ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP

BETWEEN A TEACHER APPRAISAL SYSTEM AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education
in Professional Leadership

by

Jilliane Christina Raphiel

May 2013

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Dedication

For my mom, Jill Henderson Raphiel, who watches over me from the Pink Flamingo Lanai in the sky, I dedicate this dissertation to you. Knowing that you are reveling in this moment gives me great strength to continue doing the work about which I am so passionate.

"Forever Remembered"

By Injete Chesoni

Even after life is gone

In our hearts your love lingers on

Even after you have left our sight

In our thoughts

Your light shines bright

Even after you are gone

In our memories

You forever live on.

Acknowledgements

Growing up, my mother always preached the importance of a good education. She would tell us to take advantage of the wealth of resources around us because "education is the one thing that nobody can take from you." I really did not recognize the importance of her words until I started teaching. It was then I came to realize that my mother had been right all of those years – education is the one true equalizer. Those who have it can accomplish anything. As I complete my doctoral degree, I know she would be thrilled.

First of all, I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee: Dr. Allen Warner, Dr. Julie Baker, Dr. Steven Busch, and Dr. Wayne Emerson. I am truly grateful for the support and insight that you all have given me. This entire process has empowered me as an educational leader and researcher, and in turn, I have produced a work of which I am truly proud. Dr. Warner - As my Chair, you have been by my side since the beginning, answering my panic-stricken emails and phone calls. Dr. Baker – Your work is transforming the way we educate all children in our district. Dr. Busch – Your warm smile and conversation always set my mind at ease. Dr. Emerson – No matter what I brought to you, you always had kind and encouraging words.

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Abstract

Across the nation, teacher appraisal systems are being revamped to serve the primary purpose of supporting and developing teachers, regardless of experience. To what degree a principal believes the instructional criteria within the appraisal system are valid influencers on student achievement may be key in developing teachers at all levels of effectiveness to cultivate student achievement that can lead to higher performing schools. The purpose of this study was to identify what principals at highly effective elementary school campuses valued as the key instructional criteria in a teacher appraisal system. The outcome of this study can greatly impact the development, hiring, and transitioning of teachers at any school. By using the value-added model to identify effective schools, this study focused on the perception of principals of elementary campuses that are able to accelerate students, regardless of any perceived learning barriers. Data was collected through a qualitative approach, using descriptive statistics in the form of charts, tables, and graphs to identify trends. A survey and follow-up interviews were administered to elementary school principals currently leading schools within the top 25% of value-added achievement in a large urban school district in the southern United States. The study determined that while the appraisal instrument encompasses several instructional criteria that principals clearly perceived as impacting student achievement, the instrument serves as a springboard into additional best practices. Open-ended survey responses and interviews determined additional instructional criteria

that principals perceived as having an impact on student achievement and their plans to

ensure that they continue to add value to all students as accountability rapidly increases.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

We will not be able to keep the American promise of equal opportunity if we fail to provide a world-class education to every child. This effort will require the skills and talents of many, but especially our nation's teachers, principals, and other school leaders. Our goal must be to have a great teacher in every classroom and a great principal in every school. We know that from the moment students enter a school, the most important factor in their success is not the color of their skin or the income of their parents – it is that teacher standing at the front of that classroom. To ensure the success of our children, we must do better to recruit, develop, support, retain, and reward outstanding teachers in America's classrooms. (Obama, 2010)

Across the nation, teacher appraisal systems are being revamped to serve the primary purpose of supporting and developing teachers, regardless of experience. To what degree a principal believes the specific instructional criteria within the appraisal system are valid influencers on student achievement may be key in developing teachers at various levels of the effectiveness spectrum in order to create sustainable systems that cultivate student achievement which lead to higher performing schools. "In the search for adequate measures on teacher or classroom effects on student achievement, teacher performance assessment results could be considered as one possible alternative if the evaluation scores can be shown to be valid measures of teaching practice and to have the expected positive relationship to student achievement" (Kimball et al., 2004, p. 55). A good teacher appraisal system measures what really matters in the classroom – the quality of instruction.

Brief Review

To ensure confidentiality of participants and campus data, the district used for this study will be referred to the Harrison Consolidated School District (HCSD). Established in the 1920s, HCSD is one of the largest school districts in the nation. Located in a

sprawling urban metropolis in the southern United States, HCSD employs around 26,500 individuals and serves some 203,066 students. According the 2011-2012 demographic information (CSD Website, 2011), elementary school students make up the largest academic level served with 105,684 students. Fifty-two percent of HCSD schools are elementary campuses. The student population is ethnically, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse, consisting of 25.1% African-American students, 62.4% Hispanic students, 8.1% white students, 3.3% Asian students, and 1.1% students of other ethnicities. Based on federal criteria for free and reduced lunch, 80.4% of students are considered economically disadvantaged, and 94.2% of students are classified under the umbrella of Title I. Bilingual students account for 20.8% of all students in HCSD, gifted and talented students make up 15.1% of the student population, and 7.8% of students receiving special education services. Ninety-one percent of the district's 13,660 eligible teachers received $35,062,117 in performance pay for accelerating student progress, based on value-added measurements, in the 2010-2011 school year.

While engaging in a conversation about student achievement with Mr. E., a teacher who teaches at a struggling elementary school in the middle of one of the roughest neighborhoods in HCSD, I was floored, yet completely understood what he meant, when he said:

> All of these teacher incentives and new systems really don't matter to me. I mean, it's a nice surprise, but to say that I work harder to earn extra money each year and get higher appraisal scores is like saying I wasn't working as hard as I possibly could before.

Not only does his yearly student data prove his effectiveness as a teacher in one of the most critical needs classrooms in the entire school, but his instructional practices in the classroom and campus leadership are a constant source of support and inspiration for other teachers on campus wide. Mr. E. represents a group of teachers who, regardless of awards, praise, and appraisal scores, are driven every day to do whatever it takes to ensure the success of their students. These teachers, who often yield the greatest student gains, are also the teachers that tend to burn out and potentially exit the teaching profession within five to ten years. What we do as a nation to retain and develop teachers like Mr. E. can and will have a substantial impact on the lives of the children who we serve in public schools every day.

When Ms. B., who teaches at the same HCSD campus down the hall from Mr. E., arrived at school, she always hurried in at the last minute, looking disheveled. Parents complained about her lack of people skills and her ability to work with children. Her instructional practices and professional attitude derailed student achievement as they were substantially weaker than her colleagues. She was placed on a growth plan, based on consistently low student data and instructional performance. The last year that the campus was departmentalized, Ms. B. was responsible for teaching math to 88 3rd graders who were eager to learn and grow academically. That spring, when the state standardized test scores arrived, while the other grade level math scores increased, Ms. B.'s score plummeted 18 percentage points from the previous year, costing the campus a satisfactory state accountability rating. Ms. B did not return to the campus the following year. However, based on her value-added data (a statistical combination of student norm-referenced and student standardized assessment data, as compared to other comparable

groups in the district, which will be explored more in depth for the purpose of this study in Chapter 2), she received the highest performance pay amount in the entire school – approximately $8,000, an amount that rivaled some of the highest awarded administrators in the district. Her summative appraisal ratings were dismal overall, despite the large incentive bonus she received. Once the teacher awards amounts were publicly released, other teachers and administrators on the campus were appalled, negatively impacting the campus culture.

Mr. E. and Ms. B. are archetypes of teachers at both ends of the teacher effectiveness spectrum. Highly effective teachers are self-motivated due to their passion for teaching and desire for their students to be successful. They feel as if their work will have an impact on the future of our society. They are the ones making a difference daily through planning, diligence, and effort, believing that they are the primary needle of student success. When their students are successful, this only ignites their job satisfaction, redefines their commitment, and, generally, leads to more gains in student achievement.

In the spring of 2011, the HCSD Board of Education approved a new teacher appraisal and development system for the district to implement in the 2011-2012 school year (ISD Website, 2011). For the purpose of this study and to ensure confidentiality, this teacher appraisal instrument will be referred to as the Effective Teacher Appraisal Tool or ETAT. ETAT was designed to "give teachers a clear assessment of how well they're fulfilling their most important responsibility: helping students learn" (ISD Website, 2011). Through a joint effort of teachers, campus decision-making committees, administrators, community member, parents, and HCSD staff, the ETAT was designed.

From September 2010 through March 2011, these teams met to discuss and develop an appraisal rubric that would address two of the three categories of the ETAT: Instructional Practice and Professional Expectations. The third category, Student Performance, was implemented in the 2012-2013 school year. In February of 2011, drafts of the rubrics were released and school teams were encouraged to submit feedback to the district developers via online surveys.

For the 2011-2012 school year, teachers were rated in the Instructional Practices category, containing Planning criteria (3 criteria) and Instruction criteria (10 criteria), and the category of Professional Expectations, containing Professionalism criteria. Teachers received training on the ETAT in August of 2011 from campus administrators, with the support of district instructional specialists. Principals and other campus administrators are required to conduct at least two 30-minute observation and two 10-minute walkthroughs throughout the course of the school year. Teachers receive explicit feedback linked directly to each ETAT criteria throughout the course of these classroom visits. Ratings are assigned on a scale of 1-4 (1-Ineffective, 2-Developing, 3-Effective, and 4-Highly Effective). Appraisers are required to submit criterion-based evidence and specific recommendations for improvement on feedback forms that are given to the teacher for review within ten days of an observation or walkthrough. Teachers are given opportunities for teachers to submit criteria evidence to their appraisers for review.

Optimal student learning takes place when all adults are working toward the same goal of student achievement. School teams must function within a collaborative culture where teachers are fully committed to teaching, learning, and confronting problems together. Research consistently supports that a key indicator of student success is a

teacher who delivers quality instruction. School principals serve the primary purpose of serving as instructional leaders on campus; however, it is ironic that the majority of principals only spend the minimal amount of time observing teachers' instructional practices, usually in order to meet evaluation deadlines. "Pinpointing the skills that lead certain teachers to have a greater impact on student performance than others is a matter of great urgency in a country that struggles with educating all of its children equally" (Goe, 2007). At this time, with the conclusion of one full academic year of utilizing this tool, the degree to which principals value specific instructional criteria or teacher instructional skills in this new teacher appraisal system as a valid influencer on student achievement is unclear.

This study will focus on how principals perceive the Instructional Practice criteria and the relationship between individual ETAT criterion and student achievement in the top 25% of high performing schools as measured by district value-added measures. Participating principals who are familiar with this tool, as it is used to support teaching and learning on their campus, may feel comfortable and more likely to provide authentic responses while completing the survey and possible follow up interviews.

Figure 1-1 outlines the Instructional Practice rubric. The Planning and Instruction components of the appraisal tool will be utilized for the purpose of defining instructional effectiveness as they relate to student achievement for the purpose of the study, because these criteria directly impact student achievement, on some level, specifically in the classroom.

Figure 1-1 Harrison Consolidated School District Instructional Practice Criteria Rubric

HARRISON CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT EFFECTIVE TEACHER APPRAISAL TOOL (ETAT) INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE CRITERIA	
Planning (PL)	PL-1 – Develops student learning goals
	PL-2 – Collects, tracks, and uses student data to drive instruction
	PL-3 – Designs effective lesson plans, units, and assessments
Instruction (I)	I-1 – Facilitates organized, student-centered, objective-driven lessons
	I-2 – Checks for student understanding and responds to student misunderstanding
	I-3 – Differentiates instruction for student needs by employing a variety of instructional strategies
	I-4 – Engages students in work that develops higher-level thinking skills
	I-5 – Maximizes instructional time
	I-6 – Communicates content and concepts to students
	I-7 – Promotes high academic expectations for students
	I-8 – Students actively participating in lesson activities
	I-9 – Sets and implements discipline management procedures
	I-10 – Builds a positive and respectful classroom environment

From: "Effective Teacher Appraisal Tool Implementation Manual" by Harrison Consolidated School District, 2011. Copyright 2011 by HCSD. Reprinted with permission.

Statement of the Problem

How a campus principal perceives a teacher's performance is not only a key indicator of teacher success, but can be the primary driving force of student achievement and school improvement at the campus level. Every year, principals are charged with appraising teachers on their campuses using a variety of different measures, and, therefore, "When used appropriately, teacher evaluations should identify and measure the instructional strategies, professional behaviors, and delivery of content knowledge that affect student learning" (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Shinkfield & Stufflebeamm 1995). It is unclear to what degree principals value the individual instructional criterion set forth by the new teacher appraisal for increasing student achievement, at the top 25% of high performing elementary schools in HCSD as measured by district value-added campus student growth over three years.

Purpose of the Study

The objective of this study is to identify what principals at highly effective campuses value as the key instructional components in a teacher appraisal system and how these components relate to student achievement. The outcome of this study can greatly impact the development, hiring, and transitioning of teachers at any school. How these instructional practices may be replicated in other classrooms, schools, and district outside of HCSD can have a huge impact on achievement levels for all students in classrooms across the district. By using the value-added model to identify effective schools in HCSD, we are looking at campuses that are able to accelerate students, regardless of any perceived learning barriers (including high achieving students, who consistently outscore their peers on assessments), which should be the goal of any

educational institution. By utilizing the instructional criteria from the ETAT, a tool that has not been previously extensively studied due to its recent implementation, this study will serve as a catalyst for future educational instructionally-specific research that will help define clear instructional practices and needed support systems for administrators and teachers to accelerate student achievement in schools and classrooms far beyond HCSD.

Research Questions

Given the purpose above, this study aims to address the following research question:

To what degree do principals in the top 25% of value-added pre-kindergarten through fifth grade elementary schools in a large urban school district perceive the criteria of the district's teacher appraisal system as each individual criterion contributes to student learning?

Definition of Terms

- **3-Year Average Growth Index** – A measure of student progress across the grades tested within a school for selected tests and subjects, averaged over the course of three school years

- **Instructional Practice Criteria** – "Reflects teacher's skills and knowledge that help drive student learning in the classroom" (ISD Website, 2012)

- **Instructional Practice Rubric** – "Sets standards for the skills and actions necessary to promote student achievement and assess a teacher's effectiveness in Planning and Instruction" (ISD Website, 2012)

- **Principal Perception** – To what degree a principal believes the specific instructional criteria within the appraisal system are valid influencers on student achievement

- **Student Learning** – Increased knowledge due to instructional delivery in a school setting a measured by formative and summative assessments throughout the school year

- **Teacher Appraisal System** – A system "designed to provide all teachers with regular, accurate, useful feedback on their performance and individualized development that will help them do their best work in the classroom" (ISD Website, 2012)

- **Teacher Appraiser** – A campus administrator, such as a principal or assistant principal that is responsible for appraising teachers annually

- **Value-added** – "A statistical method that helps educators measure the impact schools and teachers have on students' academic progress rates from year to year" (Battelle for Kids, 2009).

Limitations

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2010), there are several potential threats to the internal validity of any study, which may include, but are not limited to the following: subject characteristics, mortality, location, instrumentation, testing, history, maturation, subject attitude, regression, and implementation. With the concept of value-added being introduced to HCSD in 2006 and ETAT first being implemented in the 2011-2012 school year, it is important to note that both systems have undergone minimal alterations in order to ensure the efficiency of the systems. For the purpose of this study, value-added

3-year composite average growth data for the 2010-2011 school year was used to determine the top quartile of achieving elementary schools. The 3-year average growth included the following school years: 2008-2009, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011. The 3-year composite average growth was chosen to identify participants because this is the most recent and consistent value-added growth data using the same measurement criteria to determine value-added growth in all content areas, including Math, ELA/Reading, Language, Social Studies, and Science.

One of the unique characteristics of HCSD that was also a limitation was that it is a de-centralized school district, meaning that budget decisions, professional development decisions, staffing decisions, and other school improvement decisions are all made at the campus level, with input from stakeholders via site-based decision making committees that meet on a monthly basis. Where one school may decide to spend a substantial amount of money on technology, it is possible that another campus may decide to spend the same amount of money to hire a content-based interventionist. Both expenditures may lead to increased student achievement but in different ways. Also depending on the student population served on the campus, school budget amounts vary. For example, a Title I campus with a large population of English Language Learners may receive more funding from the state than a campus without those populations of students, which also greatly impacts budgetary decisions, leading to differentiated instructional decisions on campuses in HCSD.

Despite specific and leveled criteria set forth on the ETAT rubric, principals at various stages in their careers may interpret quality teacher instructional practices differently, impacting perceptions and teacher summative scores. At this time, ETAT is

currently used to appraise all teachers across the district, regardless of grade level or content area taught. A physical education teacher is being appraised using the same ETAT criteria as a pre-kindergarten bilingual teacher, which may skew how principals perceive this new appraisal tool as a means to develop all teachers in the district and identify key instructional practices.

A definition of terms was included in Chapter 1 to ensure that the reader has a clear understanding of the components of the literature review and the study in its entirety. As the purpose of this research was to identify what principals at a highly effective campuses value as the key instructional components in a teacher appraisal system and how these components relate to student achievement, a review of quantitative and qualitative literature is compiled in Chapter 2. Taking into account previously mentioned limitations, Chapter 3 provides the reader with an explanation of the research design, methodology, participants involved, and measures taken to ensure ethical compliance. In Chapter 3, there will also be a more in depth explanation of each individual criterion, and the reader will be provided with a deeper meaning of the appraisal ratings as they directly relate to student achievement. The results of the study are reported, summarized, and interpreted in Chapter 4. The conclusion of the study is organized in Chapter 5, including implications for Educational Leadership, which may lead to expanded research on the topic. A reference section and appendix section are also included.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

Effective Schools

In 1991, Lawrence Lezotte compiled the correlates of effective schools. The concepts were simple, yet groundbreaking in shifting the mindset of educators as they worked towards school improvement. Seven correlates drove the primary work. Years after these correlates were implemented in schools, educators began to question what was next for school improvement. Lezotte responded with second generation correlates: "There are two underlying assumptions to keep in mind: First, school improvement is an endless journey. Second, the second generation correlates cannot be implemented successfully unless the first generation correlates are present in a school" (Lezotte, 1991). From that, the first and second generation was born:

1. Safe and Orderly Environment

    a. First generation – The school environment is favorable to teaching and learning. There is an absence of any threat of physical harm.

    b. Second generation – There is not only a threat of physical harm, but students help each other to eliminate behaviors that will take away from teaching and learning. There is a collaborative environment for students and teachers. Schoolwide structures are created to maintain this commitment to collaboration.

2. Climate of High Expectations for Success

    a. First generation – School staff believes that all students can master skills and will master them with their support and encouragement.

    b. Second generation – Teachers will create and implement a variety of structures and strategies to respond to students when they are having difficulty mastering material.

3. Instructional Leadership

    a. First generation – The principal is the instructional leader, understands and applies instructional effectiveness and management campus wide.

    b. Second generation – Instructional leadership goes beyond the principal and is inclusive of teacher leaders, students, and community members. "The role of principal will be changed to that of a 'leader of leaders,' rather than a leader of followers." (Lezotte, 1991)

4. Clear and Focused Mission

    a. First generation – There is an understood school mission and the staff accepts responsibility for working towards that mission.

    b. Second generation – There is a balance of advanced learning and skill mastery. Teachers will participate in backwards planning, with end goals of what students should master in mind.

5. Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task

    a. First generation – Most of classroom instructional time is spend with students in a whole class or group that is teacher-directed.

    b. Second generation – This is the one of the most challenging correlates as it involves the restructuring of the school day so that students are given more time in the school day; however, due to funding, this may not be an option. In that case, instead of adding more tasks on our

teachers, schools must carefully examine what tasks harvest the best outcomes for students and eliminate tasks that do not.

6. Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

   a. First generation – Results of student assessments are examined and used to tweak instructional programs

   b. Second generation – "Teachers will pay much more attention to the alignment that must exist between the intended, taught, and tested curriculum" (Lezotte, 1991). Focusing on how educators respond when students do not master material will be key.

7. Home-School Relations

   a. First generation – Parents understand and support the school's mission of educating their children and play an active role in school support.

   b. Second generation – Schools and parents form an "authentic partnership" (Lezotte, 1991) where problems are confronted together and solutions are mutually agreed upon, with all parties being invested in the same goal of student success.

In order for schools to move towards a level of effectiveness or maintain excellence, principal leadership is critical. With the already massive role of school leader expanding daily, it is essential that we build capacity by seeking out and nurturing campus leaders to assist us in communicating the message of student achievement. While some teachers are hesitant to be a visible leader on campus, we can funnel their strengths into other campus initiatives best suited for their professional growth. As appraisers observe best practices consistently in classrooms, classroom teachers can be encouraged

to serve as instructional coaches to provide training and support to others on campus to replicate these practices, creating a substantial impact on student achievement. Incorporating a variety of leadership styles, staff members can contribute to the campus vision in several different ways. Sustainability can be the most challenging piece of developing school effectiveness as it takes time and commitment; however, set systems will continue to flourish throughout the natural attrition of campus leadership, teachers, and staff. "To sustain is to keep alive in every sense; sustenance is nourishment" (Blankstein, 2004, p.201). As a campus leader, growing human capital and strengthening teacher instructional practices must be promoted at all levels of leadership in order to support campus success, long after the operational woes rise and settle.

"Teachers are among the most likely mentors and positive influence for underachieving students" (Blankstein, 2004, p.98). In a typical school environment, it is possible to come into contact with teachers who believe, like Blankstein, that they are the single most important indicator of a student success and those that do not hold this belief. A committed campus leader must be willing to confront the behaviors of non-believers openly and honestly. At high-performing campuses, systems are put in place to ensure the success of every student, regardless of obstacles. Some of these systems may include greeting all students when they enter the campus, encouraging cooperative learning, allowing students to redo assignments until mastery is achieved, and creating learning opportunities through community service. Interventions are essential in ensuring the success of all students; however, with a prevention system in place, struggling students are easily identified so that they can receive the support that they need to be successful in a timely manner. Prevention systems may be based on historical student data and input

from teachers. The prevention process should allow for identification and intervention early in a student's career, setting them on a trajectory for success once content mastery is accomplished. Plans for intervention and prevention should be developed jointly with teachers and staff so that a level of commitment to assist the students in greatest need can be encouraged and implemented.

Blankstein (2004) incorporates the research of Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) and delves into the four main types of school culture: individualistic, balkanized, contrived collegiality, and collaborative. Individualistic culture can be compared to a "closed-door" culture, where teachers work individually to meet their goals, but do not lean on the support or expertise of other staff members on campus. In a balkanized culture, previously formed staff cliques can cause tension with other cliques, due to existing conflicts. Contrived collegiality happens when teachers go through the motions of collaborating and sharing best practices; however, the collaboration does not truly focus on teaching and learning. A collaborative culture has the potential to flourish in a high-performing school where teachers are fully committed to teaching and learning and confront problems together, quickly planning actions that will improve the overall school. Campuses that successfully collaborate do so with the main goals of the school at the forefront of all of their decisions. Professional learning communities, peer observations, curriculum planning sessions, grade level teams, and ongoing professional development can all contribute to the collaborative culture of a school. According to Blankstein (2004), solid campus collaboration may contain the following: leaders supporting meaningful collaboration, a culture of trust and respect, well-managed meetings, plans to implement, and clear purposes and goals. While challenging at times, building a clear

system for collaborations with a focus on learning and teaching is critical when aiming to lead a team to reach and surpass their goals.

There are so many different forms of data. That variety of data can make trying to decipher all of it counterproductive at times, for school teams. Using data to guide decision making and continuous improvement is an essential component in a high-performing school; however, we must be purposeful in the way we disaggregate and use it to make decisions. Prior to looking at data, there must be results-oriented desired outcome. By looking at what goals the organization is striving to accomplish, the data tells the story of how close the organization is to meeting or exceeding their goals, what further steps need to be taken, and what students and teachers need extra assistance with teaching or learning certain objectives. With student assessment data being linked so closely to teacher accountability in today's classrooms, a campus leader must build trust among their staff in order to openly discuss trends, discuss teacher strengths and weaknesses, plan professional development, and set goals. The administrative team may do this by celebrating data strengths across campus, participating in professional learning communities, and collaborating with teams so that all staff members understand how to use data to drive instruction. By taking into account other forms of data that may not be directly linked to content standards, such as student and teacher attendance data, anecdotal data, and survey data, the entire campus team can gain an understanding of the broader campus vision and what steps need to be taken to ensure the success of all learners and leaders.

