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Gladys Smith Moton

August 2015

TEACHERS' AND ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF A NEW MULTI-
MEASURE TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM IN ONE LARGE URBAN SCHOOL
DISTRICT IN TEXAS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT LEADERS

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

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Dedication

I am dedicating my dissertation in memory of my beloved brother, Darrell.

Darrell you were one of my biggest cheerleaders prior to God taking you home. You gave me inspiration to strive for my doctorate. I watched you as you completed your MBA while courageously battling with cancer. You embodied the scripture “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!”

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To God be the glory for the things He has done! I am so very grateful for all of the support, inspiration and encouragement from my family and friends. My journey would not have been possible without your love and support. To Lorin, Malori, and Misti, I thank God daily for the privilege of being your mommy (that includes you, too, Brandon and Brandon). I could not have picked better siblings. You guys are unmatched, my sister-friends (Samantha, Etta, Chris and Chantay). Uncle Trula (Sam II), you're my rock. Zolton, thank you for just being you. To my sister and brother in love, hugs and kisses. To my amazing parents, Dr. Samuel and Silver Smith, your love and spiritual guidance led me to God. Your incredible knack for making each of your eight children feel like your favorite is a true gift. To the sheroes that are the very reason I decided to go into education, Aunt Barbara and Betty Davis, I love you. Dr. Ennetta Rose, thank you so much for doing what only you could. To Perry Welsh, thanks for everything. To my extraordinary chair, Dr. Robin McGlohn, God knew that I would need your prayers and friendship during my brother's fight. I cannot thank you enough for your kindness and guidance. To Dr. MacNeil, Dr. Busch, Dr. Emerson, and Dr. Borneman, I appreciate your leadership and wisdom. Kudos to my Jones family, you are simply the best. I could not ask for a better team to work with. A special thank you to Lily, my leadership team and the three musketeers for holding things down. Marceil and Ray, what would I have done without your listening ears! To my study buddies, Maria Galindo, Alfred James, Christina Gomez, Marcia Garcia and Yolanda Calhoun thanks for playing and incredible part in this journey. Finally, to Dr. Bamberg thank you for being my mentor.

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Abstract

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, and Obama's Race to the Top (2009) policy charged districts with increasing academic achievement by improving teacher quality. The problem of teacher quality has plagued the public school system for decades. Stronge and Hindman (2005) suggest, "we can greatly improve student achievement if we come to an understanding of what constitutes an effective teacher and then seek out those qualities and behaviors" (p. 49). Districts are now compelled to take a closer look at teacher evaluation systems in order to measure teacher quality and effectiveness. Evaluation systems provide the impetus for informing teacher practice, as well as, potentially driving future staff development (Education, 2009). Many states are now requiring teacher ratings to be based on multiple measures of performance, with many states and districts electing to establish performance pay incentive parameters for meeting specific goals (Doherty & Jacobs, 2013). In the backdrop of this transitional educational landscape, at least one large urban school district in Texas embarked upon a project to improve its teacher evaluation system. The 2012-2013 school year marked the deployment of this district's newly implemented teacher evaluation system. This newly implemented teacher evaluation system aimed to address both teacher effectiveness and student growth. The purpose of this program evaluation was to: 1) examine teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system within a large urban school district and its influence on instructional planning, classroom

instruction and professional practice; 2) examine teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the training they received with the newly implemented evaluation system; and, 3) explore teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system being tied to performance pay. A purposeful sampling of sixteen teachers and five principals from low-performing and high-performing elementary, middle, and high schools within one large urban school district were selected as participants for this study to gain multiple perspectives from teachers and administrators across various contexts. Participants were part of one of the district's feeder pattern schools who participated in the pilot year of implementation. Three teacher focus groups were conducted, and each of the five principals were interviewed one-on-one using semi-structured interviews. Transcribed audio recordings from principal interviews and teacher focus groups were coded inductively (Creswell, 2002) and analyzed for emerging themes using the constant comparison method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Findings revealed teachers and administrators perceived the newly implemented teacher evaluation system to positively influence instructional planning by providing the focus and structure embedded in the Danielson's Framework for Teaching and assisting teachers in refining pedagogy. Additionally, both teachers and administrators reported the evaluation system influenced classroom instruction by promoting increased levels of student engagement and moving teachers from teacher-directed instruction to student-driven learning. Findings also revealed the evaluation system provides teachers and administrators opportunities for reflective practice through increased dialog and strengthened relationships. The teachers and administrators perceived some of the

training to be overwhelming and confusing due to the large amount of content given at once. Lastly, findings revealed teachers and administrators question the fairness of tying student growth measures to teacher performance pay, and they are unclear about the process for determining teacher performance pay.

Implications and recommendations for districts planning to implement new evaluation systems are included in this study. The recommendations include: developing a clear set of teaching standards rooted in best practices for effective teaching when adopting a new teacher evaluation system; assuring the evaluation process encourages frequent observations, goal setting, action planning, and teacher and administrator reflections to promote reflective and improved practice, increased dialog, and strengthened relationships; assuring district leadership across all levels are well-informed regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system and are equipped to explain processes and address concerns; forming a district-wide core training team to deliver district-wide professional development rather than relying solely on campus administrators to deliver turn-around training to teachers and other campus level administrators; and, scaffolding training in smaller segments to allow adult learners to synthesis and process information more deeply.

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Chapter I

Introduction

President Obama (2009) stated in a presidential address, “America will not succeed in the 21st century unless we do a far better job of educating our sons and daughters ...and the race starts today”. Although his seemingly ambitious proclamation about education reform is likely based on data reflecting needed reform, the means to achieve these grandiose ideals are often left in the hands of systemically paralyzed educators who are perpetually mired in red-tape. The implication for these educational leaders—who are already highly scrutinized and endlessly chided—is that the systems they have meticulously engineered and nurtured are failing. In essence, the head "superintendent" (Obama) implies that educators' current efforts are failing and need an educational paradigm shift.

Obama is not alone in his opinion, as multiple data and information resources reflect a need for reform. Low scores are common. Layton and Brown (2012) reported in the Washington Post that the 2012 SAT scores were the lowest in 40 years. Ironically, however, Obama’s proclamation was delivered on the heels of the most revolutionary, expansive, and expensive reformation endeavor in history—compelled by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2001. President Obama claimed that despite the efforts, education is still inadequate. However, there are subsequent reports from Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) evaluations that are coordinated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reporting that American students scored in the middle among 65 nations that participated in tests of reading math, and science. Improvements were shown over the first administration of

international test in the 60' and 70's where American students were in the bottom quartile (Ravitch 2013). Notwithstanding opposing research that counters educational decline, President Obama suggests that mandated changes from the NCLB law, along with other incremental reform pillars our current system is based on, have failed to curtail our nation's continual academic decline compared to academic performance in Russia, China, etc.(Race to the Top, 2009). In other words, after enduring decades of profound transformational renovation to no avail, it is apparent that our academic perspective itself must evolve to compete globally.

Inspired by the president's mandate and armed with new research to support the value of teacher accountability in the classroom, many districts across the nation are focusing on more divergent and innovative research based reforms. Research reflects that teacher quality is directly linked to student success (Goe & Stickler, Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: Making the Most of Recent Research, 2008). The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (2010) reported that although teachers are the most important school-related factor for student achievement gains, evaluation of teacher performance is seldom conducted in any rigorous way. It is, therefore, in the best interest of school districts and educational leaders to discover and use evaluation methods that promote and value good teaching as a key component for effective teaching models that promote professional excellence and continued growth.

To accomplish these tasks, administrators and assessors need to not only understand the technical components of their teacher evaluation system, but also internalize the system's purpose in order to foster meaningful relationships and teacher growth. Donaldson and Donaldson (2012) observed that teaching research largely focuses

on measuring teaching effectiveness. More importantly, they suggest “models of teacher performance assessment apply this research to district supervision and evaluation policies” (Donaldson & Donaldson, 2012, p. 78). However, one research-based perspective about teacher performance evaluations suggests that districts need to implement an assessment system that will go beyond evaluation and actively cultivate teacher improvement (Commission of Effective Teachers and Teaching, 2011).

Since the status of the educational system outlined and published in *A Nation at Risk* (1983), federal mandates were established to improve education quality through accountability, proficiency standards, and assessment criteria for teachers. As a result, nationwide attention to improve public education can, in part, be attributed to the No Child Left Behind Act and Obama’s Race to the Top (2009) policy. These policies were designed to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice so that all children have access to a quality and equitable education. President Bush’s NCLB Act mandated that all states create standards for testing students to ensure that students acquire required minimum skills in core academic areas. The law also increased the accountability standards yearly, requiring that 100% of students meet passing standards by year 2014 (NCLB, 2001). The NCLB Act focused on preparing, training, and recruiting high-quality teachers and principals. Each district was mandated to increase academic achievement through strategies to improve teacher quality and the number of highly qualified teachers. Similarly, the Race to the Top policy promotes innovation, reform, and excellence in America’s public schools. These initiatives both compel states to improve teacher effectiveness and offer incentives to states that actively drive educational reform in improving qualities of teaching and learning (Education, 2002).

Because of these policies, improving quality education is no longer just benevolent idealism—it is the law.

To provide a quality education for our youth, we must demand quality teaching through utilizing best practices, while observing characteristics of effective teachers, and combine those to create an efficient, teacher evaluation system. To accomplish these tasks, we must also examine inputs, processes, and outputs as they relate to teacher development. In this study, teachers' and administrators' perceptions of a district's new evaluation system and how they perceive it influencing their classroom instruction, professional practice, and instructional planning will be examined. Additionally, teachers' and administrations' perceptions and attitudes toward pay for performance being tied to the new evaluation system will be explored. Results from this study will provide school districts and educational leaders with knowledge of the teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the new evaluation system and how it influence their professional growth and practice.

Problem Background

Debates across the country regarding teacher effectiveness continue as school leaders, policy makers and various stakeholders further explore ways to assure that all students (K-12) receive a quality education in the United States public school setting. In one article, the suggestion to improve teacher quality states “we can greatly improve student achievement if we come to an understanding of what constitutes an effective teacher and then seek out qualities and behaviors” (Stronge & Hindman, 2005, p. 49). From this perspective, practitioners' performance is categorized as the duties and routines (i.e., planning for teaching and learning processes and staff development) that are

connected to practitioners both inside and outside the classroom. Consequently, evaluating teachers' performance "requires having a set of performance criteria" (Hinchey, 2010, p. 4). These criteria should be aligned with specifying and clarifying descriptions of desired behaviors that reflect the standards of education professional organizations or agencies. One such organization is The National Board.

Table 1.

The Five Core Propositions in General Education of Effective Behaviors

<i>What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do</i>	
Position 1	Teachers are committed to their students and their students' learning.
Position 2	Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
Position 3	Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
Position 4	Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
Position 5	Teachers are members of learning communities.

Source: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (1987).

Note. In 1987, The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards developed a set of standards or behaviors to advance the quality of teaching and learning.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) also gives some guiding principles for demonstrating quality teacher behaviors. The TEA's Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) Standards are listed in Table 2.

Table 2.***Texas Teacher Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities Standards***

<i>Standards</i>	<i>Descriptions</i>
I	The teacher designs instruction appropriate for all students that reflects an understanding of relevant content and is based on continuous and appropriate assessment.
II	The teacher creates a classroom environment of respect and rapport that fosters a positive climate for learning, equity, and excellence.
III	The teacher promotes student learning by providing responsive instruction that makes use of effective communication techniques, instructional strategies that actively engage students in the learning process, and timely, high-quality feedback.
IV	The teacher fulfills professional roles and responsibilities and adheres to legal ethical requirements of the profession.

Source: Texas Education Agency, EC-Grade12 (2007)

Note. This table illustrates an explanation of standard behaviors TEA suggests effective teachers demonstrate, including instructional strategies aligned with the assessment framework for practitioners (e.g., grades PPR & Early Childhood-12) (2007).

Both the National Board and the TEA primarily focus on positively impacting teaching and learning through a set of core standards and behaviors. Such behaviors should be demonstrated by practitioners and observed by an assessor. These guiding principles and standards are considered (a) best practices, as indicated by additional researchers; (b) important barometers for improved student achievement and academic growth; and (c) criteria indicators for assessing teacher performances. Grant, Hindman, and Stronge (2010) reiterated beliefs about the functions and relationship of certain teacher behaviors that are directly aligned with the definition of quality teaching. They

contended that communication skills, teacher preparation, personal relationship with students, classroom management, and instructional planning that focuses on high expectations correlate to quality or effective teaching.

In view of these discussions, present-day evaluation systems alone are inadequate to designate teacher quality, enhance teacher practice, and raise student achievement levels. Evidence supporting these claims can be seen in studies conducted by Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, and Bernstein (1984) and others (Glatthorn, 1984; McGreal, 1983; Toch & Rothman, 2008). More importantly, these researchers reveal that present evaluation systems do not provide specific information to assist in improving pedagogical skills to align with instructional standards. Furthermore, “the assessment of teacher quality fails more often because of organizational neglect than because of technical deficiencies” (Donaldson & Donaldson, 2012, p. 79). Organizations must commit to ongoing training and professional development to further teacher growth. A good evaluation system should begin with discussions, demonstrations, and ongoing professional development to tease apart indicators and characteristics of what effective instruction is. To assist teachers in developing higher competency, proficiency, and better instructional practices for pedagogy, an evaluation system needs to aid in practitioners’ perceptions of effectiveness and ineffectiveness.

Statement of the Problem

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, and Obama’s *Race to the Top* (2009) policy charged districts with increasing academic achievement by improving teacher quality. Thus, districts are taking a closer examination of teacher evaluation systems to measure teacher effectiveness, inform teacher practice and drive staff development

(Education, 2009). As a result, a large urban school district in Texas has embarked upon a project to improve their teacher evaluation system. The 2012-2013 school year marked the inaugural year of the district's evaluation system. The multi-measure evaluation system aims to address both teacher effectiveness and student growth. More states are requiring teacher ratings to be based on multiple measures of performance, with many states and districts including performance pay (Doherty & Jacobs, 2013). Recent researchers have conducted studies on the influence of new teacher evaluation systems in the early stages of implementation (Dee & Wyckoff, 2013; Robertson-Kraft, 2014).

The district in this study began the design of their newly implemented teacher evaluation in September 2011. Operation Public Education (a University of Pennsylvania based consulting group) supported the district in this process. The district utilized the book *A Grand Bargain for Education Reform: New Rewards and New Supports for New Accountability* as its guide during the entire process (Hershberg & Robertson-Kraft, 2009). During the 2012-2013 school year, Robertson-Kraft (2014) focused on moving the body of research on performance management policies forward by examining the impact of a district's newly implemented teacher evaluation on teachers' motivation, effectiveness, and retention.

Robertson-Kraft also explored how individual personality characteristics, school organizational factors, and evaluation system features influence these outcomes. She focused on the implementation of the new evaluation system and teachers' attitudes towards the policy, the new system's impact on teacher motivation, effectiveness, and retention, and the relationship among all three of these outcomes (teacher motivation, effectiveness, and retention). During the district's pilot year (2012-2013), 4,397 teachers

were teaching in 74 schools and 1,883, or 43%, of these teachers were in pilot schools. Dr. Robertson-Kraft's case study sample was diverse, representing different school environments. The researcher collected data on early implementation of the new system by conducting teacher surveys. The confidential surveys were developed to capture information on teachers' attitudes towards specific aspects of the new system. The key descriptive results were collected in two phases highlighting overall perceptions of the evaluation system and explore how these attitudes changed over the course of the year. During phase one of the study, many principals struggled to consistently accomplish the increased requirements, in particular the additional observations under the new system. The survey also revealed both teachers and principals had different ideas regarding the purpose of the new evaluation system. Even with the presence of centrally developed resources, principals' presentations to their teachers on the purpose of the new system varied considerably. Some believed the system would result in improved teaching and learning and others believed the system was designed primarily as a tool to hold teachers accountable for their performance. The researcher reported that teachers' attitudes towards the new system at the beginning of the year were mixed and subsequently shifted over the course of the year. Initially, teachers were overwhelmed by the timeline and increased expectations. Nonetheless, the majority of teachers appreciated the clarity and comprehensive nature of the new observation measure (the Danielson Framework) and the detailed and evidence-driven nature of the new observation process (utilizing the online Teachscape system). However, at the end of the year, pilot teachers had lower perceptions of the evaluation system. After experiencing system's implementation, many teachers conveyed frustration with the unattainability and unfairness of the requirements.

