Commissioner of Education has taken over four school districts since 1995 that has resulted in the ultimate sanction of school district closure (Smith, 2012). The Texas Commissioner of Education has three options when a school district has shown three consecutive years of unacceptable performance. The Commissioner may order purposing of the schools, require alternative management, or recommend school district closure (TEA, 2013a).

In Texas, as in many other states, accountability drives the academic reasons for district takeovers. Texas accountability is governed by state accountability testing as

measured by student performance on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS until 2012 and the STAAR from 2013 to present) Test and state accountability requirements. Student performance results on this test are calculated according to a fixed standard and assigned final rating as reported in the state's AEIS System (AEIS until 2012) of TAPR (2013 to present). In 2005, the Wilmer-Hutchins district was taken over by the Texas Education Agency for accountability issues, including academics, financial, and governance policies. Wilmer-Hutchins school district was closed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed methods research study was to explore state and federal policies that drive school closures in Texas and to explore the effects of school closures using the case of one Texas school district.

Research Questions

This research is based on the premise that by holding school districts accountable for student performance low performing schools and districts should be either closed or turned around. The question that drives school closures is the same question Katz (2013) asks about takeovers. In the end, does it make any difference? When schools are closed or taken over, the assumption is that student performance will increase.

The following questions will be explored:

- 1) What are the federal and state accountability policies used in determining if a school or school district should be closed or taken over?
- 2) When a school district is closed and annexed with another school district, how is student performance affected?

Significance

The significance of this study is that it may provide new information on school and district accreditation takeovers and to understand how students are affected

Glossary

Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) - detailed performance data tables that provide information about every public school and district in the State of Texas as it relates to state test data, attendance rates, dropout rates, completion rates, and college readiness indicators.

Accreditation Status – process in which certification of competency, authority, or credibility is presented: Accredited, Accredited Warned, Accredited Probation, and Not-Accredited Revoked.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, 347 U.S. 483 (1965) – The US Supreme Court ruled that the segregation of public schools was found in violation of the 14th amendment. This marked the end of the “separate but equal” laws.

Desegregation – process of ending the separation of racial groups.

Edgewood v. Texas (Kirby) – this court case centered-around an attempt to reform the Texas public school finance system so that it would be equitable. A lawsuit filed by Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund against commissioner of education William Kirby in 1984 citing discrimination against students in poor school districts. The case went to trial in 1987 indicating that the school finance system of the state unconstitutional on both “equal protection” and “efficiency”. In 1989, the Texas Supreme Court reversed the decision.

Elementary Secondary Education Action of 1965 (ESEA) – ESEA, which was first enacted in 1965, is the principal federal law affecting K-12 education. The No Child Left Behind Act is the most recent reauthorization of the ESEA.

Equity – a term expressed when discussing the fairness of school funding between property rich and property poor school districts.

Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA) – At the end of 2015, Congress passed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which provides states an opportunity to leverage progress.

Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) – The purpose of the financial accountability rating system (Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 19, § 109.1001) is to ensure that school districts are held accountable for the quality of their financial management practices and achieve improved performance in the management of their financial resources. The ratings are listed as follows: Superior Achievement; Above Standard Achievement; Standard Achievement; Substandard Achievement; Suspended – Data Quality.

Focus Schools –Refers to Title I schools that show the widest gaps between reading/math performance of the federal student groups and safeguard targets of 75%.

Local Education Agency (LEA)– is a public board of education or other public authority within a State which maintains administrative control public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) – Refers to legislation passed in 2001 which reauthorization the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. (P.L. 107-110).

Its main purpose aimed to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice.

NCLB, Title I, Part A, § 1116 – refers to academic assessment and local education agency and school improvement. Each local education agency receiving funds under this part shall use the State academic assessments and other indicators describe in the State plan to annually review the progress of each school served under this part to determine whether the school is making adequate yearly progress as defined in section 111(b)(2).

NCLB, Title I, Part B, § 1003 (g) - refers to assistance for local school improvement. The Secretary shall award grants to States to enable the States to provide subgrants to local educational agencies for the purpose of providing assistance for school improvement consistent with section 1116.

Office of School Turnaround – is responsible for providing financial assistance and other support, including through the administration of School Improvement Grants (SIG) program, for state and district efforts to turn around the lowest-performing five percent of schools in each state.

Priority Schools – Title I high schools with less than 60% graduation rates and/or schools with the lowest academic performance on reading/math system safeguards at the All Student level.

Property Poor – Low funding per student due to low property values.

Property Rich – Higher funding per student due to higher property taxes.

Public Law 107-110 - An act to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind.

Reform Strategy – A strategy to improve the educational system that places emphasizes on increased student performance specifically through content, assessments, and teaching resulting in sanctions as consequences.

San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez, 411 U.S.1 In 1971 San Antonio ISD acting on behalf of students and families living in poor school districts argued that its students were deprived because their schools lacked sufficient school aid compared to other school districts.

SES – Social Economic Status - is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic situation.

State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) – Implemented in the spring of 2012, the STAAR Test measures student performance in grades 3 – 8 and features select end-of-course (EOC) exams.

Texas Academic Basic Skills test (TABS) – In 1979, the Texas Legislature decided to administer the TABS test to determine how well the students are learning the curriculum. This began the era of public school accountability in Texas.

Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) – In 2012, the Texas Academic Performance Reports replaced AEIS (Academic Excellence Indicator System). It provides a range of information on student performance and district accountability data.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) – In 1991, the Texas Legislature decided to move from meeting minimum skills to learning Essential Elements.

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) - The 2001 Legislature moved to make accountability testing more rigorous by replacing the Essential Elements with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills standards.

Texas Education Agency (TEA)– is a branch of the State Government of Texas that provides leadership, guidance and resources to help schools meet the educational needs of all students.

Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) – In 1984, the Texas Legislature approved the TEAMS test which shifted the focus of students learning basic skills to meeting minimum skills.

Turnaround Schools – The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Law is Obama’s push to focus states and school districts to turn around their 5000 lowest-performing schools.

United States Constitution, Tenth Amendment – The Tenth Amendment states the Constitution’s principle of federalism by providing that powers not granted to the federal government by the Constitution, nor prohibited to the States, are reserved to the States or the people.

United States Constitution, Fourteenth Amendment – The amendment addresses citizenship rights and equal protection of the laws.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

The purpose of this mixed methods research study was to explore state and federal policies that drive school closures in Texas and to explore the effects of school closures using the case of one Texas school district.

This study defined and examined federal and state policies for closing schools and school districts in Texas, including accountability standards and district accreditation. In addition, the study investigated the effects of school closures on student achievement using case study data from a school district that lost accreditation and was annexed with an adjoining school district.

There are two major strands of literature reviewed in chapter two. The first strand of literature focuses on federal and state policies that define school closures. Federal and Texas accountability policies are reviewed. Specifically, the federal NCLB, Title I, Part A, § 1116 and the Texas Accountability Law are examined.

The second strand of literature reviewed includes literature available on school and district takeovers as well as newspaper articles. Interestingly, the peer-reviewed literature on district takeovers is not widely available. Instead, the literature available came primarily from legal journals, news articles, and policy studies. Another line of research explored issues of race, achievement, and school and district takeover issues. Finally, literature available on the state takeover of Texas school districts was reviewed.

According to Toppo (2012) schools are closing at an alarming rate because of weak academic performance and financial instability. These closures may be warranted based upon failure to meet state and federal accountability standards; however, the

intended policy and/or mandate of closing a school may not produce the desired result of improved student performance after all.

While the research on school and district takeovers is limited, school and district takeovers for academic failures and fiscal responsibilities have existed in the United States (U.S.) for many years. Wong (1999, 2001, 2003, & 2004) has done the most research in this area. While there are many recent reports on school and district takeovers, the research is limited to the work of Oluwole and Green (2009), Bowman (2011 & 2013), and David (2013). Reports by Jennifer Imazeki (2004), Chappelle-Nadal (2007), and Torre and Gwynne (2009) indicate that research relating to school or district takeovers is limited but highly critical.

Federal Accountability

Federal accountability policy is grounded in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. No Child Left Behind of 2001 (NCLB) was developed from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. The chief purpose of NCLB like ESEA is to increase student performance and close achievement gaps (NEA, 2014). As a part of NCLB, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is a term used to measure student performance under Title I. The law requires schools, school districts, and states demonstrate progress in meeting academic standards. Progress of these standards is to be tested annually in grades 3 through 8 and in one grade-in high school. Results are compared to prior years, based on predetermined standards (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2011).

No Child Left Behind provides flexibility to the states to define progress. However, it must contain specific elements. One, states must factor in state's measure of

AYP and use one other indicator of school performance. Secondly, another academic indicator must include high school graduation rates. Thirdly, states must maintain a baseline for measuring students' performance toward the goal of 100% efficiency. Fourth, states are required to develop benchmarks to determine progress toward meeting the 100% proficiency standard. Fifth, state's AYP is required to include separate measures for both reading/language arts and math, but it also needed to address various subgroups such as African-American, Hispanics, English Language Learners. Sixth, 95% of the student's enrollment in the school is required to take the state test (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2011).

As AYP requirements have increased over the years, the number of failing schools has climbed. Data indicates that in 2007, 28 percent failed to make AYP. In 2011, the number climbed to 38%. The United States Commissioner of Education acknowledged that 82% of schools may fail to meet AYP if it is not redefined in the next reauthorization. The number of schools failing to make AYP varies from state to state. This is largely attributed to each state's accountability system (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2011).

The Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (1965) paved the way to provide quality education to all students in the United States of America. In 1980, Texas took the lead for accountability by establishing its own accountability system in evaluating the progress of public schools and school districts. This "performance-based accountability system" established standards, assessments, and accountability by way of laws and regulations (TEA, 2013b).

Public Law 107-110 and NCLB were the primary sources for federal school and school district accountability policies and school district takeovers. NCLB policy on accreditation includes the Flexibility and Accountability of Public Law, 107-110, § 601 (2002, p. 1879). State policy was defined using the Texas Education Code Chapter 39 (TEC), Texas Administrators Rules Section 19 (TAC), and administrative correspondence from the Commissioner of Education (COE). The following state policy was used to define the state accreditation policy for a school district to lose its accreditation and to be taken over by the state.

Texas Accountability System

The first high stakes test under the Texas Accountability System administered to students to determine proficiency was the Texas Academic Basic Skills Test (TABS, 1979). After TABS, a series of tests were administered to students in Texas to determine academic performance: Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS, 1984), Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS, 1991), Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS, 2003), and (STAAR, 2012). Each test was more rigorous than the previous. All test scores were evaluated according to a measure formerly known as the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and now recognized as Texas Accountability Performance Reports (TAPR, 2012). The AEIS system used test scores and high school completion rates to determine if a school and district was meeting or exceeding standards. The Texas accountability system under AEIS rated schools and districts as Exemplary, Recognized, Acceptable, or Academically Unacceptable depending on their performance. With the implementation of TAPR, the accountability rating labels changed to Met Standard, Met Alternative Standard, Improvement Required,

Not Rated, or Not Rated: Data Integrity Issues. The new and old accountability systems required schools and districts to report their achievement data to parents and the local community. Schools failing to meet baseline proficiency standards received sanctions while those performing well were rewarded (TEA, 2013b). For the purpose of identifying district takeovers, only the AEIS accountability system was used.

In Texas, according to 39.073 Determining Accreditation Status, the accreditation status of a school district is to be determined by the Commissioner of Education. Every year, the commissioner will review student performance results of school districts and assign a rating. A district's rating can be increased or decreased based upon unacceptable performance of one or more campuses within the school district. When a school district receives a lower accreditation rating they are required to notify parents and property owners of its status and implications. In examining a district's accreditation rating, the Texas Education Agency considers special education compliance status, progress of students who failed to meet standards the previous school year on the state's assessment, and dropout rates (TEA, 2005).

If a school district does not meet accreditation criteria, the commissioner shall impose a range of sanctions against the school district. The commissioner shall:

1. Notify the board of trustee of deficiencies;
2. Require a hearing of the school district's board announcing unacceptable performance and indicating sanctions that may be forced;
3. Order the development of a school improvement plan to address academic deficits;

4. Order a hearing to be held in the presence of the commissioner or the commissioner's representative in which the president of the board and school superintendent must be in attendance;
5. Order a district on-site investigative review
6. Designate a monitor to review and report activities of the school district to the agency
7. Designate a conservator to oversee the operations of the district
8. Appoint a management team to manage the operations of the district in the areas of unacceptable performance.
9. Appoint a board of managers if the district has been rated unacceptable to for one or more years;
10. If a district has been rated as academically unacceptable for two or more years, annex the district with a neighboring district under Section 13.054; or order closure of all programs operated under the district's or school's charter;
11. If a district has been academically unacceptable for two or more years due to dropout rates, a range of sanctions will be ordered (Texas Education Agency, 2005).