"Educational research clearly shows that the support and involvement of students' families and the community at large is fundamental to achievement in schools"

(Blankstein, 2004, p.167). Gaining an understanding and developing a sense of empathy for the families that are served is the first step in eliminating the barriers that keep our parents and families away from the schools. Some of the simple steps that we can take as administrators to reach out to our parent and guardian community may include: working with local agencies to provide support services, inviting parents into classrooms to observe and assist, provide transportation for campus activities, and becoming part of the community by doing home visits and attending local church services. Gaining active engagement from family and community is critical to a high-performing campus.

Principals and campus leaders must focus on making their schools safe and honest environments where adult learners can take risks and learn from one another. In order to do this, positive relationships must be cultivated amongst individuals on campus, with the leader at the helm, driving the beliefs that will promote a high-performing campus where all students can be successful. As a leader, it can be cumbersome to make adequate time to cultivate relationships; however, taking the time to create and sustain campus relationships can lead to the ultimate success or failure of a school.

Liebman, Maldonado, Lacey, and Thompson (2005) presented a case study that focused on educator perceptions and understandings of leadership within their professional learning community at a large, suburban, public middle school where the principal was perceived as being dedicated to the ideas of the professional learning community and an advocate for school-based research. This case study sought out to answer questions surrounding the operating and functioning of professional learning communities at the school, the principal's leadership in the development and maintenance of the professional learning communities, and conditions that exist to help maintain the

level of the professional learning community on that campus. The participants included 1

principal, 5 administrators, and 15 key faculty members, including department heads and

team leaders.

The study was conducted over a period of two months. Qualitative data was

collected from the participant interviews over the course of the study. Researchers used

three different interview protocols to collect data. "The goals of the semi-structured

interview process were to find out how educators at this school perceived their realities

(ontology) and created their understandings of a professional learning community

(epistemology)" (Liebman et al., 2005). The Principal Interview Protocol that was

developed and used focused on the principal defining a professional learning community,

vision and goals of administrative team, structural conditions, social and human resource

conditions, perceptions of teacher activities, and best practices for focusing on student

learning. The Administrative Team Interview Protocol and the Key Faculty Member

Interview Protocol contained similar questions, but focused on the principal's leadership

and support. All interview protocol was presented in an open-ended response format. The

interviews were analyzed and provided data for the study. Although there were several

external factors that may have limited the study, none of them were considered in the

findings. Research also analyzed school documents such as schedules, building maps, and

memorandums in order to better understand structural conditions that supported the

learning communities.

The findings of Liebman et al. (2005) centered on the importance of developing

and building a mission/vision that was connected to student learning. The participant

responses trended within the themes of the importance of planning to develop the

professional learning community and the implementation of a structured plan within the

professional learning community. The principal was strategic in the way that she utilized

staff member talents in order to reach campus goals that were focused on student

achievement. Staff members were key contributors in planning curriculum and

assessment that contributed to student learning. The entire school community was given

multiple opportunities to come together to share, observe each other, and coach one

another to better their contributions to the school. It was also concluded that the principal

was a transformational leader who was able to identify and empower the staff to work

towards the collective campus mission of student learning. Part of that transformational

vision should include ensuring that there is an effective teacher in front of every

classroom, which the federal government supports as a primary characteristic of school

reform.

No Child Left Behind

What characteristics and opportunities contribute to student success? What most

research and any reform-minded individual will tell you is that it is imperative to have a

quality teacher in the front of every classroom. In 2010, the United States Department of

Education published *A Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorization of the Elementary and

Secondary Education Act*, commonly referred to as No Child Left Behind. This

government publication explores the nation's priorities as they pertain to educational

reform and student achievement, building on 2009's American Recovery and Investment

Act which focused on 1) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness, 2) Family

involvement and investment, 3) College- and career-readiness standards, and 4) Intensive

support and intervention for struggling students (United States Department of Education,

2010). While using 2009's priorities as the groundwork for more specified efforts, the

U.S. Department of Education outlined the following key priorities and supporting

frameworks as a means to transform our nation's schools into effective educational

institutions for all students.

1. College- and Career-Ready Students

   a. Raising standards for all students – All students, regardless of
      socioeconomic status or demographic background will graduate from
      high school ready for college and a career. States will develop or
      update a set of common standards to be taught in schools with a focus
      on mathematics and language arts.

   b. Better assessments – Assessments that are aligned to college- and
      career-readiness standards will be developed and implemented to
      establish student readiness and ensure we are responding to the needs
      of those students needing more support.

   c. A complete education – A well-rounded education will be supported in
      order for U.S. students to be successful on a more global competitive
      scale. There will be a focus on literacy, mathematics, the arts, financial
      literacy, technology, civics, and foreign languages. Teachers will be
      supported in providing this education with professional development
      opportunities.

2. Great Teachers and Leaders in Every School

   a. Effective teachers and principals – A focus on recognizing,
      encouraging and rewarding excellent teachers will be placed in the

schools. New programs will be created to support the recruitment, rewards, promotions, and placement of teachers that will enhance the teaching profession.

b. Our best teachers and leaders where they are needed most – Funds will be provided to states and district to support improving the effectiveness of teachers and leaders in high-needs schools.

c. Strengthening teacher and leader preparation and recruitment – The effectiveness of state and local alternative certification programs will be monitored. Investments will be made into programs whose graduates are accelerating progress based on student growth.

3. Equity and Opportunity for All Students

a. Rigorous and fair accountability for all levels – Students will be included in accountability systems across the nation and achievements will be celebrated. In low-performing schools where progress has stalled over time, dramatic changes in leadership and programs will be made.

b. Meeting the needs of diverse learners – All students will be provided with a challenging curriculum and the support to be successful. "From English Learners and students with disabilities to Native American students, homeless students, migrant students, rural students, and neglected or delinquent students, our proposal will continue to support and strengthen programs for these students and ensure that schools are helping them meet college- and career-ready standards."

    c. Greater equality – Resources will be given to students, principals, and teachers so that they success can be equal and attainable for students in high- and low-poverty schools.

4. Raise the Bar and Reward Excellence

    a. Fostering a Race to the Top - Race to the Top incentives will be continued at the state level so that school district that are willing to take on "bold, comprehensive reforms" may increase. Note to reader: As of January 19, 2010, Texas was one of the ten states that had not applied for Race to the Top funding. "Of the 10 states that did not apply in the first round, most did not come as a surprise. Texas Gov. Rick Perry, a Republican, leveled sharp criticism at the Obama administration earlier this month, declaring his state would not compete for fear of a "federal takeover" of schools" (McNeil , 2010).

    b. Supporting effective public school choice – Expansion of high performing charters and "autonomous" public schools will be supported so that students and families may have choice.

    c. Promoting a culture of college readiness and success – Access to college-level course, dual credit, advanced placement, and other enhanced courses will have an impact on providing a more challenging high school curriculum to students.

5. Promote Innovation and Continuous Improvement

    a. Fostering innovation and accelerating success – "The Investing in Innovation Fund will support local and nonprofit leaders as they

> develop and scale up programs that have demonstrated success, and
> discover the next generation of innovative solutions."
>
> b. Supporting, recognizing, and rewarding local innovations – More
>   flexible funding streams will be created so that states and districts may
>   make adjustments according to their specific needs.
>
> c. Supporting student success – Investing public agencies, community
>   organizations, and families in student successes across the country.
>   School schedules will be redesigned in order to promote schools as the
>   centers of the communities. (United States Department of Education,
>   2010)

With the aforementioned goals at the forefront of educational reform in the nation, it is abundantly clear that the success of each and every student in classrooms across the nation is an issue that no individual can solve on his or her own.

Effective Teachers

A leader is "a person who is in the position to influence others to act and who has, as well, the moral, intellectual, and social skills required to take advantage of that position" (Schlecty, 1990, p. xix). According to McEwan (2002), highly effective teachers meet Schlecty's definition of a leader. A teacher's years of experience and educational background are not always indicative of his or her effectiveness in the classroom. With the evolving demands on teachers and the expectations for student success increasing, in defining teacher effectiveness, "the emphasis shifted from what teachers were to what they did, and what effects those behaviors have on student achievement" (McEwan, 2002).

In the book *10 Traits of Highly Effective Teachers: How to Hire, Coach, and Mentor Successful Teachers,* McEwan (2002) suggests 10 traits that highly effective teachers possess:

- Trait 1: *Mission-Driven and Passionate* – The effective teacher is mission-driven, feeling a "call" to teach as well as a passion to help students learn and grow.

- Trait 2: *Positive and Real* – The highly effective teacher is positive and real, demonstrating the qualities of caring, empathy, respect, and fairness in relationships with students, parents, and colleagues.

- Trait 3: *A Teacher-Leader* – The highly effective teacher is a "teacher-leader" who positively affects the lives of students, parents, and colleagues.

- Trait 4: *With-It-Ness* – The highly effective teacher demonstrates with-it-ness – the state of being on top of, tuned in to, aware of, and in complete control of three critical facets of classroom life:

  1. The management and organization of the classroom
  2. The engagement of students
  3. The management of time

- Trait 5: *Style* – The effective teacher exhibits a personal unique style, bringing drama, enthusiasm, liveliness, humor, charisma, creativity, and novelty to teaching.

- Trait 6: *Motivational Expertise* – The highly effective teacher is a motivator, par excellence who believes in his or her own ability to make a difference in

the lives of students and relentlessly presses and pursues students to maintain the highest possible behavioral and academic expectations.

- Trait 7: *Instructional Effectiveness* – The highly effective teacher in an instructional virtuoso: a skilled communicator with a repertoire of essential abilities, behaviors, models, and principles that lead all students to learning.

- Trait 8: *Book Learning* – The highly effective teachers has a sound knowledge of content (the structure of the discipline) and outcomes (what the school, district, or state has determined is essential for students to know).

- Trait 9: *Street Smarts* – The highly effective teacher had knowledge of the students, the school, and the community in which that teacher is teaching and uses this knowledge to solve problems in the instructional setting.

- Trait 10: *A Mental Life* – The highly effective teacher has a substantive thought life that includes the abilities to be the following:

  1. *Metacognitive*: able to read one's own mental state and them assess how that state will affect one's present and future performance

  2. *Strategic*: able to think aloud and model strategic learning for students

  3. *Reflective*: able to think about personal teaching behaviors for the purposes of self-growth

  4. *Communicative*: able to articulate ideas, issues, beliefs, and values about the act of teaching with colleagues, students, and parents

  Responsive: able the "flex" to the challenging needs and demands of the profession. (McEwan, 2002, pp. 9-20)

Despite the rising standards of state testing, heightened teacher accountability, and reform programs expanding across the country, there is still a clear achievement gap between children of color and their counterparts. "Often what occurs in classrooms is the curriculum generally does not match the home and school cultural experiences of African American students who are generally taught by white teachers" (Herrera, 2010). The way a teacher perceives and interacts with his or her students can have a dramatic impact on results. Using the Multicultural Teacher Education Framework (MTEF) (Cochran-Smtih, 2003) as a foundational assessment, Herrera conducted an investigation to address teacher beliefs in an urban school setting and teaching practices that lead to student achievement in the secondary school setting (Herrera, 2010). Generated by theory and research, the MTEF systemically focuses on the following topics: diversity (cultural elements that define current issues), practice (skills effective teachers need and use), knowledge (teacher beliefs and values connected to practice), ideology (one's belief about historical relevance), teacher learning (acquiring pedagogical skills), teacher recruitment, teacher selection (hiring), and coherence (to what degree all aforementioned issues are connected to issues outside of the classroom).

Combining elements from the MTEF with online instruments created by Love (2001) and Ladson-Billing (1994), a survey was created, consisting of 104 closed questions and five open-ended questions focusing on the achievement of African American students. Teachers, ranging from age 24 to 64, in a large urban district in the Midwest participated in the survey-based mixed methods study. The researcher desegregated the results of this study using an ANOVA to define a relationship between the survey results and elements of the MTEF. Upon return of 103 completed surveys and

50 partially completed surveys, data was analyzed and the study yielded three results to address the initial questions.

While the researcher predicted that teachers who exhibited high expectations for all students would most likely have a greater cultural competency than those who did not, it was concluded, however, that there was no significant difference compared to those teachers that associated with exhibiting lower expectations for students. The second hypothesis sought to connect teachers with lower expectations to a lack of instructional practices. The results of this analysis produced no statistical difference either. Lastly, Herrera predicted that student achievement would be "directly influenced by the social ecology of the teacher" (Herrera, 2010), which was explored deeper using the open-ended survey responses which yielded a variety of contrasting data. Herrera concluded the study with the following key points: years of teaching experience were strongly correlated to teacher attitudes; white teachers and teachers of color responses were overwhelmingly contrasted; and there is an inconsistency surrounding multicultural teacher training. When considering multicultural professional development and support, the deep-embedded belief systems of adults must be taken into consideration as an inconsistency in a teacher's belief system may be a contributor to student learning or hindrance in a classroom.

Student Achievement

When hiring novice teachers, campus leaders often seek teachers who possess a sense of efficacy as these teachers appear to be confident in their ability to impact change in their future classroom, regardless of external circumstances. According to Hall (1997), teacher perceptions of teacher preparation programs, teaching attitudes, type of schools,

and choices in professional development preferences are some of the best predictors of teacher efficacy. While these measurements are subjectively interpreted, they can serve as baseline concepts for hiring managers to consider during the teacher interview process when seeking the most effective teachers to serve their students. "Self-efficacy theory is a component of social cognitive theory that centers on the belief in one's own ability to effectively accomplish a given task or obtained a desired outcome" (Bandura, 1997).

Compiling a sample of 1,327 teachers from 35 schools, Jackson (2009) examined the relationship between organization citizenship behaviors (OBC) and collective teacher efficacy (CTE) as it relates to elementary student achievement, when controlling for student socioeconomic status (SES) in an urban school district in southeast Virginia. Specifically, OBC includes "extra-role behaviors that an individual displays in the work environment that exceed the required tasks associated with their position" (Jackson, 2009, p. 5). OBC teacher characteristics include, but are not limited to, collaborating with colleagues, tutoring students outside of regular contract hours, and serving on campus committees. According to Bandura (1997) CTE characteristics may be exhibited by teacher perceptions of how their actions relate to overall school effectiveness or their openness to attempt new instructional strategies in the classroom.

The quantitative correlational study concluded that there was not a significant relationship between CTE and SES as it related to student achievement. Comparing the results between student achievement as measured by standardized math and reading middle school assessments and CTE, the study found no significant relationship. When focusing on opinions of instruction and discipline, there was a positive correlation between OCB and CTE. There was a positive relationship between OCB, both when SES

was factored in and when it was ignored, evidenced by third grade math, third grade reading, fifth grade math, fifth grade reading scores (Jackson, 2009). CTE, when focused on perceptions and instruction and discipline, showed significant positive relationships noted, both when SES was included and not included, as measured by third grade math, third grade reading, fifth grade math, and fifth grade reading scores. When CTE was focused on how teachers value instruction, there was evidence of the same positive correlation in the aforementioned areas. When centered on how teachers value discipline, the results were again the same. While the results of Jackson's 2009 study contrasted slightly with previous results, it was abundantly evident that OBC and CTE had an overall positive impact on the student achievement of the children of this school district in Virginia.

"The main goal of standards-based reform is to improve student outcomes by focusing on student achievement" (Gallagher, 2002). Gallagher's 2002 study focused on the relationship between measures of teacher quality and student achievement at Vaughn Elementary, a recently turned charter school and campus that had been implementing a teacher knowledge- and skills-based pay system for three years, in the Los Angeles area. Before becoming a charter school, Vaughn students consistently under-performed on norm-referenced standardized assessments, often scoring in the lowest 10th percentile (Gallagher, 2002). Since the charter, where student performance was listed as a critical goal in the campus turnaround efforts, student achievement levels had dramatically increased, with the campus earning National Blue Ribbon status and performance bonuses under the state's accountability and rewards system.

In the four years leading to the study, Vaughn teachers were being evaluated throughout the school year in up to 10 domains on a scale of 1 (unsatisfactory) to 4 (exemplary), including "lesson planning, classroom management, literacy, mathematics, language development, special education inclusion, social studies, science, art, and technology, and their students' English Language Proficiency, if applicable" (Gallagher, 2002).

The study focused on comparing teacher evaluation scores in literacy, math, and language development to student outcomes. A pre-test/post-test model was used to measure student success, according to the norm-referenced Stanford 9 assessment, which was closely aligned to state standards. Outcomes of the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results of the study determined that there was no overall significance relationship between teacher evaluation scores and student test scores in the areas of literacy, math, and language development; however, there was more of a correlation in reading compared to math and language development.

"Results of research that have tried to tie teacher evaluations to student achievement have shown that principals' evaluations of teachers, the most common form of teacher evaluation, typically have little to no correlation with student achievement" (Medley & Coker, 1987; Peterson, 2000).

Teacher Appraisals and Evaluation

"Principals should become knowledgeable about pupil gain data, costs of evaluation, sociology of teacher evaluation, and the problem of the bad teacher. Teacher evaluation can reassure external audiences that schools are doing a good job" (Peterson, 2004). With the roles and responsibilities of school leaders expanding exponentially,

most principals will admit that time management and staying organized can be a struggle. Monitoring and supporting teacher instruction in the classroom is possibly the most important job that a principal has; however, getting into classrooms can be cumbersome at times due to constant interruptions and urgent matters.

Halverson et al. conducted a series of case studies in 2004 that focused on the implementation of standards-based teacher evaluations systems in several large school districts and how campus leaders implement these systems. "New standards-based teacher evaluation policies promise to provide school leaders and teachers with a common framework that can serve as a basis for improving teaching and learning in schools" (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Odden & Kelley, 2002). While campus leaders may impact teaching practices by evaluating classroom instruction, they also can impact teaching in non-direct ways such as campus discipline, budgeting campus resources to support teacher goals, and encouraging staff members.

The subjects of the study included teachers and campus leaders at 14 different campuses in a school district located in the Western United States. Data was collected via interviews, teacher evaluations, and demographic campus statistics. Findings included that "that there was a strong desire of local leaders to use teacher evaluation practices for two central purposes: one, to maintain a community of good will with teachers, and two, to help novice teachers improve or remove those unable to perform at a basic level" (Halverson et al., 2004). Two issues at the core of successful evaluation include leaders and teacher understanding the evaluation framework and the theory of sensemaking, as individuals determine what is important to them based on their background and past experiences. Overall, campus leaders valued the evaluation tool as a means for improving

teaching on their campuses and teachers enjoyed the interactions with their evaluators, even in the spirit of disagreement, if necessary.

A major focus of the study centered around the question of whether or not teacher evaluation systems have the power, if implemented with fidelity, to impact positive change on a campus despite deeply embedded organizational structure and habits. The team of researchers concluded that systemic change takes a great deal of time and focusing on "common practices" (Halverson et al., 2004) for teachers and leaders to exercise while engaged in conversation using the teacher evaluation tools. It was also determined that different campuses implemented the teacher evaluation system in different ways, leading to a possible contrast on the power of the evaluation tool as it was connected to shaping instructional practices on different campuses.

Using the Delphi Technique, Tellez (2008) gathered a group of "personnel administrators" and "personnel attorney experts" to pinpoint skills that should be incorporated into a program for aspiring kindergarten through 12th (K-12) grade principals in the next "five to ten" years. Anonymous experts were selected based on some of the following characteristics: prior experiences, ability to problem solve, and commitment to participate in study. Data was collected in three rounds. During Round One, experts submitted practices that they believed needed to be incorporated into the K-12 training program in order for the teacher evaluation process to "improve teachers' instructional performance and the goal that all students be proficient by 2014" (Tellez, 2008). In Round Two, experts ranked data collected from Round One in order of importance as they believed it impacted instruction. Lastly, Round Three, experts ranked the practices in order that they felt strongly about the principals being able to implement.

While the experts were able to compile a list of 70 actions to implement, there was a contrast between the importance of the task and the likelihood for implementation. Importance (I) was ranked 1-10, measuring the importance of the practice as it pertains to teacher evaluations. Likelihood (L) was ranked 0-100% that the "technique will be used by 2014" (Tellez). The following techniques were ranked (combined from Round Two and Round Three) above a 9 in importance and above 70% likeliness:

- Conduct a "courageous" conversation (I-9.08; L-71.67%).

- Providing clear and consistent messages (I-9.29; L-80%).

- Providing feedback to teachers on a regular basis (I-9.17; L-75%).

- Handling the evaluation process in a fair, consistent and nondiscriminatory manner (I-9; L-75%).

- Hiring qualified teachers and do not keep if they do not achieve at a high level during probationary period (I-9.63; L-75.33%).

- Good people skills. Build trust (I-9.25; L-75.42%).

- The ability to release ineffective teachers (I-9.75; L-78.75%).

- Constant attention and supervision of mediocre teacher (I-9.29; L-78.75%).

- Creating a climate and culture of trust, through constructive feedback (I-9.04; L-73.33%).

Tellez (2008) concluded that many of the techniques with the higher likelihood ranking involved principal behaviors. As was mentioned before, time management plays

an extremely influential role in ensuring that the principal is prepared to conquer the important tasks needed to accomplish student achievement goals. The techniques were further ranked to identify "high priority cells" of which 45 were identified. Using a t-test, the researcher compared the responses from the personnel attorneys to the personnel administrators. This resulted in importance differences in 7 areas and in likelihood, 31 differences. The study concluded that it is the ultimate responsibility of the principal to utilize the evaluation tool to support teachers and also prioritize techniques that will support the campus vision and "improve student learning by 2014" (Tellez, 2008).

A 2004 study conducted by Milanowski "analyzed the relationship between teacher evaluation scores and student achievement on district and state tests in reading, mathematics, and science in a large Midwestern U.S. school district" (Milanowksi, 2004). Using a value-added framework, the researcher explored the student test data from grades 3-8 as it related to teacher evaluation scores. The concept of using value-added data will be explored later in this literature review.

In the 1998-1999 school year, as a response to low student achievement results compared to area school districts, Cincinnati Public Schools created a revised teacher appraisal system based on the Framework for Teaching (Danielson, 1996), incorporating a knowledge and skill-based pay system. According to Milanowksi (2004), the evaluation consisted of 16 performance standards that were separated into four domains: "planning and preparation (Domain 1), creating an environment for learning (Domain 2), teaching for learning (Domain 3), and professionalism (Domain 4)".

For the purpose of this study, Milanowksi (2004) obtained teacher evaluation scores from the 2000-2001 for 270 teachers and 2001-2002 school year for 335 teachers.

All four previously mentioned domain scores were taken into account and added together and weighed against student achievement data from yearly state assessments. Taking into account student demographics, student gender, teacher experience, and variance of student data and teacher evaluation scores, the results of the study found that was a "moderate degree of criterion-related validity" (Milanowksi, 2004). The results also concluded that linking student achievement data to a teacher evaluation system may be useful for the following purposes: determine teacher pay differentiation, manage personnel, implement professional development, and look deeper at teaching practices that impact student learning. "It is important to recognize that very high correlations between teacher evaluation scores and student achievement measures are unlikely to be found for reasons including error in measuring teacher performance, error in measuring student performance, lack of alignment between the curriculum taught by teachers and the student tests, and the role of student motivation and related characteristics in producing student learning" (Milanowski, 2004).

Principal Support and Supervision

"The relationship between a principal and faculty members has a pivotal effect on instructional effectiveness" (McGreal, 1983). Skills that a principal should possess in order to efficiently evaluate teachers include: experience, knowledge, positivity, trust, and a commitment to improvement (Deckert-Pelton & Zimmerman, 2003). A qualitative study in 2003 surveyed 86 volunteer teachers (79 women and 7 men) in Florida to determine their perceptions of their campus principals as effective evaluators that supported their teaching and professional development. Participants were asked the

following open-ended questions from the "Professional Appraisal Systems Survey" (Deckert-Pelton & Zimmerman):

- What methods do principals employ to gain information about the quality of a teacher's performance?

- Is teacher evaluation performed consistently throughout your district? Why or why not?

- How can the teacher evaluation be improved?

- Does the process of teacher evaluation/related feedback, help you to improve the quality of your teaching?