According to Robertson-Kraft's findings, the positive impact on teaching, teacher development, and student achievement were hovering in the neutral range on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 as "strongly disagree" to 5 as "strongly agree". As demonstrated in table below, teachers who scored a level 4 or highly effective on the Danielson Framework tended to have a better perception of the new evaluation system. Whereas, teachers who scored level 1 or ineffective, their mean was not as positive as the highly effective teachers. The survey captured contrast between level 4 or highly effective teachers and the other level teachers in each of the areas. However, the difference between the levels (level 1 is ineffective, level 2 is basic, level 3 is effective, and level 4 is highly effective) was even more pronounced for perceptions of the fairness of the evaluation process. Thus, it is not surprising the mean score for the overall positive impact of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system was 2.89.

Table 3.
Individual Variation in Survey Perceptions by Teachers by Performance Level on Danielson Framework.

Perceptions	Mean Scale (1-5)	Level 1 <i>n</i> = 17	Level 2 <i>n</i> = 100	Level 3 <i>n</i> = 806	Level 4 <i>n</i> = 115
<i>Teachers in All Schools</i>	3.54	3.22	3.15	3.55	3.86
Quality of Measures***	(0.87)	(1.42)	(0.85)	(0.85)	(0.80)
Fairness of Process***	3.41	2.65	2.74	3.43	3.92
	(0.93)	(1.27)	(0.94)	(0.88)	(0.76)
Frequency of Evaluation***	3.70	3.09	3.38	3.72	3.97
	(0.98)	(1.29)	(1.10)	(0.95)	(0.90)
Reported Number of Observations	3.94	3.65	4.04	4.03	3.20
	(4.23)	(1.97)	(1.93)	(4.67)	(1.95)
Reported Number of Conversations	2.77	2.94	2.72	2.77	2.77
	(1.88)	(1.34)	(1.50)	(1.87)	(2.33)
Quality of Feedback and Growth	3.38	3.22	3.35	3.36	3.59
	(0.89)	(1.11)	(0.81)	(0.90)	(0.83)
<i>Teachers in Pilot Schools</i>	3.31	3.32	3.16	3.32	3.43
	(0.82)	(0.95)	(0.80)	(0.82)	(0.80)
Level of Understanding					
Positive	3.17	3.47	3.06	3.17	3.26
	(0.91)	(1.07)	(0.93)	(0.91)	(0.90)
Goal-Setting	3.27	3.50	3.01	3.27	3.45
	(0.79)	(0.98)	(0.76)	(0.79)	(0.70)
Accuracy of Measures***	3.20	3.54	3.04	3.20	3.31
	(0.82)	(0.87)	(0.84)	(0.82)	(0.75)
Growth and Impact*	2.89	3.41	2.73	2.87	3.08
	(1.09)	(1.06)	(1.08)	(1.09)	(1.09)
Positive Impact of New System*					

Source: (Robertson-Kraft, 2014)

With the above mentioned in view, this study attempted to gather a deeper understanding of the teachers' and administrators' perception of the newly implemented evaluation system and how they perceive it to influence their instructional planning, classroom instruction, and professional practice. This study also examined teachers' and administrators' perceptions of performance-based pay as a component of the newly implemented evaluation system.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to seek a deeper understanding of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of a newly implemented evaluation system and how it influenced instructional planning, classroom instruction, and professional practice. Teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the quality and effectiveness of the training they received during the implementation process of the teacher evaluation system was explored. Finally, teachers' and administrators' perceptions of this newly implemented evaluation system incorporating performance pay as a component was examined.

Results from this study provided district leaders and policy makers with additional knowledge about teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding a newly implemented evaluation system and how they perceived it influencing instructional planning, classroom instruction, and professional practice, the quality of the training they received, and perceived impact of performance pay being tied to the teacher evaluation system.

Significance of the Study

As districts embrace the opportunity to implement new teacher evaluation systems that will promote teacher quality and effectiveness across the state of Texas, it is essential they critically analyze newly implemented teacher evaluation systems to see if they are perceived to yield, as well as actually yield, the following desired results in order to pave the way for many districts to follow:

- To differentiate instructional practice
- To increase teacher effectiveness

The district's goal was to differentiate and improve teachers' instructional performance using a model that focuses on five domains. The first four domains were modeled after Danielson's framework for teaching and the fifth domain was the value added component. The goal was to have the system create productive conversations between teachers and the administrators, as well as create more accurate representations of teachers' performance across campuses. The ultimate goal was to increase the number of highly effective teachers deploying quality instruction. This evaluation system was not only designed to assist teachers in improving their craft as they become highly effective, it was also designed to help teachers who are underperforming by providing immediate feedback to target and support areas that were deficit in order to assist those teachers in advancing their practice. On the other hand, the district was aiming for the system to also lend itself to the dismissal of teachers who are unable to improve the quality of their instruction. The last goal was to increase teacher job satisfaction ratings, thus leading to an increase in the district's retention rate.

Research Questions

1. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing instructional planning (demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, setting instructional expectations demonstrating knowledge of resources, designing coherent instruction, designing student assessments)?
2. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing classroom instruction (communicating with

students, questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, assessment, and flexibility and responsiveness)?

3. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing teachers' and administrators' professional practice (growing and developing professionally, showing professionalism, participating in a professional community, reflecting on teaching)?
4. What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the quality of training they received with the newly implemented teacher evaluation system?
5. What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system being tied to performance pay?

Assumptions

The assumptions for this study included,

1. The participants responded openly and honestly on the questionnaire and interview instruments.
2. The responses on the questionnaire and the interview instruments was representative of other practitioners and administrators in the same population because of similar training.
3. The instrument was a valid and reliable measuring tool for the population under investigation.
4. The participants interpreted each question of the questionnaire and the interview similarly.

Limitations of this Study

The following limitations are noted in this study.

1. This study did not include an examination nor responses from teacher evaluation instruments within other school districts in other states.
2. This current study collected data from teachers and administrators who are employed in the schools of a vertical feeder pattern.
3. The research was conducted at the district where the researcher is employed.
4. The study was bounded to one district and findings in this district may not be symbolic of other districts.

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of clarity and specificity, these terms were defined for this study.

Highly effective teacher. “A teacher whose students achieve acceptable rates (e.g., at least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in this notice). States may supplement this definition as they see fit so long as teacher effectiveness is judged, in significant measure, by student growth (as defined in this notice)” 74 Fed. Reg. at 37811.

Effective teacher. A teacher whose students achieve acceptable rates (e.g., at least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in this notice). States may and should supplement this definition with multiple measures as they see fit, so long as teacher effectiveness is judged, in significant measure, by student growth (as defined in this notice). Supplemental measures should include evidence of research-based teaching practice, teacher performance, and contribution to student learning. Such measures should be appropriate both for newly licensed and veteran teachers. 74 Fed. Reg. at 37811.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. The federal mandate or law that emerged in 2001 as an instrument to assist school improvements by focusing federal accountability for results, freedom for states and communities, and proven education methods and choices for parents.

Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS). The appraisal system recommended by the State of Texas.

Supervision. The process of observing, evaluating, and directing a group of people with regards to job-related or work-related tasks and responsibilities.

Vertical Education Advisory Committee (VEAC.) Elected representatives for each of the 74 schools in the study district. The representatives include two teachers, one support personnel, one parent, and one business community member.

District Education Advisory Committee (DEAC). Members from the VEAC who are elected to serve on the district advisory committee.

Multi-measures. Using many areas, documents, and data to compose a holistic approach of an evaluation. It requires more than one source of documented evidence (e.g., quantitative and/or qualitative data) in the decision making process and developing theories to create solutions for the problem.

Assessment. An evaluation instrument used in the educational system as a tool to measure instructional performance with regards to teaching behaviors that are associated with competency and proficiency levels influencing the academic and achievement outcomes of students.

Smartcard. A statistical means of measuring and assigning values to teacher performance in relation to student achievement over time.

Value-added. A statistical means of measuring and assigning values to teacher performance in relation to student achievement over time.

Theoretical Framework and Rationale for this Study

The emphasis on accountability and student achievement legislated by NCLB coupled with the Race to the Top policy directly influence the teacher evaluation process as the laws require districts to focus on teacher quality. In Texas, the evaluation of teachers is specifically mandated by the Texas Administrative Code.

A plethora of research surrounds the premise of teacher evaluation systems. Darling-Hammond (2000) suggested that effective teacher evaluation systems and how they are used help teachers improve their practice. According to the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (2010), teachers are the most important school-related factor for student achievement gains, but evaluation of teacher performance is seldom conducted in any rigorous way.

Danielson's Framework for Teaching (2007) contends that traditional systems of evaluation do little to improve teacher effectiveness or quality. Danielson's framework for teaching focuses on the importance of student learning, the nature of learning and how learning is promoted. The system also examines professional responsibilities of teachers and professional growth. Danielson (2008) stated, "The framework for teaching may be used to evaluate teacher performance. Its principle contribution to the profession lies in its use in promoting professional learning" (p. 17). As a result, connections made between teacher evaluation and teacher development may be attributed to solutions for problems linked to professional inquiry as an ongoing process. For these reasons, teacher evaluation has important functions that make connections between professional development and identifying effective and/or best pedagogical practices an opportunity to

deepen the content knowledge and learn new methods of implementation. In addition, “professional development encourages more time to work with colleagues, to critically examine the new standards being exposed, and to make decisions to determine the implementation plan” (Corcoran, 1995, p. 1). These areas are listed as:

- Measures teachers’ content knowledge
- Measures teachers’ pedagogical skills
- Measures students’ growth performance
- Designed to cultivate teacher development and growth (Marzano & Toth, 2013, pp. 4-7).

Because teaching is one of the most valuable investments a school district can make, professional development makes contributions to effective practices by providing teachers with “job-embedded learning” (Zepeda, 2008, p. 141) through hands-on activities for professional growth.

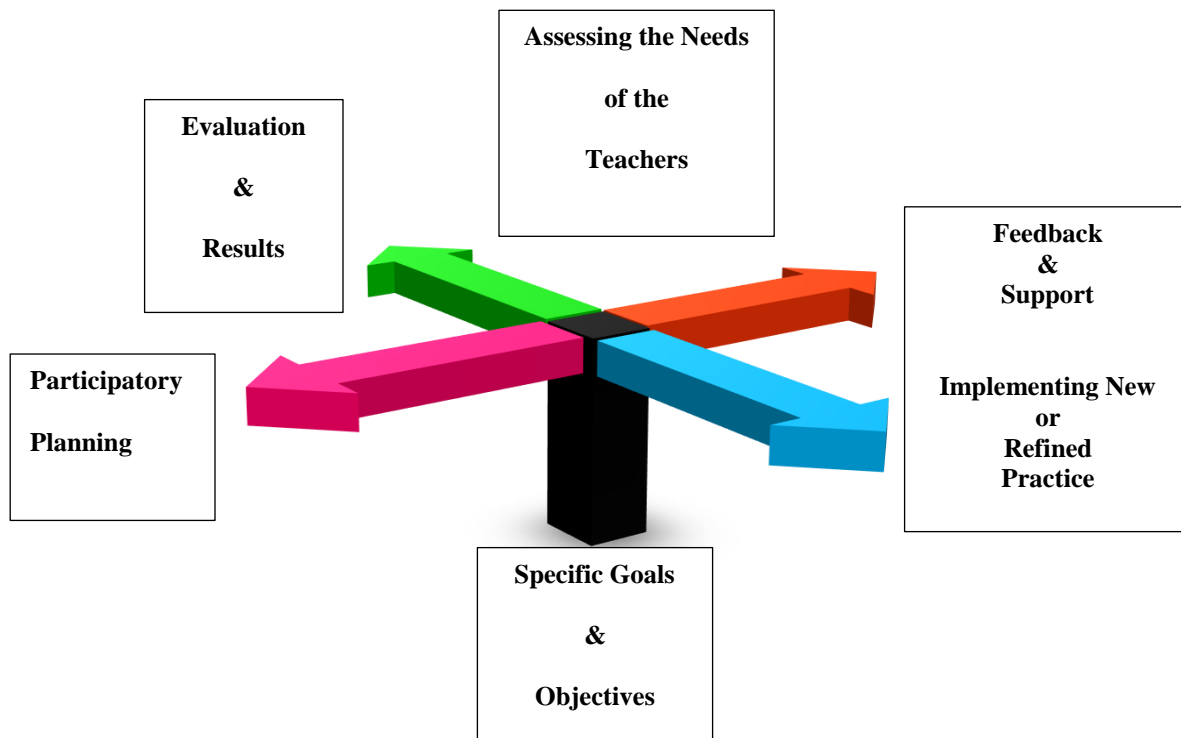


Figure 1. Job-Embedded Learning Impact as Professional Development. Source: Professional Development: What Works (Zepeda, 2008, p. 126).

Figure 2 illustrates methods that can be incorporated to transform professional development into higher standards and expectations implemented in teacher pedagogy and planning. Figure 2 depicts the connection of teacher training, showing that “the cornerstone of successful development is the way in which adults are engaged in learning and professional growth” (Zepeda, 2008, p. 121). In an educational system that is continuously changing or in the process of reform, improving practice, performance, and professional development become essential parts of the process.

There are several reasons professional development becomes necessary in the teaching profession. Many experts and organizations have suggested that the most effective professional development policies include the following principles:

- Stimulate and support site-based initiatives.
- Ground professional development in knowledge about teaching.
- Model constructivist teaching so teachers question and debate before integrating new ideas or strategies.
- Consider the differences between varying degrees of experience and areas of disciplinary expertise.
- Provide sufficient time for follow-up support for teachers.

(Corcoran, 1995, p. 5).

The connection between teacher evaluation and professional development can be linked to formative and summative evaluation approaches. Formative evaluations are concerned with conditions that help to make decisions to improve daily, weekly, or monthly operations of professional learning. Summative evaluations are conducted at the

end of the initiative or process. Both formative and summative evaluations assist with addressing changes or accountability questions with regard to teacher improvement or termination. Researchers have justified connecting professional development and evaluation as a way to improve the quality of education for students, as well as assist in implementing improvements of instructional practice (Duke & Corno, 1982; Guskey, 2000; Sanders & Sullins, 2005). More importantly, to meet new expectations, teachers need to be exposed to intensive ongoing professional training (Cole, 2008).

Continuous teacher professional training is considered to be essential to the academic and achievement growth of students; therefore, evaluating the instructional cycle and repertoire of pedagogical strategies are key components to sustain effectiveness and best practices.

The Present Evaluation Process Framework for Texas

The evaluation process is divided into several steps, with timelines and scoring incorporated at each step. Figure 3 serves as the evaluation framework and the process steps as outlined by the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS).