The federal and state school and district accountability policies are provided in a policy table in Chapter 4.

The Texas Accountability Law has a reconstitution provision, [allows for district takeovers, and takeovers of individual schools.] Texas Education Code 39.131 (2000): indicates that if a district does not meet the accreditation criteria, the commissioner shall take any of the following actions, in order of severity:

1. Issue a notice to board of trustees outlining deficit areas;
2. Order a hearing conducted by the board of trustees in order to update the public of the districts unacceptable performance as well as the expected improvements in performance and the sanctions that may be imposed if there is no improvement;
3. Appointment of a special intervention committee to conduct an on-site review of the school to determine the cause for low performance, recommend actions, assist in the development of a CIP and to assist in the monitoring of the school;
4. Appointment of a board of managers from local citizens in the district to act as the board, and
5. An order to shut down the school (TEA, 2013b).

If low performance persists, parents may request to transfer their student to surrounding schools or district. Once a school has been deemed Unacceptable or Low Performing, assistance from the state is provided to assist with curriculum alignment, data analysis, and targeted intervention (TEC, 2011).

Literature Available on School and District Takeovers

As referenced in the section above, each state's accountability law includes a sanction for failing schools. One key consequence for a school or school district not meeting its predetermined educational objective is to be ordered closed and/or taken over. However, the question remains, does performance improve when a school or school district is taken over? Wong and Shen (1999, 2003) provided the most historical research on school and district takeovers. In their article, *Measuring the Effectiveness of City and State Takeover as a School Reform Strategy* (2003), the authors shared that 24 states

allow state takeover of local school districts. Of the states with takeover policies, 19 states and the District of Columbia have enacted their powers to take over a district.

Wong and Shen's study examines the potential for city and state takeovers to turn around under performing schools from 1992 – 2000. They explore the effectiveness of city/state takeover as a strategy for improving the quality of teaching and learning, improving management, and enhancing public confidence. In so doing, they acknowledge that takeovers have both promises and limitations. Their analysis suggests that from a fiscal standpoint, a mayor/state takeover is successful. However, intervention strategies have not been deemed successful in turning around academic results (Wong & Shen, 2003).

According to Davidson and et. al., (2013) the authors indicate that No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 required states to establish an accountability system measuring student performance on state tests. Its chief purpose is to hold schools and districts accountable for improving student performance in English Language Arts and math. NCLB specifically examines the performance of all students including special education, English Language Learners, and ethnic subgroups.

They also note that if a school falls short in meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in accordance to the established benchmark timeline, then the school and/or district is subject to sanctions. After repeated failures to meet AYP proficiency standards, private tutoring must be made available (supplemental education services), students may have the opportunity to transfer, the principal may be removed, and the school could possibly face closure (Davidson et. al., 2013).

Davidson's et. al., (2013) concern is that each individual state was originally provided flexibility in interpreting NCLB guidelines such as determining minimum group size, grade levels to test, and setting annual benchmarks. As a result, their research suggests that "States' school failure rates are not strongly related to their students' performance..." (Davidson et. al., 2013, p. 2). The team is suggesting that "...policy implementation differences, rather than real differences in student achievement or exam difficulty, caused the wide variation in states' school failure rates" (Davidson, et. al., 2013, p. 2). The group found that individual state differences in interpreting NCLB rules contributed to a wide variance in failure rates (Davidson et. al., 2013).

Davidson et al (2013) provide an analysis of unintended consequences for not making AYP. Oluwole (2009) provides an extensive review of the consequences for failing to meet standards at the state and federal level by analyzing state takeover policies and laws. He goes one step further in examining the state takeovers of minority school districts throughout the United States. In his review of each state, he presents compelling statistics that show school districts that were taken over had high minority populations ranging from "51% to 74%" in 2004. He further strengthens his argument by citing policy analyst Todd Ziebarth stating, "State takeovers, for the most part, have yet to produce dramatic and consistent increases in student performance, as is necessary in many of the school districts that are taken over." (Oluwole & Green, 2009, 343)

As each state becomes reflective regarding its policy of closing schools due to requirements of accountability, The Nadal Report (Chappelle-Nadal, 2007) from the University of Missouri provides an insightful view of various School Reform Strategies in the State of Missouri. The major focus of her research centers on the accreditation

status of school districts in Missouri. Under Missouri Law, like Texas and other states, unaccredited school districts have two school years to regain full accreditation. If sufficient progress is not achieved, then the school district can be closed or consolidated.

Chappelle-Nadal takes a close look at Missouri policies regarding accreditation. In so doing, she notes that St. Louis Public Schools' accreditation process is different from other parts of Missouri. Due to Missouri statute, RSMo. 162.1100, "SLPS does not have to remain unaccredited for two years to be taken over." (Chappelle-Nadal, 2007, p. 5). She indicates in her report that on one hand, the board remains in place with no administrative authority and on the other hand students may leave the public schools to private schools forcing further financial constraints (Chappelle-Nadal, 2007).

In 2011, another Missouri school announced it was losing its accreditation status, Kansas City, Missouri School District. The Missouri Board announced that student performance had not met the required standard. Thus, the school would have two full years to show academic growth or a takeover would be necessary. In this case, "an unaccredited school district must pay for the tuition and transportation costs for students wishing to transfer to another district..." This may result in reduced funds for an already strained budget facing a possible takeover (Sulzberger, 2011).

When school or district takeovers occur, Chappelle-Nadal contends that many parents often seek other educational options such as charter schools, private schools, and vouchers (Chappelle-Nadal, 2007). Roda and Wells (2013) explore school choice as an option mixed with educational competition. They contend that school choice policies oftentimes lead to racial separation versus racial integration. Furthermore, they illustrate

that allowing school choice leads toward “good” and “bad” schools (Roda & Wells, 2013).

Stroub and Richards (2016) conducted a study on school closure as a reform strategy. The study reported that little empirical attention had addressed the effects of closures on academic achievement. The study examined 4,168 students in 27 regular public schools who were displaced due to school closure. Students were matched with an equal size comparison group of students who did not experience closure. The final sample consisted of 8,336 students. The researchers used a series of multilevel discontinuous change models (Singer & Willet, 2003) to capture the immediate effect of a closure on student performance in the year following closure and its long-term effect on test scores. Several student and school level covariates were included in the procedure as referenced by (Shadish, Clark, & Steiner, 2008) to strengthen the accuracy of the causal estimates.

The study found that the closures disproportionately displaced poor and black students. Schools that were closed tended to be particularly poor: 91% of students in schools that were closed were economically disadvantaged and 43% of the students affected by closures were black. The study concluded that despite students affected by closure being reassigned to higher performing schools, they still transferred to low-performing schools. The study also concluded that the overall impact of school closures is small and the effects vary across subjects (Stroub & Richards, 2016).

In sum, findings indicated that the closures disproportionately displaced poor and black students. Students were generally transferred to slightly more advantaged and academically higher-performing schools. However, few transferred to the highest

performing schools in the district studied. Closures were not associated with higher achievement than would have been expected in the absence of closures and there were some short-term gains in math. The study reported that closures have the potential to benefit the achievement of displaced students if they transfer to high-performing campuses. However, the analyses of student transfer patterns in this study suggested that few students, particularly low-performing students and students of color transfer to higher performing schools.

State takeovers of schools and districts are a fairly new policy issue in school policy; consequently, the research in this area is limited. One issue is clear, which is takeovers may improve district financial issues but in most cases do not improve student achievement (Oluwole & Green, 2009; Stroub & Richards, 2016). The research shows that in the case of major takeovers (Oluwole & Green, 2009), there was some improvement in achievement but in all other takeover cases, there is no evidence of improvement in achievement. The purpose of this study is to investigate a takeover in a Texas school district and to study the effects of the takeover on children from the case study school district.

Literature on Texas Takeovers

In Texas, the following four school districts were taken over by the state: North Forest ISD 2013, Kendleton ISD 2010, Wilmer-Hutchins ISD 2006, and Mirando City ISD 2005. These largely minority low income school districts in Texas have been ordered closed in recent years to due to persistently low academic performance as evidenced on state mandated tests and accountability standards (Cortez, 2005; Mellon, 2010, 2013)

Commissioner of Education, Robert Scott, ordered the closure of North Forest Independent School District due to its persistent history of low academic performance and financial mismanagement (Aiyer, Adams, & Lapps, 2013). Despite community attempts to keep the troubled school district open, the new Commissioner of Education, Michael Williams, felt “absolutely confident” the takeover would occur. Commissioner Williams pledged that his order to shut down North Forest Independent School District on July 1, 2013, was a done deal despite a request from the U.S. Justice Department for more information on the annexation with Houston Independent School District (Mellon, 2013). At the time of its accreditation-revoked status, North Forest Independent School District was 67% African American and 31% Hispanic. NFISD’s was reported as having a 99.8% free and reduced lunch eligible population of students (Aiyer et al., 2013).

The Lubbock Avalanche-Journal reported that the Texas Education Agency planned to close Wilmer-Hutchins and send the students to Dallas Independent School District campuses due to financial mismanagement and persistently low academic performance. The state took control of the 2700 student impoverished district after investigators confirmed that 22 elementary teachers acted inappropriately during the previous year’s standardized tests (Associated Press, 2005).

In an open TEA News Release dated March 10, 2010, Commissioner of Education, Robert Scott revoked Kendleton Independent School District’s authority to operate as a public school due to persistent academic problems. The letter announces that the school district will annex with Lamar Consolidated ISD pending clearance from the U.S. Justice Department. The school was assigned a 2009-10 accreditation status of Not Accredited-Revoked (TEA, 2010). Powell Point Elementary, the oldest historically black

school in the state, was the final school in Kendleton ISD. The district's middle school and high school students were already being serviced by neighboring LCISD.–Kendleton ISD served about 75 at Powell Point Elementary until they closed (Mellon, 2010).

Texas Education Agency Commissioner ordered the annexation of Mirando City ISD with neighboring Webb Consolidated ISD due to chronic low academic performance and health and safety concerns. Board members were hoping that the state would give them another year; however, that did not occur. Board members were hoping for consolidation versus annexation. Mirando served 51 students in PK – 8 (Cortez, 2005).

This research on school and district takeovers is grounded on the fact that schools must close the achievement gap and improve student performance in order to survive without severe sanctions. This work is fundamentally grounded on federal accountability system, No Child Left Behind Act, whereby schools, school districts, and state education agencies must meet strict requirements. This act helps to address the needs of underperforming schools, yet its level of accountability may have unintended consequences of closing schools (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009).

Chapter III

Methodology

Introduction

This mixed method study had two purposes. Purpose one was to investigate the state and federal policies that drive school closures in Texas. Purpose two was to study the effects of school closure on one Texas school. This study used policy research methods to define and examine federal and state policies for closing schools and school districts in Texas, including accountability standards and district accreditation (Fowler, 2008; Kingdon, 2013). Qualitative research methods were used to investigate the process of one school district closure. Additionally, student achievement data was reviewed using quantitative research methods including Texas Education Agency (TEA) Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR).

Research Questions

The following were the research questions for this study:

1. What are the federal and state accountability policies used in determining if a school or school district should be closed or taken over?
2. When a school district was taken over by the state education agency and annexed with another school district, how was student performance affected?

To answer the first research question, a policy review was conducted on federal and state accountability policy theory using policy documents developed by government actors and the political system usually in the form of laws, rules, regulations and other government documents (Fowler, 2008; Kingdon, 2013). As evident in the literature review in Chapter 2, federal and state laws were reviewed. Federal and state policies including rules and regulations were also reviewed. The federal law reviewed was No Child Left Behind which is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary

Education Act of 1965, Public Law 107-110. Its main purpose was to close the achievement gap. Federal rules and regulations were examined as well. Specifically, No Child Left Behind, Title I, Part A, § 1116 which outlines a required School Improvement Program for Title I schools that did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress. “Title I, Part A, Section 1116 School Improvement Program provides supplemental funds to Title I campuses identified for school improvement by failing to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two or more consecutive years,” (Texas Education Agency, 2014). Title I, Part A, § 1116 required restructuring for school failing to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in the percentage of children meeting grade level standards for five consecutive years must engage in restructuring to improve student learning. “All five structuring options are called alternative governance arrangements in the law, and thus, are intended to change how failing schools are lead and controlled”. (Hassel, Hassel, Arkin, Kowal, & Steiner, 2009, p. 6)

State accountability laws, rules, and regulations were also reviewed. In particular, TEC, 39.052 requires each school district in Texas to receive an accreditation status. According to TEC 39.052, the Commissioner of Education is required to assign one of the following accreditation statuses: 1. Accredited; 2. Accredited-Warned; 3, Accredited-Probation; or 4. Not Accredited-Revoked. In addition, the Texas Administrative Code was examined. Specifically, guidelines for Chapter 97 relating to Commissioner’s Rule for State District Takeover were analyzed. Other state policies were examined including the Texas Accountability Manual (2011). The accountability manual provides rules, requirements, and expectations for schools and school districts. The commissioner’s rules, TAC 97.1065 provides state rules for the takeover of a district that loses its

accreditation. The Commissioner of Education (COE) can order repurposing, alternative management, or closure of a campus if the school or district is assigned an unacceptable performance rating for the third consecutive school year after reconstitution is required to be implemented (TAC, 2013).