Common themes were determined according interview responses. Dekert-Pelton and Zimmerman (2003) determined the following domains as they related to teacher perceptions of evaluators: interaction, consistency, commitment, and knowledge. The majority of respondents reiterated their desire to have a relationship with their evaluator that was shared and included positive feedback and constructive feedback:

> They explained that effective evaluative interactions with their principals include constructive general feedback, encouragement, pedagogically appropriate feedback, and adequate time for the feedback process. In contrast, 11% of educators noted that they had few, if any, opportunities for sustained bidirectional communication between themselves and the evaluator, and lamented this lack of feedback. (Deckert-Pelton & Zimmerman, 2003)

The study also concluded that although campuses may use the same documentation forms, there is a clear difference in the levels of effective collaboration amongst teachers and their evaluators at different schools. Regardless of the pedagogical

knowledge of the evaluator, teachers will turn to them for support and feedback. Campus leaders are charged with educating themselves on best practices and current educational trends in order to support learning on their campuses. It was determined that evaluators must provide effective and consistent feedback in order for the teacher/evaluator relationship and communications to be beneficial in the teaching and learning process for adults and students. "The large scale reform initiatives that many, if not most, of American schools are faced with can be enhanced when the principals are committed, consistent, knowledgeable, and skilled evaluators of teachers' pedagogical skills" (Deckert-Pelton & Zimmerman, 2003).

> One major emphasis in the educational arena in the early 21st century has been the continuing demand for greater accountability to increase student performance. National and state expectations require schools to ensure that all students achieve mastery of curriculum objectives, and local schools focus on implementing those requirements to the best of their ability. As a result, leading instructional efforts in a school has evolved into a primary role for school principals. (Catano, Richard, & Stronge, 2008, p.3)

With most teacher appraisals focusing on key instructional practices, principals have a immense responsibility of ensuring that classroom teachers not only implement district curriculum, it is also their responsibility to support teachers and staff members in harvesting a strong understanding of the best practices that will lead their students to success. How teachers conceive factors concerning instruction and improving teaching practices are crucial to school improvement efforts. Gardner's 2012 mixed-methods study surveyed 20 kindergarten through sixth grade teachers and researched the following:

teacher conceptions about student achievement, teacher practices for school improvement that are reflected in reform models, and teacher conceptions about challenges with school improvement (Gardner, 2012).

To collect data, Gardner conducted interviews, with responses being categorized for interpretation. Twenty classroom observations were conducted and interpreted using components of the 90/90/90 school reform model (Reeves, 2004). Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) student data was also explored for the purpose of the study. Based on teacher interviews, "the three descriptive categories of school improvement challenges are as follows: 1) student transiency throughout the school year; 2) staff restructure and transfers to different schools; and 3) lack of parent involvement in school and at home" (Gardner, 2012). MEAP scores were compared, and it was discovered that there was a decline in 2009 and 2010, lower than what had been statistically expected. Based on interviews, "the descriptive categories that teachers believed were necessary to improve student achievement were: 1) analyzing student achievement data to develop interventions; 2) a model to decrease disruptive behavior; and 3) high expectations for all students" (Gardner, 2012). It was also concluded that the 90/90/90 model does indeed "generate successful urban schools" when the five characteristics are implemented in the form of clear curriculum, frequent assessment, writing focus, and combined scoring and student work (Gardener, 2012; Johnson, 2008).

Motivational Theories

To motivate is "to stir to action or provide with a motive" (The American Heritage Dictionary, 1989, 447). For individuals teaching in public schools across the nation, the idea of providing all of their students with a quality education is perhaps the

primary motivation for making education their career of choice. With the flurries of standardized testing, dwindling school budgets, and teacher accountability at an all time high, one may wonder what truly motivates a highly effective teacher to remain in the classroom. Rewarding successful teachers to stay in the classroom is not only one of the most important characteristics of transformational school reform, but is also one surrounded by great controversy. One way that school districts across the country have decided to motivate teachers is by implementing teacher performance pay initiatives. With these plans, teachers are eligible to earn monetary bonuses based on student achievement levels, often based on standardized test scores.

Frederick I. Herzberg (1923-2000), an American Psychologist, may be considered one of the most influential management teachers and theorists of the 20th century. While most of his work has been applied to traditional business settings, his motivation theories are often connected to teacher effectiveness and performance. In 1959, Herzberg developed a two-dimensional model linking people's individual attitudes about the workplace to sources of motivation in accomplishing their work. The Motivation/Hygiene Theory divides determiners of job satisfaction into two distinct categories – motivators, also known as satisfiers, and hygiene factors, also known as dissatisfiers. Motivators are the factors that may enrich a person's job. According to Gawal, Herzberg identified five factors in particular that were strong determiners of job satisfaction: achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and advancement. (1997). Hygiene factors often deal with the context of the job or the environment in which the job is performed, which could lead to dissatisfaction. Salary, relationship with supervisors, security, work conditions, and company policy could be considered hygiene

factors. "The hygienes have always been – and probably always will be – easier to measure, control, and manipulate than the motivators" (Pardee 1990). Taking into account monetary gain, Herzberg felt as if recognition and achievement were more motivational than salary.

In 2008, Chapman administered a job attitude survey to 200 accountants and engineers. Achievement in the workplace was the most frequent cause of work satisfaction, whereas company policy and administration were the most frequent cause of dissatisfaction. Of the factors measured, 15% of survey participants felt that salary was a frequent cause of satisfaction and 18% felt that is was a frequent cause of dissatisfaction. While most would agree that money is important, research shows that there are more sustainable motivating factors that contribute to employee satisfaction and productivity.

Teacher performance pay would be considered a hygiene factor as it is extrinsic and can be manipulated. Before teachers can be motivated by variables such as performance pay, it is important that administrators prioritize providing a foundation of satisfiers. Once teachers are satisfied with their jobs, they will likely feel a sense of contentment, which can become a catalyst for acceleration and achievement in other areas, such as student achievement and professional development. While most of the research conducted highlighted hygiene factors to be more of a contributor to employee dissatisfaction, it is possible that with the right systems in place, hygiene factors, such as performance pay, could play an intricate role in moving a campus from a level of passive compliance to excellence. In setting clear guidelines and emphasizing opportunities surrounding performance pay as it is linked to job satisfaction, it is possible that teachers can be positively motivated by hygiene factors.

As human beings strive to reach their full potential personally and in the workplace, they are fueled by an inherent need to respond to motivation and flourish. In 1954, Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) devised a hierarchy for understanding human motives. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs encourages employers to provide their employees with a workplace where they can experience personal fulfillment, while contributing to the overall mission of the organization. The five general levels of needs as described by Hamner and Organ, as explained by Pardee (1990), are shown in the following hierarchical order.

1. Physiological needs: Food, water, sex, and shelter

2. Safety needs: Protection against danger, threat, and deprivation. Behavior which arouses uncertainty with respect to continued employment or which reflects favoritism or discrimination, unpredictable administration of policy are powerful motivators of the safety needs in the employment relationship at every level (Hamner & Organ 1978, 137).

3. Social needs: Giving and receiving of love, friendship, affection, belonging, association, and acceptance.

4. Ego needs: Need for achievement, adequacy, strength, and freedom. In essence this is the need for autonomy of independence. Status, recognition, appreciation, and prestige. In essence this is the need for self-esteem of self-worth.

5. Self-actualization needs: The need to realize one's potentialities for continued self development and the desire to become more and more of what one is and what one is capable of becoming. (Pardee 1990, 8-9)

After Maslow's death in 1970, his work was extended by scholars to include the following needs in the hierarchy:

1. Cognitive needs: Knowledge and meaning

2. Aesthetic needs: Appreciation and search for beauty, balance, and form

3. Transcendence needs: Helping others to achieve self-actualization (Chapman 2001-2007)

Maslow concluded that until your needs are met in any one area of the hierarchy, you couldn't have your needs met in another area. Self-actualization may be the most critical area for an individual to develop as it is dependent on one's desire of self-fulfillment. In order to develop, one must believe in his or her capacity to exceed what is expected of him or her. Four assumptions that support the concept of self-actualization include: (1) Humans are active as well as reactive beings; (2) humans are inherently good; (3) humans have a single basic motivation; and (4) humans are social beings (Brooks and Cole, 1985). In the educational setting, self-actualization concepts may transfer as follows: (1) Teachers respond to extrinsic and intrinsic rewards based on their past experiences in the school setting; (2) All teachers entered the teaching profession with the ideal of shaping student outcomes in mind; however, societal pressure and administrative barriers can impact teacher and student performance; (3) Teachers have a desire to excel, and it is vital to their professional well-being; and (4) Interactions with other teachers can strengthen their practice, leading to greater success in the classroom.

The need for teachers to feel successful has a significant impact on individual self-actualization that may result in greater job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction, depending on one's self-perception. Preparing for the challenges of the classroom and a

teaching profession are critical in teacher development. A. Dodd (2001) reflects on her time as a teacher, beginning in the 1960's, and aligns teacher development to a hierarchy comparable to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. A novice teacher develops through the following stages: Stage 1 – Confusion, Chaos, and Survival; Stage 2 – Coping and Recipe Collecting; Stage 3 – Trusting the Experts; Stage 4 – Questioning the Experts; and Stage 5 – Self-Actualization (Dodd, 1994).

In order to reach and continue to develop within the self-actualization stage, teachers must take advantage of opportunities to excel and remain unwavering in their commitment to excellence for themselves and the students they serve. Rewarding teacher performance can lead to greater teacher autonomy, yielding a positive impact on job satisfaction and self-determination. Eisenburger and Cameron (1996) suggested that when a previously unavailable reward is made contingent on meeting specific criteria of performance, greater self-determination is perceived.

Teacher Performance Incentives

Teacher performance pay is "appearing as a strategy increasingly implemented on the district, state and even national levels to address issues of teacher quality, recruitment, and retention in hopes that it will improve academic outcomes" (Jensen, Tibbetts, & Yamashiro, 2010). For the purpose of this dissertation, teacher performance pay, which also may be referred to as merit pay, will be any additional compensation, outside of a regular salary, awarded to a teacher due to student academic growth and progress.

In the corporate world, employees are given opportunities to earn monetary bonuses for a multitude of reasons: securing high profile clientele, meeting yearly goals, or gaining a considerable profit for their business. Some employees work feverishly and

strategically with the goal of earning a bonus in mind. There is a level of uncertainty to what extent performance pay has on a school's campus culture. When award amounts are published, performance pay does have the potential to pit adults against each other. The conversations quickly turn to wonderings about how certain teachers earned certain amounts and others did not.

"Pay-for-performance policies are based in part on the assumption that if teachers are compensated on the basis of student performance on state-mandated achievement tests, or on the basis on their performance as measured by classroom evaluations, several outcomes will follow, including: teachers will be motivated to work harder to bring about improvements in student learning; effective teachers will be more easily distinguished from less effective ones; and larger proportions of students will achieve at high levels" (Wells, 2011). A survey-based study conducted by Wells in 2011 shed light on assumptions surrounding teacher performance pay and teacher support surrounding the systems. Bonus pay, for the focus of this study, was based on student performance as measured by standardized tests on the school and classroom level, in addition to classroom evaluations. Teacher perception, likeliness to collaborate, and teacher motivated were also factors taken into account in this study. A mixed-method evaluation was conducted using five years of data collection from the Ohio Teacher Incentive Fund (OTIF) program, beginning in 2006, with grant monies for the U.S. Department of Education's Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) program.

The federal program has four primary goals:

1. Improve student achievement by increasing teacher and principal effectiveness;

2. Reform teacher and principal compensation systems so that teachers and principals are rewarded for increases in student achievement;

3. Increase the number of effective teachers teaching poor, minority, and disadvantaged students in hard-to-staff subjects; and create sustainable performance-based compensation systems. (Wells, 2011)

The survey data interpreted was collected from classroom teachers in four schools high-poverty urban school districts in Ohio over the course of three years (2007-2008 – Year 1, 2008-2009 – Year 2, and 2010-2011 – Year 4). The school districts were Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, and Toledo. Longitudinal data was collected that took into account the pay system, teacher levels of support, teacher understanding of the program, levels of collaboration amongst teachers, and teacher attitudes. In addition, the researcher used a quasi-experimental design that allowed him or her to compare the survey responses of teachers at schools where a performance pay system was implemented to the responses of teachers at schools where there was not a pay system in place. Survey response rates were solid, ranging from 71 percent to 90 percent at various locations. Findings were broken down into specific areas – one addressing the knowledge about the OTIF program and attitudes about the additional pay; the other addressing the support for the incentive program, teacher collaboration, and perceived changes resulting from the program.

As knowledge about the OTIF program was measured, teachers responded "yes" or "no" to a variety of statements measuring their understanding of key components of the program. While knowledge surrounding the program increased year to year, the overall knowledge was low, with an increase from 33 percent overall understanding in

Year 1 to 49.3 percent in Year 2, a growth of 16.3 percent; however, knowledge

decreased in Year 4, showing a -18.1 percent to total 31.2 percent. It appears from the

survey results that teachers understood the levels by which they were measured according

to the pay system; however, they appeared to be unclear that half of the pay was based on

their demonstration of skills and knowledge.

　　　　"Strictly speaking, teachers' attitudes about supplemental pay do not represent an

implementation issue; rather, it represents a preexisting factor that will influence the

implementation as well as the outcome of the program" (Wells, 2011). Cincinnati teacher

attitudes were more positive in Year 1 and throughout the course of the study, whereas

the satisfaction was somewhat positive, yet lower overall and in the other districts

throughout the course of the study. The following proved to be components that teacher

felt strongly should be related to the state's performance pay system: fulfilling additional

roles on campus (70%), teaching in "hard-to-staff" schools (69%), professional

development opportunities seized (61%), and performance as determined by appraiser

evaluation (58%). On the other hand, a lower level of support was determined for using

student performance on standardized tests as measured on the classroom level as an

indicator of additional pay (41%) and student standardized testing results as measured at

the school level (38%).

　　　　Overall support for OTIF was consistent throughout the three years of the study,

with scores within the 62 to 64 point range on a 1 to 100 scale. Cincinnati was once an

outlier with overall stronger support for the program than the other districts. Seventy-

seven percent of teachers agreed with the implementation of the pay program at their

schools; however, they overall were in disagreement with the following statements: "The

program will encourage teachers to work harder than in prior years to get more pay" (57 percent) and "The amount of incentive will be large enough to motivate me to examine my teaching practices more closely" (54%) (Wells, 2011).

In the area of collaboration, at the end of Year 4, the overall perceptions of collaboration and support among teachers was strong at 74.6% on a scale or 1 to 100. While there were some small differences among districts, there was no strong difference detected among levels of collaboration across the five districts.

The overall perceived changes at the end of Year 4 resulting from OTIF ranged from 62.2% in Columbus to 68.8 in Cleveland. While the overall results for this component of the survey were higher, fewer teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:

- "Teachers seem more competitive than cooperative (13%)

- I think about transferring to another school/district more often (24%); and

- I have noticed increased resentment among teachers (33%)" (Wells, 2011)

Sixty-seven percent of teachers felt that they became more effective as a result of the OTIF program on their campus. It can be concluded from this study that a variety of factors such as teacher years of experience, grade levels and subjects taught, amount of bonus paid and the level of knowledge surrounding the program can impact whether or not this performance pay program had a substantial impact on teacher attitudes and response to this district program. In Year 4, teachers were more informed leading to a greater support of the program implementation. It can be concluded that ongoing district support also has an impact of teacher responses. While the support for the program was high with limited teacher knowledge, one can only assume that with the right support,

performance pay programs may have the potential to impact teacher practices, in turn leading the greater student achievement.

In order for teachers to become invested in any incentive program, teacher support would be a critical factor in the implementation of this program. It was clear in the Ohio study that teachers supported the performance pay program; however, there was a significant need for further support and development of the teacher's knowledge surrounding the system. Like any new implementation on the school level, teacher support and ongoing professional development opportunities are critical components to sustain any program changes or enhancements at the campus and district level.

Some performance pay critics argue that there are other more important ways to support teachers and build human capital. Some would argue that instead of awarding individual teachers extrinsically with additional money, administrators should focus on intrinsic rewards such as building teacher efficacy and creating work environments conducive to job satisfaction. In 1998, Podgursky and Solmon conducted a study in collaboration with the Milken Family Foundation, surveying 50 teachers who had received Milken Educator Awards for excellence in education. The focus of the study was to receive input from these accomplished educators to compile and address the issues surrounding teacher performance pay. Based on the qualitative data collected from teacher focus groups, Podgursky and Solmon produced the following points, many of which are still contentious topics today.

1. Performance-based compensation programs encourage competition rather than collaboration among teachers.

2. The Union environment and the Collaborative Nature of Teaching –The argument is made that the unions are socialist in origin and philosophy, and just as students are not treated differently, teachers don't expect to be treated differently when it comes to pay.

3. There is no clear definition of what constitutes a "good teacher." In other words, what is merit based upon?

4. If student learning is the sole basis of the merit evaluation, relying on test scores can present major problems.

5. When you reward teachers for student achievement, nobody wants to teach certain kids in certain communities.

6. Some teachers perceived bias and favoritism stemming from administration.

7. Performance-based compensation will take from teachers the ability to teach as they wish and as they do best. It requires teachers to jump through hoops. It will make everyone teach and behave in the same way.

8. Performance-based compensation programs reward the top 15-20 percent of performers without making any effort to improve all teachers.

9. The costs of implementing a performance-based compensation system are very large.

10. Teachers should want to teach to serve kids, not for money. We want teachers who love teaching and who are not in it for the money.

11. Performance-based compensation forces teachers to work harder to get more pay – but the extra pay is not sufficient for the extra work required.

12. If the names of those who receive performance-based compensation are posted, parents might be upset if they disagree with their choices. Or they may be upset if their kids get teachers who did not receive performance-based compensation.

13. There are risks of comparing the private, corporate, for-profit sector with education.

14. Performance-based compensation cannot be imposed from the outside.

15. People are too critical of education – it is actually doing fine, so why rock the boat by changing things? (Podgurksy & Solmon, 1998, pp. 4-25)

Despite the overall unfavorable responses from the 1998 study, some educational reformers may argue in favor of teacher performance pay, stating that it attracts high quality teacher candidates to serve in our nation's most struggling schools. The ideal is that these high quality teachers will be eligible to earn additional merit pay, solidifying their long-term commitment to the teaching profession. Another mindset in favor of the opportunity for teachers to earn performance pay is that job satisfaction will increase as teachers earn these bonuses. Both the commitment of high quality teachers to the teaching profession and positive teacher attitudes will act as catalysts for significant gains in student achievement.

While performance pay is a relatively new concept and often linked to public school reform efforts as it relates to increased student achievement, several studies have been done in school districts across the nation to measure the relationship between performance pay and teacher attrition. In March of 2010, the National Education Policy Center evaluated District Awards for Teacher Excellence Program (D.A.T.E.), one of the

country's largest performance pay programs in Texas. The state of Texas awards schools

districts incentive funds to award to teachers based on criteria pre-determined at the

campus level. The 3-year program distributed $150 million to $197 million each year

across 203 Texas school districts.

While the study had its constraints, such as lack of information about program

implementation at the campus level and only one cycle of teacher data, it presented 63

key findings using descriptive data. Program components included the number of

teachers designated to receive awards, the size of potential reward, and the accountability

units. In the 2008 to 2009 school year, teacher turnover did decline in districts

participating in D.A.T.E.; however, the decline was attributed to typical district turnover

as comparable turnover took place in schools that were not program participants.

Researchers concluded that teachers who thought that they may receive an award

remained at their schools to receive the awards and those that were to possibly receive a

larger sum of money were more likely to remain in their teaching position than those that

did not. These conclusions were based on one year of D.A.T.E. data. Something

interesting to note was that "the turnover rate surged among teachers not receiving

awards, and fell sharply among teacher who did" (Gratz, 2010).

D.A.T.E. participants were given a survey twice within one year of the program

cycle. From the survey, it was determined that most teachers who thought that they would

receive an award did. Survey results also noted that teachers participating in the program

reported greater implementation of professional development practices and openness to

further development. Surveyed teachers who were positive about the program appeared

also to be positive about their school settings. It is likely that positivity and satisfaction in

one's job may lead to their decision to remain at their schools, despite D.A.T.E., so the true impact on teacher turnover is unclear.

"The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2003), contends that both new and experienced teachers need the opportunity to earn more money and advance their careers without leaving the classroom" (Hess, 2006). Differentiated compensation for teachers can provide additional salary incentives, enticing teachers to stay in the profession longer than they may have if they felt as if their opportunities for professional growth were stagnant. Hess conducted a qualitative research study in 2006 that sought to measure the effects of differentiated compensation on teacher retention in an urban middle school in Kentucky. Rolling Hills Middle School was considered a hard-to-staff school due to a lack of student growth based on the Stanford diagnostic assessment, a large population of low socio-economic students, and traditionally high teacher turnover rates. Teacher retention was a serious issue at Rolling Hills with an average of 40% of teachers leaving at the end of every school year from 2000-2003, approximately 23 teachers each year.

The compensation program for Rolling Hills was designed by administrators, with the overall goal of reducing teacher attrition by 20% and attracting teachers to the campus over the course of the grant (2003 to 2005). In order to qualify for reward money, teachers would make a commitment to stay at Rolling Hills for three years, earning a total of $4000 over the years, with $1000 increments awarded at set times throughout the course of the program.

For the qualitative research study, teachers and administrators participated in surveys, one-on-one interviews, group interviews, and telephone conversations. Thirty-

two teachers participated in the study, including teachers at Rolling Hills at the time of the study and teachers who had left Rolling Hills but stayed in the school district. Their teaching experience ranged from 2 to 33 years. Rolling Hills administration collaborated with the researcher, allowing access to: (a) survey data collected in the Kentucky Department of Education Differentiated Compensation Research Project; (b) teacher retention records from 2001 to 2005; (c) the school's Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP); (d) professional development attendance and records; (f) the 2004 Kentucky Performance Report for Rolling Hills Middle School; (g) the school master schedule; and (h) interim and final reports on the Kentucky Department of Education Differentiated Compensation Research Project, which included survey data and case studies regarding program implementation (Hess, 2006).

It is important to note that the principal who had written the grant and committed to the implementation during the 2003-2004 school year retired after that initial year, leaving Rolling Hills open to new administration. The principal turnover led to great distress and confusion amongst staff members surrounding the grant. In the change in leadership, several teachers had been rewarded funds that were later found to be incorrect. While most teachers who did receive awards were thankful for them, the general consensus among staff members was that the amounts of the rewards were not enough to make them want to stay at Rolling Hills. One teacher said, "The $2000 helps, but it's almost like a drop in the bucket… with as much time as it takes away from my family; it's not worth $2000 to stay" (Hess, 2006). Although the differentiated compensation program was advertised, no in-district teachers attempted to transfer to Rolling Hills.

"The success of differentiated compensation to motivate highly qualified teachers to serve and remain in hard-to-staff urban middle school is limited by insufficient levels of incentive rewards, high rates of administrator and teacher turnover, and high levels of inexperienced teachers" (Hess, 2006). Hess concluded that "understanding the relationship between differentiated compensation and teacher recruitment and retention may contribute to enhancing the stability of schools and improving student learning" (Hess, 2006). Of all the interviews that were conducted with Rolling Hills teachers, rarely was student achievement ever mentioned. The focus of the participants remained on the negative components of the school, thwarting the primary purpose of the compensation model. Perhaps, school culture and intrinsic motivation have more of an impact on teacher retention than any amount of money. The researcher concluded that any chance that the additional money had to impact teacher attrition at this struggling campus was diminished before it even began due to the deeper issues that no amount of money could change.

Value-added

In a school environment when high expectations and a culture of accountability are foundational, by using value-added data as a means to measure student progress, administrators can support teachers as they strive to educate and meet the needs of every level of learners in their classrooms.

> Value-added, along with other growth measures, are powerful because they level the playing field and measure the right thing – student academic progress. Students come to teachers every year with vastly different levels of achievement, and the teacher's goal is to "add value" or growth. (Mahoney, 2012)

In order to be successful in the classroom, teachers need to be supported with feedback, opportunities for professional development, data, and resources. "Value-added information should not be used to name, blame, and shame; it should be a catalyst to uncover, discover, and recover" (Mahoney, 2012).

When educators look at student value-added data, it is important to note the difference between student achievement and student progress. "In education, the words "achievement" and "progress" are often used interchangeably. However, their meanings are very different" (Battelle for Kids, 2009). Student achievement is determined by measuring a student's performance at a certain point in time against a standard, such as state assessment where a pre-determined passing standard has already been determined. Student progress focuses on the "gain" or "growth" students make over time (Battelle for Kids, 2009). "By measuring students' academic achievement and progress, schools and district have a more robust, comprehensive picture of their effectiveness in raising student performance" (Battelle for Kids, 2009).