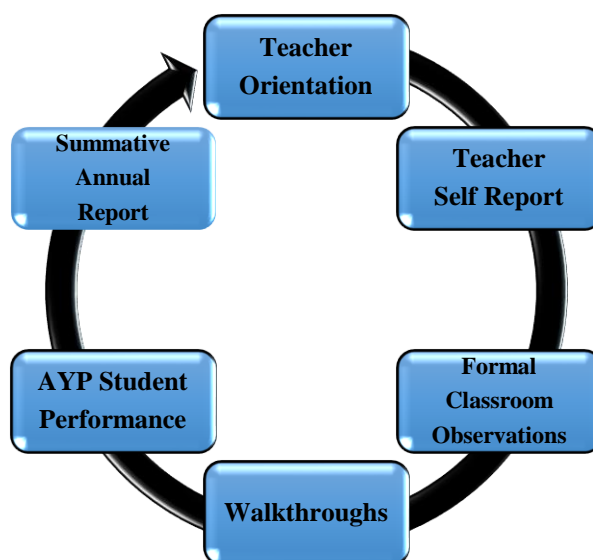


Figure 2. Texas appraisal process steps. Source: PDAS Teacher Manual (Texas Education Agency, 2005, p. 7).

The timeline for the PDAS teacher orientation is designated during the first three weeks of school. The schedule for the informal observations may occur no earlier than three weeks into the orientation, and the Teacher Self Report Part I should be completed during this time period. The Teacher Self Report Parts II and III are due at least two weeks before the summative conference. The formal observation periods may begin with a pre-observation conference at the request of the teacher or appraiser. The formal observation period lasts a minimum of 45 minutes. This rule is also applied for the post-observation conference. Walkthroughs or classroom visits are implemented at the discretion of the appraiser.

The scoring of the PDAS consists of the following evaluation criteria:

- Exceed expectation (90-100% of students participating).
- Proficient (80-89% of students participating).
- Below expectation (50-79% of students participating, while others are off-task).
- Unsatisfactory (less than 49% participating)

(Texas PDAS Teacher Manual, 2005, p. 62).

The above scoring standards for quality are determined by the frequencies, percentages of time, and repeated evidence. The domains and their classifications of the evaluation will be discussed in another section of this study. Prior to the challenge issued by President Obama, districts across the State of Texas used the PDAS as a measure of teacher effectiveness. However, teachers consistently scored at proficient or higher rates, while students were not making corresponding academic gains.

Research Design

This program evaluations are intended to provided information to relevant stakeholders so that stakeholders make informed decisions about programs (Fitzpatrick & Sanders, 2011). Thus, the purpose of this program evaluation was to provide the district leaders and stakeholders with pertinent information regarding teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system and how it is perceived to influence teachers' instructional planning, classroom instruction, professional practice, quality of received training, as well as performance pay being tied to their evaluation.

This program evaluation drew on results from a previous quantitative study conducted by Claire Robertson-Kraft for this large urban school district to garnish information about the district's newly implemented teacher evaluation system to drive further examination of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the system. The previous quantitative data supplied background information and showed the generality of specific information (Taylor & Trujillo, 2001). The quantitative data from this previous study including 3,254 teachers in 2013 and 3,172 teachers in 2014 was used by the researcher to guide this program evaluation in developing research questions and instruments. Participants in the survey gave their perceptions of specific elements of the new teacher evaluation system. According to Robertson-Kraft's findings, the positive impact on teaching, teacher development, and student achievement were all hovering in the neutral range on a 5-point scale (with 5 being "strongly agree" and 1 being "strongly disagree"). The mean score for the overall positive impact of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system on teaching and learning was 2.89.

Therefore, the researcher used qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and focus groups to further explore into the perceptions of both teachers and administrators in regards to the large urban school district's evaluation system. The researcher obtained perceptions regarding the evaluation system's influence on teachers' instructional planning, classroom instruction, and professional practice. In addition, teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the quality of the training they received and incorporating performance pay as a component.

Qualitative research methods can enhance the development of quality measures, the development and dissemination of comparative quality reports, and quality improvement efforts. Interviews have also been used to identify best practices (Sofaer, 2002). According to Sofaer (2002), it is critical that the analysis and interpretation process be deliberate and thorough to avoid the use of internal bias. Using both quantitative results from the previous study and interview data from this qualitative research, the researcher was able to form stronger generalizations (Creswell & Clark, 2006). The researcher collected, analyzed, and mixed both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study.

Interviews were conducted with selected principals and selected teachers from a vertical feeder pattern. The researcher selected a total of sixteen teachers from the five schools to participate in one of three focus group meetings. The researcher also interviewed each of the five campus principals. The researcher conducted a pilot test of the questions by having two teachers and two principals that did not participate in the study read the questions to see if they understood the intent of questions. The predetermined, open-ended questions were directed to five principals and sixteen

teachers. The participants answered standardized, open-ended interview questions where the wording and sequence of questions were predetermined. Principals and teachers answered the same open-ended questions in the same sequence. This predetermined wording reduces the researcher's effects and bias (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

The interviews and focus group meetings allowed each participant the opportunity to reflect on the newly implemented teacher evaluation system and its perceived influence on teachers' instructional planning, classroom instruction, professional practice, received training, as well as performance pay. The interviews and focus groups allowed the principals and teachers to respond to the questions based on their own experiences and point of view concerning the newly implemented teacher evaluation system. The five campus principals and sixteen teachers were asked to give specific examples of how the newly implemented evaluation system has influenced their practice.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Since the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, educational leaders and administrators have been preoccupied with the criteria of teacher evaluations and assessments. For more than two decades, educational administrators have been challenged with the issues of determining teacher quality and selecting the best practices, methods, or instruments to measure teacher competencies and proficiencies. Administrators are challenged to determine or define effective teachers and accurately isolate “*the what*” components to evaluate teacher quality and designate or determine how these criteria will be measured (Bogden, 2003).

Measuring teacher effectiveness can be challenging when students' academic growth and learning successes as reflected by test scores do not always correlate with excellent teaching. Policy makers and educational administrators are also contributing to the evaluation reform movement in districts across nations by focusing attention on professional development, instructional practices, and effective pedagogical strategies. (National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, 2010) This attention has catalyzed a renaissance of teacher evaluation reform. Consequently, performance-based instruction has gradually emerged as the norm in school districts across the United States. This landscape of performance-based instruction has influenced a paradigm shift in teacher assessment and evaluation systems. As result, many districts are reorganizing or restructuring their teacher evaluation systems to identify and differentiate between ineffective practitioners and those effective practitioners who positively influence student academic progress and promote best practices (Pathe & Choe, 2013). None would argue

that having a quality teacher in every classroom is the ultimate goal of effective evaluation systems; yet, the debate continues about how best to define what teacher quality really means (Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice A Framework for Teaching*, 2007).

Teacher quality may be defined as inputs (education, certification, and subject matter knowledge), processes (teaching and learning), and outputs (student performance, graduation). This chapter includes multiple perspectives on what “teacher quality” really means and how to define it (Hightower, Delgado, Lloyd, Wittenstein, Sellers, & Swanson, 2011). Before discussing teacher quality, historical perspectives are provided for several components, including teacher supervision, pay for performance, the value-added model (VAM), classroom instructional measurements, professional practice measures, instructional planning measurements, professional development as adult learners, the role of principals as leaders in the evaluation process, suspension, and research literature describing current practices.

Historical Perspective

Prior to giving the history of teacher supervision, the foundation of how the term “teacher supervision” is defined will be examined. According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, supervision is defined as the action, process, or occupation of supervising—especially “a critical watching and directing” (as of activities or of a course of action). Merriam-Webster states that to supervise is to oversee. It is from a Latin word *supervisus*, past participle of *supervidere*, which means to oversee. Supervision is related to vision. If ‘vision’ implies seeing, the word ‘supervision’ can be read as over-seeing, looking over someone’s shoulder to check on them; and also ‘super’ in the sense of outstanding or

special, helping someone to extend their professional skills and understanding. Both of these aspects will be relevant to varying degrees in supervision, depending on the context...It can be helpful to think about supervision both in terms of development which is related to ongoing professional learning and performance with regards to related clinical governance and standard setting. (London Deanery Website, 2012, p.1).

The Early Era of Supervision: 1700-1800

Supervision of teachers was very different in the 1700s because education was not considered a profession (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). During the 1700s, clergy or local government officials were appointed as officials to inspect both the teachers and what the students were learning. Burke and Krey (2005) noted that these supervisors had total power to establish criteria for effective instruction and to hire and fire teachers. The inspectors would visit school in the area to make sure that the teachers were following the community standards. Often, the standards were not clearly defined and had no link to the student's education.

The Common School Era of Supervision: 1830-1900

The formation of city schools or the new public schools grew in the late 1830s due to population growth in the larger cities. This was called the Common School Era. As the cities grew, so did the demand on teachers and supervisors (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). Cities would select one of the teachers in the building to assume administrative duties. Over time, the lead teacher or principal teacher grew into the role of "building principal", fading out the need for clergymen to act as school inspectors. The lead teacher or principal teacher continued to inspect what the teachers were doing and determined if the students were learning. As time progressed, the demand became greater

for the principal to assume increasingly difficult responsibilities as the principal's pedagogy knowledge became critically valuable in making academic decisions.

The Clinical Supervision Era of Supervision: 1900

In the 1900's, clinical supervision was leading the charge. Harvard professors Cogan (1972) and Anderson (1996), along with a group of graduate students, identified different forms of clinical supervision. Clinical supervision consisted of both objective and scientific classroom observations with aspects of peer coaching, rational planning, and some aspects of student learning. Each practitioner had some aspects of pre-observation conference, classroom observation, and post conference. Goldhammer (1969) had a system with five steps. The five-step process included:

1. a pre-observation conference between supervisor and teacher concerning elements of the lesson to be observed,
2. classroom observation,
3. a supervisor's analysis of notes from the observation and planning for a post-observation conference,
4. a post-observation conference between supervisor and teacher, and
5. a supervisor's analysis of the post-observation conference .

(Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer, 1969).

Coupled with changes in how teachers were evaluated, curriculum reform came into focus. One curriculum reform called the Hunter Model significantly impacted supervision in the 1980s (Hunter, 1984). The Hunter Model designed lessons using seven elements which the teacher needed to consider. The seven elements are as follows:

1. **Learning objective.** The teacher selects an objective at an appropriate level of difficulty and complexity, as determined through a task analysis, diagnostic testing, and/or congruence with Bloom's cognitive taxonomy.
2. **Anticipatory set.** The teacher motivates instruction by focusing the learning task based on its importance and the prior knowledge/experience of the learners.
3. **Modeling.** The teacher models what is meant as important, showing several examples so as not to stifle creativity.
4. **Input.** The teacher should identify and teach main concepts and skills, emphasizing clear explanations, frequently using examples or diagrams, and inviting active student participation.
5. **Check for understanding.** The teacher should frequently observe and interpret student reactions (such as active interest or boredom) and provide immediate feedback, adjusting instruction as needed and re-teaching if necessary.
6. **Guided practice.** The teacher should provide guided practice at following instruction by having students answer questions, discuss with one another, demonstrate skills, or solve problems, giving immediate feedback and re-teaching if necessary.
7. **Independent practice.** The teacher should assign independent practice to solidify skills and knowledge when students have demonstrated understanding.

(Hunter, 1994, pp. 87-95).

Hunter's (1994) instructional model was embedded in the clinical supervision process of pre- and post-conferences, coupled with walkthroughs and observations. Although clinical supervision is a preferred method, it is time-consuming and labor-

intensive. Therefore, many districts shy away from using clinical supervision on a regular basis given the number of teachers that administrators have to supervise and the number of other administrative tasks administrators are responsible for (Starratt, 1997). With the noted time constraints, Sergiovanni and Starratt (2006) recommended a supervisory system with multiple processes of supervision. The process would include a summative evaluation. This system allows for indirect and direct supervision. It would not require each teacher to have an observation every year. The system would cycle teachers with a high rating on their evaluations through a three to five year period. During the time they were being formally evaluated, educators would simply use other means to gather information, such as teacher self-reports and peer supervision, in addition to curriculum development and school reform projects. (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2006).

Transformation Era of Supervision

Many research studies in education have emerged since the inception of the NCLB Act in 2001 and Race to the Top in 2009. Some researchers explored the effectiveness of teacher evaluation systems and how they were used to help teachers not only improve their practice but help close achievement gaps for learners. One such study was conducted by Darling-Hammond in 2000. Darling-Hammond (2000) examined the performance of teachers and their students and identified a clear link between teachers and student achievement. Darling-Hammond (2000) determined that improving teachers' pedagogical skills and professional growth had a huge impact on student achievement. She explained:

As teaching has become a major focus, teacher evaluation is currently the primary tool being promoted to improve it. Thus, most states are dramatically overhauling

their evaluation systems for teachers and administrators. What is really needed is the conception of teacher evaluation as part of a teaching and learning system that supports continuous improvement for individual teachers and the profession as a whole. (Darling-Hammond, 2012, p. 8)

Researchers are taking a critical examination of teacher evaluation systems in terms of increasing teacher quality, which in turn will increase student learning. Multiple studies have emerged focusing on teacher quality. While few would argue the importance of having a quality teacher in every classroom, how “teacher quality” is defined is often up for debate. This next section aims to discuss how teacher quality is defined in term of inputs, processes, and outputs.

A broad but common working definition of teacher quality is the set of teacher skills, knowledge, personal attributes, and pedagogical abilities that yield desired student outcomes (Goldhaber & Hannaway, 2009). *The Widget Effect* (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009) is a report that suggests that educators persistently fail to acknowledge differentiations in teacher quality and effectiveness. Teacher evaluation systems should be the nucleus for change. In theory, teacher evaluation systems should be the catalyst by which teacher effectiveness is differentiated. In actuality, only when the teacher’s performance necessitates a dismissal is teacher data usually used to speak to the teacher’s effectiveness. The inability of evaluation systems to provide reliable information regarding a teacher’s instructional practice has become what is called the Widget Effect. The Widget Effect is the propensity for school districts to presume effectiveness is the same from teacher to teacher—thus creating a culture in which teachers are no longer individual professionals, but interchangeable parts. Teacher

performance information is predominantly used for teacher remediation and dismissal, which portrays a dismal representation of how teacher effectiveness is measured.

In an effort to differentiate teacher effectiveness, a district in Texas is overhauling its teacher evaluation system. The system aims to differentiate teacher quality in four domains. The domains are (a) planning and preparation, (b) classroom environment, (c) classroom instruction, and (d) professional responsibilities (Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice A Framework for Teaching*, 2007). The district also intends to incorporate a domain that focuses on student growth percentiles as an additional measure of teacher quality or effectiveness.

The Measures of Effective Teaching project (MET project, 2013) was a study conducted to investigate better ways to identify and develop teacher quality. Funding the project was the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The goal of the MET project was to build and test measure of effective teaching to find out how to evaluation methods could best be used to tell teachers about skills that make them most effective (MET Project). Examined in the project were classroom observation instruments, student perception surveys, and student achievement gains. The MET project tested new approaches to measuring effective teaching using a variety of available frameworks—all considered in order to help school systems build fair and reliable systems. Nearly 3,000 MET project teachers volunteered to open their classrooms for this study. The study spanned across seven cities in seven states.

The MET Project focused on several measures, including classroom observation instruments, student perception surveys, and student achievement gains. The classroom observation instrument measured both subject-specific and cross-subject tools, which

defined discrete teaching competencies and described different levels of performance. Student surveys assessed key characteristics of the classroom environment. Student achievement gains were based on state tests and on more cognitively challenging assessments.

Researchers involved in the Met Project reported findings as they learned them in order to give the various states and district ongoing insight on how to inform their practice. This in-depth project sought to answer some critical questions (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013). Can measures of effective teaching identify teachers who better help students learn? The data of this particular study indicated that educators can identify groups of teachers who are more effective than other teachers in helping students learn. In addition, researchers reported that the students of the identified “effective teachers” outperformed their peers on state tests, as well as on more cognitively challenging assessments in math and English.