Research Design

This study used a mixed methods research design using policy methods to review state and federal laws, quantitative methods for student growth, and qualitative data for participant interviews. Multiple research methods are the most convenient to do research in school settings (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009).

Policy research methods.

To answer the first research question, a policy review was conducted on federal and state accountability policy theory using policy documents developed by government actors and the political system usually in the form of rules, regulations, laws, court decisions, and other government documents (Fowler, 2008; Kingdon, 2013). Public Law 107-110, NCLB was the primary source for federal school accountability policies and school district takeovers. Section 1116 provided policy for states to develop academic assessment with local educational agency defining school improvement. State policy was defined using the Texas Education Code Chapter 39 (TEC), Texas Administrators Rules Section 19 (TAC), and administrative correspondence from the Commissioner of Education (COE). The following state policy was used to define the state accreditation policy for a school district to lose its accreditation and to be taken over by the state.

The federal and state school and district accountability policies were provided in a policy table in Chapter 2.

Quantitative research methods.

To answer research question number two quantitative data were used. Archival data were retrieved from TEA AEIS data on student achievement for math and reading. The data was used to explore the academic effects of the state takeover on Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District (WHISD) students. The WHISD was academically unacceptable for two years. Descriptive statistics were used to demonstrate student achievement at various points in time. Quantitative methods were used to develop simple statistics from the AEIS data including measurements of central tendency (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

Quantitative research methods were used to identify data for one school district that was taken over by the state and the school district studied for this research. The WHISD was taken over by the TEA on July 1, 2006. Quantitative data for this study included the old Wilmer-Hutchins High School pre-takeover achievement for AEIS TAKS data for 2002-2003, 2003-2004, 2004-2005, and 2005-2006 for math and reading. In 2006, after the takeover WHISD students were scattered in several Dallas ISD schools from 2006 to 2011. In 2011, the new Wilmer-Hutchins High School was reopened in the same geographic community as the old takeover Wilmer-Hutchins High School. In order to attempt to identify achievement growth for the students in the old WHISD geographical area, achievement data was used from the reported 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014 AEIS and TAPR data reports. The AEIS and TAPR data will constitute the quantitative data for this study. The use of unlike data presented research problems for this study; however, these are the only data available to assess achievement growth

for students from the Wilber-Hutchins community involved in the accountability sample district. The limitations of using these unlike data will be discussed in chapter 5.

Qualitative research methods.

Qualitative Research Methods were used to review data from observations, interviews, and journal documents. It helps researchers in identifying themes and patterns in real world situations (Patton, 2005). In the case of Wilmer-Hutchins ISD, newspaper articles, school documents, and district archival data were used to develop a school context.

Qualitative methods were used to conduct interviews with a purposive sample of administrators and teachers with knowledge of district takeovers. Interview data were triangulated with data from state policy, data from the interviews, and archival data including AEIS data, newspaper articles, and journal articles (Hobbs, 2011; Mellon, 2010; Mastaglio, 2011; Metzger, 2013).

Interviews were conducted to gather data from six informants who are former administrators and former teachers for the WHISD. Six telephone interviews were conducted following the procedure approved by the University of Houston Committee for Human Subjects (UHCHS). The UHCHS approved the following research procedures. Human subject forms are attached in Appendix A.

Names and email addresses of these informants were acquired through a professional referral. The researcher sent an email request to participate in the study. The participants were sent an informed consent form by email. They signed the form and agreed to participate in the study. The return of the consent form was followed by a brief telephone interview. The following three major questions were asked.

- What was your role at WHISD?
- What can you tell me about the closure of your former school district?
- What can you tell me about how you think the district closure affected student achievement of students in the district?

Upon completing each interview, member checks were conducted to increase data validity (Lincoln, 2004; Nelson, 2010). Transcripts were developed from the interviews. The transcripts were sent to the interviewee for interviewee confirmation. The interviewee was asked to read the transcript of the interview and to confirm that the transcript reflected the interviewee's language. Peer reviews were used to increase data validity. A second peer review was conducted with a colleague. The colleague was asked to review the transcripts for accuracy and making sense of the interviewee responses.

Data triangulation methods were also used. The three sets of data aligned for meaning or confirmation of findings included district archival records, newspaper records, student achievement and interview data. Triangulation was used to improve validity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

While some of the case study research design methods apply to this study, this was not a true case study. This was a study that focused on one school district which was taken over by the state for loss of accreditation. The data gathered from the sources cited were used to create a context for a district takeover and to answer research question two.

Participants

The participants for research questions came from one school district, Wilmer Hutchins ISD. This district was selected because they were a recent public school district that was ordered closed by the Texas Education Agency. The six interviewees were

purposively selected as a participant for a phone interview by the principal investigator based upon a prior employment and position in Wilmer-Hutchins ISD. The participants signed consent thereby becoming a purposive sample. When the participants signed and return the informed consent by email, a thank you letter for agreeing to participate was sent.

Instrumentation

The instrument for this study consisted of two interview questions and an interview procedure approved by the UH CPHS. Appendix A provides the interview questions and procedures used in the interviews with the six administrators. While data has been collected from an urban school district that annexed a smaller school district when they lost their accreditation, the researcher acts as the instrument for gathering these data.

Finally, a review of school performance records and archival data as provided by the Texas Education Agency website was examined to retrieve historical performance data over a period of five years. The researcher also reviewed all the newspaper articles, journals, and publications, and other archival data reviewed as historical background.

Data Analysis

According to Fraenkel et. al., (2012), researchers must make sense out of large amounts of data. The interviews were analyzed using narrative inquiry methods (Cladinin & Connelly, 2000) which captured the personal and human dimensions of the interviewee's experiences over time. The interviewees' experiences in the district takeover process were organized as follows: 1. Pre-Takeover Notifications; 2. Experiences from the State notification to close the district; 3. Teachers responses to

district closure notification; 3. Administrator/Management responses to district closure notification; 4. Community/Parent Responses to district closure notification; 4. Effects on school culture; 5. Student responses to district takeover; 6. Day-to-Day operations under the cloud of district takeover; 7. Effects on teachers of closing the district; 8. Effects on governance and politics; 9. Effects on teachers after closing the district.

This researcher constructed tables to determine emerging themes from interview outcomes. Two additional data sources were used to support the interview themes or the themes were discarded. This study cannot be generalized due to the small sample size. However, the advantage of this research was to acquire information and evidence that could not be obtained otherwise (Fraenkel et al., 2012). The data was triangulated with data from state policy, data from interviews, and archival data including AEIS data, newspaper articles, and journal articles.

The achievement data was analyzed based upon summative data extracted from AEIS performance reports during the 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2011, 2012, and 2013 school years. Specifically, state assessment data in core subjects of mathematics, reading, writing, social studies and science was analyzed to determine if student performance at the district level met state standards requirements to receive a Texas Education Agency rating of acceptable or higher for a particular year. Additionally, student results from the single high school in the school district were analyzed to determine if its performance during the same time period met state standards.

Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District data acquired from the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) was used to determine performance ratings from 2002 – 2004. The AEIS data shows a combined average for each grade level in the

district's elementary, middle, and high school. The results of these scores translated into a rating set forth by the Texas Education Agency. Due to school district closure in 2005, Wilmer Hutchins ceased operation. Dallas ISD immediately took over the troubled district and sent students elsewhere throughout Dallas ISD. In 2010, Dallas ISD opened Wilmer-Hutchins High School in a brand-new facility in its own neighborhood. Student performance data acquired from AEIS for the time period 2011-2013 was examined. Pre and post district closure data was compared and analyzed.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher accepts the fact that qualitative research is ideologically driven, with no value-free or bias-free design (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The researcher recognizes his bias and proposes to maintain the highest ethical behavior in conducting this research

Chapter IV

Results

Overview

The purpose of this mixed methods research study was to review the state and federal policies that drive school and district closures in Texas and to examine the effects of Texas school closure using a single Texas school district case. The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. What are the federal and state accountability policies used in determining if a school or school district should be closed or taken over?
2. When a school district is taken over by the State Education Agency (SEA) and the Commissioner of Education (COE), how is student performance affected?

Question 1: What are the Federal and State Accountability Policies Used in Determining if a School or School District Should be Closed or Taken Over?

Question one was answered by a review of federal and state policies as they pertain to accountability takeovers/reconstitution (consolidations, annexations, and name changes) using policy research methods (Fowler, 2008; Kingdon, 2013). To answer the first research question, a policy review was conducted on federal and state accountability policy theory using policy documents that express the intentions of government actors and the political system usually in the form of rules, regulations, laws, court decisions, and other government documents (Fowler, 2008; Kingdon, 2013). This section discussed findings of the federal accountability policy, including Public Law 107-110 (2001), and the sections within the NCLB (2001) legislation: Title I, Part A, § 1111 and § 1116 (b)[11]. At the time of this study, NCLB, the name of the Elementary and Secondary

Education Act, Public Law 107-110, required State Education Agencies (SEA) to develop a state plan with standardized assessments for approval to the United States Department of Education (USDOE).

Implementing a State Plan

Once approved as an authorized state assessment, the Local Education Agency (LEA) was to administer the assessment in order to measure Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) (NCLB, Title I, Part A, § 1116, 2001). If schools did not meet AYP there were punitive measures set in place (please see <https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/ayp/2011/index.html> for the AYP Guidelines in Texas in 2011).

If the measures were not met in three consecutive years then a “restructuring” of the school would be put in place by the state. If the process continued to produce failing results in the seventh year, the school district was required implement restructuring, including removal of all staff (NCLB, Sec. 1116 (b) [11], 2001). While the NCLB accountability system has a seven-year cycle, the state Commissioner of Education (COE) has the authority to give districts additional years to correct district academic, fiscal, and governance problems (TEC, 97.1079). Appendix B: NCLB Accountability Cycle, further outlines the school and district NCLB accountability cycle.

Defining AYP

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 school districts and schools, within the parameters set by NCLB. In defining AYP, each state sets the minimum levels of improvement in measurable terms of student

performance that school districts and schools must achieve within certain timeframes as specified in the law. Each state starts by setting a minimum threshold based on the performance of the lowest-achieving demographic group or the lowest-achieving schools in the state, whichever is higher. The state must then set the level of student achievement that each school must attain in order to make AYP. Subsequent thresholds must increase at least once every three years, until, at the end of twelve years, all students in the state are achieving at the proficient level on state assessments in reading and language arts, math, and science (NCLB, 2001).

Impact of Federal Policy on State Policy in Texas

In 2011, the state of Texas defined AYP focusing on low-performing, high-poverty, and minority students who are often left behind. Title I programs are designed specifically to meet the needs of low-performing, high-poverty, and minority students. Title I is the federal policy used to close the achievement gap (NCLB, Title I, Part A, 2001). AYP includes student outcomes in reading, mathematics, graduation rates, and attendance.

At a minimum, 95 percent of the all students must participate in the state assessments in Texas. Additionally, Texas' AYP definition requires that 80 percent of students in a school reach proficiency on the state reading assessment and that 75 percent of the students in all subgroups reach proficiency on the state Mathematics assessment (TEA, 2011a). Other indicators to consider for AYP in Texas are four-year graduation rates of 90 percent or five-year graduation rates of 80 percent. The attendance rate is also a consideration in meeting AYP. The attendance rate must be at 90% or it must show

improvement. The Texas 2011 AYP Guide, link provided in Appendix C, presents guidelines to school administrators on AYP progress for each school (TEA, 2011a).

Based on AYP outcomes, the Texas accountability system rated schools and districts as Exemplary, Recognized, Acceptable, or Academically Unacceptable depending on their performance. The law also required schools and districts to report their achievement data to parents and the local community. Schools failing to meet baseline proficiency standards received sanctions while those performing well were rewarded (TEA, 2011a). Texas has a unique approach among the states when determining proficiency and the identification of schools in need of improvement. Appendix D provides a timeline of the steps taken by the State of Texas when a school or district is identified as in need of improvement (TEA, 2011a).