In 1991, Tennessee, under the Education Improvement Act, which mandated that the state be specific in determining systems that schools would be held accountable for, implemented a value-added assessment model referred to TVAAS or the Tennessee Value-added Assessment System (Horn & Sanders, 1994). TVAAS formulates a pattern of growth over the child's academic career, using student scale score data in math, science, reading, language, and social studies for grades 3-8 on the Tennessee state annual norm-referenced assessment, the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP), and a comparison to other students in the state of similar demographics and

schooling to determine a cumulative gain in each subject. TVAAS was also extended to

grades 9 through 12 at a later date.

A 1994 educational assessment focused on TVAAS and addressing problems that

the mixed-methodology determinant formula may contact.

> TVAAS circumvents many of the problems associated with the use of student
>
> achievement data in assessment of school systems, schools, and teacher by relying
>
> on the scale scores that indicate gains students make from year to year, regardless
>
> of the point at which the student enters the classroom. (Horn & Sanders, 1994)

The mixed-model process (Sanders, 1989) allows for TVAAS to account for missing

student data and various teaching models by retaining five years of data for individual

students and teachers.

The 1994 study by Horn and Sanders concluded that in order to fully understand

the impact and future of TVAAS, the following effects should be considered for future

research: "teaching mode (cooperative learning, whole language, team teaching), class

size, textbook adoptions, funding technology, curricular innovations, and many other

factors" (Horn & Sanders, 1994).

> TVAAS offers insight and perspective in the pursuit of educational improvement.
>
> It provides a solid basis from which change can be rationally undertaken. The
>
> academic gains our students make is the measure of our success as educators as
>
> well as theirs. *(*Horn & Sanders, 1994)

In *Evaluating Teachers: The Important Role of Value-Added,* Glazerman et al.

(2010) focused on clarifying four areas of confusion surrounding using value-added as a

means to evaluate teachers: uses of value-added, significance of classifying teachers as

"effective" or "ineffective" based on value-added, the reliability of value-added measures of teacher performance, and the reliability of teacher evaluation systems that include value-added compared to those that don't. "There is an obvious need for teacher evaluation systems that include a spread of verifiable and comparable teacher evaluations that distinguish teacher effectiveness" (Glazerman et al., 2010). It is evident from any school that teachers vary in effectiveness. While teacher evaluations should recognize these differences, they generally do not, causing critics to question the "validity, reliability, and corruptibility" of value-added measures (Glazerman et al., 2010).

According to Glazerman et al. (2010), "While added-value data may quantify a statistical measure of student performance, it may "mask the incredible progress that a teacher has made" (Glazerman et al., 2010). Campus evaluators may use value-added as a component of a teacher evaluation system; however, classroom observations, parent input, and teacher reflections may be taken into account in order to get a holistic view of a teacher's performance.

Some of the concern surrounding value-added measures is how the measures are used to determine teachers as being effective or ineffective. Glazerman et al. (2010) refer to the possible frequency of "false negatives," where effective teachers may be labeled as ineffective based on value-added data. "By framing in terms of false negatives places the focus almost entirely on the interests of the individual who is being evaluated rather than the students who are being served" (Glazerman et al., 2010). Incorporating value-added as a component into how a teacher is evaluated may give campus administrators a data baseline of how to support teacher in their development.

Summary

The culture and climate of any institution have a great impact on the success and productivity of employees and stakeholders involved in the mission of that organization. In school settings all over the world, the employees may be considered the administration, teachers, teaching assistants, office staff, school nurse, custodians, cafeteria workers, and district officials. Stakeholders in the school setting may include students, parents, community officials, advocates, and neighbors in the surrounding area. In order to ensure the needs of our students are being met, stakeholders and employees must work together in a manner that is conducive to educating students each and every day. Principals must support teachers in becoming highly effective, no matter what student population they are serving. The appraisal tool that a school district uses should not be a formulated checklist. A teacher appraisal system should focus on teacher and student behaviors that ultimately lead to student learning.

Chapter 3
Methodology

The research study identified what principals at highly effective elementary school campuses in a sprawling urban school district, located in the southern United States, valued as key instructional criterion in the district's teacher appraisal system and how these individual criterions contributed to student achievement. The findings of this study can greatly impact the professional development, hiring, and transitioning of teachers and principals in the district. How these instructional practices may be replicated and supported in other classrooms, schools, and districts outside of the surveyed group may have a substantial positive impact on achievement levels for all students. Better understanding of the link between the criteria and student performance may aid in the creation of future created professional development opportunities to support teaching, leading, and learning in the district. This chapter explains the description of the research design, state the research question, describes the setting where the study will take place, identifies subjects participating in the study, and discusses the procedures and instruments that will be used in the analysis of the data collected.

By utilizing the instructional criteria from the district's appraisal and development rubric, referred to the Effective Teacher Appraisal Tool (ETAT) for the purpose of this study, a tool that has not been previously extensively studied due to its recent implementation in the 2011-2012 school year, this study will serve as a catalyst for future educational instructionally-specific research that will help define clear instructional practices and needed support systems for administrators and teachers to accelerate student achievement in schools and classrooms far beyond the participating district.

Description of the Research Design

The study was conducted using qualitative data, collected by surveys and interviews, to explore a new teacher appraisal tool that had not been previously extensively studied and the perceived effects on student learning. Participating principals, who were familiar with how the ETAT is used to appraise teachers as it was used it in the 2011-2012 school year to support and appraise teachers at their schools, felt comfortable and more likely to provide authentic responses while completing the survey and participating in a possible follow up interview.

The qualitative survey component allowed principals to identify which instructional criterion from the district's teacher appraisal system they perceived as contributing the most positively to student learning on their campuses. After giving online consent, participating principals took a Survey Monkey online survey. The survey consisted of 10 questions, with one question consisting of 13 sub-items asking participants to rate individual instructional criterion and one open-ended response question. The qualitative interview component allowed the researcher to delve deeper into the connection that principals perceive specified criterion as having on student learning. Utilizing descriptive statistics, the data collected was desegregated in a variety of ways, including charts and graph.

Although each individual instructional criterion is independent from the others, each is an instructional practice that on some level may be a contributor to student learning on the pre-determined elementary school campuses. Using a Likert Scale gave respondents the opportunity to measure each criterion as they contributed to an overarching theme of student learning. "Likert Scales have the advantage that they do

not expect a simple yes / no answer from the respondent, but rather allow for degrees of opinion, and even no opinion at all" (McLeod, 2008). Data analysis included the general percentages and the frequency of survey responses based on the theme of the study as it relates to student learning. Based on survey responses and permission from participants, qualitative data was collected via open-ended survey item responses and follow-up interviews, where applicable. No actual student testing was required, nor was any additional data requested from campuses.

Open-ended responses on the survey provided insight and specific examples of how principals perceive student achievement was enhanced by other criteria not included in the district's teacher appraisal instrument. The interview questions were used to gain insight into how principals of these high performing campuses currently support and will continue to support their teachers in continuing to add value to their students, despite the annually increasing federal, state, and district accountability standards.

Research Questions

The theoretical basis for this study was to determine what instructional criteria on the district's teacher appraisal system were perceived by principals as having the greatest impact on student learning at high achieving elementary school campuses. The research question to guide the study was:

To what degree do principals in the top 25% of value-added pre-kindergarten through fifth grade elementary schools in a large urban school district perceive the criteria of the district's teacher appraisal system as each individual criterion contributes to student learning?

Setting

Established in the 1920s, this urban school district is one of the largest school districts in the nation. Located in a sprawling urban metropolis in the southern United States, the district employs around 26,500 individuals and serves some 203,066 students. According the 2011-2012 demographic information (CSD Website, 2011), elementary school students make up the largest academic level served with 105,684 students. Fifty-two percent of the district schools are elementary campuses. The student population is ethnically and culturally diverse, consisting of 25.1% African-American students, 62.4% Hispanic students, 8.1% white students, 3.3% Asian students, and 1.1% students of other ethnicities. Based on federal criteria for free and reduced lunch, 80.4% of students are considered economically disadvantaged, and 94.2% of students are classified under the umbrella of Title I. Bilingual students account for 20.8% of all students in the district, gifted and talented students make up 15.1% of the student population, and students receiving special education services make up 7.8% of the student population.

Subjects

The maximum number of participants was limited to 25% of the total elementary school principals in the district. No more than 50 participants were included in this study. All principals participating were the leader of a prekindergarten through 5th grade elementary campus in the district that was in the top 25% of elementary school achievement as measured by district 3-year average growth value-added data. This data was obtained from the 2011 SAS EVAAS (Education Value-Added Assessment System) Elementary Composite Report, which lists all of the district's elementary schools in order of 3-year average growth index. The Composite report takes into account campus value-added data in the areas of Math, ELA/Reading, Language, Social Studies, and Science.

The 3-year composite average growth includes the following school years: 2008-2009, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011. The 3-year composite average growth was chosen to identify participants because this is the most recent and consistent value-added growth data using the same measurement criteria to determine value-added growth in all content areas.

Campuses that do not serve pre-kindegarten-5th grade were not included in this study. The study focused on elementary principals; therefore, it was not appropriate to include middle school, high school, or early childhood center principals in the district.

Procedures

2011 value-added reports, containing 3-year average composite campus growth, were formally requested from the district. A request for permission to conduct research in the district was also completed so that approval would be given to contact eligible principal participants. An Institutional Review Board Application was submitted to the University of Houston's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in the Division of Research requesting approval to begin the study. Participants were asked to provide informed consent at the beginning of the online survey. In addition, informed consent was given again prior to the interview. Individuals taking the survey and participating in the follow-up interview were informed that their responses would be completely voluntary and would remain anonymous throughout the entire study.

Principals identified as leading elementary schools in the top 25% of value-added 3-year growth were emailed a link to an online survey along with background information to help them understand the purpose of the study and their role as a voluntary participant. The survey contained an informed consent question, two participant demographic questions, three questions focused on principal experience and school's state rating, individual instructional criterion to rate, and an open-ended response

question. The survey concluded with the participant giving permission to be contacted for a follow-up interview, if deemed necessary and beneficial for the study. The interview questions consisted of four open-ended response questions that focused on campus instructional practices, campus professional development support, and campus plans for the future. The interviews were conducted with participants on a voluntary basis in a location that was convenient for the participants. The data was then desegregated and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results are provided in Chapter Four.

Instruments

Participating principals will be asked to complete several online survey items. The survey items are as follows:

1. Do you give your consent to participate in this study?;

2. Gender;

3. Ethnicity;

4. Total years of experience as a Principal;

5. Years of experience as a Principal at your current campus;

6. What is your current campus Texas Education Rating (based on 2011 TEA Rating)?;

7. Please rate the following instructional criteria as you perceive it to impact student achievement on your campus, using a scale of 1 to 7:

    1-Extremely Likely to Impact Student Achievement

    2-Quite Likely to Impact Student Achievement

    3-Slightly Likely to Impact Student Achievement

    4-Neither Likely or Unlikely to Impact Student Achievement

5-Slightly Unlikely to Impact Student Achievement

6-Quite Unlikely to Impact Student Achievement

7-Extremely Unlikely to Impact Student Achievement

Develops student learning goals
Collects, tracks, and uses student data to drive instruction
Designs effective lesson plans, units, and assessments
Facilitates organized, student-centered, objective-driven lessons
Checks for student understanding and responds to student misunderstanding
Differentiates instruction for student needs by employing a variety of instructional strategies
Engages students in work that develops higher-level thinking skills
Maximizes instructional time
Communicates content and concepts to students
Promotes high academic expectations for students
Students actively participating in lesson activities
Sets and implements discipline management procedures
Builds a positive and respectful classroom environment

8. What other components (not listed above) do you believe impact student achievement on your campus?;

9. Can the researcher contact you to discuss your answers further?;

10. If "Yes," please complete the following: Name, School, Email Address.

One of the key components of the online survey was that participating principals rated the individual ETAT instructional criteria as to how they perceive it to impact student learning on their specific campus, using a seven-point Likert Scale. The scale format is as follows: 1-Extremely Likely to Impact Student Achievement, 2-Quite Likely to Impact Student Achievement, 3-Slightly Likely to Impact Student Achievement, 4-Neither Likely or Unlikely to Impact Student Achievement, 5-Slightly Unlikely to Impact Student Achievement, 6-Quite Unlikely to Impact Student Achievement, or 7-Extremely Unlikely to Impact Student Achievement. Throughout the course of a regular school year,

teachers in the district received explicit feedback from campus administration linked

directly to specific ETAT criterion following administrative observation of classrooms.

Ratings are assigned to each individual criterion on a scale of 1-4 (1-Ineffective, 2-

Developing, 3-Effective, and 4-Highly Effective). Administrators determined ratings via

campus walkthroughs (10-minute classroom visits) or observations (30-minute classroom

visits).

As the district strives to place an effective teacher in every classroom, the

expectation is that all teachers work towards earning at least a rating of "3-Effective" in

every individual ETAT instructional criterion, which consists of planning and

instructional components as previously mentioned in Chapter One. For explanatory

purposes, the following descriptors represent a "3-Effective" teacher and replicated, with

permission, directly from the ETAT rubric booklet (HCSD, 2011):

Planning (PL) Instructional Practice Criteria

- **PL-1 – Develops Student Learning Goals**

  - Teacher develops annual student learning goals that are:
    - a) aligned with appropriate required content standards and curricula,
    - b) measurable using end-of-course assessments and/or rubrics,
    - c) ambitious and feasible given student skill levels diagnosed at the beginning of the year, and
    - d) differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and groups of students.
  - Teacher uses goals to develop an annual plan that:
    - a) prioritizes content and skills that are a prerequisite for or utilized in future courses,
    - b) includes specific content and skills for enrichment and remediation of students, based on their starting points, and
    - c) groups and sequences content and skills into logical units so students build upon prior knowledge and master a variety of objectives at an increasing level of sophistication.
  - Teacher consistently communicates annual learning goals to students and explains how those goals will be assessed.

o Students demonstrate investment in achieving annual student learning goals.

- **PL-2 - Collects, tracks, and uses student data to drive instruction**

  o Teacher accurately determines student progress toward and mastery of objectives and annual student learning goals using multiple methods of assessment.
  o Teacher uses a system to track student assessment data, including individual and class progress toward meeting unit objectives and annual learning goals.
  o Teacher analyzes student progress data at key points during a unit and during the year to:
    - a) determine the effectiveness of past instruction and diagnose why students did or did not master objectives, and
    - b) modify upcoming lesson and unit plans.
  o Teacher uses analysis of student progress data to plan differentiated instruction including intervention and enrichment.
  o Students articulate their performance and progress relative

- **PL-3 - Designs effective lesson plans, units, and assessments**

  o Teacher selects or develops student learning objectives that are tightly aligned to annual goals and are measurable using assessments or rubrics.
  o Teacher plans backward-designed units by:
    - a) first, selecting or developing assessments and/or rubrics that accurately measure student mastery of unit learning objectives, and
    - b) then designing a sequence of lessons that leads students towards mastery of unit learning objectives as determined by those assessments.
  o Teacher writes lesson plans that describe: lesson objectives, learning activities that are sequenced to lead students towards mastery of those objectives, and how student mastery of objectives will be assessed.
  o Teacher allocates adequate time within a unit for students to master each objective while maintaining fidelity to district curriculum requirements.

Instruction (I) Instructional Practice Criteria

- **I-1 - Facilitates organized, student-centered, objective-driven lessons**

  o Teacher facilitates a cohesive lesson in which all lesson elements are sequenced and organized in order to lead students toward mastery of the objective.
  o Teacher selects and executes instructional strategies that effectively support lesson objectives.

- o Students connect lesson content to prior knowledge in order to build new learning.
- o Students explain the lesson's objective and what they will be doing in the lesson in their own words.
- o Students articulate how their work will be assessed or what assessment the teacher is using to measure their learning.
- o Students practice, apply, and demonstrate the skills and knowledge they are learning during the lesson through meaningful learning activities.
- o Students demonstrate an understanding of lesson content and skills through correct responses in student work or by asking relevant clarifying or extension questions.

- **I-2 – Checks for student understanding and responds to student misunderstanding**

  - o Teacher checks for understanding and accurately diagnoses student misunderstanding at key moments during a lesson using a variety of methods.
  - o Teacher adjusts lesson to ensure student understanding in response to assessments during the lesson and without interrupting the flow of the lesson.
  - o Teacher provides feedback throughout the lesson that affirms correctly understood content, clarifies misunderstood content, and extends student thinking.
  - o Teacher uses clear systems and routines for assessing student understanding during the lesson.

- **I-3 – Differentiates instruction for student needs by employing a variety of instructional strategies**

  - o Students engage with lesson content in multiple ways1 that are appropriate to lesson objectives and responsive to their needs.
  - o Teacher adapts the depth, pace, and delivery mode of what is taught in a lesson to allow students to access the lesson at multiple levels of challenge.
  - o Teacher provides extra support, enrichment, or variation of work in order to meet the needs of each student, where necessary.
  - o Teacher strategically utilizes flexible instructional groups and varied instructional arrangements that are appropriate to the students and to the instructional purposes of the lesson.
  - o Students engage in learning experiences or performance tasks that allow for interest- or skill-based

- **I-4 – Engages students in work that develops higher-level thinking skills**

  - Teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies and questioning techniques to develop students' higher-level thinking skills.
  - Teacher provides students the support and guidance (e.g., scaffolding) needed to exercise higher-level thinking skills.
  - Teacher embeds higher-level thinking skills into the lesson objective so that mastery of the objective requires students to meaningfully employ higher-level thinking skills.
  - Students employ higher-level thinking skills to engage with lesson concepts, questions, and tasks and to demonstrate understanding of the lesson's objectives.

- **I-5 – Maximizes instructional time**

  - Teacher allocates time within a lesson by selecting high-impact instructional strategies that lead students to mastery of lesson objectives.
  - Teacher effectively designs, teaches, and implements consistent classroom routines and procedures that allow students to maximize time spent on learning activities.
  - Teacher directs classroom aides, paraprofessionals, and other classroom support personnel in a manner that effectively supports lesson objectives.
  - Students execute routines and procedures in an orderly and efficient manner with some direction from the teacher.
  - Students engage in productive learning activities from the start of class until the end of class and little time is lost on transitions and other non-instructional activities.

- **I-6 - Communicates content and concepts to students**

  - Teacher explains concepts and skills clearly and coherently.
  - Teacher conveys accurate content to students.
  - Teacher uses developmentally appropriate explanations and explains new terms and vocabulary.
  - Teacher emphasizes key points needed to master lesson objectives.
  - Teacher communicates content and skills using visuals or technology in situations where such methods facilitate student understanding of lesson objectives.

- **I-7 - Promotes high academic expectations for students**

  - Teacher communicates and reinforces the expectation that all students will meet annual learning goals and connects this achievement to students' long-term or personal goals.
  - Teacher encourages students to work hard towards mastering lesson objectives and to persist when faced with difficult material.

- o Teacher highlights examples of recent student work that meet high expectations.

- **I-8 – Students actively participating in lesson activities**

  - o Students demonstrate engagement during direct instruction by participating in and completing instructional tasks, volunteering responses to questions, following teacher directions, and asking appropriate questions.
  - o Students display active effort in learning activities during independent and group work.

- **I-9 – Sets and implements discipline management procedures**

  - o Teacher effectively implements district and campus discipline management procedures.
  - o Teacher consistently communicates high behavioral expectations with students, addresses non-compliance, and reinforces appropriate behavior, as needed.
  - o Teacher maintains lesson momentum because there is no inappropriate or off-task behavior, or because the teacher redirects it in a subtle and preventative manner.
  - o Teacher consistently follows-through with consequences that are logical, appropriate to the level of student behavior, and effective at changing student behavior, when necessary.
  - o Students demonstrate a clear understanding of behavioral expectations and rules through their actions

- **I-10 – Builds a positive and respectful classroom environment**

  - o Teacher demonstrates caring and respect for all students and creates a positive, energetic, and orderly climate and culture in the classroom.
  - o Teacher communicates and reinforces expectations for positive student behavior and interactions between students, including a respect for individual, cultural, and linguistic differences.
  - o Teacher arranges and organizes furniture, supplies, reference materials, and student work in a way that supports learning activities.
  - o Students demonstrate respect by actively listening and responding positively to each other and to the teacher.

Follow-up principal interviews were administered and transcribed. The face-to-

face interviews were conducted in a location that was convenient for the participant and

did not take more than one hour to complete. The same open-ended interview questions were administered to all participants. The questions administered are:

- What instructional practices, aside from the criteria on the current teacher appraisal system, do you perceive as having the greatest impact on student achievement on your campus?

- How do you plan professional development opportunities for your teachers to maximize their effectiveness in these areas?

- What changes have you seen in student achievement on your campus as a result of your efforts?

- With accountability increasing rapidly in the state, how do you plan on continuing to add value to all students on your campus?

Data Analysis

Survey and interview data collected was analyzed using qualitative descriptive statistics in the form of data and graphs. Responses from both instruments were described and trends were identified. Patterns and themes were identified in a way that addressed the research question. Using a semi-structured interview format, principals were encouraged to share authentic and relevant experiences. The descriptive analysis of data also included percentages in order to rank how principals perceived each individual instructional criterion as each one related to student learning via the Likert-Scale responses from the survey. An additional in-depth analysis of the data is provided in Chapter Four.

Limitations

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2010), there are several potential threats to the internal validity of any study, which may include, but are not limited to the following: subject characteristics, mortality, location, instrumentation, testing, history, maturation, subject attitude, regression, and implementation. Both fairly recent systems, the concept of value-added was introduced to the district in 2006 and the district appraisal tool was first implemented in the 2011-2012 school year.

One of the unique characteristics of this school district which may also be a limitation is that it is de-centralized, meaning that budget decisions, professional development decisions, staffing decisions, and other school improvement decisions are all made at the campus level, with input from stakeholders via site-based decision making committees that meet on a monthly basis. Where one school may decide to spend a substantial amount of money on technology, it is possible that another campus may decide to spend the same amount of money to hire a content-based interventionist. Both spending options may lead to increased student achievement but in different ways. Also, depending on the student population served on the campus, school budgets vary. For example, a Title I campus with a large population of English Language Learners may receive more funding from the state than a campus without those populations of students, which also greatly impacts budgetary decisions, leading to differentiated instructional decisions on campuses in the district.

Despite specific and leveled criteria set forth on the ETAT rubric, principals at various stages in their careers may interpret quality teacher instructional practices differently, impacting perceptions and teacher summative scores. At this time, ETAT is

currently used to appraise all teachers across the district, regardless of grade level or content area taught. A physical education teacher is being appraised using the same ETAT criteria as a pre-kindergarten bilingual teacher, which may skew how principals perceive this new appraisal tool as a means to develop all teachers in the district and identify key instructional practices.

Chapter 4
Results

The purpose of this this study was to identify what principals at highly effective campuses valued as the key instructional components in a teacher appraisal system and how these components related to student achievement. The replication of these instructional practices in other classrooms in schools and districts outside of Harrison Consolidated School District (HCSD) can have a huge impact on achievement levels for students in classrooms across the district and beyond.

By using the value-added model to identify effective schools in HCSD, we are looking at campuses that are able to accelerate students, regardless of any perceived learning barriers, which should be the goal of any educational institution. In utilizing the instructional criteria from the Effective Teacher Appraisal Tool (ETAT), a tool that previously has not been studied extensively due to its recent implementation, this study will serve as a catalyst for future educational instructionally-specific research that will help define clear instructional practices and needed support systems for administrators and teachers to accelerate student achievement in schools and classrooms far beyond HCSD.

This study aimed to address the following research question:
To what degree do principals in the top 25% of value-added pre-kindergarten through fifth grade elementary schools in a large urban school district perceive the criteria of the district's teacher appraisal system as each individual criterion contributes to student learning?

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis will be presented. Data was collected from principals identified as leading elementary schools in the top 25% of

value-added 3-year growth in Harrison Consolidated School District (HCSD), one of the largest school districts in the nation. Located in a sprawling urban metropolis in the southern United States, HCSD employs around 26,500 individuals and serves some 203,066 students. According the 2011-2012 demographic information (CSD Website, 2011), elementary school students make up the largest academic level served with 105,684 students. Fifty-two percent of HCSD schools are elementary campuses.