However, some criticisms are present of the MET project, as stated in a review partly funded by the Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice (Rothstein, J.; Mathis, W.J., 2013). Two different MET Project Documents were reviewed: *Have We Identified Effective Teachers? And A Composite Estimator of Effective Teaching: Culminating Findings from The Measures of Effective Teaching Project*. The review focused on these two studies because these studies became the foundation of the policy conclusions. One of the major criticisms of the study focused on the value-added (VA) component. The review contends that VA-based evaluations pose concern in that teachers may be unfairly rewarded or penalized due to student differences. Although the model

makes an effort to regulate for variances, this cannot occur without a glitch. The degree of bias in VA scores is vital in order to use these scores for teacher evaluations.

Process

As a result of the NCLB Act's and Race to the Top's concentration on teacher quality and student results, focus has altered from supervision to evaluation. Although some districts may still use walkthroughs as the only method for measuring teacher quality, a definite need is present for change to a more current evaluation system, especially if districts are going to measure instructional performance by the NCLB Act and Race to the Top standards criteria continuum (Normore & Brooks, 2012).

Danielson (2007) contended that traditional systems of evaluation did little to improve teacher quality or the quality of instruction. Danielson designed a standards-based evaluation system that was based on the assumptions about what is important for students to learn, the nature of learning, and how learning is promoted. Also addressed in this system are the professional responsibilities of teachers and professional growth. Danielson (2007) developed a very detailed rubric to measure teacher effectiveness entitled a *Framework for Teaching*. According to Danielson, many evaluation systems in use today were developed in the early to mid-1970s and reflect what educators believed about teaching at that time. Danielson reported that current systems rely heavily on the documentation of a small number of observable behaviors, such as writing the objective on the board, teacher smiling at the students as she/he greets them, and giving the students verbal praise. Danielson (2007) contended the teacher will make a point of doing all of those things when being observed by the administrator so as to have each item checked off the list. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, evaluation systems like the one

described by Danielson are grounded in the teaching that prevailed in the 1970s, and many systems today are still based on the work originally implemented by Madeline Hunter (1982). The research on student learning that accompanied these systems relied on the only available measures of student achievement: norm-referenced, machine scoreable, multiple-choice tests of fairly low-level knowledge.

Today, the goals for student achievement have evolved. Now the interest is in more complex learning, problem-solving, and the application of knowledge to unfamiliar situations. Recent educational research, particularly on the nature of the brain and how it learns, has made it clear that we need new approaches to teaching and, therefore, to the description and evaluation of teaching (Danielson, 2007; Jensen, 2005). Similar to other professions, education is built around a conception of practice based on current and emerging research findings. As those findings suggest new approaches, pedagogical practices follow. As pedagogical practices emerge, the evaluation of teaching must reflect these newer techniques. The evaluative criteria used should represent the most current research available, and we need to make provisions, as time goes on, to revise those criteria to reflect current findings. For example, teachers might be asked to demonstrate that their students successfully achieve the state's content standards or that teachers are teaching for understanding (rather than merely rote learning). Danielson's (2009) work represented a milestone in the development of a standards-based teacher evaluation systems, and over the next decade, many others joined in developing similar tools for evaluating the effectiveness of teachers. As these advances were made, others began to study the usefulness and validity of these tools.

The profound study called the Widget Effect (referenced earlier in this chapter) documented that the most important factor for schools in improving student achievement is the teacher's effectiveness or teacher quality (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009). Noted in this particular report was that if campus and district leaders would examine teacher evaluations records, they would discover that, on paper, nearly every teacher is scored effective or highly effective, even if their students' achievement scores indicate the opposite. Unfortunately, this issue is systemic for public schools nationwide. The report examined the nation's failure to examine teacher effectiveness honestly and the role that effectiveness played on students' achievement. Further detailed in this report was that core of this failure is the teacher evaluation system and how the system fails to provide truthful and reliable information regarding individual teachers' instructional performance.

The Widget Effect spanned across four states and 12 districts, surveying 15,000 teachers and 1,300 administrators while gaining insight of more than 80 local and state education officials, teachers union leaders, policymakers and advocates who participated in advisory capacity. The overarching findings of the study were that districts continue to foster an environment where teachers are not understood to be individual professionals, but interchangeable parts. It depicts the idea that teachers are not looked at for their individual instructional performance unless the teacher's performance is so low that it is deemed necessary to dismiss the teacher for poor performance. The created assumption that teacher performance is solely used for decisions related to teacher remediation and or dismissal makes one think that instructional effectiveness is only measured when it comes times to remove a teacher (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009).

Inputs

Some quality indicators, such as education, certification, and subject-matter knowledge, are considered inputs identified in the definition of *highly qualified* teachers in the NCLB Act of 2001. The act requires all newly hired elementary and secondary school teachers in Title I schools to hold at least a bachelor's degree and to have full state certification or licensure. In addition, new elementary school teachers must pass tests in subject-matter knowledge and teaching skills in mathematics, reading, writing, and other areas of the basic elementary school curriculum. New middle and high school teachers either must pass a rigorous state test in each academic subject they teach or have the equivalent of an undergraduate major, graduate degree, or advanced certification in their fields (*No Child Left Behind Act* 2001).

Identifying teacher quality is two-fold. Not only are quality teachers required to demonstrate higher standards for certification, research also indicates that quality teachers produce considerably more academic growth in their students compared with less-skilled teachers (Education Week, 2011). Many researchers examined the impact of teacher characteristics on teacher effectiveness or quality. These researchers explored teacher experience, teacher preparation programs and degrees, teacher certification, teacher coursework, and teachers' own test scores (Rice, 2003). Thus, not a single accepted definition of teacher quality exists. Yet many characteristics identify quality teaching. Some of these characteristics are:

- High quality teachers set high expectations for student learning.
- High quality teachers make sure students know both the learning objectives and goals and have opportunities to practice new skills.

- High quality teachers are prepared and organized.
- High quality teachers engage students and get students to look at issues in a variety of ways.
- High quality teachers form strong relationships with their students and show that they care about the students as people.
- High quality teachers are masters of their subject matter.
- High quality teachers communicate frequently with parents.

(Great Schools Staff, 2012).

Additional characteristics of effective and quality teachers include categorized as well-versed. These behaviors are described or classified as:

- They comprehend their text.
- They determine and set goals for student learning and student behavior.
- They are organized and have a plan for student learning.
- They use best practices and multiple instructional strategies to meet students' individual learning needs.
- They give regular feedback to students and parents regarding process, progress, and expectations.
- They collaborate with colleagues and they seek continuous professional development.

More importantly, Weingarten (2010) contended teacher evaluations and improving teaching should be developed by teachers. For too long, educators have tolerated teacher evaluation systems that are mere formalities designed to meet state or district mandates. As Zatynski (2012) commented, "Time is the greatest obstacle to

making teacher evaluations as useful as they need to be. By reorganizing the teacher evaluation system, principals have an opportunity to expand their roles as instructional leaders, as well as improve teaching and learning” (p. 22). To accomplish these goals, collaboration between the administrators and the teacher is needed to orchestrate the evaluation system design. Traditional methods of supervision and evaluation focus on teachers’ inputs, including their lesson plans, instruction, and classroom management practice. But what matters most is the outcome they achieve—learning (Aseltine, Faryniarz, & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2006).

Outputs

Teacher quality is further defined by outputs or the level of teacher productivity as it relates to student growth. “Desired outputs” usually refers to student mastery of core academic skills. Such contributions to student growth are assessed by several different models such as VA and peer assistance review. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2013) contends that teaching is effective when it enables student learning. However, distinguishing effective teaching is complex in that students’ needs can be vastly different. Often, districts or campuses give teachers students with similar academic levels year in and year out. Some teachers are identified as exceptionally skilled and given high-level students, whereas others inherit only students with documented learning gaps. Thus, VA measures lend themselves to the purpose of accounting for and bridging documented academic disparity in relation to teacher evaluation. Bill and Melina Gates Foundation (2013) contend that teachers should be compensated for their effectiveness. Thus, measuring teacher effectiveness is important.

In an article written by Mielke and Frontier (2012) entitled *Keeping Improvement in Mind*, they argued that as valuable as comprehensive frameworks such as Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* (2007) and Marzano's *Art and Science of Teaching* (2007) can be, these frameworks alone cannot act as a sole rubric to rate teacher's effectiveness or quality. Educators, like students, need to play an active role in their own evaluation process (Stiggins, 2004). Teachers need to play an intricate part and be given power as leaders in the constructive use of the system that will be the basis for their evaluation (Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice A Framework for Teaching*, 2007). The most successful evaluators and evaluation systems allow teachers to measure their own effectiveness and reflect on areas for growth. Such systems employ teachers to use comprehensive frameworks throughout the school year to collect artifacts linked to their instructional practice, reflect, and set goals and create actions that they can deploy to enhance their practice. This, in turn, creates a culture that empowers teachers by identifying improvement as a benefit rather than as a problem. Comprehensive teaching frameworks can act not only as an evaluation tool, but also as rubrics for teachers. Just as teachers give students rubrics as exemplars that students should apply to guide their improvements, teachers and evaluators should use comprehensive evaluation systems to serve as compasses for continuous improvement. This will transcend the customary tradition of making administrators the primary users of evaluation system.

Robert Marzano (2012) contended that an evaluation system that fosters teacher learning will differ from one whose aim is to measure teacher competence. He continued to report that the national movement across districts to develop and deploy new teacher evaluation systems has brought a collection of reports and initiatives that highlight two

failings of past efforts: (a) Teacher evaluation systems have not accurately measured teacher quality because they have failed to do a good job discriminating between effective and ineffective teachers, and (b) teacher evaluation systems have not aided in developing a highly skilled teacher workforce (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2011; Toch & Rothman, 2008; U.S. Department of Education, 2009; Weisberg et al., 2009). In discussing these two failings, Marzano noted:

Although efforts to move quickly in designing and implementing more effective teacher evaluation systems are laudable, we need to acknowledge a crucial issue—that *measuring* teachers and *developing* teachers are different purposes with different implications. An evaluation system designed primarily for measurement will look quite different from a system designed primarily for development. (Marzano, 2012, p. 14).

Models of Teacher Evaluation Systems in Texas

Teacher evaluation systems not only can assist in helping teachers grow professionally, but evaluations can also serve as a tool to measure accountability. Darling-Hammond (2008) stated that teacher support and accountability can be incorporated into a single evaluation system. Considering that teacher evaluations are designed to both help the teacher to grow professionally as an effective educator and to increase accountability as measured in most cases by student test scores, it is imperative to examine some of the current teacher evaluation systems used in the state of Texas. In the following sections, several teacher evaluation systems will be discussed beginning with the current teacher evaluation system in the state of Texas.

Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS)

The PDAS has been the Texas-state approved instrument for appraising its teachers and identifying areas that would benefit from staff development since 1997. However, the state piloted a new evaluation system in as many as 72 districts and charters in the 2014-2015 school year. The current PDAS system includes a minimum of one 45-minute observation and completion of the Teacher Self-Report form. PDAS includes 51 criteria within eight domains reflecting the Proficiencies for Learner-Centered Instruction adopted in 1997 by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC). The domains are:

- 1) Active, Successful Student Participation in the Learning Process
- 2) Learner-centered Instruction
- 3) Evaluation and feedback on Student Progress
- 4) Management of Student Discipline, Instructional Strategies,
Time/Materials
- 5) Professional Communication
- 6) Professional Development
- 7) Compliance with Policies, Operating Procedures and Requirements
- 8) Improvement of All Students' Academic Performance (Texas
Education Agency, 2014).

The System for Teacher and Student Advancement (TAP)

Lowell Milken and colleagues at the Milken Family Foundation created the TAP system in 1999. The system is continuing to grow. The TAP system, now operated by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET), is based on four interrelated elements:

- 1) **Multiple Career Paths.** Powerful opportunities for new roles and responsibilities, and commensurate pay.
- 2) **Ongoing Applied Professional Growth.** Continuous, job-embedded professional development during the school day focused on specific teacher and student needs.
- 3) **Instructionally Focused Accountability.** Fair and meaningful evaluation based on clearly defined, research-based standards
- 4) **Performance-Based Compensation.** Salaries and bonuses tied to roles and responsibilities, instructional performance, and VA students learning gains (National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, 2010).

Peer Assistance Review (PAR)

A few districts across the nation provide leadership to Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) programs. The PAR programs arrange for peer reviewers (often called consulting teachers) to leave the classroom for a number of years to offer concerted, customized assistance to approximately 15-20 individual teachers. Most of the 15-20 teachers are new to the profession. However, on occasion, experienced teachers who are in need of improvements are recommended by their principals to take part of the PAR process. The par consultant evaluates the teachers progress after several months of prescriptive assistance to determine if the teacher has made the require improvements to meet district standards. Afterwards, the consultant files individual reports to the PAR panel. The PAR panel is the management committee which oversees the entire program. As Johnson and Fiarman (2012) noted, “PAR provides teachers with expert advice for improvement and, if that effort fails, a clear path to dismissal. Because due process is

ensured in all aspects of PAR, districts rarely encounter legal challenges to their decisions” (Johnson & Fiarman, 2012, p. 21).

Johnson and Fiarman (2012) suggest that peer evaluators can decrease the demand on administrators while at the same time provide needed support to improve their effectiveness from a teacher expert. This process allows teachers to take control of their professional growth. However, Donaldson (2008) suggested that without substantiating the peer reviewers expertise and considerable backing from administrators, peer reviewers may not have the credibility they need to ensure that their colleagues accept their judgment and advice.

As many districts are rethinking their teacher evaluation or assessment system, many districts across the United States are reviewing Peer Assistance Review (PAR) as an option. Several benefits are present for using peer evaluators. These benefits are identified as,

- reducing the demands on the administrators,
- providing disciplinary or subject-matter expertise a principal may lack,
- introducing the teacher’s perspectives into the evaluation process,
- allowing teachers to have more control of their profession.

(Johnson & Fiarman, 2013, p. 21).

However, Johnson and Fiarman (2013) suggest PAR can be expensive if you include both novice teachers and experience teachers. In addition to the cost of adding experience teachers, it may generate controversy among union members if they philosophically oppose peer review or personally know the teacher involved.

Value Added Models (VAM)

From this perspective, the VAM functions as an instrument that provides evaluation data that can be manipulated by educational administrators and policy makers. Researchers indicated that the VAM assessment process perpetuates teacher quality by using quantifiable test data and ammunition to support student growth as a criterion for performance-based pay in the public school system (Hinchey, 2010; Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997).

As emphases are placed on continuous improvement for individual teachers and the profession as a whole, many districts are moving towards a multi-measure teacher evaluation system of evaluating teachers. Thus, districts are incorporating a VAM. According to Schacter (2012), the VAM was first applied to school analyses by Sanders at the University of Tennessee. This approach uses test data to measure “growth” or “value-added,” meaning it measures student’s improvement from one year to the next. The results are then aggregated at the teacher, grade, and school levels. Tables 4 and 5 reflect criticisms with features of the VAM and the traditional PDAS evaluation model.

Table 4.
Criticism of the Value-Added Model and the PDAS Evaluation Model

<i>Assessment Instruments</i>	<i>Process Descriptions</i>	<i>Criticisms</i>
Value-Added	Improves accountability systems.	Unable to control influencers (e.g., socioeconomic status of students and school) validity of test adequately.
	Uses multiple sources of data.	No information on how to assist teachers in improving their pedagogical practices.