The Consequences of Low Performance at the School Level

The Texas Accountability Law has a reconstitution provision which allows for district takeovers by the Commissioner of Education using consolidations, annexations, and name changes. Texas Education Code 39.131 (2000) indicates that if a district does not meet the accreditation criteria, the commissioner shall take any of the following actions, in order of severity:

1. Issue a notice to board of trustees outlining deficit areas;
2. Order a hearing conducted by the board of trustees in order to update the public on the districts unacceptable performance in addition to the expected improvements in performance and the sanctions that may be imposed if there is no improvement;

3. Appointment of a special intervention committee to conduct an on-site review of the school to determine the cause for low performance, recommend actions, assist in the development of a CIP, and to assist in the monitoring of the school;
4. Appointment of a board of managers from local citizens in the district to act as the board, and
5. An order to shut down the school (TEA, 2013b).

If low performance persists, parents may request to transfer their student to surrounding schools or district. Once a school has been deemed Unacceptable or Low Performing, assistance from the state is provided to help with curriculum alignment, data analysis, and targeted intervention (TEC, 2011). As Texas accountability standards have increased, the number of unacceptable schools and districts that may be candidates in Texas has also increased. With more rigorous standards, the state identifies more failures or students and districts to meet standards. Table 4.1 identifies the magnitude of the challenge in Texas over time. Specifically, over the past seven years, anywhere from 182 to 2,233 schools in Texas have not met AYP on any given year.

Table 4. 1

Texas Schools Not Meeting AYP 2009-2016

Year	Number Mot Meeting AYP
2009-2010	190
2010-2011	182
2011-2012	248
2012-2013	1,154
2013-2014	2,233
*2014-2015	895
*2015-2016	895

Note. *Number based on Focused and Priority Schools Listings. Data pulled from the Adequate Yearly Progress Archives maintained by the TEA (2016).

In 2014-2015 and 2015-2016, the scale for accountability changed. The change was a result of states opportunity to request flexibility waivers built on local reform efforts related to assessments and college and career ready standards. Texas, like most states, requested the flexibility waiver and was granted the opportunity to use state developed plans to improve outcomes. This change significantly reduced the number of schools not meeting AYP to 895 in 2015-2016 as compared to 2,233 schools not meeting AYP in 2013-2014. As a result of the redesigned improvement plan process, Texas, among other SEAs, developed a list of Priority and Focus Schools that did not make improvement. Texas defines Priority schools as Title I high schools with less than 60% graduation rates and/or schools with the lowest academic performance in reading/math system safeguards at the All Student level; and Focus schools are Title I schools showing the widest gaps between reading/math performances (TEA, 2016).

The Consequences of Low Performance at the District Level

When districts do not make academic improvements, they could become the target of a Structural Governing Takeover which is the final sanction for multiple years of not making required performance goals established by the Texas Education Agency. The term structural governing takeover means that districts could be closed, consolidated, or managed by a neighboring school district. The Texas Education Agency Report and Data site was used to create a list of the school districts identified for structural governing takeovers by the Texas Education Agency from 1983 to 2016 (TEA, 2016). In Texas, districts can be annexed, consolidated, merged, renamed, abolished, closed, or a new district created by district or community action in accordance with state policy.

Additionally, the Commissioner of Education for the State of Texas can perform these same actions and can also target a district for takeover.

Texas consolidations, annexations, name changes, and takeovers were analyzed using TEA's website on Texas consolidations (TEA, 2015) along with enrollment data from the TEA AEIS. A total of five school districts were removed from the analysis because they were not true consolidated districts in the sense that they encountered a name change not associated with a state mandated consolidation. Of the remaining school districts, two districts were excluded because they were new districts and were not part of a structural governing takeover.

The names of the districts that were the target of Structural Governing Takeover, the state action, and the date of that action are provided in Appendix E: Consolidations, Annexations and Name Changes for Texas Public Schools. When a school district does not meet the accreditation criteria the district faces the consolidation process used by the COE outlined under TEC 39.131 (2000) to take over or close said district. There have only been 20 consolidations in Texas spanning from 1994 to 2014. Each consolidation involved only two school districts – Wilmer Hutchins ISD and North Forest ISD (Taylor, Gronberg, Jansen, & Karakaplan, 2014). Since 2014, one additional school district, LaMarque ISD, was annexed by a larger district (TEA, 2016).

Structural Governing Takeovers in Rural Districts

Prior to 1994, Texas consolidation focused on reducing rural school districts due to increasing challenges experienced by small districts with low enrollment (Cooley & Floyd, 2013). These challenges included fiscal constraints relative to school funding, special programming needs that were not being adequately provided as accountability

demands increased, and academic challenges that included increased migrant students, special education program needs, higher teacher turnover rates, and teachers teaching outside of their certification area (Cooley & Floyd, 2013).

Comparison of Five District Takeovers

Five districts were identified for State accountability takeover using the Commissioner's Rule for District Takeover. All district takeovers occurred between 2006 and 2015. The five districts that were identified for State takeover were: Wilmer-Hutchins ISD; Kendleton ISD; Samnorwood ISD; North Forest ISD; and, LaMarque ISD. These five districts were largely minority districts with the exception of one – Samnorwood ISD. The following are the demographics of the five districts. See demographics data in the table. Of the five Texas takeover school districts, one district Samnorwood was dissolved by school board policy for low enrollment (American School and University, 2012). In addition to these five districts, one district was slated for a future takeover. Beaumont ISD was slated for takeover and was considered a minority district. Beaumont ISD was 60.2% African American and 21.2% Hispanic (TEA, 2015).

Table 4. 2

Five Districts in Texas Demographics

School District	African American	Hispanic	White
Wilmer-Hutchins ISD	68.00%	27.00%	
Kendleton ISD	48.70%	50.40%	
Samnorwood ISD	11.10%	29.60%	51.90%
North Forest ISD	63.20%	35.00%	
LaMarque ISD	69.20%	19.50%	

Note. Data pulled from the Academic Excellence Indicator System maintained by the TEA (2017a).

Question 2: When a School District is Taken Over by the State Education Agency and the Commissioner of Education (COE), How is Student Performance Affected?

After delineating the federal and state policies for identifying Texas school districts taken over by the Texas Education Agency and the Commissioner of Education, the results of the implementation of the policies over the last 30+ years was discussed. The second question reviews the impact these takeovers have on student performance using one of the five districts in Texas that was taken over between 2005 and 2016.

Wilmer-Hutchins ISD was a Texas school district that was taken over in 2006 by the TEA and COE using the state district takeover policy. The district was selected as a convenience since the district was taken over more than a decade previously and is a district with student data available both prior and subsequent to takeover. The documentation related to Wilmer-Hutchins ISD indicated that the takeover decision by the state was based on the district's mismanagement, poor academic performance, and governance issues (Benton, 2006).

This case study of Wilmer-Hutchins ISD was conducted using mixed research methods. Specifically, two data sources were used to analyze in response to the question: *When a school district is taken over by the State Education Agency (SEA) and the Commissioner of Education (COE), how is student performance affected?* To answer this question, interviews were conducted and the student achievement data was collected. In an attempt to validate the study, the interviews and student data were triangulated with information found in the state policy, newspaper articles, and journal articles (Hobbs, 2011; Mellon, 2010; Mastaglio, 2011; Metzger, 2013). The University of Houston

Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects approved the interview survey in March 2014.

Qualitative Interviews

Six interviewees were selected to participate in this study. The interviewees were identified and selected because they were former employees for Wilmer-Hutchins ISD and were willing to participate in the study. After acknowledging that they will participate, the principal investigator followed up via phone to ask the interviewee questions in accordance to IRB protocol. Subsequently, the interviewees were thanked for participation in the study.

Of the six interviewees, five were central office administrators who worked in various capacities at various times within Wilmer-Hutchins ISD while one respondent was a former campus administrator. Of the five central office informants, two were former superintendents, two others were cabinet level employees, and the other was a central office staffer. One of the Superintendents was appointed by the COE. The other Superintendent was selected by the Wilmer-Hutchins ISD School Board. One central office administrator was hired by a new superintendent. This individual worked 14 months. Another cabinet level employee interviewed work for WHISD for a period of two years.

Each of the six interviewees were asked the same series of interview questions. These included:

- What was your role at WHISD?
- What can you tell me about the closure of your former school district?

- What can you tell me about how you think the district closure affected student achievement of students in the district?

Common themes from the Qualitative Interviews

Four themes emerged from the interviews. One theme was the role that the school board played or the issue of school governance and district mismanagement. A second theme was the condition of the facilities. The third theme was the issue of student achievement.

School Governance and District Mismanagement

School governance is defined as: (Hunter, Brown, & Donahoo, 2012)

1. The capacity to implement guidelines to ensure compliance with board and district policies.
2. The structure to support constituent representation.
3. The board and districts ability to follow state policy in hiring and promoting employees.
4. Sufficient training for board members to exercise their duties.

According to the Texas Education Code (TEC), school districts have the responsibility “for implementing the state’s system of public education and ensuring student performance in accordance with the TEC, § 11.002 (2015). In § 11.003 of the Texas Education Code (2015), the school district is an independent body governed by the board of trustees that acts as the district body corporate or legal body for the school district. The following are the duties of the board of trustees:

1. Oversee the management of the school district

2. Ensure that the superintendent implements and monitors plans, procedures, programs, and systems to achieve appropriate, clearly defined, and desired results in the major areas of the school district operations.
3. Unless authorized by the board, a member of the board may not act individually on behalf of the board.
4. The board may act only by majority vote of the members present in compliance with the Government Code in a meeting in which quorum of the board is present for voting.
5. The board shall provide the superintendent an opportunity to present at a meeting an oral or written recommendation to the board on any item that is voted on by the board at the meeting in the form of the Superintendent's agenda.

The interviewees provided several examples of failures of Wilmer-Hutchins Board of Trustees to oversee the management of the school district. This information was supported through interviews. One respondent commented, "The district was overstaffed due to political landscape." The interviewee also stated, "A new superintendent added more to payroll and spent the fund balance." This report was supplemented with a review of local newspapers. According to a review of newspaper articles, Wilmer-Hutchins ISD failed to oversee the governance and management of the school district. According to the *Dallas Morning News* (2005), the board fired the original superintendent for poor performance but kept him on the payroll. Additionally, the Superintendent, Charles Matthews, overspent funds resulting in an insufficient fund balance making it difficult to pay the district's bills. The superintendent suspended the chief financial officer in retaliation for testifying as a state witness (*Dallas Morning*

News, 2005). The actions and district mismanagement of the superintendent was not adequately monitored by the school board and resulted in a governance problem. This was supported by one respondent's response that board members had connections to vendors causing issues that had to be confronted. One respondent stated, "The board was mostly concerned about politics and not student learning." Another interviewee was quoted as saying, "The district was overstaffed upon my arrival... Central office had to make decisions to close schools from 9 to 6 at mid-year... There was a four million dollar fund balance that dwindled down to a half a million. The biggest challenge was missing payroll." Another respondent commented, "The threat of district closure affected staff and parents more than it affected the students. On paydays some employees rushed to make deposits into their bank accounts in fear that payday funds would not be available."

As a result of the superintendent's actions and the board's oversight (or lack thereof), Wilmer-Hutchins ISD was put into bankruptcy. The district could not make payroll nor could they pay their debts (*Dallas Morning News*, 2005). One interviewee said, "Employees were anxious. Failure to make payroll was a concern for all employees." Another commented, "Wilmer-Hutchins did not have enough money to pay overtime to its teachers for tutorials... Students suffered... Class size due to budget constraints was an issue. The district was not in a position to hire additional teachers. These problems led to staff morale issues despite the fact many wanted to do what's in the best interest of the district." One interviewee, whose comments were supported by a local newspaper, stated that board meddling in hiring was so widespread that "people would just show up on the payroll" (*Dallas Observer*, 1996). Claims of governance and management problems consistently resurfaced during interviews with former employees.

Indeed, one respondent reported that the board members recommended more people to be hired than was needed resulting in problems with the district staffing. I recall one district official saying, “After leaving, I learned corruption charges and FBI investigations occurred.” Another respondent stated, “Students suffered the last year... There was big turmoil because people were being assigned to other schools. The reduction was taken care of through attrition.”

It is estimated that 60% of U.S. school takeovers are purely for financial and/or management reasons (Oluwole & Green, 2009). It is apparent from interviewee responses, newspaper reports, and court documents that Wilmer-Hutchins ISD suffered from problems related to both governance and district mismanagement.

Condition of Facilities

Interviewees noted the condition of the facilities in the district. For example, the district could not afford to repair their facilities that had been poorly maintained (*Dallas Morning News*, 2005). One respondent stated, “The high school facility was not operable. School was delayed for two months.” In an effort to ease the burden of its financial situation, Wilmer-Hutchins took out a \$500,000 loan. A state financial audit later revealed that the loan was illegal because it was paid with funds from the school district bond program (*Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, 2004). One respondent stated that bond money was used to help cover shortages.