The study was conducted using qualitative data, collected by surveys and interviews, to explore a new teacher appraisal tool that has not been previously extensively studied and the perceived effects on student learning. The qualitative survey component allowed principals to identify which instructional criterion from the district's teacher appraisal system they perceive as contributing the most positively to student learning on their campuses. Participants were emailed a link to an online survey along with background information to help them understand the purpose of the study and their role as a voluntary participant. The survey contained an informed consent question, two participant demographic questions, three questions focused on principal experience and school's state rating, individual instructional criterion to rate, and an open-ended response question. The survey concluded with the participant giving permission to be contacted for a follow-up interview, if deemed necessary and beneficial for the study. The interview questions consisted of four open-ended response questions that focus on campus instructional practices, campus professional development support, and campus plans for the future. The interviews were conducted with participants on a voluntary basis in a location that was convenient for the participants. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, using Creswell's Sample Interview Protocol (2013) as a guide. All interview

participants completed an interview consent form prior to the interview taking place. The qualitative interview component allowed the researcher to delve deeper into the connection that principals perceive specified criterion as having an impact on student learning. Utilizing descriptive statistics, the data collected was desegregated in a variety of ways, including charts, tables, and graphs.

Results of Each Set of Statistics

The online survey was sent via email to 50 HCSD elementary school principals. Forty-one principals completed the survey for a return rate of 82%. Of the 10 question survey, participants were required to answer 6 of the 10 questions. The first question on the survey asked participants to give consent in order to participate in the study. All 41 participants or 100% of participants agreed and gave their consent to participate in the study. The second and third questions on the survey focused on participant demographic information, including gender and ethnicity identification. Table 4-1 illustrates the gender and ethnic diversity of principal survey participants.

Table 4-1 Principal Survey Participant Demographic Data

Total Number of Participants (%) n=number	Gender			Ethnicity					
	Female (%)	Male (%)	Prefer not to Answer (%)	Asian/Pacific Islander (%)	African American (%)	Caucasian (%)	Hispanic (%)	Native American (%)	Prefer not to Answer (%)
100 n=41	56.1 n=23	39.0 n=16	4.9 n=2	2.4 n=1	19.5 n=8	19.5 n=8	53.7 n=22	0.0 n=0	4.9 n=2

Survey questions four and five focused on the experience of principal participants. It was important to capture this information as principals at different levels of experience

may interpret the instructional criteria at varying levels on the teacher appraisal tool,

based on a multitude of experiences. As clearly desegregated in Table 4-2, the total years

of experience as a principal and the years of experience as a principal at his or her current

campus varied; however, in both cases, the majority of participants had less than 5 years

of experience as a principal.

*Table 4-2 Principal Survey Participant Years of Experience*

Total Number of Participants (%)	Total Years of Experience as a Principal				Years of Experience as a Principal at Current Campus			
n=number	less than 5 years (%)	5-10 years (%)	11-15 years (%)	more than 15 years (%)	less than 5 years (%)	5-10 years (%)	11-15 years (%)	more than 15 years (%)
100 n=41	48.8 n=20	26.8 n=11	14.6 n=6	9.8 n=4	53.7 n=22	31.7 n=13	9.8 n=4	4.9 n=2

Survey questions number six asked participants to identify their current campus

Texas Education Agency (TEA) Rating (based on the 2011 TEA Rating). The 2011 TEA

Rating was used, because it represents the most current value-added growth data and

because it is also the last year prior to an updated state assessment system.

The state accountability system assigns ratings to every campus and district in the

Texas public education system each year. In most cases, the system assigns one of

four rating labels —ranging from lowest to highest—Academically Unacceptable,

Academically Acceptable, Recognized, and Exemplary. To determine a rating

label, the system evaluates indicators of performance, including assessment

results on the state standardized assessment instruments as well as longitudinal

completion rates and annual dropout rates. (Texas Education Agency, 2011)

While the principal participants selected currently lead an elementary campus within the top 25% of value-added 3-year average growth, not all of the campuses had a 2011 state rating that was Recognized or Exemplary. As Figure 4-1 illustrates, 11, or 27%, of the campuses were rated Exemplary, 22, or 54%, of the campuses were rated Recognized, 7, or 17%, of the campuses were rated Acceptable, while 1 campus, or 2 % of the surveyed campuses, was rated Unacceptable. While the elementary campus that was rated as Unacceptable by state accountability standards is an anomaly, it is important to note that it was still part of the participant group, due to the substantial amount of value that was added to students over a 3-year period, determining its placement in the top 25% of elementary schools in HCSD for value-added.

Figure 4-1 2011 Texas Education Agency (TEA) Campus Rating of Principal Survey Participants
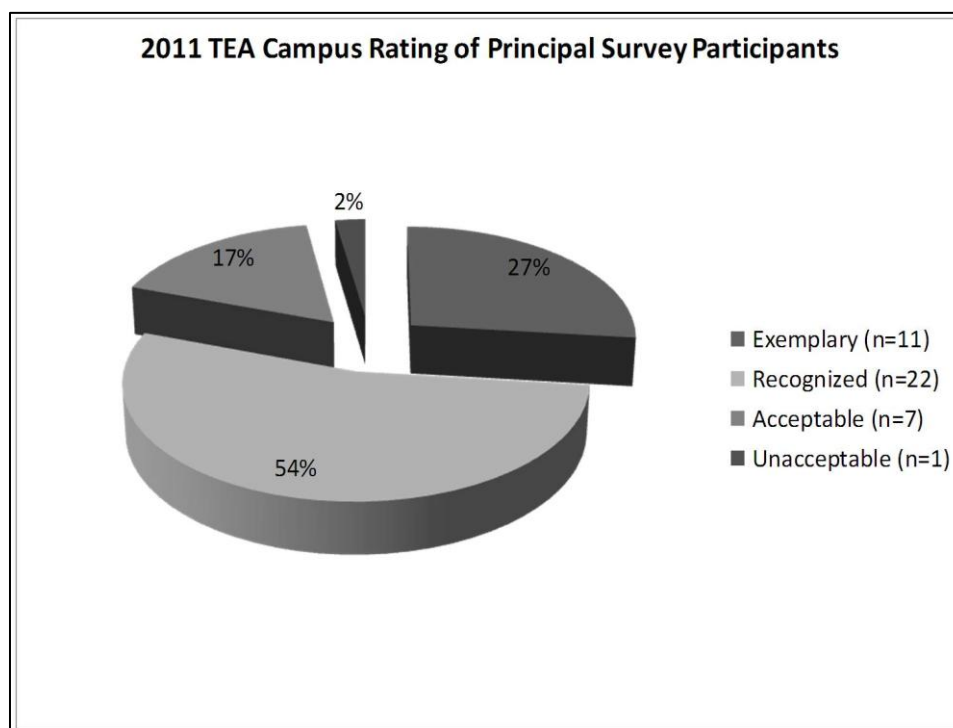
In having participating principals rate the instructional criteria on the HCSD teacher appraisal system as they perceive it to impact student achievement on their current campus, data collected from survey question seven allowed for a direct connection from principal perception to student achievement, which assisted in answering the research question at the forefront of this study. Although each individual instructional criterion is independent from the others, each is an instructional practice that on some level may be a contributor to student learning on the pre-determined elementary school campuses.

Participating principals rated the ETAT instructional criteria as to how they perceived each individual criterion to impact student learning on their specific campus, using a seven-point Likert Scale. The scale was as follows: 1-Extremely Likely to Impact Student Achievement, 2-Quite Likely to Impact Student Achievement, 3-Slightly Likely to Impact Student Achievement, 4-Neither Likely or Unlikely to Impact Student Achievement, 5-Slightly Unlikely to Impact Student Achievement, 6-Quite Unlikely to Impact Student Achievement, or 7-Extremely Unlikely to Impact Student Achievement.

Due to the numerical coding of this survey instrument, a lower mean score indicates a higher principal perception of an individual criterion's positive impact on student achievement. It is clear from the data desegregated in Table 4-3 and Table 4-4 that the majority of participating principals perceived that all of the instructional criteria on the ETAT were extremely likely to impact student achievement, quite likely to impact student achievement, or slightly likely to impact student achievement. Two principals, or 4.8% of the 41 participants, perceived that all of the instructional criteria were extremely unlikely to impact student achievement. Because these two outlier respondents did not

give consent for a follow-up interview, it is not possible to gain a better understanding of their responses. It is possible that these two respondents may have not understood the question or the Likert Scale ranking system presented. It may also be possible that, due to their discontent with the new appraisal system, they responded in such a way.

Table 4-3 HCSD Appraisal System Instructional Criteria: Principal Survey Participant Perceptions Overall

Table 4-3 n=41	1-Extremely Likely to Impact Student Achieve-ment	2-Quite Likely to Impact Student Achieve-ment	3-Slightly Likely to Impact Student Achieve-ment	4-Neither Likely or Unlikely to Impact Student Achieve-ment	5-Slightly Unlikely to Impact Student Achieve-ment	6-Quite Unlikely to Impact Student Achieve-ment	7-Extremely Unlikely to Impact Student Achieve-ment	Rating Average
Develops student learning goals	46.3% (19)	22.0% (9)	17.1% (7)	7.3% (3)	0.0% (0)	2.4% (1)	4.9% (2)	2.20
Collects, tracks, and uses student data to drive instruction	61.0% (25)	24.4% (10)	7.3% (3)	2.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.9% (2)	1.76
Designs effective lesson plans, units, and assessments	57.5% (23)	32.5% (13)	5.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	5.0% (2)	1.73
Facilitates organized, student-centered, objective-driven lessons	68.3% (28)	22.0% (9)	2.4% (1)	2.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.9% (2)	1.63
Checks for student understanding and responds to student misunderstanding	61.0% (25)	29.3% (12)	4.9% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.9% (2)	1.68
Differentiates instruction for student needs by employing a variety of instructional strategies	61.0% (25)	24.4% (10)	7.3% (3)	2.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.9% (2)	1.76

Table 4-4 HCSD Appraisal System Instructional Criteria: Principal Survey Participant

Perceptions Overall (Continued)

Table 4-4 n=41	1-Extreme ly Likely to Impact Student Achieve -ment	2-Quite Likely to Impact Student Achieve -ment	3-Slightly Likely to Impact Student Achieve -ment	4-Neither Likely or Unlikely to Impact Student Achieve -ment	5-Slightly Unlikely to Impact Student Achieve -ment	6-Quite Unlikely to Impact Student Achieve -ment	7-Extreme ly Unlikely to Impact Student Achieve -ment	Rating Average
Engages students in work that develops higher-level thinking skills	51.2% (21)	31.7% (13)	9.8% (4)	2.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.9% (2)	1.88
Maximizes instructional time	68.3% (28)	19.5% (8)	4.9% (2)	2.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.9% (2)	1.66
Communicates content and concepts to students	61.0% (25)	26.8% (11)	7.3% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.9% (2)	1.71
Promotes high academic expectations for students	51.2% (21)	24.4% (10)	14.6% (6)	4.9% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.9% (2)	1.98
Students actively participating in lesson activities	53.7% (22)	31.7% (13)	7.3% (3)	2.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.9% (2)	1.83
Sets and implements discipline management procedures	46.3% (19)	36.6% (15)	12.2% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.9% (2)	1.90
Builds a positive and respectful classroom environment	48.8% (20)	29.3% (12)	17.1% (7)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.9% (2)	1.93

There was a .57 rating average (mean) difference between the criterion that overall was perceived to have to most important impact on student achievement, "facilitates organized, student-centered, objective-driven lessons" (1.63), and the criterion that was perceived to have the least important impact on student achievement, "develops student learning goals" (2.2) which would be considered educationally important. Graph 4-1 displays all ETAT instructional criteria rank ordered by principal perception. Except for a rating average difference of .22 between the 12th ranked criterion, "promotes high expectations for students" with a rating average of 1.98, and the 13th and lowest ranked criterion, "develops student learning goals" with a rating average of 2.2, the difference

between the other individual criterion rating average means when ranked ordered, is between .00 and .07. Neither of these outcomes is considered to be educationally important.

> An arbitrary but commonly used interpretation of effect size by Cohen (1988), a standardized mean effect size of 0 means no change, negative effect sizes mean a negative change, with .2 a small change, .5 a moderate change, and .8 a large charge. Wolf (1986), on the other hand, suggests that .25 is educationally significant and .50 is clinically significant. (Neill, 2006)

In summation, all of the instructional criteria are perceived to contribute to student learning; however, the impact of each on different campuses varies.

Graph 4-1 HCSD Appraisal System Instructional Criteria: Principal Survey Participant

Perceptions Rank Ordered
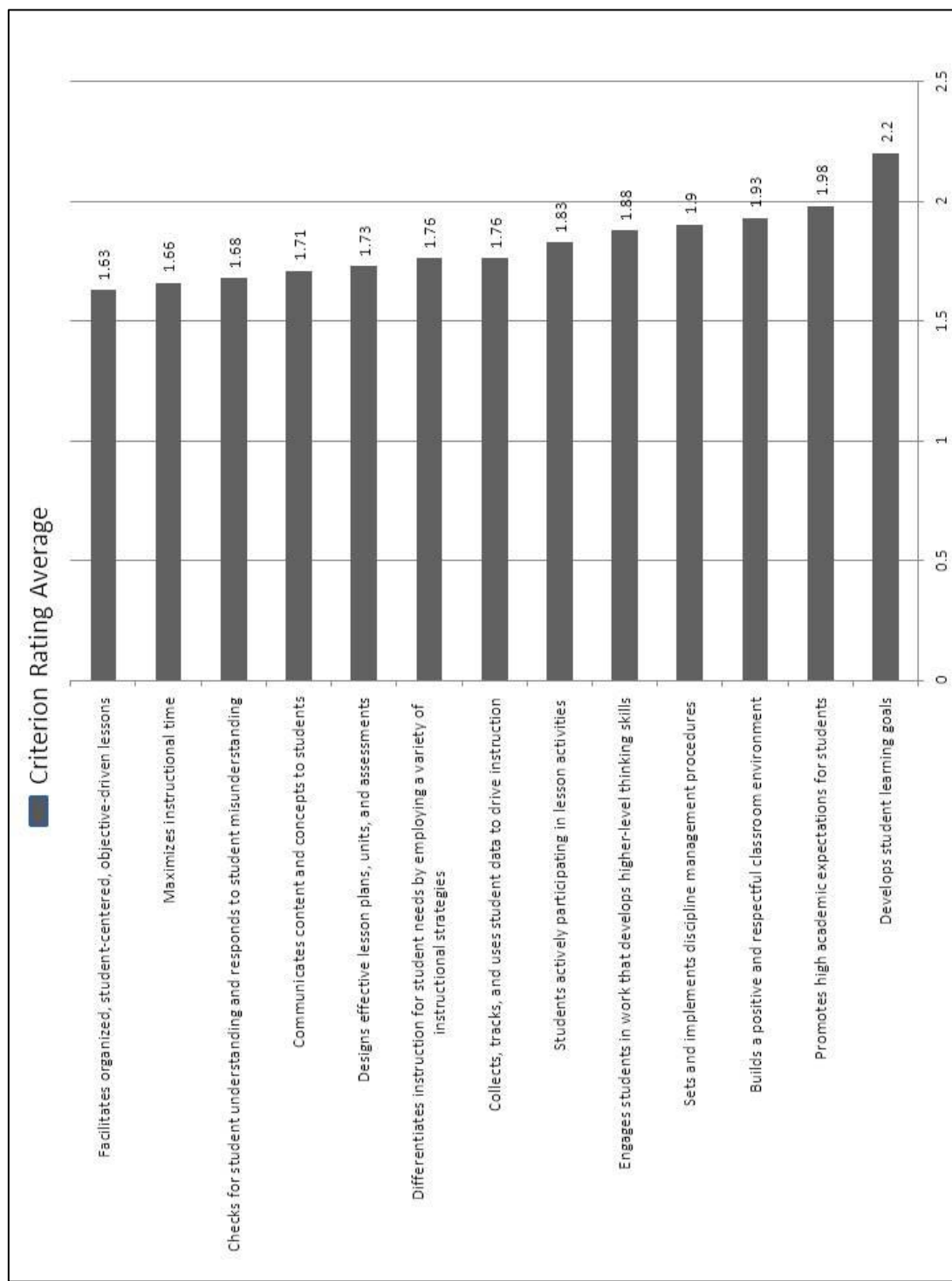
Of all 13 criteria, the following instructional criteria were perceived as being extremely likely to impact student achievement by over half, or at least 21, of the survey participants:

- Collects, tracks, and uses student data to drive instruction – 61% of participants (25 individuals);

- Designs effective lesson plans, units, and assessments – 57.5% (23);

- Facilitates organized, student-centered, objective-driven lessons – 68.3% (28);

- Checks for student understanding and responds to misunderstanding – 61.0% (25);

- Differentiates instruction for student needs by employing a variety of instructional strategies – 61.0% (25);

- Engages students in work that develops higher-level thinking skills – 51.2% (21);

- Maximizes instructional time - 68.3% (28);

- Communicates content and concepts to students – 61.0% (25);

- Promotes high academic expectations for students – 51.2% (21);

- Students actively participating in lesson activities – 53.7% (22).

In order to delve deeper into additional instructional practices happening at the high-performing campuses surveyed, question eight was open-ended, asking participants to share additional components, not included in the ETAT instructional criteria, that they believed also impacted achievement on their individual campuses. Responses are as follows and copied directly from survey responses (Survey Responses, 2013):

- *Teacher professional development*

- *Safe environment*

- *Principal leadership and support*

- *Teacher belief systems*

- *All are covered*

- *Teacher knowledge of content*

- *Parent conferencing concerning progress of students, professional development for teachers, and application of teacher learning*

- *Teacher enthusiasm for teaching the content, collaboration with peers in order to determine what strategies are working and which are not, the development of assessments through backward design (again, with peers/PLCs – professional learning communities)*

- *School culture and climate.*

- *Parent involvement*

- *Teacher capacity to improve and implement effective strategies.*

- *Accountablity (sic) -students, parents, and teachers*

- *Relationships that are fostered between students and teachers*

- *Level of education of parents*

- *A teacher who can think on their feet and adapt in the middle of a lesson is crucial*

- *None*

- *You listed them all above*

- *Hiring highly effective teachers*

- *Teacher attitude and willingness to implement change, teacher's content strength, and Teacher experience*

- *Teachers willingness to go above and beyond*

- *Investment*

- *Understanding poverty plays an important role on my campus. Teachers that have a deep understanding of how poverty affects instruction, search for ways to overcome obstacles that may limit learning opportunities.*

- *N/A*

- *Exceptional work ethics*

- *Student mobility*

- *School-wide expectations must be clear. Teachers need to know the school wide goals for improvement and incorporate them in their daily activities.*

- *Collaboration, visiting other teacher's classrooms, coaching and mentoring, looking at best practices, engagement of students on practice*

- *Relationship building*

- *The teacher's willingness to share effective strategies with other teachers.*

- *Teacher contnet (sic) knowledge is an important component in student achievement*

- *Teachers commitment to every students mastering the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills)*

- *Strong teacher work ethic*

- *N/A*

- *Parental involvement and ability to support student at home. Structure and discipline at home.*

- *Parent-teacher communication(sic)*

- *Having a great teacher who enjoys teaching and learning.*

- *Family income*

- *Teachers interaction with students*

- *Parent communication, colleague collaboration*

- *Teacher university preparation, the right mentor, "real time" professional development*

Five respondents, or 12%, whose answers are captured above, responded to question eight indicating that no other components were applicable or they responded that their answer had already been included within the 13 instructional criteria previously mentioned, which reiterates that the ETAT instructional rubric encompasses several instructional criteria that are perceived to impact student achievement. Out of 41 responses to question eight, 24 involved a teacher action as an additional component to impact student achievement on the campus. Because of the variety and multitude of additional answers to question eight, responses were analyzed and response categories were developed using a coding method. Table 4-5 contains the coded responses to survey question eight.

Table 4-5 Additional Components Believed by Principal Survey Participants to Impact

Student Achievement

What other components (not listed above) do you believe impact student achievement on your campus?			
Teachers	**Parents**	**Campus Leaders**	**Campus Culture**
Belief systems	Education level	Hiring effective teachers	Safe environment
Collaboration with colleagues	Income	Campus-wide expectations	Accountability
Content knowledge	Communication with teachers	Teacher coaching and mentoring	Staff work ethic
Relationships with students	Student mobility		
Capacity to improve	Accountability		
Accountability			
Professional development			
Implementation of effective strategies			
Willingness to implement change			
University preparation			

Survey question nine asked participants if they wanted to participate in a follow-up interview. Question 10 captured the respondents contact information. Fourteen respondents stated that they wanted to participate in a follow-up interview; however, when contacted, only eight, or 19.5%, of all respondents were responsive in a timely manner to be included in the interview portion of the study. Table 4-6 illustrates the gender and ethnic diversity of principal survey participants.

Table 4-6 Principal Interview Participant Demographic Data

Total Number of Participants (%) n=number	Gender		Ethnicity				
	Female (%)	Male (%)	Asian/Pacific Islander (%)	African American (%)	Caucasian (%)	Hispanic (%)	Native American (%)
100 n=8	62.5 n=5	37.5 n=3	0 n=0	0 n=0	25 n=2	75 n=6	0.0 n=0

Table 4-7 reveals the interview participants total years of experience as a principal and the years of experience as a principal at his or her current campus. Varying from survey respondents, half of the interview participants had five or more years of experience as a principal. In addition, half of the interview participants had at least five to ten years of experience as the principal of his or her current campus.

Table 4-7 Principal Interview Participant Years of Experience

Total Number of Participants (%) n=number	Total Years of Experience as a Principal				Years of Experience as a Principal at Current Campus			
	less than 5 years (%)	5-10 years (%)	11-15 years (%)	more than 15 years (%)	less than 5 years (%)	5-10 years (%)	11-15 years (%)	more than 15 years (%)
100 n=8	37.5 n=3	37.5 n=3	12.5 n=1	12.5 n=1	37.5 n=3	50 n=4	0 n=0	12.5 n=1

All of the campuses led by interview participants would be considered high performing based on their 2011 TEA accountability rating. As Figure 4-2 indicates, all eight campuses were rated either Exemplary or Recognized for their performance on state assessments in the 2010-2011 school year. The homogenous sampling of interview respondents (all are leaders of campuses with high value-added data and high-performing

based on state assessment results) can be considered a limitation to the study as most

responses reveal positive viewpoints.

Figure 4-2 2011 Texas Education Agency (TEA) Campus Rating of Principal Interview
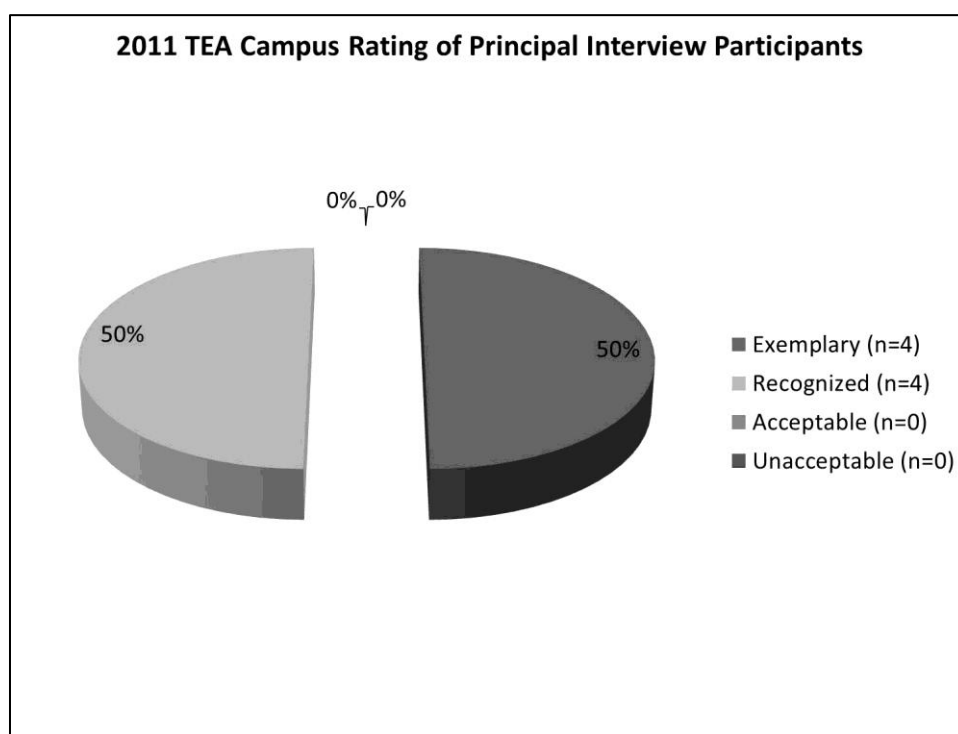
Participants

Open-ended responses on the survey provided insight and specific examples of

how principals perceive student achievement is enhanced by other criteria not included in

the district's teacher appraisal instrument. The interview questions allowed for insight

into how principals of these high performing campuses currently support and will

continue supporting their teachers in continuing adding value to their students, despite the

annually increasing federal, state, and district accountability standards. The interview

questions consisted of four open-ended response questions that focused on campus

instructional practices, campus professional development support, and campus plans for

the future. The eight interviews were conducted with participants on a voluntary basis in

a location that was convenient for the participants during the month of February 2013.