Source: *Phi Delta Kappan* (Scherrer, 2012, pp. 58-60)

Table 5.
Criticism of the Value-Added Model and the PDAS Evaluation Model

<i>Assessment Instruments</i>	<i>Process Descriptions</i>	<i>Criticisms</i>
Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS)	Evaluation of critical attributes.	Validity of the evaluation scores are questionable.
	Makes provisions to assist or support teachers in improving deficiencies.	Requires documentation for professional development course hours for credit.
	Provides or focuses on indicators that enhance students' academic performance.	Involves or stresses a specific percentage of observing student participation during the lesson cycle.

Source: PDAS Teacher Manual (Texas Education Agency, 2005).

Tables 3 and 4 reflect two types of evaluation methods and the criticisms for each for making an assessment of instructional practices and behaviors. In addition, literature examined for this study revealed that educational researchers have concerns about, a) the trustworthiness of a value-added measure depends on how it is defined and calculated, and b) the trustworthiness of how the PDAS scores may be impacted by poor classroom observations or administrator bias (David, 2010). Furthermore, if evaluations are designed to increase teacher quality in such a way that student achievement is propelled forward, then the traditional models are futile (Bambrick-Suntoyo, 2012).

The two previously mentioned methods of teacher evaluations have highlighted arguments presents about why the present system of teacher evaluation needs to be reorganized, as well as considered to be inadequate for providing credible information about teacher's instructional practices. The changing landscape of teacher evaluation has filtered down to include Texas. With respect to states overhauling their evaluation

systems, Texas is also in the process of revamping their evaluation system (Texas Education Agency, 2014). They are piloting two models. Texas Education Agency and Region 13 decided to pilot a model developed by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching used by the Teacher Advancement Program and the Framework for Teaching Proficiency System, which was developed by Teachscape in partnership with Danielson and Education Testing Service. Robert Scott, then-Education Commissioner, asked the TEA to review the current Professional Development and Appraisal System. Reviewers concluded that the PDAS needs revisions to include current research and data relating to improving teacher effectiveness. Ninety-six percent of all Texas teachers received a rating of proficient or better; however, as of 2010, only 77% of Texas students met passing standards on the state test. This number has significantly decreased since the implementation of STARR. Also referred to in this study was that student performance will play a more prominent role in the new evaluation adopted by the state of Texas than it does currently with PDAS. Some districts are already linking teacher pay to student performance. Therefore, the concept of student performance data impacting pay is not foreign to Texas teachers. In the past, Texas teachers have received the District Awards for Teacher Excellence, commonly known as the DATE grant for demonstrating success in improving student achievement. Districts were able to create systems to award teachers who demonstrated success or continuous improvement financially (Texas Education Agency, 2014).

The value-added model (VAM) is a quantitative evaluation of teachers based on an analysis of the test score gains of their students (Brawn, 2005). This model tracks data depicting individual student's academic growth as reflected from two years of testing to

measure growth from one year to the next. Adding a quantitative component to the teacher evaluation processes means the VAM places the primary education goal on increasing student learning, not just on teacher quality.

During this VAM process, teachers are compared to other teachers in the district based on statistically adjusted, aggregated test gains. Developers of VAMs argue that their analysis of the changes in student test scores from one year to the next enables them to objectively isolate the contributions of teachers and schools to student learning (Brawn, 2005). Several different VAMs are present. All of them are very similar as they are virtuously statistical and rely exclusively on student test scores and not on other measures of student learning. Some of the VAMs are the Educational Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS), the Dallas Value-Added Accountability System (DVAAS), and the Rate of Expected Academic Change (REACH) (Brawn, 2005).

Some researchers claim that VAMs intrinsically nurture teacher improvement as a byproduct by specifically relating to its emphasis on student centered learning, while also providing a more stable foundation for teacher evaluation. Although these models are new in terms of measuring teacher effectiveness, they may provide a means to determine the impact a teacher has on student learning as measured by standardized test. As one researcher noted:

Value-added scores provide a means to identify highly effective teachers whose practices contribute the most to student learning gains. Establishing these teachers' classrooms as "learning labs" for colleagues and researchers may provide valuable information about what practices and processes contribute to

student achievement gains. (Goe, Bell, & Little, *Approaches to Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness: A Research Synthesis*, 2008, p. 45).

With each of these models of teacher evaluations systems in Texas, the principal or administrator plays a key role in the process.

The Role of the Principal as Evaluator

The role of the principal in the teacher evaluation process is not only critical to identifying teacher quality but also to assist with identifying professional development needs and the deployment of effective instructional strategies that impact student learning (Aseltine, Faryniarz, & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2006). The evaluation can be used as a way to shape the educators' capacity to focus on student learning needs.

For many years, teacher assessments and evaluations has been the responsibility of the principal. From this perspective, the principal is the campus' instructional leader and has the responsibility of monitoring interventions and preventions strategies to improve the teaching and learning processes. The addendum of *Race to the Top* (2009) describes effective principals as administrators whose students, overall and for each subgroup, demonstrate high rates of student growth as outlined by the United States Department of Education. In addition, supplemental state definitions include multiple measures as long as the teachers' instructional performances are evaluated based on important measures linked to student growth (*Race to the Top* 2009). As a result of the administrative attributes outlined by federal mandates (e.g., NCLB 2001; *Race to the Top* 2009), principals are the essential instrument in drawing out the best performance efforts in teachers.

In an effort to cultivate the improvement of teacher quality, Zepeda (2008) offers several concepts exist that administrators should provide:

- Principals should be proactive in developing and promoting learning opportunities that are focused on deepening the knowledge of the teaching craft.
- Principals should make provisions for authentic learning in staff development so that the practitioners can immediately implement the concepts or strategies into their daily practice.
- Principals should take into consideration the practitioners' career stage across the career stage continuum (i.e., new inductee/beginning educator, adjustment stage-two to four years, mature stage-five to 10, veteran stage-more than 15 years).
- Principals should provide opportunities for collaborations between faculty and PLCs.
- Principals should provide opportunities for reflections to support teachers in actively constructing knowledge, weighing new information against previous understanding, and thinking about and working through the discrepancies to develop new understandings. (pp. 135-136)

The above activities are important to enhancing teacher performance because the evaluation of teachers has emerged as a crucial instrument in determining instructional status or measuring quality. From this perspective, student achievement data alone will not provide administrators with the amount of information needed to cultivate continuous improvement; therefore, it is important that administrators provide the guidance and support that the practitioners need to become more effective (New Teacher Center, 2009).

Empowering principles to facilitate school improvement efforts by principals as instructional leaders need to concentrate on the following areas:

- focusing on instruction,
- using data to guide decisions about the teaching and learning processes,
- assigning emphasis to the improvement of student achievement,
- emphasizing teamwork and professionalism,
- and ensuring that teachers and school administrators have access to resources that strengthen their professional skills. (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010).

To document or record these behaviors, the principal instruments of teacher performance data are collected by a variety of tools and materials (e.g., walkthroughs, observations, videos, standardized test data, self-reports/portfolios). Effectively incorporating the data collection to make improvements means that principals need to provide immediate feedback from the observations, walkthroughs, or evaluations so that corrective measures and interventions can take place (Protheroe, 2009). The assessment document feedback can be translated as an action plan for change or improvements.

Principals as Instructional Change Agents

As an instructional leader and campus administrator, an important role of the principal is to influence instructional change. With regard to mandates and reform efforts, the principal as the instructional change agent has great influence over a campus instructional focus. Consequently, more “intensive and stringent measures of supervision and evaluation of teachers to improve the instructional and learning processes are continuously becoming the norm in districts across the United States” (DuFour & Matto,

2013, p. 34). Listed in the next sections are the behaviors of an effective principal in the role of the campus instructional leader.

Focusing on Instruction

During the evaluations, walkthroughs, or observation processes, principals are concerned with the instructional process during the lesson cycle. From this perspective, the principals' focus is on the relationship of how pedagogical content knowledge is delivered, because this area is crucial and connected to the how students' learning is affected and facilitated during the instructional and learning process (Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice A Framework for Teaching*, 2007).

The research supporting the relationship between the practitioners' pedagogical strategies are evidenced by Nye, Konstantopoulos, and Hedges (2004) and by Wright, Horn, and Sanders (1997). According to Nye et al. (2004), teacher effects on learning are indeed real. They argued that their findings were more accurate due to random assignment of teachers and students to classrooms in the experiment. The results of the study supports the notion that student academic achievement gains are directly linked to teachers' effectiveness. Likewise, Wright et al. (1997) noted that teacher effects are the leading influences that impact student academic gains.

Using Data to Guide Decisions about the Teaching and Learning Processes

Another important area that will facilitate improvements between teaching and learning is interpreting student test score results. The principal guides the teacher by asking the teachers to take a more committed role in influencing the focus of their professional efforts, and it places student learning at the center. As principals support teacher development, they gather evidence of practice. This evidence is collected to both

support teacher development and the evaluation of teacher performance. The conversations regarding teaching should be grounded in events, facts or actions. Thus, it is the principal's role to create that dialogue to inform the teachers' practice. In addition to collecting evidence, the principal should also provide mentoring and coaching. The coaching should be nonjudgmental conversations about practice (Danielson, 2007).

An alternative model to supervisory practices uses a different paradigm for teacher evaluation as outlined in the book *Supervision for Learning by Aseltine, Faryniarz and Rigazio-DiGilio*. The new practice allows for instructional processes and student learning to be linked. "When all teachers are working on meaningful and connected goals—goals that are measurable and directly linked to the overall mission of the school—then real progress will be possible for all students, not just those fortunate enough to be in a specific teacher's classroom" (Aseltine, Faryniarz, & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2006, p. 14). This type of supervision is called performance-based supervision and evaluation (PBSE).

Instructional Planning Measured

As principals focus on performance-based supervision and evaluation systems, they must critically analyze how to measure instructional planning. Instructional planning begins with the teachers' deep understanding of the content and pedagogy. Not only do the teachers need to understand the "what", they also need to understand the "who". Who are the students? What background information are they bringing with them? What will keep the students engaged? Instructional planning also encompasses lesson design, instructional strategies, learning outcomes, student assessment design, sequencing of events, and making adjustments when necessary (Danielson, Implementing the

Framework for Teaching in Enhancing Professional Practice, 2009). Accomplished teachers understand the internal relationships within the disciplines they teach, knowing which concepts and skills are prerequisites to the understanding of others (Danielson 2009). However, knowledge of the content is only part. Teachers should know pedagogy to truly move student learning forward. In moving student learning forward teachers need to know content and pedagogy. They also should have knowledge of the students they are teaching. Teachers should develop a relationship with students in order to make the learning relevant. This is especially true when it comes to selecting resources. Teachers should stay abreast of current trends and best practices (Danielson, Enhancing Professional Practice A Framework for Teaching, 2007).

Classroom Instruction Measured

After principals review teachers' planning and lesson design, they must measure the actual classroom instruction, thus, measuring the nuts and bolts of teaching and learning. Teachers must deploy instructional strategies and skills to fully execute the instructional planning ideas. As principals measure classroom instruction, they should focus on the authenticity and level of student engagement. Students should be authentically engaged in meaningful activities that are both rigorous and relevant. Danielson (2007) contended that engaging students in learning is the reason for schools' very existence; it is through active engagement that students learn complex context. Principals will measure several different components under classroom instruction. Some of the components are communicating with students, questioning and discussion techniques, using assessment in instruction, flexibility, and responsiveness.

Professional Practice Measured

Principals are generally expected to also measure teachers' professional practice. This particular component also measures the teachers' commitment to improve their craft. This specific section of the teacher evaluation system is designed for the competent professional to continuously and objectively gauge their effectiveness in order to create a productive improvement strategy and professional development (Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice A Framework for Teaching*, 2007).

Provide Opportunities for Adult Learning

A component of continuously and objectively gauging one's own effectiveness is needed in order to promote continuous improvement. Thus, learning for the practitioner must still be in the forefront. Therefore, evaluators must provide opportunities for adult learning. According to Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2012), evaluators explore a set of core adult learning principles that pertain to all adult learning state of affairs. They coined these principles as Andragogy: Core Adult Learning Principles. The principles are as follows:

1. Learner's Need to Know: Why, What, and How
2. Self-Concept of the Learner: Autonomous and Self-directing
3. Prior Experience of the Learner: Resource and Mental Models
4. Readiness to Learn: Life Related and Developmental Task
5. Orientation to Learning: Problem centered and Contextual
6. Motivation to Learn: Intrinsic Value and Personal Payoff

State Evaluation System

Texas Education Agency and Region 13, Education Service Center, decided to pilot a model developed by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching used by the Teacher Advancement Program and the Framework for Teaching Proficiency System developed by Teachscape in partnership with Danielson and Education Testing Service (Texas Education Agency, 2014). Robert Scott, then-Education Commissioner, asked the TEA to review the current teacher evaluation system (Professional Development and Appraisal System, PDAS). Reviewers concluded the revisions made to the evaluation system needed to include current research and data relating to improving teacher effectiveness. When the study was conducted, 96% of all Texas teachers received a rating of proficient or better; however, as of 2010, only 77% of Texas students met passing standards on the state test. However, this number has significantly decreased since the implementation of STARR.

Local District

In an effort to meet the challenge of increasing quality teaching, a large urban Texas School District developed a new multiple measure teacher evaluation system in an effort to measure teacher effectiveness and student growth (Robertson-Kraft, 2014). The springboard for the district's evaluation system began after the district was made cognizant of Operation Public Education, an external consulting group, at a national conference. Operation Public Education (OPE) was established in 2000 to design a new reward structure for public schools that aligned the interests of teachers and administrators with the goal of significant increases in student achievement. Funds were garnished from the Annenberg Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation, and the William

Penn Foundation, allowing OPE to build its comprehensive framework through two basic activities. The OPE traveled to states where innovative efforts were underway and brought leading reformers to Pennsylvania to share their ideas. When all the travel and seminars were completed, OPE selected practices that supported one another and had been shown individually to improve instruction and raise student achievement. In 2003, OPE asked six members of the Teacher Union Reform Network (TURN) to vet the framework, and they adopted several of their key suggestions to ensure that the approach was both fair and teacher-friendly (Robertson-Kraft, 2014).

According to an overview in the districts' evaluation systems handbook (2011), the district invited the OPE to present its comprehensive framework for school reform as described by Hershberg and Robertson-Kraft (2009). This document was entitled, *A Grand Bargain for Education Reform: New Reward and Supports for New Accountability*. This presentation led to a proposal submitted to, and funded by the Laura and John Arnold Foundation in January, 2011. Consequently, funding led to the birth of the new evaluation system during the 2011-2012 school year.

Various stakeholders comprised a design team involved in the evaluation system's inception. The district used *A Grand Bargain for Education Reform: New Rewards and New Supports for New Accountability* as its guide throughout the design process. Members of the design team encompassed teachers, administrators, community partners and parents. Representatives from the districts Vertical Education Advisory Committee (VEAC) and District Education Advisory Committee (DEAC) were also involved with the project. In addition, educators with expertise in specific areas were recruited by administrators to serve on the design team. The design team was divided into work

groups. Each work group had a range of 30 to 60 participants. Each work group met throughout the course of the 2011-2012 school year. Each work group focused on policy decisions and made recommendations to the district leadership (Aldine ISD).

The new system has two parts. Part A is the observation portion consisting of domains 1-4. Domains 1-4 are modeled after Danielson's framework for teaching. This framework has been used nationally as a measure to document and develop teacher practice. The four domains are: (a) Planning and Preparation, (b) Classroom Environment, (c) Instruction, and (d) Professional Responsibilities. The performance rubric differentiates four levels: unsatisfactory, basic, proficient and distinguished. Figure 3 reflects each of the domains and their components (Aldine ISD).