Student Outcomes

Another major outcome that emerged from interviews was a concern about persistently low academic performance. This is not surprising given that it is estimated 27% of U.S. school takeovers are due to academic performance (Oluwole & Green,

2009). In this case, four of the six respondents interviewed shared that the Texas Education Agency was involved in helping the school within the district to improve. For example, one interviewee who worked for the district from the summer 1996 to December 1997 stated, “Strides were made and significant gains were realized.” This respondent shared increases as quoted: “Grade 3 had a 17.9% increase; Grade 4 had a 5.4% increase; Grade 5 had a 25.6% increase; Grade 6 had a 11.9% increase; Grade 7 had a 12.5 % increase; Grade 8 had a 5.7% increase.” This respondent reported that the average gain overall netted a 13.7% increase in student performance. The respondent also shared that the single high school in WHISD moved from low performing to TEA Acceptable.

As time progressed, it is noted by one respondent who commented, “Student achievement was problematic for a while” especially leading into the final years of Wilmer-Hutchins ISD. “There was a lack of focus from students. Distractions occurred because of superintendent changes. A handful of students were able to maintain focus. The large majority was not due to home circumstances that served as further distractions.”

Analysis of data required student outcomes to be compared over time. Outcomes were compared for three academic years prior and three academic years subsequent to the takeover. It must be noted that these achievement comparisons are not statistically comparable since the state test changed during this six-year period along with the passing criteria. However, the trend in outcomes may provide some information about the relative performance of the campus before and after takeover.

Note. Data pulled from the Academic Excellence Indicator System maintained by the TEA (2017).

For purposes of this study, achievement was identified using the percentage passing state tests in math and reading. The Texas Academic Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) data was used for outcomes until the change of the state assessment in 2011 whereby the data are from the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR). As the content areas of reading and math have been consistently tested, these are the only two sections of the state mandated tests that were examined and compared. The second achievement indicator that was explored was the state's accountability rating for Wilmer-Hutchins High School. The high school was part of Wilmer-Hutchins ISD and upon being merged with Dallas Independent School District the district level comparison could not be made. However, it was possible to analyze the school rating of 2005-06 with the school rating after 2011 as the high school was located in the same geographic site as the old Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District High School.

Table 4. 3

Wilmer-Hutchins High School Demographics Data (Pre Merger)

Year	African American	Hispanic	Whites	Eco. Dis.	LEP
2004-2005	83.70%	13.80%	2.40%	53.10%	2.50%
2003-2004	76.20%	20.70%	3.10%	62.60%	2.20%
2002-2003	79.20%	17.40%	3.40%	49.30%	3.20%

Note. Data pulled from the Academic Excellence Indicator System maintained by the TEA (2017a).

Table 4. 4

Wilmer-Hutchins High School Demographics Data (Post Merger)

Year	African American	Hispanic	Whites	Eco. Dis.	LEP
2013-2014	69.60%	28.50%	0.90%	88.00%	10.40%
2012-2013	69.50%	27.50%	1.90%	89.00%	10.60%
2011-2012	70.30%	26.40%	1.80%	83.30%	10.80%

Note. Data pulled from the Academic Excellence Indicator System maintained by the TEA (2017).

Table 4. 5

Wilmer-Hutchins High School Achievement Data Passing Rates (Pre and Post Merger)

Year (Pre Merger)	Reading Scores	Math Scores	Year (Post Merger)	Reading Scores	Math Scores
2004-2005	31	15	2013-2014	*	*
2003-2004	65	30	2012 -2013	50	21
2002-2003	37	8	2011-2012	84	31
Average	44.3	17.6	Average	67	26

Note. Pre-Consolidation data pulled from the Academic Excellence Indicator System maintained by the TEA (2017a). Post Consolidation data utilizes the Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) requirements data maintained by the TEA (2017b).

Table 4.5 shows Wilmer-Hutchins performance data during the last three years of existence, from 2002-2005. In order to locate post school consolidation data from 2011-2014 in reading and math, the Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) was used.

Table 4.5 achievement measures also show an average reading and math passing standards for the three-year period. The average for the three-year period in reading was 44.3% and 17.6 % in math. The average performance after consolidation was 67% for reading and 26% for math. A comparison of pre-consolidation and post consolidation averages reveals that reading performance increased by 23% on average and math performance increased by 8% on average.

Table 4. 6

Wilmer-Hutchins High School Accountability Ratings by Year (Pre and Post Merger)

Year (Pre Merger)	Rating	Year (Post Merger)	Rating
2004-2005	Not Rated - Other	2013-2014	Improvement Required
2003-2004	Academically Acceptable	2012-2013	Improvement Required
2002-2003	Academically Acceptable	2011-2012	No Rating

Note. Pre-Consolidation data pulled from the Academic Excellence Indicator System maintained by the TEA (2017a). Post Consolidation data utilizes the Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) requirements data maintained by the TEA (2017b).

Table 4.6 shows the accountability rating for pre consolidation and post consolidation. The pre consolidation data shows that Wilmer-Hutchins High School was rated Academically Acceptable. In contrast, Table 4.5 post consolidation data shows that Wilmer-Hutchins High School was rated Improvement Required. The school did not receive a performance rating in the pre-consolidation year, 2004-2005 nor in post-consolidation year, 2011-2012.

Overall, the data suggest that despite gains in reading and math scores, Wilmer-Hutchins Independent School District performance rating was lower after consolidation. However, it must be noted that during the 2012-2013 school year, the Texas accountability system, only provided for “Met Standard” or “Improvement Required.” Despite the increase in percent passing, it cannot be concluded that performance was worse after consolidation.

Chapter 5

Discussion Overview

The purpose of this mixed methods research study was to study the state and federal policies that drive school and district closures in Texas and to study the effects of Texas school closure using the case of one Texas school district. The following research questions were answered in this study:

- 1) What are the federal and state accountability policies used in determining if a school or school district should be closed or taken over?
- 2) When a school district is taken over by the state education agency Commissioner of Education (COE), how is student performance affected?

Research Question One: Federal Accountability Policy

Question one was answered by a review of federal and state policies for accountability takeovers. The following section will outline findings of the federal accountability policy. Federal policy as articulated by NCLB (§ 1116 (b) [11], 2001) set the standard for required academic improvement in schools and school districts. These standards under NCLB authorized state assessments for LEAs to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) (NCLB, Title I, Part A, § 1116, 2001). The NCLB (2001) law not to be confused with ESSA (2015), new education law, was established to show improved academic performance. ESSA was designed to document progress and focus on college and career ready efforts. For the purpose of this study, NCLB law is applicable due to the time-period explored in this research. Each state was required to develop and implement its plan to meet AYP. If academic measures were not met within the specified time-period, sanctions would be imposed. One major sanction is school

district closure. In Texas, there were 190 schools that did not make AYP during the 2009-2010, school year. The number of schools that did not make AYP in 2013-2014 had climbed dramatically to 2,233 students. Cumulatively, there have been a total of 59 school districts that have been taken over in Texas since its accountability system started in 1983 (TEA, 2014).

Research Question One: State Accountability Policy

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, which in time led to NCLB in 2001 and now ESSA (2015), holds schools and school districts accountable for closing the performance gap in academic achievement. In Texas, school districts have been held to accountability standards since 1984, and have steadily increased standards and accountability testing that spans four decades and includes TEAMS, TAAS, TAKS, and recent STAAR Testing. Due to increased rigor and strengthened accountability standards, there were three times as many schools that did not meet AYP in Texas in 2014 as there were in 2010-2011.

Federal and state accountability policies.

The Texas Accountability Law has a reconstitution provision that allows for district takeovers using consolidations, annexations, and name changes and takeovers of individual schools by the Commissioner of Education. According to Texas Education Code 39.131 (2000), if a district does not meet the accreditation criteria, the commissioner shall take action that can result in a school district takeover.

At the time of this investigation, the State of Texas defined AYP in 2011 with special attention on low performing, high-poverty, and minority students who are often left behind. Title I programs are designed specifically to meet the needs of low

performing, high-poverty, and minority students. Title I is the federal policy used to close the achievement gap (NCLB, Title I, Part A in 2011). Texas' adequate yearly progress definition requires that 80 percent of students in a school reach proficiency on the state reading assessment and that 75 percent of the students in all subgroups reach proficiency on the Mathematics state assessment. Additionally, 95 percent of the students must participate in the in the state assessments for reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics. Other indicators to consider for AYP in Texas are four-year graduation rates of 90 percent or five-year graduation rate of 80 percent. The attendance rate is also a consideration in meeting AYP. The attendance rate must be at 90% or it must show improvement (TEA, 2011a).

Every school district in Texas must be assigned an accreditation status annually in accordance to the Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 39, Public School System Accountability. TEC 39.052, requires the COE to determine the accreditation status of each district. A total of 20 consolidations in Texas from 1994 to 2014 have gone through the consolidation process and each consolidation involved only two school districts (Taylor et al., 2014). Since 2014, one additional school district, LaMarque ISD, was annexed by a larger district.

Research Question Two: Post Takeover Affect on Student Performance

While the overall statewide data provided information useful for analysis, it was determined that the data analysis for this study would provide more useful data if it focused on one Texas school district that was taken over by the TEA and COE using the state district takeover policies. There were a list of 70 Texas school district consolidations, annexations, and name changes analyzed using TEA reports on Texas

consolidations from 1983 to 2015 (TEA, 2015). A similar study was conducted by Taylor et al. (2014) to review potential increases from school district consolidation in five counties in Texas – Bexar, Dallas, Harris, Tarrant, and Travis. This particular study focused on the time period between 1994- 2014. Two of the 20 school districts in this study, Wilmer Hutchins ISD and North Forest ISD, were consolidated into a larger district as a part of state takeover policies. Due to the time-period that had elapsed and the fact that of Wilmer-Hutchins HS in Dallas ISD had re-opened, it was selected for this study.

Summary

If a school district does not meet accreditation criteria under Section 39.071, for academics and/or financial reasons, by commissioner's rule, the commissioner shall take action deemed appropriate which can ultimately lead to school district closure. The one sample district selected for this study was Wilmer-Hutchins ISD in the State of Texas. The sample district was selected using a convenience sample or a district with which the researcher was knowledgeable.

Wilmer-Hutchins ISD was identified to conduct a case analysis using mixed research methods. Research methods used were qualitative interviews and quantitative descriptive analysis of student achievement data. Three data sources were analyzed and triangulated with data from state policy information from question one, interviews, and archival data including AEIS reports, TAPR, newspaper articles, and journal articles.

The common themes that emerged from the interviews, research, and article reviews were school governance, district mismanagement, and condition of the facilities. Consistent responses were obtained from interviewees with regard to how the State

monitored the school district and maintained control for periods of time due to governance issues. Responses from interviewees and the newspapers identify that governance issues at Wilmer-Hutchins ISD had been long-standing and that the district had historically been plagued with many and varied challenges.

During the final few years prior to closing, budgetary concerns and the financial wellbeing of the district are of major concern to interviewees. Specifically, Wilmer-Hutchins ISD had financial constraints and at times was not able to maintain an adequate fund balance. Employees were concerned that the district would not be able to make payroll since they had already experienced a district where funds were not available to pay overtime for tutoring or repairing facilities. By the 2003-2004, school year, Wilmer-Hutchins was broke. The lack of funds and mismanagement of funds that were reported in the interviews were corroborated by federal investigations, court documents, and newspaper reports.

In summary, school districts have the responsibility to implement compliance guidelines through the use of board and district policies and to oversee the management of a school district in accordance with the guidelines. If that does not occur, in accordance with state policy, the district is subject to takeover. In the case of Wilmer-Hutchins ISD, the board had historically failed to manage the district (mismanagement) as defined by Hunter, et. al., (2012) and the superintendent failed to implement and monitor finances (governance) (Hunter, et.al., 2012).

Limitations

While there is a plethora of statewide data, only one district case was analyzed to answer the research questions. A major limitation for this study is that it compared

unlike data. The AEIS data used to compare student growth or student achievement is not controlled for the subjects. Ideally student numbers would have been used to compare the same students over time and over different school experiences. The findings are only an effort to seek new information using unlike subjects; however, efforts were made to draw some growth data for groups of students. The data from this study may not be generalized.

Achievement data (AEIS, 2012) for Wilmer-Hutchins was reviewed and compared to pre and post school district takeover. It is noted that these two achievement comparisons are not statistically comparable, nor do they represent the same students. After consolidating with Dallas ISD, Wilmer-Hutchins reading performance increased by 23% and math performance increased by 8%. However, the accountability rating did not increase. It went from Academic Acceptable to Improvement Required (TEA, 2015). Despite an increase in performance and a changing accountability system, it cannot be concluded that performance was worse after consolidation.