All interview participants were asked the same four questions. Each respondent was

given a participant code in order to maintain confidentially for the purpose of the study.

The interview questions for principals were:

1. What instructional practices, aside from the criteria on the current teacher

    appraisal system, do you perceive as having the greatest impact on student

    achievement on your campus?

2. How do you plan professional development opportunities for your teachers to

    maximize their effectiveness in these areas?

3. What changes have you seen in student achievement on your campus as a result of

    your efforts?

4. With accountability increasing rapidly in the state, how do you plan on continuing

    to add value to all students on your campus?

The purpose of interview question one, "*What instructional practices, aside from*

the criteria on the current teacher appraisal system, do you perceive as having the

greatest impact on student achievement on your campus?", was an effort to capture

additional best instructional practices, aside from the criteria on the ETAT, that take

place on campuses that are successful in accelerating student progress and impacting

student achievement. Although most respondents mentioned that the ETAT does a solid

job of addressing most instructional criteria, their answers allowed for deeper exploration

into best practices on their specific campuses. While the question specifically asked for "instructional practices aside from the current criteria," their replies linked closely to the already established instructional criteria, "Communicates content and concepts to students" and "Promotes high academic expectations for students." While the latter expectation was not considered one of the strongest contributors, it is important to note that setting high expectations may be manifested in a variety of additional practices that principals discussed below. Overall, the responses focused on digging deeper into the set curriculum and cultivating a culture of high expectations that starts with the campus administration holding teachers to high expectations and teachers doing the same for students.

> P00 stated: "What I think has the most impact on student achievement on my campus is my stating that I expect all kids to pass all the tests given. It's an instructional practice for a teacher to let her students know that her expectations are high, right? I think it's an instructional practice when I do it too" (P00, personal communication, February 15, 2013).

> P01 stated: " I think that they cover just about every instructional practice that is research based and proven to impact student achievement on campuses; however, one instructional practice that I don't think that is really addressed in the current appraisal system is the work some teachers do in order to find strategies and/or activities that teach learning objectives to the extent to which they are written… and making sure that the resources and strategies they use address the learning objective or the TEKS fully" (P01, personal communication, February 11, 2013).

P02 stated: "… the preparation that teachers do besides what's required in doing that extra, finding extra resources, finding extra training or in just having that commitment to make sure that students are successful. I know it kind of goes into part of the criteria that (HCSD) does have at this time and just having that ability to motivate kids and make that relationship, even having teachers that are very competent and then are able to have that relationship with that student to make sure that to get them to do whatever that they need them to do" (P02, personal communication, February 15, 2013).

P03 stated: " The instructional practices that I see that are really making the most difference, aside from what the district has already designated as instructional practices that will help student achievement, is teachers being able to create the culture of high expectations and maintaining that. That makes students invested in their learning" (P03, personal communication, February 15, 2013).

P05 stated: "… Another part of it, although it might be tied to the appraisal system, but it emphasizes, is the act of timing that has to take place with going deep into the curriculum, really diving into the student expectation – what students are expected to do and planning for that piece – not so much being compliant with just having lesson plans, because anybody can write lesson plans, but that doesn't mean anything until it's delivered" (P05, personal communication, February 16, 2013).

P06 stated: "We've all read studies where the more money your family makes, the better their students do on tests, perhaps like the SAT. That's a huge, a huge piece. As a principal we don't really have control over that, but what we do have

control over is, I think, is on the (ETAT) – we do have control over our teachers

and the kind of instruction that we provide for students, regardless of their

economic background" (P06, personal communication, February 16, 2013).

Interview question two, "*How do you plan professional development*

opportunities for your teachers to maximize their effectiveness in these areas?", targeted

specific professional development practices that support developing teachers and staff

members in order to continue to be successful in meeting the needs of students on their

campuses. While continuing to strengthen the focus on the teacher's lesson delivery of

specific learning objectives or "unpacking the standards" as it was referred to by several

principal, addressing specific campus needs and individual teacher development needs

was at the forefront of most of the responses to question two. In addition, it was

abundantly clear that principals value the human capital already on their campuses as

these are the individuals who are the experts in their classrooms and should be valued and

utilized in the role of delivering professional to their colleagues. Spending time observing

other successful campuses and replicating effective practices as part of professional

development opportunities was also an answer trend. While professional development is

specifically addressed in the Professional Expectations component of the ETAT rubric

which is not a focus of this study, the practices summarized by principal respondents link

to the following instructional criteria as principals address campus instructional deficits

with professional development: "Facilitates organized, student-centered, objective-driven

lessons" and "Collects, tracks, and uses student data to drive instruction."

P01 stated: "I asked teachers to pick either TEKS that are coming up that they

know will be a challenge, or one they have already covered, but know they will be

going back to repeatedly as our data shows that our kids are having a hard time with it, for example, inferencing. This has really helped teacher discussion move away from logistics or management issues to more instructional issues" (P01, personal communication, February 11, 2013).

P02 stated: "Just making sure teachers are able to unpack the standards and really teach to that level that is required now for students to perform at and that's been a learning process for I think for some of our teachers and even for me as well to try to maximize their effectiveness and the overall achievement in particular" (P02, personal communication, February 15, 2013).

P03 stated: "We also look at each teacher specifically and so if we see some teacher that is really good at investing the students or doing a fantastic job in a particular area, we have them conduct professional development for our staff as a whole. We also do it by taking videos and showing those videos on our website and having teachers view those videos and give feedback" (P03, personal communication, February 15, 2013.

P04 stated: "We also do a lot of in-home trainings because we do have a lot of expertise on campus. So for instance, on Mondays we do study groups and all our reading teachers get together from all grade levels, not only upper grade teachers that are involved in testing but all levels so that we all learn from each other… we also did some school visits which we thought were very powerful. We had the opportunity to visit ------ which is a school that doesn't really match our demographics; however, they're doing an extraordinary job with differentiation of instruction so we went and observed and like 75% of our campus actually went

there and observed and then we came back and we adapted a lot of the things we are doing, of course, with a tweak to make sure that it met the needs of our teachers but we loved the model where we actually go and see other teachers doing the work so that we can learn and ask questions and learn from them" (P04, personal communication, February 15, 2013).

P06 stated: "I really like the idea of teachers providing professional development to other teachers. I think it strengthens our teacher leaders, it validates their hard work, and it also provides them with leadership opportunities and then they can mentor our teachers on campus. In concern to the classroom, I feel like they have a better, I think that the teachers that are sitting in on that development are going to be more likely to accept what they have to say or follow what they have to say, because they are teachers themselves" (P06, personal communication, February 16, 2013).

P07 stated: "One of the things that I'm a very strong advocate in is using my own people as resources, because everybody brings to the table different resources that affect our strengths. Bringing somebody in from the outside is not necessarily your best means. When we looked at research for training, we, you really need somebody who is going to come it to work side by side with somebody and using somebody on campus that has that expertise that can work with others, and just really capitalize on other peoples strengths based upon your needs assessment" (P07, personal communication, February 17, 2013).

Because respondents are currently leading high-performing campuses as measured by 2011 3-year value-added growth data, it may be generalized that the actions

by the leaders over the previous years has aided in this accelerated achievement.

Interview question three, "*What changes have you seen in student achievement on your campus as a result of your efforts*?", was asked in an effort to memorialize solid examples of actual change that took place due to a focus on harvesting best practices and a focused approach to professional development to support those practices. This question generated a variety of responses from the principals; however, the general theme from these responses was a feeling of uncertainty. This feeling of uncertainty has made teacher collaboration stronger on most campuses as campus teams work together to implement change in hopes to continue to accelerate students. In doing this, school teams are looking at individual student needs and interventions to support the growth of every student, despite their level. The following instructional criteria have the potential of strengthening as teachers and principals work together to address the needs of specific students: "Designs effective lesson plans, units, and assessments" and "Differentiates instruction for student needs by employing a variety of instructional strategies."

> P01 stated: "I haven't seen changes in student achievement yet as this is a new protocol I've implemented, however I have seen more open ended discussions in the classrooms, and more teachers working together whereas before many worked in isolation" (P01, personal communication, February 11, 2013).
>
> P03 stated: "So, when we're looking at how have we changed our campus around, our teachings, our professional development – it's we're more target-specific, student-specific as opposed to program specific" (P03, personal communication, February 15, 2013).

P04 stated: "Our teachers started to collaborate with each other so we saw increases in learning, we saw increases in students reading on grade level which has been one of our concerns being a large ELL population campus. So we've seen a lot of student progress and not only that but actually teachers working together to make sure that they support each other and that they learn from each other to make sure that the kids are learning and they're succeeding and improving their teaching or their craft" (P04, personal communication, February 15, 2013).

P06 stated: "So I think with teachers being leaders on campus, providing professional development, that starts the conversation and I think that will help increase student achievement. We haven't really seen what our gains are going to be just yet, so we have to increase with teachers communicating with one another, teachers communicating with parents" (P06, personal communication, February 16, 2013).

A change in the state accountability standards, starting in the spring of 2012 and increasing every year after, means that the way that student achievement is measured in HCSD elementary schools will also change. Schools that have been historically high performing will be faced with the challenge of maintaining that excellence, while continuing to add value to all students, in order to meet and exceed revised state standards. Interview question four asked interview participants, "*With accountability increasing rapidly in the state, how do you plan on continuing to add value to all students on your campus?*" The theme of participant responses focused on ensuring that all students on their campuses continued to receive individualized and rigorous daily

instruction, including in the lower grades where the foundation of learning is set. By focusing on "Engages students in work that develops higher-level thinking skills," principals are preparing their campuses to continue adding value to all students by providing students with a rigorous instructional program, beginning in the early grades. The role that the principal plays in supporting teachers was also mentioned – being a role model for teachers, ensuring transparency in an effort to get better, reaching out to other leaders for support, and holding all staff members accountable for student results.

P00 stated: "I want to train the teachers to be more conscious of their students' scores and be more strategic and data-driven in addressing students' weaknesses. I have to be a better role model for them and I think I will work on that" (P00, personal communication, February 15, 2013).

P01 stated: "The consistent use of our data to continually spiral back to students that are not mastering objectives will play a large part in our efforts" (P01, personal communication, February 13, 2013).

P02 stated: "We have to close the gaps early on and identify those kids if there is a learning issue or if it's just an instructional issue so that's where we have to close the gap early on in the lower grades" (P02, professional communication, February 15, 2013).

P03 stated: "So using our data effectively, having tracking systems, and making sure that we are adding value to the students… although we have been doing it for years now, we always look at how can we make it better and do it better and how can we be more effective and strategic in how we are looking at data and making

sure that all our students have growth" (P03, personal communication, February 15, 2013).

P04 stated: "We're having to learn how to ask better questions, we're having to understand the rigor and relevance model, we're having to actually do meetings and participate in our PLC's meetings so that we can address those needs and we can support the teachers and make sure that they're asking the right questions. Also meeting during our vertical meetings so that the lower grades understand those supporting standards and how important it is that they teach them and to make sure those students master so that they can succeed when they finally come up to 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade and they take those tests. It's not only one thing, it's a school effort" (P04, personal communication, February 15, 2013).

P05 stated: "I think with it rising so quickly, one of the things that the principals and all administrators need to keep on the forefront is relationships with their teachers, because we can't do it alone. That relationship piece with their teachers is very strong, because you've got to get them on board. You have to get them to be in accord with you. As far as raising students achievement and how to get there, you have to give them the tools to get there, you have to be very transparent with them, good or bad news, and walk with them through their process because we're all held to standards, we're all held to raise student achievement but it's a team effort and that's my approach to it here on campus. I hope it's working" (P05, personal communication, February 15, 2013).

P06 stated: "I believe we just continue to have conversations with other campuses, so like for example, "What is your campus doing?" You know, I was at

------ on Monday – What are they doing to having conversations with other campuses to see what they're doing, So we all kind of have our own professional development among the school leaders. And really just research, you know, learning about what other schools are doing and then implementing it, trial and error. So, let's try this intervention, see how it goes and then get feedback from teachers, get feedback from students not only through their class course but also just asking them…" (P06, personal communication, February 16, 2013). P07 stated: "They need more rigor, but you know, working within your school and you really focusing on growth and making sure that kids grow more than a year for that time that they're in that seat is what is really going to maximize the teachers potential as well as decreases of the achievement gap. … the leader within that education is very important and it's very important to focus on that growth piece" (P07, personal communication, February 17, 2013).

Taking into account the key findings based on rank ordering the ETAT criteria and open-ended responses from survey responses and interviews, it was determined that the strongest ETAT instructional criteria contributors to student achievement were:

- Facilitates organized, student-centered, objective-driven lessons – 1.63 (rating average);

- Maximizes instructional time – 1.66;

- Checks for student understanding and responds to student misunderstanding – 1.68;

- Communicates content and concepts to students – 1.71;

- Designs effective lesson plans, units, and assessments – 1.73;

- Differentiates instruction for student needs by employing a variety of instructional strategies – 1.76;

- Collects, tracks, and uses student data to drive instruction – 1.76;

- Students actively participating in lesson activities – 1.83;

- Engages students in work that develops higher-level thinking skills – 1.88.

While it was evident that all criteria supported student achievement, these nine were the strongest contributors. There was a rating average difference of .25 between the highest rated, "facilitates organized, student-centered, objective-driven lessons" and the lowest rated within this group, "Engages students in work that develops higher-level thinking skills," indicating a clear demarcation between these strongest contributors and the rest of the criteria. Any criteria beyond this .25 range would be considered as having an educationally important difference from the first criterion, excluding them from the strongest instructional criteria grouping.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the ETAT Instructional Practice rubric consists of three planning criteria and ten instruction criteria. It is important to note that of the nine strongest instructional criteria identified from the data collection, two of those were specific to planning: "Designs effective lesson plans, units, and assessments" and "Collects, tracks, and uses student data to drive instruction". From the interview data collected, it was determined that in order for teachers to reach enhanced levels of instruction, they must work collectively to plan for quality instruction.

Description of Results in Terms of the Population Sample

Chapter Four consisted of all of the survey data and interview data collected for the purpose of this study. The purpose of this study was to identify what principals at a

highly effective campuses valued as the key instructional components in a teacher appraisal system and how these components related to student achievement.

Given the aforementioned purpose, this study addressed the following research question:

To what degree do principals in the top 25% of value-added pre-kindergarten through fifth grade elementary schools in a large urban school district perceive the criteria of the district's teacher appraisal system as each individual criterion contributes to student learning?

The online survey was sent via email to 50 HCSD elementary school principals who are currently leading HCSD elementary schools in the top 25% of value-added 3-year average growth in the 2010-2011 school year. Forty-one principals completed the survey for a return rate of 82%. The survey data collected indicated that 39 of the 41 principal participants perceived all 13 ETAT instructional criteria were extremely likely to impact student achievement, quite likely to impact student achievement, or slightly likely to impact student achievement. "Facilitates organized, student-centered, objective-driven lessons" was rated as having the highest overall perceived impact on student achievement. In summation, all of the instructional criteria are perceived to contribute to student learning; however there were nine that were identified as being the strongest contributors.

While the criteria on the ETAT encompasses several instructional areas that principals clearly perceive as impacting student achievement, the ETAT serves as a springboard into additional practices district wide that are supporting student achievement. The survey also prompted participants to share additional components, not

included in the ETAT instructional criteria, that they believed also impacted achievement on their individual campuses. When coded, 24 of these responses involved a direct action from the teacher in the classroom. Other repeated responses included direct parent and campus leader actions, in addition to a focus on the culture of the campus.

Follow-up surveys with eight principals produced the following categories, all which were linked to ETAT instructional criteria:

- In order for students to reach accelerated levels of success, teachers must delve deeply into the curriculum, creating objective-based learning opportunities for students. Campus administrators must cultivate a culture of high expectations that includes all staff members, teachers, and students.

- Principals value the human capital on their campuses as a key component of professional development leadership. That capital should be utilized accordingly in an effort to create and replicate best practices to impact student learning.

- Teacher collaboration has been strengthened in an effort to implement change on campuses. School teams have shifted the focus to using data to meet the needs of individual students.

- If campuses want to continue to add value to students, it is imperative that the foundation of rigorous and individualized instruction be set in the lower grades. Campus leaders must hold all staff members accountable, support teachers as they work to meet the needs of all students, and be transparent in their approach.

In-depth interview responses were also found in Chapter Four. While the survey and interview data addressed the research question, several implications sprung from the open-ended response survey items and the open-ended response interview questions. While the survey data was supportive of the role of the teacher in accelerating and maintaining student achievement, the interview component linked campus leader actions as a direct influencer on teacher actions. Additional actions that were identified from the open-ended portion of the survey and interviews were desegregated. These were clearly linked to the strongest ETAT contributors identified from this study. A discussion of these implications will be included in Chapter Five.

Chapter 5
Conclusions

Overview of Study

The purpose of this study was to identify what principals at highly effective campuses valued as the key instructional components in a teacher appraisal system and how these components related to student achievement. Every year, principals are charged with appraising teachers on their campuses using a variety of different measures. "When used appropriately, teacher evaluations should identify and measure the instructional strategies, professional behaviors, and delivery of content knowledge that affect student learning" (Danielson and McGreal, 2000; Shinkfield & Stufflebeamm 1995). It is now clear to what degree principals not only value the individual instructional criterion set forth by the new teacher appraisal in HCSD (Harrison Consolidated School District), but what other instructional criteria principals of these high performing campuses value as having an additional impact on student achievement on their campuses.

Given the purpose aforementioned, this study addressed the following research question:

To what degree do principals in the top 25% of value-added pre-kindergarten through fifth grade elementary schools in a large urban school district perceive the criteria of the district's teacher appraisal system as each individual criterion contributes to student learning?

Discussion of Results

An online survey was sent via email to 50 HCSD (Harrison Consolidated School District) elementary school principals who currently lead HCSD elementary schools in the top 25% of value-added 3-year average growth in the 2010-2011 school year. Forty-

one principals completed the survey for a return rate of 82%. The survey data collected

indicated that 39 of the 41 principal participants perceived all 13 Effective Teacher

Appraisal Tool (ETAT) instructional criteria were extremely likely to impact student

achievement, quite likely to impact student achievement, or slightly likely to impact

student achievement. "Facilitates organized, student-centered, objective-driven lessons"

was rated as having the highest overall perceived impact on student achievement. The

difference between the other individual criterion rating average means, when ranked

ordered, is between .00 and .07, which is not considered educationally important. In

summation, all of the instructional criteria are perceived to contribute to student learning;

however there were nine that were identified as being the strongest contributors to

student achievement based on their rank order and data collected from surveys and

interviews. Of the nine criteria identified as being the strongest contributors, two of those

were specific to instructional planning.

While the criteria on the ETAT encompasses several instructional areas that

principals clearly perceive as impacting student achievement, the ETAT serves as a

springboard into additional practices district wide that are supporting student

achievement. The survey also prompted participants to share additional components, not

included in the ETAT instructional criteria, that they believed also impacted achievement

on their individual campuses. When coded, 24 of these responses involved a direct action

from the teacher in the classroom. Other repeated responses included direct parent and

campus leader actions, in addition to a focus on the culture of the campus. Follow up

interviews with eight principals yielded results in the following categories: the level at

which teachers must examine and implement the objective-based curriculum, campus

administrators cultivating a culture of high expectations, utilizing human capital on campus as a means for quality professional development, shifting the focus to individual student results, and continuing to add value to all students despite rapidly increasing accountability standards. These findings will be discussed further in this chapter, with a focus on implications for educational leadership and future research.

Implications for School Leaders

With the role of the teacher evolving as accountability standards increase, the role of the principal must evolve also with a focus on supporting and developing individual teachers in a way similar to how teachers are charged with developing individual students. The theme of the findings throughout the entire study focused on developing teachers, because teacher actions directly impact student outcomes. Long gone are the days where a teacher stood in front of the classroom delivering a lesson and was considered effective, based on his or her actions alone. In reviewing the Effective Teacher Appraisal Tool (ETAT) instructional rubric, it is important to note that indicators of teacher effectiveness focus on a common theme focused on student actions and outcomes.

Considering that the findings of this study indicate that all of the instructional criteria on the ETAT are perceived as having a positive impact on student learning, campus leaders must work alongside their team to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their campuses and individual teachers and work toward developing and strengthening selected ETAT criterion. When hiring teachers, it is important that campus interview teams focus on what potential hires' strengths are and if those strengths match the desired criteria. With the ETAT in its second year of implementation, there is still considerable

room for growth in understanding each instructional criterion and how it relates specifically to student achievement. When looking at utilizing teacher talent on a campus to build instructional capacity, highlighting individual teacher exemplars as they relate to the ETAT criteria can serve as a catalyst for others to make changes within their own instruction.

"Facilitates organized, student-centered, objective-driven lessons" is the instructional criteria on the ETAT that principals perceive as having the greatest impact on student achievement. Campus leaders must construct systems on every campus that support and allow teachers to strengthen their expertise in this criteria in order to meet the needs of the learners in their classrooms. In order to be effective in "facilitating organized, student-centered, objective-driven lessons," one must be focused on student outcomes and plan accordingly. Although this may seem like a logical feat for any educator, it is important that campus leaders familiarize themselves with the curriculum so that they may lead professional learning communities and facilitate teacher planning. In doing this, principals will be more attuned to what should be happening in classrooms daily and can provide support as needed.

Revising master schedules to include an appropriate amount of time for teachers to share resources and create quality lesson plans is essential to the success of any campus. Lesson planning also allows for teachers to be prescriptive in their approach to meeting the needs of learners in their classrooms. It is the shift in mindset that takes place throughout the lesson planning process that will allow for teachers to move from a focus on teacher actions to a focus on student actions. Strengthening the development of this criterion for all teachers campus-wide will allow for more rigorous instruction, leading to

greater gains in student achievement. Focusing on student-centered instruction will also allow for students to take ownership in their classrooms and apply what they have learned to real world situations.

In order for students to reach accelerated levels of success, teachers must delve deeply into the curriculum, creating objective-based learning opportunities for students. P01 summed up this challenge during the interview when he or she stated, "Too many teachers are still teaching the (state standards) at a very basic or rudimentary level and not pushing their students to deeper understandings of the content" (P01, personal communication, February 11, 2013). Leaders at campuses of all different levels of the performance spectrum must support their instructional teams in dissecting each objective and identifying what that objective means and how it should be taught at all grade levels. Campus leaders need to ensure that all teachers, including those in the early grades, engage in conversations or activities that allow them to "unpack the objectives" in a meaningful way. In doing this, the foundation is being shaped in the early grades, leading to students that are better prepared to tackle a more challenging curriculum as they move through grade levels.

Implications for Further Research

Harrison Consolidated School District (HCSD), like other districts across the state, prepares to support teachers and principals as they work towards strengthening instructional systems on their campuses in an effort to exceed upcoming increased state accountability standards. With the implementation of value-added being introduced to HCSD in 2006 and the Effective Teacher Appraisal Tool (ETAT) being implemented in the 2011-2012 school year, it is important that HCSD continue to support all stakeholders

in understanding the role of both systems in supporting student achievement across the district.

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations have been made for further research:

- This study could be replicated with a focus on principals who lead campuses that are consistently in the bottom 25% of 3-year value-added average growth data and different perceptions of the role their leadership played in accelerating student progress during their tenure versus the results of this study which focus on perceptions of principals from consistently high-performing campuses.

- A comparison study could be conducted that would seek a correlation between individual teacher ETAT Instructional Practice summative ratings, individual teacher summative value-added scores, and student standardized test scores.