<i>Domain 1: Planning and Preparation</i>	<i>Domain 2: Classroom Environment</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy b. Demonstrating knowledge of students c. Setting instructional outcomes d. Demonstrating knowledge of resources e. Designing coherent instruction f. Designing student assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Creating an environment of respect and rapport b. Establishing a culture for learning c. Managing classroom procedures d. Managing student behavior e. Organizing physical space
<i>Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities</i>	<i>Domain 3: Instruction</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reflecting on teaching b. Maintaining accurate records c. Communicating with families d. Participating in a professional community e. Growing and developing professionally f. Showing professionalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Communicating with students b. Using questioning and discussion techniques c. Engaging students in learning d. Using assessment in instruction e. Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness

Figure 3. Framework for Teaching (Danielson, Implementing the Framework for Teaching in Enhancing Professional Practice, 2009)

Part B of the new evaluation system focuses on student growth. It measures teacher performance based on student growth. The model compares the changes in each student's achievement score to all other students in the district who had similar achievement scores in the previous year. Students receive a student growth percentile (SGP) and the teacher is assigned an overall SGP based on the median SGP of their students. The district aims to heighten teacher's effectiveness in an effort to increase student achievement with the VAM component (Aldine ISD).

Chapter III

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to seek a deeper understanding of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of a newly implemented evaluation system and how they perceived it influencing their instructional planning, classroom instruction, and professional practice. Teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the quality and effectiveness of the training they received during the implementation process of the teacher evaluation system was explored. Finally, teachers' and administrators' perceptions of this newly implemented evaluation system incorporating performance pay as a component was examined.

Results from this study can provide district leaders and policy makers with additional knowledge about teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding a newly implemented evaluation system and how they perceived it influencing instructional planning, classroom instruction, and professional practice, the quality of the training they received, and perceived impact of performance pay being tied to the teacher evaluation system.

Outlined in this chapter are the procedures for examining the perceptions of teachers and administrators in regard to the newly implemented evaluation system. More specifically, descriptions of the research design, setting, procedures, instruments, and analysis, and considers study limitations as well are provided in this chapter.

Research Design

Program evaluations, in general, provide information to relevant stakeholders in order to assist them in making informed program decisions (Fitzpatrick & Sanders,

2011). Thus, the purpose of this program evaluation was to provide district leaders and stakeholders with pertinent information regarding teachers' and administrators' perceptions of a newly implemented teacher evaluation system in a large urban school district and how it is perceived to influence their instructional planning, classroom instruction, and professional practice. In addition, teachers and administrators perceptions regarding the quality and effectiveness of the training they received will be examined. Finally, the teachers and administrators perceptions regarding the fairness of performance pay being linked to the new system was explored.

This program evaluation extended on the findings from a previous quantitative study using semi-structured interviews and focus groups to better understand teachers and leaders' perceptions of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system. Qualitative research methods can enhance the development of quality measures, the development and dissemination of comparative quality reports, as well as quality improvement efforts. According to Sofaer (2002), it is critical that the analysis and interpretation process be deliberate, and thorough to avoid the use of initial bias. By using the archival data from the quantitative research to inform the researcher as newer data are collected from the qualitative research, the researcher is empowered to make more intuitive generalizations (Creswell & Clark, 2006). Thus, the researcher used the quantitative data from a previous study as a springboard to probe and explore more deeply the meaning and understanding of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system.

Data collected from this program evaluation were based on semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The researcher collected and analyzed responses from semi-

structured, open-ended interviews with five principals and three focus groups with sixteen total teachers. The information gathered from these interview and focus group questions were designed to explore meaning and triangulate the responses from the previous quantitative study that was conducted in 2013. This extension on the previously conducted program evaluation can provide valuable feedback for this district and other districts aiming to further refine and improve the implementation and deployment process of a multi-measure teacher evaluation system. The interview feedback and focus group feedback allowed participants to express their experiences and articulate their basic perceptions. The goal of a focus group, in general, is to promote self-disclosure among participants (Rennekamp & Nall,2004).

The researcher for this particular study utilized semi-structured one-on-one interviews with five administrators and focus groups with approximately 16 teachers to gain a deeper understanding of how they perceive a newly implemented evaluation system influencing instructional planning, classroom instruction, and professional practice. Teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the quality and effectiveness of the training they received during the implementation process of the teacher evaluation system was explored. Finally, teachers' and administrators' perceptions of this newly implemented evaluation system incorporating performance pay as a component was examined.

The qualitative data from the principal interviews and the teacher focus groups were collected from a purposeful sampling of principals and teachers, selected through a vertical feeder pattern closely representing district student demographics at large. Additionally, each principal and teacher selected must have participated in the pilot year,

and the participants included a cross section of demographics as well. Initially, the researcher conducted a pilot utilizing the semi-structure interview instrument with two principals and the focus group questions with two teachers to ensure that the questions were interpreted as intended and produce the kinds of rich data the researcher was intending to produce. Next, the semi-structured open-ended interviews were conducted with five principals, and three focus groups were conducted with a total of 16 teachers previously designated as participants. Interview questions included several key questions that helped define the area being explored, while at the same time allowing the interviewer or interviewee to expound in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. Semi-structured interviews allow for discovery and elaboration. The interviews provided each participant the opportunity to reflect on the newly implemented teacher evaluation system and how it is perceived to influence teachers' instructional planning, classroom instruction, professional practice, and also their perceptions regarding performance pay being tied to teacher evaluation. The interviews and focus groups allowed the principals and teachers to respond to the questions based on their own experiences and point of view. The five campus principals and 16 teachers were asked to give specific examples of how the newly implemented evaluation system has influenced instructional planning, classroom instruction, and professional practice.

Research Questions

1. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing instructional planning (demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, setting instructional expectations demonstrating

knowledge of resources, designing coherent instruction, designing student assessments)?

2. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing classroom instruction (communicating with students, questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, assessment, and flexibility and responsiveness)?
3. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing teachers' and administrators' professional practice (growing and developing professionally, showing professionalism, participating in a professional community, reflecting on teaching)?
4. What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the quality of training they received with the newly implemented teacher evaluation system?
5. What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system being tied to performance pay?

Setting

This qualitative case study was conducted in one large school district in Houston, Texas. Over 65,000 students are disseminated within 78 schools in the district; a district that encompasses more than 111 square miles. The campus distribution consists of eight EC/PK centers, 34 elementary schools, eleven intermediate schools, ten middle schools, five ninth grade schools, seven senior high schools, and three alternative schools. Students of color in the district represent the majority population. Demographics are as follows: Hispanic 70.1%, African Americans 25.6%, White 2%, and Asian 1.3%.

Economically disadvantaged students comprise 84.8% of the student population (TEA, 2013).

For the purpose of this study, five campuses were identified, one from each level of a vertical feeder pattern that closely mirrors the district's students demographics. Each campus level had one principal and three to four teachers represented (i.e., early childhood center, elementary, intermediate, middle, and high school teachers and principals). The five principals were interviewed one-on-one, using the semi-structured, guided interview questions. The sixteen teachers from the feeder patterns were divided into three focus groups. The three focus groups consisted of three-four willing participants from each of the campuses.

Participants

The district identified 34 campuses out of the district's 74 schools to pilot the newly implemented teacher evaluations system in 2012. The district selected schools from each of its vertical feeder patterns to ensure a representation of the entire district. To accomplish this goal, district leadership strategically selected schools with different compositions, including different campus levels (i.e., elementary, middle, high), different student performance level, and mixed demographics. All campuses in the district are Title I schools comprised primarily of minority students. In this program evaluation, the researcher selected a purposeful sampling of participants that participated in the polite program from one of the districts vertical feeder patterns. The researcher selected participants to ensure there was representation across all school levels from elementary to high school. The sampling included participants from schools with various levels of

student performance. The goal was to create an overall program evaluation inclusive of school environments. The selection process is summarized in the following table:

Table 6.
Number of Participants by School Level and Effectiveness

School Level	Rated Effectiveness		
	Basic	Effective	Highly Effective
Early Childhood	1	1	1
Elementary	1	2	1
Intermediate	1	1	2
Middle	0	2	1
High	0	1	1

These participants were subdivided into the following classifications:

- 1) Primary
- 2) Secondary

This targeted group of participants was selected because of their position, accessibility, and their campus participation in the district's original multi-measure evaluation system pilot program.

Table 7 describes the ethnic breakdown of the teachers and administrators who participated in the focus groups and interviews.

Table 7.
Ethnicity Breakdown for Teachers and Administrators

Ethnicity	n	Percentage
Teachers		
African American	6	38%
White	4	25%
Hispanic	5	31%
Asian	1	06%
Administrators		
African American	3	60%
White	1	20%
Hispanic	1	20%

Table 8 reflects the years of experience of the teachers and administrators that participated in the focus group and interviews.

Table 8
Years of Experience Breakdown for Teachers and Administrators

Years of Experience	n	Percentage
1-5		
Teachers	7	44%
Administrators	2	40%
6-10		
Teachers	4	25%
Administrators	2	40%
11-15		
Teachers	1	06%
Administrators	1	20%
16+		
Teachers	4	25%
Administrators	0	0%

Procedures

After receiving approval from the University of Houston Committee of the Protection of Human Subjects (see Appendix A), the researcher called each campus principal to schedule a time to meet with their staff. At the staff meeting, an invitation to participate in the research study was extended. Included in the informational meeting, participants were given a detailed explanation about the research, the participant's rights, the rationale for the study, procedures, a confidentiality proclamation, an agreement for the use of audio tapes, and a researcher's profile background delivered by a script read by the researcher (see Appendix B). After the information was provided, the researcher answered any questions. Then, the teachers completed a short form indicating if they

were willing or not willing to participate in the research study (see Appendix C). The researcher reminded them that their participation is voluntary. Then, the researcher emailed all who were interested in participating. After the teachers were dismissed, the researcher randomly selected three-four teacher participants from each of the participating campuses based on the pool of teachers willing to participate. Teachers willing to participate received an email (see Appendix D) thanking them for their willingness to participate and giving them the information regarding the focus group time and location. No potential risks were present for the participants, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the process. Teacher participants had the opportunity to read and complete the Informed Consent Form (ICF; see Appendix E) and completed a short demographics questionnaire including name, email, years of teaching experience, school name, gender, ethnicity, certification (see Appendix F). The demographic information collected in the short questionnaire was only used for consenting participants for descriptive purposes. Teachers who were willing to participate but were not randomly selected received an email (see Appendix G).

The focus groups were conducted at the district's resource center in a private location to help protect confidentiality. Each focus group lasted approximately 66 minutes and consisted of closed and open-ended questions (see Appendix H). Although the questions provided the participants with some guidance on what to talk about, the openness of focus groups allowed for elaboration of information that might prove important to the study. Each focus group was conducted and audio recorded by the researcher. The researcher read a script prior to the focus group to cover the logistics (see Appendix I). The researcher acted as the moderator to manage the groups' dynamics, as

moderated focus groups may generate richer responses. As the moderator, the researcher valued the contribution of each participant by listening attentively and with sensitivity (Rennekamp & Nall 2004). To maintain that sense of freedom, it was important that participants felt protected by the added assurance that all identifying information would be protected. Audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed by a trained third party.

Five principals were interviewed at their prospective campuses one-on-one in a private area of their choosing on their campuses (see Appendix J). Principal participants were provided the opportunity to read and complete the Informed Consent Form (ICF; see Appendix E) and complete a short demographics questionnaire including name, email, years of administrative experience, school name, gender, ethnicity (see Appendix K). Each semi-structured interview lasted approximately 66 minutes and consisted of closed and open-ended questions (see Appendix L). Although the questions provided the participants with some guidance on what to talk about, the flexibility of the semi-structured approach allowed for elaboration of information that proved important to the study. Each interview was conducted by the researcher and audio recorded in English as all participants are English speaking. Audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed by a trained third party. No language translations was need.

Instrumentation

The researcher in collaboration with several stakeholders created the interview and focus group instrument for this program evaluation of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system to guide the process. Included in the process for developing the instrument were four teachers, two campus level administrators and a human resource

director in charge of the teacher evaluation pilot. Initially, the researcher conducted a pilot utilizing this semi-structure interview instrument with two principals and the focus group questions with two teachers to ensure that the questions were interpreted as intended and produced the kinds of rich data the researcher intended to produce. This assisted in building trustworthiness of the instrument used. Additionally, a brief questionnaire was administered to gather basic demographic information to describe participants in the study, although no personal identifiers were given to protect confidentiality. The interview and focus group questions consisted of open and close-ended questions to examine teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system.

Analyses

Interview and focus group transcripts were transcribed and analyzed by identifying common trends and themes using what Glaser and Strauss (1967) coined as the constant comparison method to search for similarities and difference. The researcher compared each participants transcript and look for emerging themes and trends by constantly comparing. The trends and themes were organized using a method of cutting and sorting and then were generalized as possible key perceptions regarding the evaluation system. The interview and focus transcripts were cross-sectioned and the researcher determined the statistical significance of the perceptions of both teachers and administrators. Data from the interviews were coded inductively and revealed a thematic content analysis about how teachers and administrators perceive the new evaluation system. Using thematic content analysis stems from grounded theory. Thematic analysis offers an accessible, theoretically flexible approach to analyzing qualitative data. Barney

Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) coined: grounded theory as a term meaning to develop theories from analyzing patterns, themes, and categories discovered in the context of conducting qualitative research.

Limitations

With respect to the national focus on teacher evaluation systems, the small sample of educators used for qualitative research in this sample may not be enough to make broad -based generalizations of best practices. The study is bounded to one district and findings in this district may not be symbolic of other districts. The researcher collected data from five principals and 16 teachers who are employed in one particular feeder pattern from the study district. The research was conducted at the district where the researcher is employed.

Chapter VI

Results

Introduction

The results of this study are focused on gaining a deeper understanding of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of a newly implemented evaluation system and how they perceived it influencing their instructional planning, classroom instruction, and professional practice. Teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the quality and effectiveness of the training they received during the implementation process of the teacher evaluation system was also explored. Finally, teachers' and administrators' perceptions of this newly implemented evaluation system incorporating performance pay as a component was examined. The guiding research questions were:

1. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing instructional planning (demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, setting instructional expectations demonstrating knowledge of resources, designing coherent instruction, designing student assessments)?
2. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing classroom instruction (communicating with students, questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, assessment, and flexibility and responsiveness)?
3. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing teachers' and administrators' professional practice

(growing and developing professionally, showing professionalism, participating in a professional community, reflecting on teaching)?

4. What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the quality of training they received with the newly implemented teacher evaluation system?
5. What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system being tied to performance pay?

The researcher collected and analyzed responses from semi-structured, open-ended interviews with five principals and three focus groups with a total of 16 teachers. The researcher also collected information with a short demographic survey yielding participants' years of experience, ethnicity, gender, and grade level taught. The principals' and teachers' ethnicity, teaching levels and years of experienced varied.

Research Question # 1

How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing instructional planning (demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, setting instructional expectations demonstrating knowledge of resources, designing coherent instruction, designing student assessments)?

To answer question one, the researcher asked teachers and administrators three questions to help them clearly express their perceptions. The participants were asked:

1. Do you think the newly implemented teacher evaluation system has influenced your own instruction planning?
2. If so, how has the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influenced your own instructional planning? If not, why do you think this is so?

3. Have you noticed a change in your own planning process as a result of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system? If so, how has it changed? If not, why do you think that is so?

Teacher Responses (RQ1)

When asked if the system influenced their planning, eleven of 16 teachers (69%) responded positively with a “yes” or a head nod indicating that the evaluation system has influenced their instructional planning. It was inferred that the remaining five of the 16 teachers (31%) had not seen any changes in instructional planning.