Conclusions

It was concluded that the data analysis for this study would provide more useful information if it focused on the individual performance of students longitudinally pre and post school district closure. The analysis of this study focused on the accreditation status of a school district that was slated for closure and re-opened with a different school district. The findings determined that the academic performance of the targeted school district, Wilmer-Hutchins ISD, that closed and merged with another school district due to performance issues did not perform significantly higher when compared to pre and post

merger data. While district closure may help to resolve governance issues, it does not necessarily improve a school's academic performance.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study recommends that relations between academic performance and school district closure be studied further using other variables like school district size and ethnicity.

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Appendix A
Human Subjects



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
Division of Research
Institutional Review Board Application

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Institutional Review Board
Application ID :
Title :

14338-EX - (4605)

State Takeovers of School Districts: A Review of a Case District

Approval details for the Application Id: 4605

	Decision	Approver Name	Date	Comment
PI signature	Approved	Johnson, Wiley	05/02/2014	
DOR signature	Approved	Admin, IRB	05/02/2014	

University of Houston

Division of Research

Appendix B

NCLB Accountability Cycle

Table B. 1

NCLB Accountability Cycle

Year	NCLB Accountability Cycle
Year 1	Year 1 of Missing AYP: There are no consequences for the first year a school misses AYP.
Year 2	<p>Identification for school Improvement</p> <p>After miss two consecutive years of missing Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) the school must be identified for school improvement by the LEA. AYP is defined by the State Accountability Plan which is approved by the Secretary of Education.</p> <p>Year 2 of Missing AYP: If a school misses AYP for a second consecutive year, it is identified as “in need of improvement.” The school must develop a two-year improvement plan in consultation with parents, school staff, and the school district. The plan should address core academic subjects and any specific subjects the school is struggling with. Students enrolled in the school now have the option to transfer to another school within the school district that has not been identified as “in need of improvement.” Priority is given to the lowest achieving students from low-income families enrolled in the school. Schools in need of improvement are provided with Title I school improvement funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sec. 1116 (b) (2) identify <u>AU schools for years to reach AYP</u> · Announce Public School choice Options · Options to transfer to other LEA with AYP or charter · Priority to the LOWEST ACHIEVING CHILDREN FROM LOW INCOME

- Opportunity to Review: Before Identifying a school for school improvement the LEA shall provide the Principal an opportunity to review school level data; If the principal and community believe the data are error for STATISTICAL OR OTHER SUBSTANTIVE REASONS, the principal may provide supporting evidence to the LEA;

- TR: this is like a due process for the school;

- Determine school's eligibility for targeted school assistance (Title I funding for school improvement under NCLB 1115 (identifies who is eligible and how to use the money, i.e. extended day, curriculum, etc.)

- SEC. 1116(b)(3) SCHOOL PLAN: Scientifically based research; policies and practices on core academic subjects; measureable objectives for each group

- 1116(b)(4)

- Technical assistance (appointed by the Governor) May be provided by: LEA, SEA (the state commissioner of education (COE) provides consultants for technical assistance, from NPO or for Profit consultants, inst. Of higher ed;

- Provides data analyses, professional development, instructional strategies, all scientifically based

- Consider
 1. Scientifically-based
 2. Budget
 3. 10% of funds made available under 6313 (Title I School Improvement Funds)
 4. Address academic achievement problem
 5. Staff development that a. addresses academic problems; b. Sec. 6319 on SD (state plan for highly qualified); c. with increased opportunities to participate in SD;

	<p>Within 45 days of receiving plan, LEA establishes a peer review process to assist with school plan</p> <p>Revised school plan must be implemented by Year 2</p>
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 1116(b)(5): Failure to make AYP by the end of the first full school year after identification · Continue with services in Year 2 · Add Supplemental educational services · Supplemental ed. Services (Districts are mandated to provide Supplements Services under Sec. 1116 (b) (5) of NCLB. Services include tutoring from private firms that have no accountability requirements other than to create a list of students recruited for tutor whether or not the students attended regularly. Many of these firms provide a phone or other gifts to high school students for signing with them for tutoring services. Some states have disallowed tutoring services because of the lack of accountability for service providers and money losers. · Continue technical assistance · Notice to parents · Reasons for identification of failure · Parental involvement <p>Option to transfer with transportation when required</p>
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sec. 1116 (b) (7) Corrective action. (Time to replace staff). · (A) means action consistent with State law. · Identify underlying staffing, curriculum, or other problems with the school · System of corrective action to help students achieve academic achievement;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Continue to provide option to transfer · Continue to provide assistance; · Continue to make SES; · Identify the school corrective action and provide one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Option to transfer 2. Assistance 3. SES 4. Identify the school and take at least one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Replace the school staff Ø Institute and implement a new curriculum, including providing appropriate professional development based on scientifically based research to enable AYP Ø Significantly decrease management authority at school level Ø Appoint an outside expert Ø Extend the school year or the school day; · Restructure the internal organizational structure of the school
Year 5	<p>Optional Year</p> <p>1116(b)(7)(D) D) Delay.--Notwithstanding any other provision of this paragraph, the local educational agency may delay, for a period not to exceed 1 year, implementation of the requirements under paragraph (5), corrective action under this paragraph, or restructuring under paragraph (8)</p>
Year 5/6	<p>1116(b)(8)Restructuring.— (TR: THIS IS YEAR 5/6 bases LEA may delay for one year)</p> <p>1116(b)(8)(A) Failure to make adequate yearly progress.— If, after 1 full school year of corrective action under paragraph (7), a school subject to such corrective action continues to fail to make adequate yearly progress, then the local educational agency shall--</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Continue to provide SES and · Prepare a plan to provide <p>alternative governance;</p> <p>1116 (b)(8)(B): (Definition) Restructuring/Alternative governance - For Title I schools that move into year four of school improvement, this may include reopening the school as a charter school, replacing staff relevant to the school's failure to make progress, or turning the management of the school over to a private educational management company with a demonstrated record of effectiveness.)</p> <p>(possible closure, state takeover, privatization, or conversion to a charter school)</p> <p>1116(b)(8)(B)(i) The school must prepare a plan for an alternative governance arrangement, which can include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reopening the school as a charter school, 2. contracting management to a private, 3. outside management group, 4. turning the school over to the state for reorganization, or 5. any other changes to school governance that “make fundamental reforms.” <p>1116(b)(9) Transportation</p> <p>Year 5 of Missing AYP: If, after a full year of corrective action, a school misses AYP for a fifth consecutive year, the school will be placed under “restructuring.” The school must prepare a plan for an alternative governance arrangement, which can include reopening the school as a charter school, contracting management to a private, outside management group, turning the school over to the state for reorganization, or any other changes to school governance that “make fundamental reforms.</p>
Year 7	<p>Sec. 1116 (b) (11): Cooperative agreement: if all the schools in the district are UA (the case of North Forest ISD) for transfer purposes the district can enter special arrangement with other district.</p> <p>Year 6 of Missing AYP: If the school misses AYP for a sixth consecutive year, it must implement the restructuring plan developed in the prior year.</p>

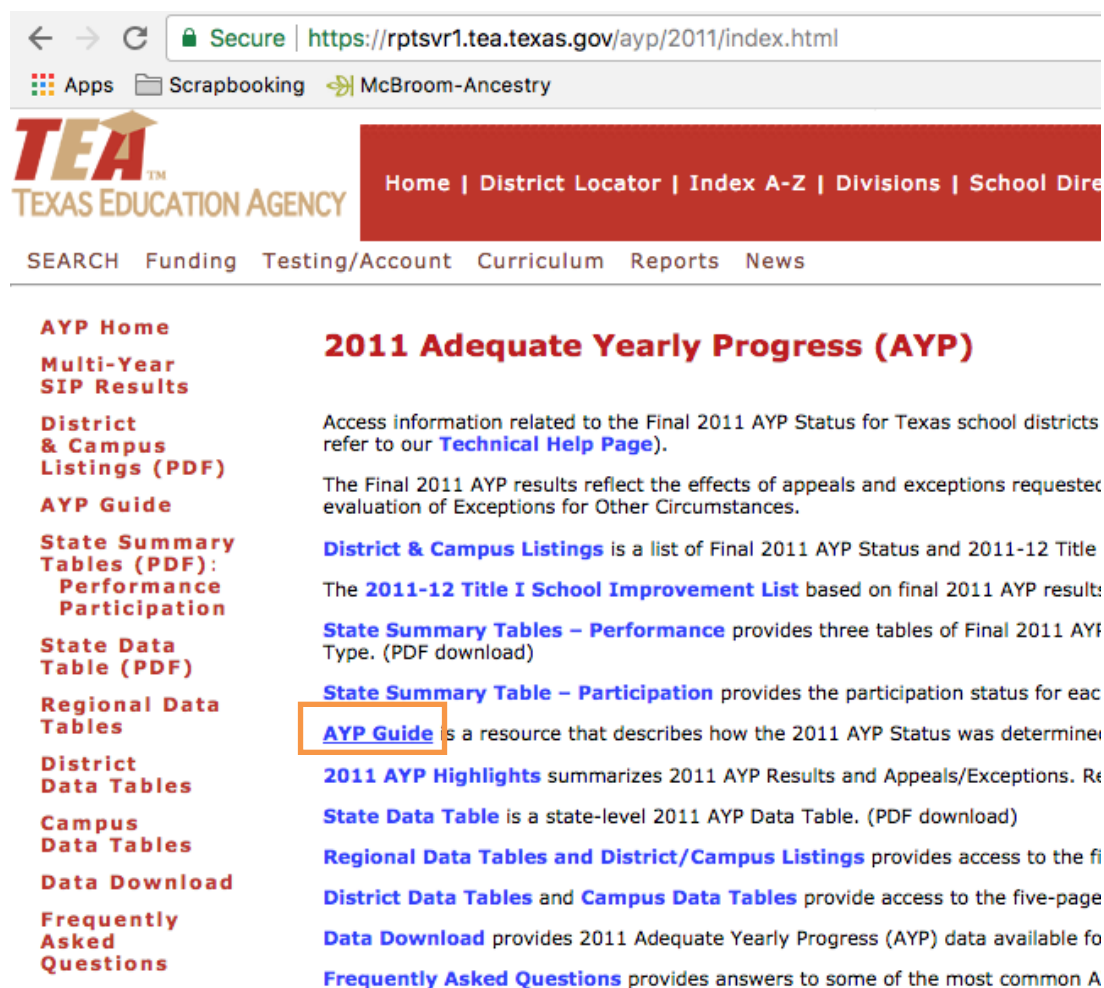
Year 7 and 8	<p>Sec. 1116 (b) (12) Duration: (If the school does not achieve AYP for two consecutive years the LEA shall no longer subject school to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · School improvement · Correction action; · Restructuring;
Year 9	<p>Sec. 1116 (b) (14) SEA responsibilities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide Technical assistance to reconstituted schools; 2. Determines LEA failed responsibilities and broke State Law; 3. ensure that academic assessment results under this part are provided to schools before any identification of a school may take place under this subsection; 4. Notify Sec. of Ed of low performing;

Note. Table provided in class notes by Dr. Reyes (2013); TEA (2013b)

Appendix C

AYP Guide 2011

Guide retrieved from <https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/ayp/2011/index.html>



← → ↻ Secure | <https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/ayp/2011/index.html>

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Multi-Year SIP Results
District & Campus Listings (PDF)
AYP Guide
State Summary Tables (PDF): Performance Participation
State Data Table (PDF)
Regional Data Tables
District Data Tables
Campus Data Tables
Data Download
Frequently Asked Questions

2011 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Access information related to the Final 2011 AYP Status for Texas school districts refer to our [Technical Help Page](#).

The Final 2011 AYP results reflect the effects of appeals and exceptions requested evaluation of Exceptions for Other Circumstances.