- Additional studies may seek out trends in how principals support novice teachers via professional development in order to help teachers develop the instructional practices that lead to higher ratings in the ETAT instructional criteria.

- This same study could be conducted once HCSD is able to produce updated 3-year average value-added growth based on the new state standards baseline (which started in the 2011-2012 school year), exploring whether or not these high-performing campuses remained high performing and what key indicators contributed to their success or lack thereof.

- Based on the additional components that impact student achievement as coded on Pg. 91, it would be powerful for future research to address how school districts incorporate specific indicators to measure teacher "belief systems" and "willingness to implement change" in teacher hiring and development.

- Findings from exploring the connection between components in university teacher preparation programs and teacher effectiveness once in the classroom can be used to strengthen teacher education at institutes of higher education across the country, leading to a stronger pool of teacher candidates.

Conclusion

When I started this educational research journey in 2012, I was on a mission to find "the secret formula" in our new teacher appraisal system that would transform student achievement on my campus. Beyond that, it was my hope that other educational leaders could use this research to increase student achievement within and outside of Harrison Consolidated School District (HCSD). After months of conducting research, I had my answer.

While principals ranked one criterion as having the greatest impact on student achievement, they also ranked the other criteria as having a substantial impact on student achievement. Using the Effective Teacher Appraisal Tool (ETAT) as a foundational tool for all that we do to increase student achievement in HCSD is crucial as personnel in all schools throughout the district steady themselves to not only embrace and exceed increasing accountability standards for student performance, but in an effort that truly prepares all students for a successful future. The group of principals that participated in follow-up interviews produced a variety of answers based on their experiences and

campuses needs; however, the theme of their message was pretty clear – they were willing to work alongside their staff to ensure that their students were successful this year and in the future. They were willing to admit that they could do a better job, assess campus data realistically, contact their neighbors, purchase programs, conduct excellent campus visits, have difficult conversations, and celebrate the smallest successes, and anything else that could help students succeed.

When I reflect back on my conversation with Mr. E that I alluded to in Chapter One, I am hopeful that we are headed in the right direction as a district in implementing a variety of resources that are focused on the right thing, ensuring that all students are successful. At the base of student success is an effective teacher delivering quality instruction daily. Supporting and developing teachers like Mr. E is critical to transform our nation's lowest performing schools.

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Appendix A
Approval from the University of Houston Human Subject Research Committee

UNIVERSITYof **HOUSTON**

DIVISION OF RESEARCH

January 18, 2013

Ms. Jilliane Raphiel
c/o Dr. Allen R. Warner
Educational Leadership & Cultural Studies

Dear Ms. Jilliane Raphiel,

The University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1) reviewed your research proposal entitled "ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS PERCEPTIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A TEACHER APPRAISAL SYSTEM AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT" on November 16, 2012, according to institutional guidelines.

At that time, your project was granted approval contingent upon your agreement to modify your protocol as stipulated by the Committee. The changes you have made adequately fulfill the requested contingencies, and your project is now **APPROVED**.

- **Approval Date:** January 18, 2013

- **Expiration Date:** November 1, 2013

As required by federal regulations governing research in human subjects, research procedures (including recruitment, informed consent, intervention, data collection or data analysis) may not be conducted after the expiration date.

To ensure that no lapse in approval or ongoing research occurs, please ensure that your protocol is resubmitted in RAMP for renewal by the **deadline for the October 2013** CPHS meeting. Deadlines for submission are located on the CPHS website.

During the course of the research, the following must also be submitted to the CPHS:

- Any proposed changes to the approved protocol, prior to initiation; AND
- Any unanticipated events (including adverse events, injuries, or outcomes) involving possible risk to subjects or others, within 10 working days.

If you have any questions, please contact Alicia Vargas at (713) 743-9215.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Daniel O'Connor, Chair
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1)

PLEASE NOTE: All subjects must receive a copy of the informed consent document, if one is approved for use. All research data, including signed consent documents, must be retained according to the University of Houston Data Retention Policy (found on the CPHS website) as well as requirements of the FDA and external sponsor(s), if applicable. Faculty sponsors are responsible for retaining data for student projects on the UH campus for the required period of record retention.

Protocol Number: 13125-01   Full Review __X__   Expedited Review_____

Appendix B
School District Approval to Conduct Study

HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
HATTIE MAE WHITE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT CENTER
4400 WEST 18th STREET • HOUSTON, TEXAS 77092-8501

TERRY B. GRIER, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

www.houstonisd.org
www.twitter.com/HoustonISD

Carla J. Stevens
Assistant Superintendent
Research and Accountability Department
Tel: 713-556-6700 • Fax: 713-556-6730

December 14, 2012

Jilliane Raphiel
Principal Investigator
3511 Mona Lee Lane
Houston, TX 02138

Dear Ms. Raphiel:

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) is pleased to approve the research proposal titled "Elementary Principals' Perceptions of the Relationship between a Teacher Appraisal System and Student Achievement". The purpose of this research is to determine what instructional criteria on the HISD Teacher Appraisal and Development System are perceived by principals has having the greatest impact on student learning. The research in Houston ISD will consist of surveying no more than 50 principals at high-performing elementary campuses (K-5) using value-added campus data to identify potential participants. These principals will be approached to participate in an on-line survey to rate the instructional criteria. They will also be asked, with their further consent, if they wish to take part in an interview to provide further insight into how they support their teachers. The proposed end date for this research is April 2013. The researcher will submit final results to the district.

Approval to conduct the study in HISD is contingent on your meeting the following conditions:

- The researcher is responsible for the collection of data including data used to identify subjects to survey, as noted in the research approval request. A fee may be assessed if the HISD Department of Research and Accountability assists in the data collection process.
- The researcher will assure that all participants and the campuses they represent remain anonymous in completing their on-line survey, as noted in the study design, except for those who specifically agree to supply their contact information.
- This study will not interfere with the District's instructional/testing program.
- The researcher must follow the guidelines of HISD and any Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Houston regarding the protection of human subjects and confidentiality of data.
- While the organization is responsible for oversight of the study, the HISD Department of Research and Accountability will also monitor the study to ensure compliance to ethical conduct guidelines established by the Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP) as well as the disclosure of student records outlined in Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Written, informed consent must be secured of participants prior to participation in the interview.
- Data will only be reported in statistical summaries that preclude the identification of any school or principal participating in the study.
- In order to eliminate potential risks to study participants, the reporting of proposed changes in research activities must be promptly submitted to the HISD Department of Research and Accountability for approval prior to implementing changes. Non compliance to this guideline could impact the approval of future research studies in HISD.
- The dissertation containing final results must be submitted to the HISD Department of Research and Accountability within 30 days of its final approval.

Any changes or modifications to the current proposal must be submitted to the Department of Research and Accountability for approval. Should you need additional information or have any questions concerning the process, please contact me at (713) 556-6700.

Sincerely,

Carla Stevens,
Assistant Superintendent
Research and Accountability

CS: dh

cc: Michelle Pola   Don Hilber
         Sydney Zullinger   James Metoyer
         Karla Loria   Melanie Heasley
         Sam Sarabia   Angela McConico
         Kim Fonteno   Julie Hill

Appendix C
Researcher Recruitment Email

Jilliane Raphiel

<jilliane.raphiel@gmail.com>

Subject: ACTION REQUESTED - Elementary Principals' Perceptions of the Relationship between a Teacher Appraisal System and Student Achievement
1 message

Jilliane Raphiel <jilliane.raphiel@gmail.com>

Tues, Jan 29, 2013 at 4:56 PM

Cc: Jilliane Raphiel <jilliane.raphiel@gmail.com>
Bcc: Jilliane Raphiel <jilliane.raphiel@gmail.com>

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by Jilliane Raphiel from the College of Education at the University of Houston. This study is being conducted as part of a dissertation for the doctoral degree in Executive Leadership under the supervision of Dr. Allen Warner.

You can access the survey at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/K2NZMMX,

Attached you will find University of Houston and Houston ISD permission to conduct this study. You may also read the attached consent form; however, you will be asked to give your official consent at the beginning of the survey. You participation and your consideration is most appreciated.

Thank you for your time!

Jilliane Raphiel
713-743-2927
jilliane.raphiel@gmail.com

PROJECT TITLE:
Elementary Principals' Perceptions of the Relationship between a Teacher Appraisal System and Student Achievement

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The importance of this study is to identify what principals at highly effective elementary school campuses in a large urban school district value as the key

instructional criteria in the district's teacher appraisal system and how these criteria relate to student achievement. Your participation in this research is anonymous.

TIME COMMITMENT
This research study will require participants to access an online website on one occasion. The survey will take 5-10 minutes to complete. No further information will be collected from participants.

INCENTIVES
There are no expected incentives for participating in this study.

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS, (713) 743-9204.

Appendix D
Consent to Participate in Research – Survey

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

PROJECT TITLE: Elementary Principals' Perceptions of the Relationship between a Teacher Appraisal System and Student Achievement

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by Jilliane Raphiel from the College of Education at the University of Houston. This study is being conducted as part of a dissertation for the doctoral degree in Executive Leadership under the supervision of Dr. Allen Warner.

NON-PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any question.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The importance of this study is to identify what principals at highly effective elementary school campuses in a large urban school district value as the key instructional criteria in the district's teacher appraisal system and how these criteria relate to student achievement. The outcome of this study can greatly impact the development, hiring, and transitioning of teachers at any school. How these instructional practices may be replicated in other classrooms, schools and district outside of the surveyed group may have a huge impact on achievement levels for all students in the school district and professional development planning for teachers. Your participation in this research is anonymous and will take an estimated 5-10 minutes to complete.

PROCEDURES

You will be one of approximately 45 subjects to be asked to participate in this project.

This research study will require participants to access an online website on one occasion. The survey will take 5-10 minutes to complete. This survey contains ten main topic questions with 13 sub-category questions for one of the questions.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your participation in this project will be kept confidential, and your responses will remain anonymous. Please do not write your name on any of the research materials to be returned to the principal investigator.

RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

Raphiel, Survey Consent 1

There are no risks of danger that can be reasonably expected as a result of your participation in this study. Should you feel any discomfort during the survey; the survey can be stopped immediately.

BENEFITS

A benefit of the study will be the opportunity to share your own experience regarding your perceptions of specific instructional criterion from the district's teacher appraisal tool. While you may not directly benefit from participation, your participation may help investigators better understand best practices and how they impact student achievement on high performing campuses.

ALTERNATIVES

Participation in this project is voluntary and the only alternative to this project is non-participation.

INCENTIVES/REMUNERATION

There are no expected costs for your participation in the study, nor will you receive payment for your participation. There are no expected incentives or remuneration for participating in this study.

PUBLICATION STATEMENT

The results of this study may be published in professional and/or scientific journals. It may also be used for educational purposes or for professional presentations. However, no individual subject will be identified.

If you have any questions, you may contact Jilliane Raphiel at jilliane.raphiel@gmail.com, 713-743-2927. You may also contact Dr. Allen Warner, faculty sponsor, at awarner@Central.UH.EDU, 713-743-5059.

ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (713-743-9204).

Appendix E
Online Survey

Survey Monkey Link - http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/K2NZMMX

1. You are being invited to participate in a research project titled: Elementary Principals' Perceptions of the Relationship between a Teacher Appraisal System and Student Achievement. This research is being conducted by Jilliane Raphiel from the College of Education at the University of Houston and is part of a dissertation for the doctoral degree in Executive Leadership under the supervision of Dr. Allen Warner. Results of this study will be used for the purpose of completing the doctoral degree in Executive Leadership at the University of Houston. Your participation in this research is anonymous and will take an estimated 5 to 10 minutes to complete. Forty-four principals have been invited to participate in this survey. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. There are no risks of danger that can be reasonably expected as a result of your participation in this study. Should you feel any discomfort during the survey at any time; the survey can be stopped. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time. The results of this study may be published in professional and/or scientific journals. It may also be used for educational purposes or for professional presentations. However, no individual subject will be identified. For additional information about giving consent, or your rights as a participant in this study, please feel free to contact Jilliane Raphiel at jilliane.raphiel@gmail.com or at 832-298-7402 or faculty sponsor, Dr. Allen Warner at awarner@Central.uh.edu. ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (713-743-9204). Do you give your consent to participate in this study?

   Yes
   No

2. Gender

   Female
   Male

3. Ethnicity

   Asian/Pacific Islander
   African American
   Caucasian
   Hispanic
   Native American
   I prefer not to answer.

4. Total years of experience as a Principal

   less than 5 years
   5-10 years
   11-15 years
   more than 15 years

5. Years of experience as a Principal at your current campus

    less than 5 years
    5-10 years
    11-15 years
    more than 15 years

6. What is your current campus Texas Education Rating (based on 2011 TEA Rating)?

    Exemplary
    Recognized
    Acceptable
    Unacceptable

7. Please rate the following instructional criteria as you perceive it to impact student achievement on your campus, using a scale of 1 to 7:
    1-Extremely Likely to Impact Student Achievement
    2-Quite Likely to Impact Student Achievement
    3-Slightly Likely to Impact Student Achievement
    4-Neither Likely or Unlikely to Impact Student Achievement
    5-Slightly Unlikely to Impact Student Achievement
    6-Quite Unlikely to Impact Student Achievement
    7-Extremely Unlikely to Impact Student Achievement

Develops student learning goals
Collects, tracks, and uses student data to drive instruction
Designs effective lesson plans, units, and assessments
Facilitates organized, student-centered, objective-driven lessons
Checks for student understanding and responds to student misunderstanding
Differentiates instruction for student needs by employing a variety of

instructional strategies
Engages students in work that develops higher-level thinking skills
Maximizes instructional time
Communicates content and concepts to students
Promotes high academic expectations for students
Students actively participating in lesson activities
Sets and implements discipline management procedures
Builds a positive and respectful classroom environment

8. What other components (not listed above) do you believe impact student achievement on your campus?

   Open-Ended

9. Would you like to participate in a follow-up interview?

   Yes
   No

10. If the answer is "Yes", please complete following:

   Name
   School
   Email Address

Appendix F
Consent to Participate in Research – Interview

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
CONFIDENTIAL RESEARCH

PROJECT TITLE: Elementary Principals' Perceptions of the Relationship between a Teacher Appraisal System and Student Achievement

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by Jilliane Raphiel from the College of Education at the University of Houston. This study is being conducted as part of a dissertation for the doctoral degree in Executive Leadership under the supervision of Dr. Allen Warner.

NON-PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any question.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The importance of this study is to identify what principals at highly effective elementary school campuses in a large urban school district value as the key instructional criteria in the district's teacher appraisal system and how these criteria relate to student achievement. The outcome of this study can greatly impact the development, hiring, and transitioning of teachers at any school. How these instructional practices may be replicated in other classrooms, schools and district outside of the surveyed group may have a huge impact on achievement levels for all students in the school district and professional development planning for teachers. Your participation in this research is anonymous and will take no longer than an hour to complete.

PROCEDURES

You will be one of approximately 45 subjects to be asked to participate in this project. This research study will require participants to participate in a face-to-face interview on one occasion. The interview will take no longer than an hour to complete. The interview will be conducted in a public location of the participant's choosing. The interview will consist of four open-ended response questions. The same questions will be administered to all participants. Each question will be asked one time to the participant. The interview will be audio-recorded. No further information will be collected from participants.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your participation in this project.

Subject's Initials_____   *Raphiel, Interview Consent*

Each subject's name will be paired with a code number by the principal investigator. This code number will appear on all written materials. The list pairing the subject's name to the assigned code number will be kept separate from all research materials and will be available only to the principal investigator. Confidentiality will be maintained.

RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

There are no risks of danger that can be reasonably expected as a result of your participation in this study. Should you feel any discomfort during the interview; the interview can be stopped immediately.

BENEFITS

A benefit of the study will be the opportunity to share your own experience regarding your perceptions of specific instructional criterion from the district's teacher appraisal tool. While you may not directly benefit from participation, your participation may help investigators better understand best practices and how they impact student achievement on high performing campuses.

ALTERNATIVES

Participation in this project is voluntary and the only alternative to this project is non-participation.

INCENTIVES/REMUNERATION

There are no expected costs for your participation in the study, nor will you receive payment for your participation. There are no expected incentives or remuneration for participating in this study.

PUBLICATION STATEMENT

The results of this study may be published in professional and/or scientific journals. It may also be used for educational purposes or for professional presentations. However, no individual subject will be identified.

AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF AUDIO TAPES

If you consent to participate in this study, please indicate whether you agree to be audio/video taped during the study by checking the appropriate box below. If you agree, please also indicate whether the audio/video tapes can be used for publication/presentations.

2/4

Subject's Initials_____   *Raphiel, Interview Consent*

☐ I agree to be audio taped during the interview.
  ☐ I agree that the audio taped can be used in publication/presentations.
  ☐ I do not agree that the audio tapes can be used in publication/presentations.
☐ I do not agree to be audio taped recorded during the interview.

SUBJECT RIGHTS

1. I understand that informed consent is required of all persons participating in this project.

2. All procedures have been explained to me and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

3. Any risks and/or discomforts have been explained to me.

4. Any benefits have been explained to me.

5. I understand that, if I have any questions, I may contact Jilliane Raphiel at jilliane.raphiel@gmail.com, 713-743-2927. I may also contact Dr. Allen Warner, faculty sponsor, at awarner@Central.UH.EDU, 713-743-5059.

6. I have been told that I may refuse to participate or to stop my participation in this project at any time before or during the project. I may also refuse to answer any question.

7. ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING MY RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (713-743-9204). ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE CARRIED OUT BY INVESTIGATORS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON ARE GOVERNED BY REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

8. All information that is obtained in connection with this project and that can be identified with me will remain confidential. Information gained from this study that can be identified with me may be released to no one other than the principal investigator (Jilliane Raphiel) and his/her faculty sponsor (Dr. Allen Warner). The results may be published in scientific journals, professional publications, or educational presentations without identifying me by name.

I HAVE READ (OR HAVE HAD READ TO ME) THE CONTENTS OF THIS CONSENT FORM AND HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED TO ASK QUESTIONS. I HAVE RECEIVED ANSWERS TO MY QUESTIONS. I GIVE MY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. I HAVE RECEIVED (OR WILL RECEIVE) A COPY OF THIS FORM FOR MY RECORDS AND FUTURE REFERENCE.

Subject's Initials_____   *Raphiel, Interview Consent*

Study Subject (print name): _____

Signature of Study Subject: _____
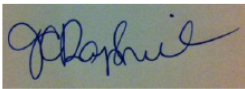
Date: _____

If you have any questions, you may contact Jilliane Raphiel at jilliane.raphiel@gmail.com, 713-743-2927. You may also contact Dr. Allen Warner, faculty sponsor, at awarner@Central.UH.EDU, 713-743-5059.

ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (713-743-9204).

Principal Investigator's Name: ___Jilliane C. Raphiel _____

Signature of Principal Investigator: __ _____

Subject's Initials_____   *Raphiel, Interview Consent*

Appendix G
Blank Interview Protocol with Interview Questions

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant Code – P0#

Project: *Elementary Principals' Perceptions of the Relationship Between a Teacher Appraisal System and Student Achievement*

Time of Interview:

Date:

Interviewer: Jilliane Raphiel, University of Houston

Interviewee (will be masked): -------------

Campus (will be masked): ------------- Elementary, HCSD

Questions:

1. What instructional practices, aside from the criteria on the current teacher appraisal system, do you perceive as having the greatest impact on student achievement on your campus?

2. How do you plan professional development opportunities for your teachers to maximize their effectiveness in these areas?

3. What changes have you seen in student achievement on your campus as a result of your efforts?

4. With accountability increasing rapidly in the state, how do you plan on continuing to add value to all students on your campus?

Appendix H

Completed Interview Protocols – Interview Answers Transcribed from Audio Recordings

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant Code – P00

Project: *Elementary Principals' Perceptions of the Relationship between a Teacher Appraisal System and Student Achievement*

Time of Interview: 5:00pm

Date: 2/15/13

Interviewer: Jilliane Raphiel, University of Houston

Interviewee (will be masked): ███████████

Campus (will be masked): ██████ Elementary, HCSD

Questions:

1. What instructional practices, aside from the criteria on the current teacher appraisal system, do you perceive as having the greatest impact on student achievement on your campus?

What I think has the most impact on student achievement on my campus is my stating that I expect all kids to pass all the tests given. It's an instructional practice for a teacher to let her students know that her expectations are high, right? I think it's an instructional practice when I do it too. When our science scores were in the 50's, we completely revamped the way we teach science and invested heavily in space, personnel, professional development and materials. We also made science knowledge a school-wide goal. It took about 3 years to make it into the 90's and I think it's still paying off. We also spend all of our money every year on instruction. If the teachers ask for something, I try my best to get it for them.

2. How do you plan professional development opportunities for your teachers to maximize their effectiveness in these areas?

I work with our specialists here on campus. We started guided reading about 3 years ago and sent teachers to trainings where and when we could find them, the Language & Reading Specialist on campus provided training and coaching, and we have had consultants coming in on a regular basis to work with individual teachers to promote excellent reading instruction. Outside of that big push, the professional development is accidental. If I see something I think teachers need, I ask them to attend. If it's after school or on a weekend, I pay them for their time attending. The same is true for the

specialists. I really pushed our teachers to go to the Just in Time math presentations. I think we need new tricks to up our game.

3. What changes have you seen in student achievement on your campus as a result of your efforts?

Re-vamping science as I said, moved us from the 50's to the 90's in science. I have not seen a similar increase in reading however. I think I'm going to get a committee together and order lots of pizza to get people to brainstorm what we can do for reading. Outside of those, our scores have gone up steadily every year except for in Stanford. My "regulars" are my most irregular kids. This year for the first time I am trying to give them and their teachers extra support in terms of personnel and materials.

4. With accountability increasing rapidly in the state, how do you plan on continuing to add value to all students on your campus?

I want to train the teachers to be more conscious of their students' scores and be more strategic and data-driven in addressing students' weaknesses. I have to be a better role model for them and I think I will work on that.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant Code – P01

Project: *Elementary Principals' Perceptions of the Relationship between a Teacher Appraisal System and Student Achievement*

Time of Interview: 1:05pm

Date: 2/11/13

Interviewer: Jilliane Raphiel, University of Houston

Interviewee (will be masked): ▉▉▉▉▉▉

Campus (will be masked): ▉▉▉ Elementary, HCSD

Questions:

1. What instructional practices, aside from the criteria on the current teacher appraisal system, do you perceive as having the greatest impact on student achievement on your campus?

The criteria are so broad when considering the four different levels of effectiveness that I think that they cover just about every instructional practice that is research based and proven to impact student achievement on campuses; however, one instructional practice that I don't think that is really addressed in the current appraisal system is the work some teachers do in order to find strategies and/or activities that teach learning objectives to the extent to which they are written – think of Kilgo's unpacking the TEKS – and making sure that the resources and strategies they use address the learning objective or the TEKS fully. Too many teachers are still teaching the TEKS at a very basic or rudimentary level and not pushing their students to deeper understandings of the content. We need to find a way to measure a teacher's own understanding of what they are supposed to be teaching. For example, first grade teachers who are continuing to pull out their butterfly unit when it's time to teach *1.1 D* – Observe and record life cycles of animals such as a chicken, frog, or fish – are going to miss the boat on this one if all they teach is the life cycle of a butterfly as that is not what will be tested.

2. How do you plan professional development opportunities for your teachers to maximize their effectiveness in these areas?

Grade level teams are expected to turn in minutes of their grade level meetings on a weekly basis. In order to help guide the instructional conversations that will help teachers more fully understand the TEKS they are teaching, I have asked them to use an "Unpacking the Standard" template as a discussion guide which they fill in as they

meet and discuss the TEKS objective they choose to focus on during their meeting. These are turned in to me weekly. I asked teachers to pick either TEKS that are coming up that they know will be a challenge, or one they have already covered, but know they will be going back to repeatedly as our data shows that our kids are having a hard time with it, for example, inferencing. This has really helped teacher discussion move away from logistics or management issues to more instructional issues.

3. What changes have you seen in student achievement on your campus as a result of your efforts?

I haven't seen changes in student achievement yet as this is a new protocol I've implemented, however I have seen more open ended discussions in the classrooms, and more teachers working together whereas before many worked in isolation.

4. With accountability increasing rapidly in the state, how do you plan on continuing to add value to all students on your campus?