The teachers were then asked to respond to how the evaluation system influenced their the planning process and instructional planning. Many of the teachers’ responses concentrated on the structure of the planning process and focus on instructional best practices. There were two major themes that emerged from their responses: 1) Danielson’s Framework for Teaching embedded in the evaluation system provides the focus and structure for effective planning, and 2) the evaluation system lends itself to refining pedagogy.

Theme 1: Danielson’s Framework for Teaching embedded in the evaluation system provides the focus and structure for effective planning.

During the instructional planning process, teachers found that the evaluation framework adopted by the district for the newly implemented evaluation system provided the necessary focus and structure to improve instructional planning (see Appendix M). The framework or “smartcard” as referred to by the teachers and administrators is based on Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching. Within the framework are the standards by which teachers are evaluated. The smartcard was referenced several times

throughout the focus group sessions as providing structure and focus for effective instructional planning processes. As one teacher indicated, “As a new teacher, the smartcard has been very helpful with keeping me on track with planning.” Several other teachers echoed the same sentiment, including the following statements:

- “It has changed my planning because I can use the smartcard as a reference guide or a self-check system.”
- “The evaluation system has given me a structure to go by, yet I have always been a very structured person and have always wanted to do a great job.”
- “The smartcard help to guide planning, making sure all of the components are covered.”
- “Using this evaluation system helps keep me on track when creating and teaching a lesson. I have a guideline to follow.”
- “The system, more so, is a tool to keep me on track with what I am already doing in my classroom.”

Although five teachers (31%) viewed the evaluation system as having no influence their planning process and instructional planning, they considered the new evaluation system as something helpful to novices or teachers in need of improvement. One teacher commented, “No, it has not influenced my planning or processes. I have always tried to differentiate instruction to meet all student needs so they will be successful.” Another teacher stated, “I don’t think the way I deliver a lesson is a product of the new system. I think the staff development trainings I attend is what trained me to lead a more student-centered lesson.”

Theme 2: The evaluation system lends itself to refining pedagogy

A second theme that emerged from the teacher focus groups regarding how they perceived the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing their own instructional planning is the new system lends itself to refining pedagogy. Teachers shared they are encouraged to demonstrate their pedagogical knowledge by sharing how best to teach a particular concept. The teachers discussed how they are having conversations in grade and department level meetings as well as PLC's about best practices. They indicated that the evaluation system helps to guide conversations and keep them focused on student learning goals while also sharing and discussing best practices to engage students and support their learning. As supported by one teacher's comment, "I hold planning meetings with my grade level team, and we break down the TEKs and develop more engaging lessons." Teachers have to know each student in their classroom and plan according to their needs. "We have to even modify for special education and gift and talented." Additional comments included:

- "The evaluation system made me stop and look at my practices and evaluate each stage of delivery, so that I can reflect and improve best practices."
- "It has made me more aware of instructional strategies."
- "It helped me to plan for various leaning styles and to improve my questioning techniques."
- "It has helped me to reflect on my teaching more and allowed me to take out elements that limit the best use of class time."

- “In my department meetings we explore the TEKS and ELPs with great clarity, analyzing the verbs and what the students are expected to know for mastery. Then, we share strategies.”
- “When we plan, we plan in groups that are composed of ESL, regular education, bilingual, and special education teachers in order to share ideas.”
- “Even though we are teaching different components, we share ideas.”
- “I did not like this at first but I have gotten some different strategies to use when some of my own are not effective.”
- “Each week a different teacher brings an activity that works well in their classroom and shares it with the group.”

Administrator Responses (RQ1)

The researcher asked five administrators about the evaluation system influencing instructional planning during one-on-one semi-structure interviews. Four out of five administrators (80%) stated that they have observed teachers’ planning being influenced by the evaluation system. However, one of the administrators stated no change was noted because the staff has always done a good job with instructional planning. The principal further explained the teachers’ planning process was attributed to staff development on lesson planning focused on rigor and relevance “gold sealed lessons” as well as three part objectives prior to the evaluation system being implemented.

Theme 1: Danielson’s Framework for Teaching embedded in the evaluation system provides the focus and structure for effective planning

When administrators were asked how they perceive the newly implemented evaluation system influencing instructional planning, four out of five principals (80%)

mentioned that the evaluation system provided structure with the smartcard. Common responses were focused on teachers using the smartcard to not only guide the process for lesson planning, but as part of the PLC discussions as the framework operationalizes the components of good teaching. The clear performance standards reflected on the smartcard guides conversations to include “What do we need our students to know?”, “How do we know when they have learned it?”, and “What do we do if they did not learn it?” Additional references to this include the following:

- “I think the teachers pay more attention to planning and look for more realistic goals when planning.”
- “It has provided a structure for our PLC’s as teachers are focused on not just planning but student outcomes.”
- “I see the planning teams using the smartcard when they meet to plan for instruction.”

Theme 2: The evaluation system lends itself to refining pedagogy

The principals suggested the evaluation system aids in identifying best practices. Three of the five principals (60%) commented on the teachers sharing instructional practices. One for the principals reported, “In the PLC meetings, the teachers are digging deep and sharing ideas.” Other comments included:

- “The teachers are getting together more and sharing best practices.”
- “The teachers are responsible for bringing best practices to the PLC meetings and sharing them.”

In summary, when examining the themes that emerged with teachers and administrators regarding how the newly implemented evaluation system has influenced

instructional planning, both teachers and administrators were in agreement that the newly implemented evaluation system influenced instructional planning by providing the focus and structure embedded in the Danielson Framework for Teaching and that it influenced refinement of instructional planning and teaching.

Research Question # 2

How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing classroom instruction (communicating with students, questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, assessment, and flexibility and responsiveness)?

To answer question two, the researcher asked teachers and administrators three questions to help them clearly express their perceptions. The participants were asked:

1. Do you think the newly implemented teacher evaluation system has influenced your own classroom instruction?
2. If so, how has the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influenced your own delivery of classroom instruction? If not, why do you think this is so?
3. Have you noticed a change in your approach to classroom instruction as a result of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system?

Teacher Responses (RQ2)

When asked if the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influenced classroom instruction, six of the 16 teachers (38%) responded in the affirmative. The researcher then asked how has the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influenced delivery of classroom instruction. Eighty-eight percent of the teachers shared

the new system has influenced their classroom instruction by moving them from delivering knowledge to facilitating learning. Two of the sixteen teachers said it had no influence on their classroom instruction.

The teachers were then asked to respond to how has the teacher evaluation system influenced their own delivery of classroom instruction and if they have noticed a change in their approach to classroom instruction. Many of the teachers gave consideration to meeting the needs of the learners. The two major themes that surfaced from their responses included: 1) The teachers are operating more as a facilitator of learning and 2) The evaluation system has influenced the level of student engagement.

Theme 1: The teachers are operating more as a facilitator of learning

The new evaluation system has propelled the teachers into the role of facilitator. Given the concentrated focus the newly implemented evaluation system has on student engagement, many teachers expressed, as a result, they have noticed a shift in their own teaching from teacher-driven instruction to student-driven learning. Thus, teachers became more of a facilitator of the learning than controlling the diffusion of the knowledge. Allowing the students to work independently, or in small groups, gives the teachers an opportunity to work with students on individual deficits. Although a few of the teachers commented that it was extremely difficult to relinquish the control of any aspect of their classroom to the students, they all agreed that it was imperative to allow teachers time to work with small groups or one-on-one with students. Many of them stated that in order to meet the criteria for rating highly effective or distinguished on the evaluation rubric, in addition to meeting the needs of all learners, the students must take a more active part in their learning. The teachers responded with the following comments:

- “My day is spent more as facilitator now.”
- “I am more of a facilitator.”
- “This allows me to spend more one on one time assisting students.”
- “I have more discussions groups and team work vs. teacher led activities.”
- “I have relinquished my classroom to my students making them in charge of their learning.”

Theme 2: The evaluation system has influenced the level of student engagement.

Authentically engaging students in meaningful learning is an important attribute of effective classrooms (Marzano, 2012). When students are actively engaged in learning, the depth and breadth of their problem solving skills or creativity are challenged beyond the routine. The teachers indicated a focus on student engagement:

- “Students are actively engaged in their learning.”
- “The students are hands-on and minds-on.”
- “We have more hands-on activities in the classroom to help students apply application.”
- “The classroom managers help keep our room running smoothly so that I can focus on small group instruction.”
- “This process has lead me to create a more student centered classroom to make sure students are engaged.”

The two teachers that stated the newly implemented evaluation system had no influence on their classroom instruction commented they were already using effective classroom instruction. “I think that my personal teaching theory is very much aligned with what the evaluation system considers to be good teaching practices, therefore I

have not really been influenced to change my instructional approach.” The other teacher commented, “No, it has not influenced my classroom instruction. I just make sure that what I am doing is still in compliance with requirements of each domain of the evaluation system”

Administrator Responses (RQ2)

When asked if the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influenced classroom instruction, three of the administrators (60%) responded “yes”. The administrators reported that they are seeing the teachers more and more in the facilitator role.

Theme 1: The teachers are operating more as a facilitator of learning

Administrators commented on the teachers moving in the direction of facilitating learning. The administrators reported students taking more of a participatory role in their own learning. Additional comments include:

- “I am seeing less teacher talk and more student talk.”
- “The students are taking more of a lead in what they are learning.”
- “Instruction is involving the students more. I no longer see the teachers just lecturing.”

Theme 2: The evaluation system has influenced the level of student engagement

Some of the principals stated that they are not seeing as many worksheets. Students are engaged in meaningful activities, and the teachers are looking at individual student needs. The quality of engagement is rising.

- “Classroom instruction is more meaningful as they target students’ specific needs.”

- “The level of student engagement has increased as teachers are using the smartcard by which to focus instruction.”
- “I am seeing more manipulatives and hands-on instruction.”
- “The teachers are more consistent about involving more students in the process and teaching them to be independent learners.”

In summary, when examining the themes that emerged with teachers and administrators regarding how the newly implemented evaluation system has influenced classroom instruction, both teachers and administrators reported the newly implemented evaluation system promoted increased levels of student engagement by moving the teachers from the stance of delivering knowledge to facilitating learning.

Research Question # 3

How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing teachers' and administrators' professional practice (growing and developing professionally, showing professionalism, participating in a professional community, reflecting on teaching)?

To answer question three, the researcher asked teachers and administrators four questions to help them clearly express their perceptions. The participants were asked:

1. Do you think the newly implemented teacher evaluation system has influenced the way teachers behave in their own professional practice? If so, how?
2. What about administrators? Do you think the newly implemented teacher evaluation system has influenced the way they approach their own professional practice?

3. How have you seen the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing the way teachers and administrators work together? What about teacher working with other teachers?
4. Have you noticed any differences in the professional growth and development of teachers and administrators as a result of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system? If so, how?

Teacher Responses (RQ3)

When asked if the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influenced the way teachers behave in their own professional practice, teachers' views were mixed. Some indicated their own professional practice was unaffected. However, others perceived the evaluation system has not influenced the way some of their colleagues behave in their professional practice. One teacher stated, "I believe it has influenced some teachers because the evaluation system can determine if we keep our jobs." Another teacher responded, "I would like to hope that it has, but this is an area where people score the lowest." The researcher then asked the teachers if the evaluation system influenced the administrators' approach to their own professional practice. All but three of the teachers (81%) affirmed the administrators' approach to their own professional practice was influenced. Teachers referenced the administrators being more visible. Twenty-five percent of teachers referred to the increased pressure and stress the newly implemented evaluation system has added to the principals. Additionally, the teachers were asked if the evaluation system influenced the way teachers and administrators work together and about teachers working with other teachers. All but one of the 16 teachers (94%) stated that the evaluation system has influenced the dialog between teachers and administrators,

as well as teachers to teachers dialog. Lastly, the researcher asked if they noticed any differences in the professional growth and development of teachers and administrators as a result of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system. Several teachers gave consideration to the built-in reflection process and how it helps them grow professionally. Four teachers (25%) stated they have not seen professional growth or development of teachers or administrators. “I have not noticed any difference.” The one major theme that emerged from their responses was the evaluation system provided opportunities for increased reflective practices through increased dialog between teacher and administrator as well as teacher to teacher, and this dialogue, in turn strengthened relationships.

Theme: The evaluation system has provided opportunities for reflective practices through increased dialog and strengthened relationships

Some teachers have benefited from the constant communication between teachers and administrators. The evaluations system has built-in reflection opportunities with goal setting and action planning conferences. Pre-and post- conferences also promoted teacher and administrator reflections on teaching in a deep and meaningful way.

- “The system forces principals out of their offices and into the classrooms to help teachers. This helps develop relationships between the administrators and the teachers. Administrators have to conference before observations and after, at that time, we can talk about the things that were needed or if we felt there was a need for more support from them.”
- “It helps them to help us to know if we need to make any changes or improve.”
- “At my school, teachers have had non-threatening observations by their peers to be a second set of experienced eyes and ears during a lesson delivery to jot down

only what is observed. Then we get together and discuss the observation. The observer is strictly there for the teacher, not the administrator. This helps to build a good relationship with the teachers.”

- “It has encouraged my team to plan together more closely developing stronger teacher-teacher relationship.”
- “I love the fact that we have a pre- and post- conference concerning our observations. It gives the administrator a chance to talk with each teacher individually about their goals. Teachers meet to share ideas and reflect on best practices.”
- “Administrators and teachers are communicating more due to pre- and post-conferences giving teachers an opportunity to reflect on the lesson taught.”
- “Yes, administrators have more dialog and interchange with teachers about the lesson.”
- “We meet periodically to go over any questions that we might have and to check for understanding of the whole evaluation system and process.”
- “The conferences helps to make some teachers aware of their personal struggles and strengths.”

Administrator Responses (RQ3)

The administrators believe there are many opportunities for reflection built into the system. The process outlined for the goal setting conferences and pre- and post-conferences give guidance to a reflection component of the evaluation system. The process helps to give direction for teacher growth.

Primary Theme: The evaluation system has provided opportunities for reflective practices through increased dialog and strengthened relationships

- “I feel that the teachers and administrators meet more frequently to discuss progress and growth which I feel is a great thing because it helps to develop a stronger relationship in some cases. In the conferences, teachers are able to identify their areas to growth and plan accordingly.”
- “We are constantly communicating with the teachers about goal setting, pre- and post- conferences, summatives, and the list goes on. During the conferences, I try to help the teacher discover opportunities for growth as well as praising the strengths.”
- “At these meetings we reflect on lesson expectations and lesson outcomes, and communicate more regarding the teaching and learning process.”
- “I believe that this system has created a more open environment for dialogue with administrators and other teachers. Therefore, teachers are more willing to share ideas, strategies and best practices with each other.”

In summary, when examining the theme that emerged with teachers’ and administrators’ perceptions on how the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influenced their practice, both teachers and administrators perceived the newly implemented evaluation system promoted increased levels of reflection and richer dialog between teachers and administrators. In many instances, this dialogue and reflective practice helped to strengthen relationships between teachers and administrators and teachers and teachers.

Research Question # 4

What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the quality of training they received with the newly implemented teacher evaluation system?

To answer question four, the researcher asked teachers and administrators five questions to help them clearly express their perceptions. The participants were asked:

1. What training did you receive in the newly implemented teacher evaluation system?
2. What are your perceptions of the training you received regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system?
3. What were the strengths of the training you received?
4. What were the weaknesses of the training you received?
5. What recommendations would you make to improve the training you received?