[District & Campus Listings](#) is a list of Final 2011 AYP Status and 2011-12 Title

The [2011-12 Title I School Improvement List](#) based on final 2011 AYP results

[State Summary Tables – Performance](#) provides three tables of Final 2011 AYP Type. (PDF download)

[State Summary Table – Participation](#) provides the participation status for each

[AYP Guide](#) is a resource that describes how the 2011 AYP Status was determined

[2011 AYP Highlights](#) summarizes 2011 AYP Results and Appeals/Exceptions. Re

[State Data Table](#) is a state-level 2011 AYP Data Table. (PDF download)

[Regional Data Tables and District/Campus Listings](#) provides access to the fi

[District Data Tables](#) and [Campus Data Tables](#) provide access to the five-page

[Data Download](#) provides 2011 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) data available fo

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) provides answers to some of the most common A

Appendix D

NCLB Time Table for Academic Sanctions

Table D. 1

NCLB Time Table for Academic Sanctions

YEAR	NCLB, Title I Part A, Section 1116 ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
	Title I Part A
Sec 1116 (a)(1)(A)	<p>STATE STRUCTURE:</p> <p>(a) Local Review: Each LEA receiving funds under this part shall:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(a)(1)(A): Use state academic assessments and other indicators of the State plan to measure Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as defined in Title I Part A, Subpart 1—Basic Program Requirements, Sec 1111 (b) (2) (This section refers to the use of the State Plan Standards, Sec. 1111(b) Academic Standards, Academic Assessments, and Accountability(2) Accountability, including Sec. 1111 (b)(2)(C) Definition of AYP FOR THE STATE PLAN: FOUNDATIONS FOR SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY;</p> <p>(Definition: AYP - Adequate Yearly Progress represents the minimum level of improvement that schools and school divisions must achieve each year as determined by State Plan: SEE DEFINITION IN SEC. 1111 AND SEC. 1112)</p>
Sec. 1116 (a)(1)(B)	<p>REVIEW ANNUAL PROGRESS FOR AYP THREE STAGES OF ACCOUNTABILITY TAKEOVER POLICY:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. school improvement, 2. corrective action, or 3. restructuring under
SEC. 1116(a)(1)(C)	Publicize and disseminate the results of local annual review to parents, teachers, and the community of state standards and assessments (SEC. 1111(b)(1)(D))
SEC. 1116(a)(1)(D)	review the effectiveness of the actions and activities the schools are carrying out under this part

	with respect to parental involvement, professional development, and other activities assisted under this part.
1116 (a)(2)	The SEA shall ensure that districts have results before beginning of next school year.
YEAR 1	Year 1 of Missing AYP: There are no consequences for the first year a school misses AYP.
1116 (b)	SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
Year 2	<p>TWO YEARS OF MISSING AYP. IDENTIFY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>BY OPENING OF SCHOOL FOR YEAR 3: An LEA shall identify for school improvement for failing to make AYP (as defined in the State Accountability Plan) for 2 consecutive years.</p> <p>Year 2 of Missing AYP: If a school misses AYP for a second consecutive year, it is identified as “in need of improvement.” The school must develop a two-year improvement plan in consultation with parents, school staff, and the school district. The plan should address core academic subjects and any specific subjects the school is struggling with. Students enrolled in the school now have the option to transfer to another school within the school district that has not been identified as “in need of improvement.” Priority is given to the lowest achieving students from low-income families enrolled in the school. Schools in need of improvement are provided with Title I school improvement funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sec. 1116 (b) (2) identify <u>AU schools for years to reach AYP</u> · Announce Public School choice Options · Options to transfer to other LEA with AYP or charter · Priority to the LOWEST ACHIEVING CHILDREN FROM LOW INCOME

- Opportunity to Review: Before Identifying a school for school improvement the LEA shall provide the Principal an opportunity to review school level data; If the principal and community believe the data are error for STATISTICAL OR OTHER SUBSTANTIVE REASONS, the principal may provide supporting evidence to the LEA;
- TR: this is like a due process for the school;
- Determine school's eligibility for targeted school assistance (Title I funding for school improvement under NCLB 1115 (identifies who is eligible and how to use the money, i.e. extended day, curriculum, etc.)
- SEC. 1116(b)(3) SCHOOL PLAN: Scientifically based research; policies and practices on core academic subjects; measureable objectives for each group
- 1116(b)(4)
- Technical assistance (appointed by the Governor) May be provided by: LEA, SEA (the state commissioner of education (COE) provides consultants for technical assistance, from NPO or for Profit consultants, inst. Of higher ed;
- Provides data analyses, professional development, instructional strategies, all scientifically based
- Consider
 1. Scientifically-based
 2. Budget
 3. 10% of funds made available under 6313 (Title I School Improvement Funds)
 4. Address academic achievement problem
 5. Staff development that a. addresses academic problems; b. Sec. 6319 on SD (state plan for highly qualified); c. with increased opportunities to participate in SD;

Within 45 days of receiving plan, LEA establishes a peer review process to assist with school plan

	Revised school plan must be implemented by Year 2:
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 1116(b)(5): Failure to make AYP by the end of the first full school year after identification · Continue with services in Year 2 · Add Supplemental educational services · Supplemental ed. Services (Districts are mandated to provide Supplements Services under Sec. 1116 (b) (5) of NCLB. Services include tutoring from private firms that have no accountability requirements other than to create a list of students recruited for tutor whether or not the students attended regularly. Many of these firms provide a phone or other gifts to high school students for signing with them for tutoring services. Some states have disallowed tutoring services because of the lack of accountability for service providers and money losers. · Continue technical assistance · Notice to parents · Reasons for identification of failure · Parental involvement · Option to transfer with transportation when required
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sec. 1116 (b) (7) Corrective action.(Time to replace staff). · (A) means action consistent with State law. · Identify underlying staffing, curriculum, or other problems with the school · System of corrective action to help students achieve academic achievement; · Continue to provide option to transfer

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Continue to provide assistance; · Continue to make SES; · Identify the school corrective action and provide one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Option to transfer 2. Assistance 3. SES 4. Identify the school and take at least one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Replace the school staff Ø Institute and implement a new curriculum, including providing appropriate professional development based on scientifically based research to enable AYP Ø Significantly decrease management authority at school level Ø Appoint an outside expert Ø Extend the school year or the school day; Ø Restructure the internal organizational structure of the school
Year 5	<p>Optional Year</p> <p>1116(b)(7)(D) Delay.--Notwithstanding any other provision of this paragraph, the local educational agency may delay, for a period not to exceed 1 year, implementation of the requirements under paragraph (5), corrective action under this paragraph, or restructuring under paragraph (8)</p>
Year 5/6	<p>1116(b)(8)Restructuring.— (TR: THIS IS YEAR 5/6 bases LEA may delay for one year)</p> <p>1116(b)(8)(A) Failure to make adequate yearly progress.— If, after 1 full school year of corrective action under paragraph (7), a school subject to such corrective action continues to fail to make adequate yearly progress, then the local educational agency shall--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Continue to provide SES and

	<p>Prepare a plan to provide alternative governance;</p> <p>1116 (b)(8)(B): (Definition) Restructuring/Alternative governance - For Title I schools that move into year four of school improvement, this may include reopening the school as a charter school, replacing staff relevant to the school's failure to make progress, or turning the management of the school over to a private educational management company with a demonstrated record of effectiveness.)</p> <p>(possible closure, state takeover, privatization, or conversion to a charter school)</p> <p>1116(b)(8)(B)(i) The school must prepare a plan for an alternative governance arrangement, which can include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reopening the school as a charter school, 2. contracting management to a private, 3. outside management group, 4. turning the school over to the state for reorganization, or 5. any other changes to school governance that "make fundamental reforms." <p>1116(b)(9) Transportation</p> <p>Year 5 of Missing AYP: If, after a full year of corrective action, a school misses AYP for a fifth consecutive year, the school will be placed under "restructuring." The school must prepare a plan for an alternative governance arrangement, which can include reopening the school as a charter school, contracting management to a private, outside management group, turning the school over to the state for reorganization, or any other changes to school governance that "make fundamental reforms."</p>
Year 7	<p>Sec. 1116 (b) (11): Cooperative agreement: if all the schools in the district are UA (the case of North Forest ISD) for transfer purposes the district can enter special arrangement with other district.</p> <p>Year 6 of Missing AYP: If the school misses AYP for a sixth consecutive year, it must implement the restructuring plan developed in the prior year.</p>
Year 7 and 8	<p>Sec. 1116 (b) (12) Duration: (If the school does not achieve AYP for two consecutive years the LEA shall no longer subject school to:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · School improvement • Correction action; • Restructuring;
Year 9	Sec. 1116 (b) (13) Special Rule: for transferring students to complete school in transferred school
Year 9	<p>Sec. 1116 (b) (14) SEA responsibilities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide Technical assistance to reconstituted schools; 2. Determines LEA failed responsibilities and broke State Law; 3. ensure that academic assessment results under this part are provided to schools before any identification of a school may take place under this subsection; 4. Notify Sec. of Ed of low performing;
	<p>Sec 1116 (c) State Review and LEA improvement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. annual Review of LEA and report AYP B. Publicize and disseminate to LEA, teachers and other staff 2. Rewards for 2 years of AYP 3. Identification of LEA for Improvement <p>When a school district is identified for improvement, it follows the same 7 year district improvement process that a school follows before it is taken over by the State.</p>

Note. Table provided in class notes by Dr. Reyes (2013).

Appendix E

Consolidations, Annexations, and Name Changes for Texas Public Schools

Table E. 1

Consolidations, Annexations, and Name Changes for Texas Public Schools

District	Action	Year
Eola ISD	Consolidated to Eden CISD	1983
Smiley ISD	Consolidated Nixon-Smiley	1983
South Park ISD	Consolidated with Beaumont	1984
Estelline ISD	Annexed Childress ISD	1985
McAdoo ISD	Annexed to Rusk ISD	1985
Old Glory ISD	Annexed to Aspermont ISD	1985
Delmar ISD	Consolidated as Delmar - West Lamar ISD	1985
Divide ISD	Consolidated with Blackwell ISD	1985
Rocksprings ISD	Annexed to Carta Valley	1985
Spur ISD	Annexed to McAdoo	1985
Crosbyton ISD	Annexed to McAdoo	1985
Talpa Centennial ISD	Consolidated with Mozelle ISD renamed Panther Creek CISD	1986
Wimberley ISD	Created from parts of Hays CISD and Dripping Springs ISD	1986
Lillian ISD	Annexed to Alvarado ISD	1986
Delmar – West Lamar CISD	Renamed Chisum ISD	1986
Dougherty ISD	Annexed to Floydada ISD	1987
Windom ISD	Consolidated with Honey Grove ISD and	1987

	renamed Honey Grove CISD	
Plemons ISD	Consolidated with Stinnet ISD and Phillips ISD and renamed Plemons-Stinnet-Phillips CISD	1987
Estelline ISD	Declared Dormant	1987
Liberty Chapel ISD	Annexed to Cleburne ISD	1988
Three Way ISD	Reclassified ISD status	1988
South Plains ISD	Annexed to Floydada ISD	1988
Divide CSD	Reclassified to Divide ISD	1989
Westminster ISD	Annexed to Anna ISD	1989
Pottsville ISD	Annexed to Hamilton ISD	1989
Maydelle ISD	Annexed to Rusk ISD	1989
Estelline ISD	Annexed to Memphis ISD	1989
McCauley ISD	Consolidated with Roby ISD	1990
Weinert ISD	Consolidated with Haskell ISD	1990
Hobbs ISD	Annexed to Roby ISD, Rotan ISD and Snyder ISD	1990
Carbon ISD	Eastland ISD	1990
Waka ISD	Consolidated with Perryton ISD	1990
Santa Cruz ISD	Annexed to London ISD	1001
Wingate ISD	Annexed to Winters ISD	1991
Lela ISD	Closed	1991
Allamore CISD	Renamed Allamore ISD	1992

Alanreed CISD	Abolished	1993
Laureles ISD	Consolidated with Riviera ISD	1993
Port Neches ISD	Renamed Port Neches-Groves ISD	1993
Refugio ISD	Consolidated with McFaddin ISD	1994
Allamore ISD	Consolidated with Culberson County ISD	1995
Bledsoe ISD	Consolidated with Whiteface CISD	1996
Welman ISD	Consolidated into Welman – Union CISD	1997
Santa Cruz ISD	Annexed to London ISD	1991
Lela ISD	Closed	1991
Mobeetie ISD	Consolidated with Briscoe ISD forming Fort Elliott CISD	1991
Juno ISD	Consolidated with Comstock ISD	1992
Alanreed ISD	Abolished	1993
Laureles ISD	Riviera ISD	1993
McFaddin ISD	Consolidated with Refugio ISD	1994
Jefferson State School	New district effective	1995
Allamore ISD	Culberson County-Allamore ISD	1995
Bledsoe ISD	Consolidated with Whiteface CISD	1996
Welman ISD & Union ISD	Merged to form Welman – Union ISD	1997
Lakeview ISD	Consolidated with Memphis ISD	2000
Three Way ISD	Merged with Sudan ISD	2002
Allison ISD	Merged with Ft. Elliott CISD	2003

Goree ISD	Merged with Munday CISD	2003
Masonic Home	Closed	2005
Rochester-County Line ISD	Consolidated -Haskell CISD	2005
Mirando City ISD	Commissioner ordered consolidated with Webb CISD	2005
Wilmer-Hutchins ISD	Commissioner ordered annexation to Dallas ISD	2006
Spade ISD	Consolidated with Olton ISD	2006
Megargel ISD	Consolidated with Olney ISD	2006
Kendleton ISD	Commissioner ordered merger with Lamar Consolidated ISD	2010
North Forest ISD	Commissioner ordered merger with Houston ISD	2013
Beaumont ISD	Identified for Takeover	2014
La Marque ISD	Commissioner ordered merger with Texas City ISD	2015

Note. Data from TEA, 2016.