Prayer works. Also, the consistent use of our data to continually spiral back to students that are not mastering objectives will play a large part in our efforts. We are also going to be working on acquiring hourly lecturers with teaching experience that can help with pulling small groups during the day.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant Code – P02

Project: *Elementary Principals' Perceptions of the Relationship between a Teacher Appraisal System and Student Achievement*

Time of Interview: 2:00pm

Date: 2-15-13

Interviewer: Jilliane Raphiel, University of Houston

Interviewee (will be masked): ██████████

Campus (will be masked): ████ Elementary, HCSD

Questions:

1. What instructional practices, aside from the criteria on the current teacher appraisal system, do you perceive as having the greatest impact on student achievement on your campus?

Well, I would say the instructional practice besides the criteria that, it kind of goes with it a little bit the planning – it is part of the criteria but I guess the preparation that teachers do besides what's required in doing that extra, finding extra resources, finding extra training or in just having that commitment to make sure that students are successful. I know it kind of goes into part of the criteria that (HCSD) does have at this time and just having that ability to motivate kids and make that relationship, even having teachers that are very competent and then are able to have that relationship with that student to make sure that to get them to do whatever that they need them to do. As teachers what I found that the more effective teachers are the ones that are very competent, that are not just competent but are able to make that connection and relationship with students that it's hard sometimes to measure on any criteria or any assessment.

2. How do you plan professional development opportunities for your teachers to maximize their effectiveness in these areas?

Well, obviously what I do is look at our data and see where our school needs assistance, like for example for this year one of the criteria and areas our data showed that Reading was a challenge for our students and then we even got down to what was it exactly by objective and it was vocabulary and comprehension so those were the two areas that we really tried to zero in and focus for our teachers to be able to help our students and even going more into detail of that, breaking it down by, "Does the teacher understand the objective that the students is supposed to be able to perform on these

assessments now which is STAAR?" Just making sure teachers are able to unpack the standards and really teach to that level that is required now for students to perform at and that's been a learning process for I think for some of our teachers and even for me as well to try to maximize their effectiveness and the overall achievement in particular.

3. What changes have you seen in student achievement on your campus as a result of your efforts?

As far as, it's hard to tell yet. I know that teachers have, in my campus at least, have all worked very hard. As far as the criteria, I'm not sure as far as the district's criteria has totally made them work harder. I think that teacher that were more effective in the past will continue to be effective but they will have to step up because of the standards not necessarily the district's student performance. I think it's more the external factors that are being required for students' expectations instead of more what the criteria that the district has for the teachers.

4. With accountability increasing rapidly in the state, how do you plan on continuing to add value to all students on your campus?

Well one of the things that we are really zeroing in and focus is on our early childhood. We have to get students on grade level at Pre K. Finding ways that Pre K, Kinder, 1st students when they leave that grade level that they're reading on grade level. Are they doing math on grade level are they writing on grade level? So, I think that's the main the area that we need to focus in our school to make sure that when they reach 3rd, 4th and 5th that teachers not dealing with a child that's reading at a 2nd grade level and trying to teach the 5th grade standards, the expectations. So, we have to close the gaps early on and identify those kids if there is a learning issue or if it's just an instructional issue so that's where we have to close the gap early on in the lower grades.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant Code – P03

Project: *Elementary Principals' Perceptions of the Relationship between a Teacher Appraisal System and Student Achievement*

Time of Interview: 2:30pm

Date: 2-15-13

Interviewer: Jilliane Raphiel, University of Houston

Interviewee (will be masked): ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Campus (will be masked): ▮▮▮▮ Elementary, HCSD

Questions:

1. What instructional practices, aside from the criteria on the current teacher appraisal system, do you perceive as having the greatest impact on student achievement on your campus?

The instructional practices that I see that are really making the most difference aside from what the district has already designated as instructional practices that will help student achievement is teachers being able to create the culture of high expectations and maintaining that. That makes students invested in their learning. It's a difficult concept for my teachers and my students to grasp. It's been a struggle for my campus as to how do we get those student to really invest in their all-around learning and how do we get them to be independent thinkers and how do we get them to take responsibility for their actions and their learning? So, I think the district touches on it vaguely, but that something that we focus on and that's something that we are proactive about, because what we are seeing is that students are too dependent on the teachers and not very self-motivated. And, so, we are looking at better practices on how to get the students invested in their education.

2. How do you plan professional development opportunities for your teachers to maximize their effectiveness in these areas?

Using the appraisal system and also with systems we have in place, we look at the trends school wide and we focus on targeting those areas. We also look at each teacher specifically and so if we see some teacher that is really good at investing the students or doing a fantastic job in a particular area, we have them conduct professional development for our staff as a whole. We also do it by taking videos and showing those videos on our website and having teachers view those videos and give feedback.

There's a lot of implementation that we had this year. We've included the rigor and relevance committee, which they conduct professional development on our campus based on the needs that were seeing per teacher and per grade level and the school as a whole. So, it's been really effective in that we're now coming together as a school, collaborating, working and making sure that we all have the same mind set when it comes to our students and their achievement.

3. What changes have you seen in student achievement on your campus as a result of your efforts?

Student achievement is now our goal and that's the one thing that we meet on weekly. It's our main focus and so we are very much data-driven on this campus in that same aspect. We take the data week by week. We never use old data, per say. It's no longer valid so instead of just looking at the data, we take it apart, we figure out what's working, what's not working, and we provide professional development based on that and we discuss each student specifically as opposed to the whole class. So, when we're looking at how have we changed our campus around, our teachings, our professional development – it's we're more target-specific, student-specific as opposed to program specific.

4. With accountability increasing rapidly in the state, how do you plan on continuing to add value to all students on your campus?

Well, we have great trackers on our campus that we have developed and some we have borrowed from our neighboring schools so we are really able to track student's growth from year to year. And, we have that information to give the teachers at the middle of the year, I'm sorry I mean at beginning of the year so teachers know where the students are coming to them. And, so we know where they're at, let's get them moving, as oppose to let's start to see where they are at the beginning of every year, which is really a waste of educational time, of learning time. So using our data effectively, having tracking systems, and making sure that we are adding value to the students. In addition, we work with the programs that the district has given us – Istation, TTM, Dream Box, which are computer based. But it gives us an idea to what are the students doing – Are they growing? Are they having growth? Are they stagnate? What are we doing to provide intervention? So, it is what it is, student accountability and student achievement is something that's not going to go away. The teachers at my campus have grown use to it. It's something that we have been doing for several years. Now, it's much more in the forefront of the district. So, although we have been doing it for years now, we always look at how can we make it better and do it better and how can we be more effective and strategic in how we are looking at data and making sure that all our students have growth.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant Code – P04

Project: *Elementary Principals' Perceptions of the Relationship between a Teacher Appraisal System and Student Achievement*

Time of Interview: 4:15pm

Date: 2-15-13

Interviewer: Jilliane Raphiel, University of Houston

Interviewee (will be masked): ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Campus (will be masked): ▮▮▮ Elementary, HCSD

Questions:

1. What instructional practices, aside from the criteria on the current teacher appraisal system, do you perceive as having the greatest impact on student achievement on your campus?

There are several, but I think focusing on high level questioning would be one of them and of course checking for understanding and differentiation. So, out of those three, if I had to check one, I would go with differentiation because you would have to use your data in order for you to provide for the needs of all students - high students, students that are on level, and students that are below. If I had to choose one, I would have to say differentiation of instruction because it does encompass a lot of the areas the other criteria also involve.

2. How do you plan professional development opportunities for your teachers to maximize their effectiveness in these areas?

You know, we do some of the trainings that are provided by our district. We have, like the teach, what is it, oh my God, I forgot the name of that book. Teach Like a Champion is one of those trainings that the district is providing. We also do a lot of in home trainings because we do have a lot of expertise on campus. So for instance, on Mondays we do study groups and all our reading teachers get together from all grade levels, not only upper grade teachers that are involved in testing but all levels so that we all learn from each other. So, I think that is one of the most powerful professional development trainings that were doing right now but we also take advantage of Neuhaus and now they're doing small groups. Also one of the trainings that we have participated in is the Debbie Diller trainings, because she focuses on a lot on differentiation and we also did some school visits which we thought were very powerful.

We had the opportunity to visit ████████ which is a school that doesn't really match our demographics; however, they're doing an extraordinary job with differentiation of instruction so we went and observed and like 75% of our campus actually went there and observed and then we came back and we adapted a lot of the things we are doing, of course, with a tweak to make sure that it met the needs of our teachers but we loved the model where we actually go and see other teachers doing the work so that we can learn and ask questions and learn from them.

3. What changes have you seen in student achievement on your campus as a result of your efforts?

You know we started implementing the small group instruction and started thinking about differentiating instruction for all the kids, our scores if we thought about scores, increased dramatically so this I'm talking about probably we started this process 5 years ago. Our teachers are whole group instruction kind of teachers, you know kind of the traditional but when we started seeing the work that other people were doing and we started talking and we started reading, our scores improved dramatically. Our teachers started to collaborate with each other so we saw increases in learning, we saw increases in students reading on grade level which has been one of our concerns being a large ELL population campus. So we've seen a lot of student progress and not only that but actually teachers working together to make sure that they support each other and that they learn from each other to make sure that the kids are learning and they're succeeding and improving their teaching or their craft.

4. With accountability increasing rapidly in the state, how do you plan on continuing to add value to all students on your campus?

And that is a very good question, Jilliane. You know, with our current accountability system, we obviously are moving from TAKS to STAAR. And STAAR, you know, 70% of, for example, of the Reading test is an inferencing test so were having to change the way that we teach. We're having to learn how to ask better questions, we're having to understand the rigor and relevance model, we're having to actually do meetings and participate in our PLC's meetings so that we can address those needs and we can support the teachers and make sure that they're asking the right questions. So those are the things that were trying to do. We're trying to look at the criteria, look at the standards and make sure that were teaching all the TEKS and at the same time we're focusing and making sure that we're teaching and that we're teaching for mastery which has been huge on our campus. You know sometimes the teachers will be teaching but they do not necessarily see or teach for mastery, making sure that the kids got it and if they don't get it the first time, that we regroup those kids and that we make sure we provide all the assistance they need because they need to have mastery of those objectives in order for them to succeed. Also meeting during our vertical meetings so that the lower grades understand those supporting standards and how important it is

that they teach them and to make sure those students master so that they can succeed when they finally come up to 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade and they take those tests. It's a challenge, but we're trying to do it with a lot of trainings in house, supporting each other, looking at some samples that the state has provided and maybe trying to use those stems that were provided by Kilgo so you know it's a lot of things. It's not only one thing, it's a school effort.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant Code – P05

Project: *Elementary Principals' Perceptions of the Relationship between a Teacher Appraisal System and Student Achievement*

Time of Interview: 11:00am

Date: 2-16-12

Interviewer: Jilliane Raphiel, University of Houston

Interviewee (will be masked): ███████████

Campus (will be masked): ███████ Elementary, HCSD

Questions:

1. What instructional practices, aside from the criteria on the current teacher appraisal system, do you perceive as having the greatest impact on student achievement on your campus?

Well, the one instructional practice that I think is most effective is that cycle of formative assessment or what I refer to as what teachers do every day to check in on students, so using exit slips, entry slips, actual active teacher monitoring - not monitoring for behavior so much but monitoring for how students are responding to instruction and taking that into account and bringing it back into instruction as teachable moments or bringing it back directly the next day of instruction to address those errors that students tend to make. Another part of it, although it might be tied to the appraisal system, but it emphasize is the act of timing that has to take place with going deep into the curriculum, really diving into the student expectation – what students are expected to do and planning for that piece – not so much being compliant with just having lesson plans, because anybody can write lesson plans, but that doesn't mean anything until it's delivered. We have lots of discussions on that. I think with those two pieces you can dive into differentiation and all the other pieces, but teachers have to be aware of and be able to deliver in a classroom but those are the starting blocks.

2. How do you plan professional development opportunities for your teachers to maximize their effectiveness in these areas?

So, for professional development, I have a two prong answer to that - and one of that is campus wide professional development and to plan for that I have to look at the trends on campus, not only the current trends but the historical trends, what's been addressed

in different content areas. Of course, it's all based on current data and historical data but looking at the again the actions in the classroom. What are teachers actually practicing in their classroom and that's how I plan campus wide. For example, currently we've been looking at our math practices and what teachers actually do in their classrooms. And, they may say they believe in one thing and what they do in their classrooms may be aligned with that or it may not be. So we are addressing our math practices campus wide. Currently, I need to come up with a plan for next year. On an individual basis or the team's professional development is planned based on data. If the data is coming in and telling us that students are not doing well in a particular subject or a particular area within a subject, then I start pulling in resources. It could be a mix of online learning, we'll do observations, let me bring in some articles. What resources do we have on campus? Let's dig into those resources, look at it together, and see what's available and what we can use. It's a mix of professional development, it certainly isn't a one shoe fits all type of mindset, because that doesn't work. And, I do allow teachers to look for professional development that meets their needs outside of campus and support them in doing that. The question to them all is what do with do with it when they come back from professional development and my teachers have to complete a template if you will or an action plan of what's next, what are the next steps, this is what I learned at professional development and this is how I'm going to implement it in my classroom.

3. What changes have you seen in student achievement on your campus as a result of your efforts?

One of the big things that we're pushing, well our goal is always this but we're a little more focused this year, is reading instruction. The majority of our campus wide and PLC professional development and learning is centered on reading instruction this school year. And so bringing in the Istation, which our whole district did, but prior to that I had already signed a contract with them to bring Istation to my particular campus to address our reading needs and to help teachers really understand the reading components. I don't think all of our teachers really understood all the different pieces of reading that students have to master but just the phonics and phonemic awareness and how that it's related to one year or one grade level to the next grade level so we've been doing a lot of work around reading practices, how students are reading and even a little bit of brain research in that with the reading, so that has had an impact on our students. Achievement in reading, although I'd like to see it skyrocket, you know were making slow progress but we are making progress in the right direction and then that in conjunction with whole bunch of other programs we have on campus such as Accelerated Reader program, our family reading nights, little reading initiatives that we give here and there. We're getting ready to start participate in a national read-a-thon

here in March, were we just kind of drop everything and we're competing online with other campuses nationwide to see how many books campus wide we read compared to others. Little initiatives, just like that, we also brought in, my assistant principal brought in a mentor program with pairing high school students with our elementary school students to mentor the children to, so that they could have something to look forward or say, "I could be this high school student and graduate from high school," and it's all centered around motivating students and building their self-confidence through a text as their reading, so they're reading *Charlotte's Web*. But at the same time, we've implemented Sean Covey's *Habits of Highly Effective Teens* within the teenager and then within the elementary school student. So, all of this combinations have had an impact on our reading achievement.

4. With accountability increasing rapidly in the state, how do you plan on continuing to add value to all students on your campus?

That's the golden question – Accountability is certainly increasing. I think with it rising so quickly, one of the things that the principals and all administrators need to keep on the forefront is relationships with their teachers, because we can't do it alone. That relationship piece with their teachers is very strong, because you've got to get them on board. You have to get them to be in accord with you. As far as raising students' achievement and how to get there, you have to give them the tools to get there, you have to be very transparent with them, good or bad news, and walk with them through their process because we're all held to standards, we're all held to raise student achievement but it's a team effort and that's my approach to it here on campus. I hope it's working. It seems to be working and then when we do run into challenges, it's not a "me against you" mentally, it's a "How are we going to turn it around or face this challenge?" and so forth so that our accountability and student achievement rises.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant Code – P06

Project: *Elementary Principals' Perceptions of the Relationship between a Teacher Appraisal System and Student Achievement*

Time of Interview: 12:30pm

Date: 2-16-13

Interviewer: Jilliane Raphiel, University of Houston

Interviewee (will be masked): ███████████

Campus (will be masked): ███ Elementary, HCSD

Questions:

1. What instructional practices, aside from the criteria on the current teacher appraisal system, do you perceive as having the greatest impact on student achievement on your campus?

I think the biggest, I mean we don't have any control over this, but I think one of the biggest factors on student achievement is family income. We've all read studies where the more money your family makes, the better their students do on tests, perhaps like the SAT. That's a huge, a huge piece. As a principal we don't really have control over that, but what we do have control over is, I think, is on the (ETAT) – we do have control over our teachers and the kind of instruction that we provide for students, regardless of their economic background. I think that's one of the things that we don't see, that's not taken into account.

2. How do you plan professional development opportunities for your teachers to maximize their effectiveness in these areas?

What I do at this campus is I have teachers lead professional development so, for example right now, we have a teacher who's really taking the lead on the Think Through Math initiative that was released to all of the campuses, the web-based program. And, so one of the things that we're planning on doing is having her lead a professional development that's based on that program and how she's incorporating it into her class and that she can be a teacher leader to the other teachers on our campus and a resource on how to get this program involved in their classes. I really like the idea of teachers providing professional development to other teachers. I think it strengthens our teacher leaders, it validates their hard work, and it also provides them with

leadership opportunities and then they can mentor our teachers on campus. In concern to the classroom, I feel like they have a better, I think that the teachers that are sitting in on that development are going to be more likely to accept what they have to say or follow what they have to say, because they are teachers themselves. In terms of the PD surrounding the financial background of our students, I think encouraging our parents to drive around the neighborhood, encouraging our parents to meet, I'm sorry I mean encouraging the teachers to drive around the neighborhood, encouraging our teachers to contact parents, communicate with parents, find out what's going on at home, find out what kind of life that child lives whenever they're not on school campus is really important. And, the teachers are the best connection to that. They see the kids every day, they know what kind of background those kids come from. I think just really encouraging teachers to find time, providing them with time to call parents and to reach out to parents, to invite parents onto campus so we can better educate our students.

3. What changes have you seen in student achievement on your campus as a result of your efforts?

I guess more communication I think is very important amongst teachers, so what's working with particular types of students, what's not working with other types of students, ideas, brainstorming. So I think with teachers being leaders on campus, providing professional development, that starts the conversation and I think that will help increase student achievement. We haven't really seen what our gains are going to be just yet, so we have to increase with teachers communicating with one another, teachers communicating with parents. I got a few notes after the last early dismissal, I gave teachers time to call home and talk to parents and I got a few notes from parents saying "thank you," that meant so much to them, they really appreciate getting the phone calls from our teachers about how their child is doing. So I think that helps the parents feel more empowered on campus and if the parent feels empowered with the school then they're going to be, I feel like they're going to be more likely to help their student, make sure that they are completing their homework, make sure that they are doing everything that they need to do in order to be better prepared for the next day for school. So, it helps with parent communication, increasing parent communication, and teacher collaboration.

4. With accountability increasing rapidly in the state, how do you plan on continuing to add value to all students on your campus?

I believe we just continue to have conversations with other campuses, so like for example, "What is your campus doing?" You know, I was at ███ on Monday - What

are they doing to having conversations with other campuses to see what they're doing, So we all kind of have our own professional development among the school leaders. And really just research, you know, learning about what other schools are doing and then implementing it, trial and error. So, let's try this intervention, see how it goes and then get feedback from teachers, get feedback from students not only through their class course but also just asking them, you know, "What did you think about Saturday Tutorials and having to do that every Saturday for the last two months?" and see what the kids say, like "Oh, I like it because Saturday testing was fun or it was a bummer waking up but I still learned." So, I guess continuing conversations. I think it's what's going to help us with accountability. Let's see - how else? I think it's just trial and error. We just have to keep trying new approaches and some of it it's going to work and some of it it's not going to work so were going to have to come back, and then some of it will work to an extent, you know, not everything in that intervention may work so we will have to go back and tweak it. But, I think just trial and error and try anything and looking at the research and looking at the data to see if it's benefiting our students and their achievement – not only with academic gains and test scores, but also just like personal growth. Are they becoming the well rounded citizens that we want them to be?

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant Code – P07

Project: *Elementary Principals' Perceptions of the Relationship between a Teacher Appraisal System and Student Achievement*

Time of Interview: 2:20pm

Date: 2/17/13

Interviewer: Jilliane Raphiel, University of Houston

Interviewee (will be masked): █████████

Campus (will be masked): ██████ Elementary, HCSD

Questions:

1. What instructional practices, aside from the criteria on the current teacher appraisal system, do you perceive as having the greatest impact on student achievement on your campus?

I think one of the biggest ones is engagement, looking at authentic engagement, and I don't really know that is addressed in that assessment tool. I think also looking at teacher talk versus student talk and I think that kind of alludes back to the engagement piece to make sure that it's rigorous. Um, the instrument itself does deal a lot with the overall assessment that is as much qualitative as it is quantitative, but I think that really working with rigor and trying to make a change that way so that when we're looking at things, it's more rigorous in nature.

2. How do you plan professional development opportunities for your teachers to maximize their effectiveness in these areas?

I think the biggest way is to really do a needs assessment and go back to see where your weaknesses and strengths were at the beginning of the year. One of the things that I'm a very strong advocate in is using my own people as resources, because everybody brings to the table different resources that affects our strengths. Bringing somebody in from the outsides is not necessarily your best means. When we looked at research for training, we, you really need somebody who is going to come it to work side by side with somebody and using somebody on campus that has that expertise that can work with others, and just really capitalize on other peoples strengths based upon your needs assessment.

3. What changes have you seen in student achievement on your campus as a result of your efforts?

Oh, I think the biggest thing is to really be targeting in on specific needs. A few years back, the school was unacceptable in the writing so we made that the major focus and we created a major emphasis on writing and made it a school wide initiative. I think, really, one of the things for strength would be the community within a learning community would be to make sure that everybody is following the same curriculum, following the same professional development that is school wide that is very targeted and that it leads from one level to the other. Teachers really can't be independent contractors. They have to have a scope and sequence as far as what the expectations are, what the learning is going to be from one student in one classroom to the next. When we look around, we find that the biggest difference within a school district is in the same school from one classroom to the next so that the better system you can put in place to make sure that everybody is using, let's say, Accelerated Reader to maximize potential so that everybody is using Guided Reading. It makes it easier for kids to transition from one classroom into the next as well as from being promoted and everybody leaving with the same foundational and enrichment skills.

4. With accountability increasing rapidly in the state, how do you plan on continuing to add value to all students on your campus?

Well, I think, and that is always the Catch 22, you know. I'm a firm believer in working in a high poverty school that the, uh, what you need to work with is the world and our kids can't necessarily come in and achieve as kids at non-poverty levels. They need more time and more differentiation. They need more rigor, but you know, working within your school and you really focusing on growth and making sure that kids grow more than a year for that time that they're in that seat is what is really going to maximize the teachers potential as well as decreases of the achievement gap. The problem right now, is that in society, we have two standards. We have the achievement that everybody looks at and then we have the value-added and I think when you're having two systems, it becomes very difficult to concentrate on one or the other. I think that if we really focus on growth, even at high level, high performing, more affluent schools, that will allow then aloe them to move to the next level and that can be the ceiling effect on achievement, but then you have kids that are at the poverty level and you focus on developing interventions and you focus on them, you know. If you went out to run a race and you were doing the 20 minute mile for practice then you reduce it from 20 to 10, you know, that's a pretty substantial increase. The same with a kid that goes, you know a 10 on a test to a 20 on a test. That's a hundred percent increase, but that's sometimes that's not recognized, because they're still looking at overall achievement. So, I think grading practices, I think, um, the leader within that education is very important and it's very important to focus on that growth piece.

Appendix I
Vita

Jilliane Christina Raphiel attended St. Charles Catholic High School in LaPlace, Louisiana. In 2001, she earned a Bachelor of Science in Mass Communications from McNeese State University in Lake Charles, Louisiana. During the summer of 2002, she moved to Houston, Texas to join the 2002 Teach For America Houston Corps, where she taught 5th grade at De Zavala Elementary in the Houston Independent School District. She received her Masters in Education from the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas in 2005. During the summer of 2006, she spent time in Costa Rica as a Fund for Teachers Fellow attending Spanish Language School and exploring natural scientific wonders that she could bring back to the classroom. She transitioned into the role of Instructional Coordinator at De Zavala Elementary, then later Assistant Principal at Edison Middle School. In 2009, she was promoted to the role of Principal at Franklin Elementary. Jilliane has spent her entire educational career in the Austin High School Feeder Pattern of the Houston Independent School District, working alongside the children and communities in Houston's East End. In July of 2011, she attended the National Institute for Urban School Leaders at Harvard University as part of the Raise Your Hand Texas Leadership Program. She entered the Graduate School of Education at the University of Houston to pursue her Educational Doctorate in the Fall of 2011.