Appendix F

Analysis of News Articles

Chronological Listing

Time Period	Concern	Source	Interviews	ACHIEVEMENT	THEME Facilities, Management & Governance Governance
1967	A court order forced Wilmer-Hutchins to integrate its schools. Many whites left town in response. Over time, Wilmer-Hutchins' population shifted, and blacks gained control of the district's school board.	The Dallas Morning News Posted July 22, 2005			Management & Governance
1970's	Decade began with accreditation threatened due to academic problems. The state first threatened to revoke its accreditation in the 1970s for academic problems.	Parent Advocates.org <i>In Texas, the Wilmer-Hutchins School District Closes Due to Corruption (June 30, 2006)</i>			Management
1975					
1980's	Board members are caught spending district money on babysitting and family trips. TEA threatens the complete loss of accreditation. In the 1980s, the education agency again threatened closure, this time for fraudulent board elections and misuse of district money.	Parent Advocates.org <i>In Texas, the Wilmer-Hutchins School District Closes Due to Corruption (June 30, 2006)</i>			Governance
1984-1994	Dr. Matthews serves as WHISD	The Dallas Morning			Management

	superintendent	News				
1985	TEA removes monitors AND RESTORES ACCREDITATION	The Dallas Morning News				Management & Governance
1987	The Dallas County District Attorney's Office started an investigation into claims of mismanaged funds and other criminal activity. No indictments were ever returned.	The Dallas Morning News			Annual Performance Report	Governance
1991	Dr. Matthews was named State Superintendent of the Year by Texas Assoc. of School Boards.	The Dallas Morning News			Performance Reported (No Rating)	Management
1993	One of seven eight graders pass all three sections of the TAAS.	http://www.dallasobserver.com/1996-10-03/news/last-in-the-class/full/			Performance Reported (No Rating)	
1994	Student's poor academic performance was cited by board members in their request that Dr. Matthews resign. He remained on payroll until 1996.	The Dallas Morning News			Accredited	Academics
1995	Ms. McGee, Supt. Matthews former secretary, was fired in June 1995 for allegedly falsifying overtime. She alleges through in a federal investigation that carpet and paneling that was bought with school money and used to fix up a board member's house.	http://www.dallasobserver.com/1996-10-03/news/last-in-the-class/full	After leaving, I learned of corruption charges and FBI investigations. This was mostly related to finance and contract issues tied to board members.		Academically Acceptable	Governance
1996	State Takes Over Wilmer-Hutchins ISD	The Dallas Morning News	Brought in with New		Accreditation Status	Academic & Governance

			Superintendent because of State Control of School District. Issues were performance, finance, and governance.	"S"	
1996	The Class of 1996 had six high school principals in four years.	http://www.dallasobserver.com/1996-10-03/news/last-in-the-class/full/		Accreditation Status "S"	Management
1996	Delores Roberts-Quintyn, who was superintendent for a little more than a year until her ouster in February, says board meddling in hiring was so widespread that people would just show up on the payroll. "You didn't know where some of the people came from," she says.	http://www.dallasobserver.com/1996-10-03/news/last-in-the-class/full/	WHISD was under TEA supervision due to financial difficulty. Issues with board member tied to vendors and the hiring of individuals and maintaining them on the payroll.	Accreditation Status "S"	Management
1996	The district's 1996-1997 legal budget is a stunning \$366,583--about \$114 per student. By comparison, Plano, with an enrollment of 38,000, is spending \$161,598--about \$4 per pupil. Dallas, which is juggling numerous lawsuits, has budgeted about \$900,000 for legal matters	http://www.dallasobserver.com/1996-10-03/news/last-in-the-class/full/		Accreditation Status "S"	Management (Finance)

	this year--roughly \$6 for each of its 149,000 students.					
1997	WHISD was taken over and returned to local control after being taken over in 1996.			School district was returned back to local control due to improved performance. District control was returned during a 14 month time period; Performance improved.	1996-1997 – Unacceptable – SAI 1997-1998 Academically Acceptable	Governance
1999	TEA Officials suspect cheating at WHISD – Alta Mesa. The school was cleared after the investigation.	The Dallas Morning News			Academically Unacceptable (AU)	Academics
2000	It was reported by the Texas Comptroller's Office that WHISD was spending too much money on their "In House" Attorney, Mr. Belt. \$ 119,000 Salary	The Dallas Morning News		WHISD had financial difficulty and academic issues. The district owed two million dollars to TEA. These constraints led to eventual closure.	Academically Acceptable	Management (Finance)
2002	Superintendent Matthews return to WHISD. The fund balance was 1.6 million dollars. Within a year the fund balance had evaporated.	The Dallas Morning News		There were continued financial challenges.	Academically Acceptable Gold Perf. HS Program	Management (Finance)

	The district was \$ 139,000 in the hole.		There was once a four million dollar fund balance. That fund balance dwindled down to half a million.	Sanctions: Spec. Ed.	
2002	WHISD school board increased Supt. Matthews salary from \$ 125,000 to \$ 175,000 a year	Dallas Morning News		AA	Management (Finance)
2003				Academically Acceptable	
KDFW-TV (Dallas) 2004	The investigation also lead to the discovery of mismanagement and fraud in the school district's leadership and its financial records. Using a hidden camera and the unpaid help of a mold remediation expert, reporters at KDFW exposed severe problems with the Wilmer-Hutchins district high school.	Dallas TV Station KDFW - TV	Financial and academic problems forced school closure	Academically Unacceptable	Governance and Facilities
KDFW-TV (Dallas) 2004	As a result of this report, a state education agency audit followed, along with investigations by the FBI, IRS, U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour division, and the Federal Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.	Dallas TV Station KDFW - TV	Financial and academic problems forced the school district to close. As a result of the raid, additional problems begin to surface.	AU	Governance
2004	By the end of the 2003-2004 school year, Wilmer-Hutchins was completely broke, unable to pay its bills on time for the opening of school last fall.	Dallas Morning News			Management (Finance)

2004	The district did a poor job tracking its equipment. It spent \$ 1953 on hand-held computers that never arrived. It bought a number of new TVs in 2004 despite having 19 new sets sitting untouched, still in their boxes, in a storage room. The district had no tracking system. 20 laptop computers were stolen.	Dallas Morning News	AU	Management (Finance)
2004	Officials intentionally overstated how many students they were teaching every day to get more state money – about 185,000 in 2003-2004.	Dallas Morning News	AU	Governance
2004	State auditors indicated that Wilmer-Hutchins improperly spent money from three categories, Title I; School Improvement, and Special Education. School improvement dollars was spent on furniture for Kennedy-Curry Middle School Principal. 1,094 Bookcase; \$ 422 chair and pillow combo. \$ 509 loveseat. Special education funds were used to pay an electrician working at the HS. Title I money was spent on a variety of kitchen, athletic, and construction equipment. (Total of \$ 273,000 of federal funds...)	Dallas Morning News	AU	Management (Finance)
June 2004	Storm tears holes in the roof of	Parent Advocates.org	AU	Facilities

	Wilmer-Hutchins HS which has been poorly maintained. The hole had not been fixed for months resulting in mold and roaches.	<i>In Texas, the Wilmer-Hutchins School District Closes Due to Corruption</i>	Funds were not available to pay overtime for tutoring or repair buildings.		
August 16, 2004	Wilmer-Hutchins HS cannot open due to damage sustained by a June storm that had not been repaired.	Parent Advocates.org <i>In Texas, the Wilmer-Hutchins School District Closes Due to Corruption</i>		AU	Facilities
August 25, 2004	The district runs out of money and fails to meet its payroll. A few months earlier, the district reported a 1.6 million fund balance.	Parent Advocates.org <i>In Texas, the Wilmer-Hutchins School District Closes Due to Corruption</i>	Employees were anxious. Failure to make payroll was a concern for all employees.	AU	Management (Finance)
August 30, 2004	A TEA audit team begins an investigation into the district's financial problems.			AU	Management (Finance)
September 2004	Dallas Morning News reports that WHISD Chief Attorney had been suspended by the State Bar of Texas twice in the past three years.	Dallas Morning News		AU	N/A
September 9, 2004	The FBI and Texas Rangers raid district offices. Community leaders call for school board to step down.	Parent Advocates.org <i>In Texas, the Wilmer-Hutchins School District Closes Due to Corruption</i>		AU	Management (Finance)
September 20, 2004	Phillip Roberson, WHISD Chief Financial Officer, is suspended by Dr. Matthews for agreeing to testify before a federal grand jury.			AU	Governance

September 21, 2004	Wilmer-Hutchins High School opens more than a month late but subsequently closed a few hours later when Dallas fire officials discovered the fire alarm system to be faulty.			AU	Facilities
October 13, 2004	Dr. Matthews received \$ 16,000 in salary illegally.	Parent Advocates.org <i>In Texas, the Wilmer-Hutchins School District Closes Due to Corruption</i>		AU	Management (Finance)
October 28, 2004	Supt. Charles Matthews & Maintenance Dir. Wallace Faggett indicted on Felony charge of Tampering with physical evidence.	Lubbock Avalanche-Journal Superintendent Faces Felony Charge – Fri., Oct. 29, 2004		AU	Governance
October 2004	State Financial Audit found the district reportedly violated state law by taking out an illegal \$ 500,000 loan. It was illegal because it was paid back with money from the school district bond fund.	Lubbock Avalanche-Journal Superintendent Faces Felony Charge – Fri., Oct. 29, 2004		AU	Management (Finance)
October 2004	Wilmer-Hutchins trustees approve the layoffs of 26 employees.		The district was overstaffed. Staffing cuts needed to be made. This led to school consolidation efforts. The number of schools moved	AU	Management

November 2004	TAKS Scores suspicious. New analysis triggers cheating concerns after Wilmer-Hutchins' third grade classes finished No. 1 in the state in TAKS Reading.		from 9 to 6. Teacher and staff reassignments stemming from testing allegations caused problems. Outside monitors were assigned to every classroom during the administration of state mandated tests due to allegations of cheating. Ultimately, all these activities led to school district closure.	AU	Academics
2005	Wilmer-Hutchins is a mess. Its former superintendent is under indictment. Its offices have been raided by the FBI. A financial crisis has forced closure of A. L. Morney, the school on the site of the old black high school	Dallas Morning News July 2005			Management (Finance)
March 2005	Wilmer-Hutchins School Board was thrown out of office and replaced by state appointees.	Parent Advocates.org <i>In Texas, the Wilmer-Hutchins School</i>	TEA discontinued interventions	Academically Unacceptable	Governance

March 2005	Texas Education Commissioner decided to take full control of Wilmer-Hutchins School District following a report extensive cheating on state's test. Investigators found that some students who finished tests early were told to correct answers on other students' answer sheets and some educators prepared answer keys for students. In some classrooms, students were told to raise their hands so their answers could be reviewed before they move to the next question resulting in an unbelievable drop in test scores from one year to the next.	<i>District Closes Due to Corruption</i> Dfvu2 – Wilmer-Hutchins School District Takeover March 22, 2005 http://forum.dallasmetroplis.com/printthread.php?t=3802	and assigned a new lead to close WHISD. School District Contracts were ended and inventory was conducted because of continued problems. Wilmer-Hutchins was slated to be closed based upon Commissioner's Rule.	AU	Governance and Management
2005	Because of cheating, Wilmer-Hutchins' rating was formally lowered to "academically unacceptable" on March 21, 2005. Less than two months later, state Education Commissioner Shirley Neeley announced she was throwing out the board.	Dallas Morning News.		AU	Academics
	Dr. Neely is quoted as saying, "The districts problems have escalated from bad to worse over decades. These students have	Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, 2005	There was a lack of focus from many students. Distractions	AU	Governance

	spent their school years in a district racked by scandal and mismanagement.”			occurred because of superintendent changes, limited resources, and facilities that needed to be repaired.		
May 2005	Dr. Neely, Commissioner, announced twenty-two teachers were found guilty of cheating as a result of a TEA investigation of suspected cheating on state tests.				AU	Academics & Governance
2005	Teachers from WHISD were to get their personal belongings from their schools. However, some educators and others were trying to steal school district property. (ie.: School District TV, Chairs)	The Dallas Morning News			AU	Governance
2005	Dallas ISD School Board accepts approximately 2700 WHISD students by a 8-0 vote with no debate.	The Dallas Morning News			AU	Governance
2006	Board of Managers discussed the possibility that Wilmer-Hutchins could be revived. However, the meeting for residents had the air of a funeral.	The Dallas Morning News			AU	Governance