Teacher Responses (RQ4)

When asked what training they received on the newly implemented teacher evaluation system, the teachers' responses varied. The trainings ranged from a brief training with some homework to multiple ongoing training sessions. Some teachers shared they had one training that lasted several intense hours. Whereas, other teachers stated they had several trainings and met periodically to cover questions and concerns. This suggests consistency with training for teachers was not evident. Teachers were then asked what their perceptions were of the training they received regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system. They indicated they understood some of the training; however, at some point, it became overwhelming due to the amount of content

they were expected to learn during the allotted training time. Eighty-eight percent of the teachers agreed that it was too much information to digest at once. Additionally, the participants were asked to share strengths and weaknesses of the training they received. The teachers listed the focus on the modules and the breakdown of each domain as strengths. All the teachers agreed that the training provided too much information at once, and it became overwhelming which resulted in raised stress levels. As a concluding question in regard to the training, the researcher asked what recommendations would they make for improving the training. Teachers suggested giving the information in stages and allowing for application and follow up. There were two major themes that emerged from their responses including: 1) The training for teachers was overwhelming 2) Clarity of Content is an important factor for adult learning.

Theme 1: The training for teachers was overwhelming

The teachers and administrators voiced concern in regard to the amount of information they needed to process. Some of the teachers stated that the length of the training and the massive amount of information they needed to retain during the training became overwhelming.

- “Some of the training was understood. Some was done too broadly or too much information was provided and the audience was at a loss.”
- “Too much information was provided and required to be implemented at once
- I don’t even think the administrators had a clue what they were looking for, they just kind of went through slides explaining certain components of the system.”
- “We were all trying to figure it out together.”
- “Way too much information at once.”

- “It was boring. They started sounding like the teachers on Charlie Brown. It was too much information.”

Theme 2: Clarity of Content is an important factor for adult learning.

Due to the overwhelming amount of information the teachers had to learn, the content became unclear. Therefore, the teachers and administrators spoke about breaking the information down into smaller chunks, allowing the learners to digest the information prior to introducing the next piece of information. This need for appropriate scaffolding and processing of information can be seen in many of the following comments:

- “The training broke down each domain, telling exactly what is expected for each rating but it was too much at once.”
- “Most were beneficial. Some of the training was understood. Some was done too broad, or too much information was provided and the audience was at a loss.”
- “We still had lots of questions and kinks to be worked out.”
- “The training needs to be broken up more so that we are not overloaded with information and not understanding it.”
- “It became stressful and confusing.”
- “Some of the information given was not as clear as I’d like.”
- “Some of us teachers are not always comfortable enough to say ‘I still don’t get it’.”
- “Too much information is given at once. So, we are on information overload.”
- “I don’t think the my administrator had a clue how to answer some of the questions.”
- “Some of the slides, we were trying to figure them out together.”

Administrator Responses (RQ4)

When the researcher spoke with the administrators about the training they received, each of the five administrators (100%) viewed the training as intense. However, they each shared that the summer conference for the administrators was beneficial. They enjoyed the opportunity to share ideas with other practitioners. However, during the course of the interviews, administrators shared that they experienced information overload. The principals admitted that they have been provided with more training opportunities than the teachers. The administrators reported that they had to be trained face-to-face as well as on modules in order to prepare themselves for the test they took to become raters. Although, the administrators have been afforded multiple trainings, they reported that the teacher training was limited. Two of the principals stated the teachers are still confused on domain 5. One of the administrators commented that they would love it if the district would offer follow up sessions for the teachers on each of the components because the training done on the campus was limited.

Theme 1: The training administrators received at the summer conference on the evaluation system was beneficial

The administrators commented that the summer conference for the evaluation system was beneficial. At the summer conference, administrators shared best practices. Administrators believed the training was relevant and broken down into smaller segments.

- “I received all of the district level training. I truly believe that the Summer Camp was the most beneficial. The camp offered us the opportunity to go to the areas we needed to absorb the most.”

- “The training we received was adequate. I personally believe that the Danielson’s Framework training was more in depth and allowed the participant to engage in the learning through various activities. The trainings have become increasingly better each year.”
- “The Conference was, by far, the best training that we have had. I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to speak with other professionals and learn from their mistakes along with their best practices.”
- “We need to allow more opportunities to train the teachers so that we can break up the time and follow up with each component.”

Theme 2: Clarity of Content is an important factor for adult learning.

The administrators agreed that the training was extensive and on-going. However, as they delivered turn-around training, time did not permit the breakdown of information in such a way that the content was clear and concise for the teachers. The administrators realized that some of the teachers were on information overload.

- “I would love for the district to give us the time to go over some of the videos together as a leadership team so that everyone is clear on what each component looks like.”
- “We as principals need to have a clear understanding of each component and how it looks so that we can give the information to the teachers as the expert.”
- “My assistant principal and I score differently. So, I think the principals and assistant principals need to be clear on scoring and what to look for.”

In summary, when examining the themes that emerged with teachers and administrators perceptions regarding the quality of training they received with the newly

implemented teacher evaluation system both groups agreed the training for teachers was overwhelming and raised stress levels. However, the administrators received additional training that proved to be beneficial. Both groups remarked that the information given on some aspects of the training needed further clarification.

Research Question #5

What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system being tied to performance pay?

To answer question four, the researcher asked teachers and administrators four questions to help them clearly express their perceptions. The participants were asked:

1. What is your overall impression of this newly implemented teacher evaluation system being tied to performance pay?
2. What is your understanding of performance pay being connected with teacher evaluations?
3. Do you think educators should be paid for their performance? If so, why? If not, why not?
4. In looking at performance pay, do you think there is a fair and equitable way of tying pay to teacher performance? If so, what?

Teacher Responses (RQ5)

The researcher asked the teachers to share their overall impression of this newly implemented teacher evaluation system being tied to performance pay. This section provides a brief overview of the findings and further discusses the themes that emerged as a result of the focus groups. All of the teachers had concerns about their pay being tied to performance. They were mostly concerned because they were unclear regarding the

process. One teacher stated that the evaluation system can still be biased depending on the evaluator, "I think the evaluation system can still be bias, one of our administrators is subjective, but the other one is not." In addition, a teacher replied she did not understand how the pay would be fairly linked to the STAAR test, "I don't understand how it's fair if I have some special education students in my class and the teacher with the gifted students in her room will both be measure using the STAAR test." The researcher then asked the participants to share their understanding of performance pay being connected with the teacher evaluation system. Eighty-eight percent of the teachers said they really did not fully understand how it will be implemented. The 12% of teachers that said they understood how the performance pay was being connected to the teacher evaluation system still questioned how it will influence student performance. When asked should educators be paid for their performance, 94% of the teachers agreed that teachers should be paid for their performance. They echoed that teachers should be given an incentive for a job well done. Reference was made to corporate America receiving bonuses for a job well done and how teachers are no different. Although the teachers were in favor of teachers receiving performance pay, they did not agree with the evaluation system being tied to the pay. One participant said "I think the evaluation system is subjective. There are too many outside things that play a part on student achievement for the pay to be fair." Another participant responded, "I think teachers should receive compensation for hard work, going above and beyond. However, I am not sure this tool is the only consideration that should be made for compensation." The one teacher that was opposed simply stated teachers should do a good job because they care about the children not because they want extra money. When asked if there was a fair and equitable way of

paying teachers for performance, many of the teachers responded “I don’t know”. One participant commented, “I don’t think so. There has not been one yet, but I am hoping there is. There are just too many things to consider.” As a concluding question, the researcher asked the teachers their thoughts on what would be a fair and equitable way of instituting performance pay. Sixty-three percent of the teachers offered, “I don’t know” or, “I’m not sure” as a response. A few of the teachers offered the following suggestions: money should be awarded to the department to encourage more team work, compensations could be shared across the campus in increments based on teachers’ interaction with students demonstrating academic improvement, and anonymous computer based surveys.

Theme 1: Fairness is questionable as it relates to pay being tied to the teacher evaluation system.

Although, 94% of the teachers agree with teachers being compensated for a job well done, they feel the new evaluation system is not a fair way of doing it. Based on their responses, it appears the teachers question the different variables that can come into play such as demographics, prior knowledge, behavior, and special programs. They also questioned it being linked to a single testing instrument.

- “I don’t think it is a fair enough system.”
- “I know for a bilingual classroom, there are so many factors that would not make this system appropriate, starting with the test that is being administered to show growth because of the language.”

- “Unless, the evaluation system sticks strictly to certain tests and certain test scores it might be appropriate; but I still think the scores that are given during appraisals are subjective, and that would take the fairness factor out.”
- “I am not a proponent of linking performance to pay idea because there are so many other things that should be considered that are not a part of the evaluation tool.”
- “As long as it is not tied to STAAR scores, it might be okay.”
- “It would not be fair for teachers with certain demographics in their classes such as special education students vs. gifted and talented students.”
- “Overall, I don’t agree with the fairness of it.”
- “I would love to get performance pay, but when you factor performance pay into the equation, you have teachers that will alter the truth.”
- “Some people will manipulate things to get a better score.”
- “I think being paid for performance is an incentive but not sure it will be done where as to prevent fraud by teachers.”

Theme 2: The process of pay being tied to performance is still unclear.

The teachers are unclear of how pay will be tied to their performance. The participants question how the pay would be disbursed. They questioned if it would be similar to the state grant they receive or if will be part of their base pay. The teachers need to better understand the processes being used to determine performance pay and to what degree will effect they pay.

- “I am not familiar with performance pay or how it works.”
- “I am not sure that there is any appraisal system that can be completely unbiased.”

- “I did not have a clear understanding of the performance pay and evaluations being linked.
- “The thought of my check being tied to performance is confusing and stressful.”
- “I really don’t understand other than it is based on your overall student’s growth.”
- “I understand what it means to tie pay to student growth but I am not sure how that would be implemented fairly.”
- “I don’t understand fully what rating or score you have to have to achieve to receive this pay.”

Administrator Responses (RQ5)

The principals had mixed feelings in regard to the fairness of the evaluation system being tied to performance pay. Some of them contend that teachers should just do a great job because “it’s their job!” The other principals were advocates of teachers getting paid for their performance. However, they are not certain there is a fair way to implement it.

Theme 1: Fairness is questionable as it relates to pay being tied to the teacher evaluation system.

Three out of the five principals (60%) indicated that the teachers should receive performance pay. However, 100% of the principals had some concern with the perception of fairness as it relates to pay being tied to the evaluation system.

- “We need a lot of work in this area to make sure it is fair with the student growth objectives and student growth percentiles.”
- “I am not in full agreement with it being tied to pay.”

- “It will be great, but before we go there, we need to standardize observations and allow principals to do mock observations to be sure we are on the same page.”
- “I do not think teachers should be paid for their performance because it is part of their job already.”
- “Teachers should not perform better because it is connected to their pay. They should perform better because they have the best interest of the student at heart.”
- “I personally believe that teachers should be paid for their instruction and their performance. In the business world, individuals are paid based on their performance and that has been instrumental in creating Fortune 500 companies.”
- “Based on my conversations held with various teachers, the Science and History teachers seem to be the most disgruntled about the performance pay.”
- “After surveying a number of teachers, they are most concerned about the appropriate assessment being used to target their performance pay. Currently, the performance pay will be based upon the scores from the IOWA exam. However, the Standards of Texas are centered around the STAAR test.”
- “I understand the concerns of the teachers. I believe that the district should create a curriculum that is devised to meet the needs of the STAAR exam and the IOWA test. If these two curriculums were merged together, the teachers would be more apt to be accepting of the evaluation performance pay.”
- “Some teachers have expressed their concerns regarding other teachers cheating on the scores.”

Theme 2: The process of pay being tied to performance is still unclear.

One principal shared that she is working on the compensation committee and there are still lots of uncertainties. The other principals agreed that everyone needs to clearly understand the process before moving forward.

- “We need to make sure everyone is on the same page and understand fully.”
- “We need to work a lot in this area.”
- “I am not sure how they are going to do this.”

When examining the themes that emerged from teachers’ and administrators’ perceptions regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system being tied to performance pay, teachers and administrator could benefit from additional training to ensure the process is clear and understood by all stakeholders.

In summary, results from this study of teachers’ and administrators’ perceptions of a new multi-measure teacher evaluation system primarily indicated that the majority of the teachers and administrators reported instructional planning was positively influenced. The newly implemented evaluation system provided the focus and structure embedded in the Danielson’s Framework for Teaching and influenced the refinement of instructional planning and teaching. Teachers and administrators reported the newly implemented evaluation system influenced classroom instruction, both teachers and administrators reported the newly implemented evaluation system promoted increased levels of student engagement by moving the teachers from the stance of delivering knowledge to facilitating learning. Professional practice was also influenced by the newly implemented teacher evaluation system. Both teachers and administrators perceived the newly implemented evaluation system promoted increased levels of reflection and richer dialog

between teachers and administrators. This, in many instances, helped to strengthen relationships between teachers and administrators.

Teachers and administrators shared concerns regarding the quality of the training they received on the newly implemented teacher evaluation system. Teachers and administrators agreed the training for teachers and administrators was overwhelming and raised stress levels. However, the administrators received additional training that proved to be beneficial. Both groups remarked that the information given on some aspects of the training needed further clarifications.

Lastly, teachers and administrators perceptions regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system being tied to performance pay revealed teachers and administrator could benefit from additional training to ensure the process is clear and understood by all stakeholders.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the study aimed to seek a deeper understanding of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of a newly implemented evaluation system and how they perceived it influencing their instructional planning, classroom instruction, and professional practice. Teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the quality and effectiveness of the training they received during the implementation process of the teacher evaluation system was also explored. Finally, teachers' and administrators' perceptions of this newly implemented evaluation system incorporating performance pay as a component was examined. In addition to a summary of the findings, discussion of findings in light of existing literature will be presented. The final portion of this chapter presents key findings from this study that pertain to the greater body of educational research.

The responses from the teacher focus groups and principal interviews sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing instructional planning (demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, setting instructional expectations demonstrating knowledge of resources, designing coherent instruction, designing student assessments)?
2. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing classroom instruction (communicating with

students, questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, assessment, and flexibility and responsiveness)?

3. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing teachers' and administrators' professional practice (growing and developing professionally, showing professionalism, participating in a professional community, reflecting on teaching)?
4. What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the quality of training they received with the newly implemented teacher evaluation system?
5. What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system being tied to performance pay?

Several similar themes emerged between teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the newly implemented evaluation system. Findings and common themes for each of the research questions are presented in the following section:

Research Question 1: *How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing instructional planning (demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, setting instructional expectations demonstrating knowledge of resources, designing coherent instruction, designing student assessments)?*

- Theme 1: Danielson's Framework for Teaching embedded in the evaluation system provides the focus and structure for effective planning.
- Theme 2: The evaluation system lends itself to refining pedagogy

Research Question 2: *How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing classroom instruction*

(communicating with students, questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, assessment, and flexibility and responsiveness)?

- Theme 1: The teachers are operating more as a facilitator of learning
- Theme 2: The evaluation system has influenced the level of student engagement.

Research Question 3: *How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing teachers' and administrators' professional practice (growing and developing professionally, showing professionalism, participating in a professional community, reflecting on teaching)?*

- Theme: The evaluation system has provided opportunities for reflective practices through increased dialog and strengthen relationships

Research Question 4: *What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the quality of training they received with the newly implemented teacher evaluation system?*

- Theme 1: The training for teachers was overwhelming
- Theme 2: The process of pay being tied to performance is still unclear
- Theme 3: The training administrators received at the summer conference on the evaluation system was beneficial

Research Question 5: *What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system being tied to performance pay?*

- Theme 1: Fairness is questionable as it relates to pay being tied to the teacher evaluation system.
- Theme 2: The process of pay being tied to performance is still unclear

Both the teachers and administrators stated that the newly implemented teacher evaluation system has had some positive influences on instructional planning, classroom instruction, and professional practice. Both groups voiced concern with the effectiveness of the training received and the evaluation system being tied to performance pay.

Discussion of Results

How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing instructional planning (demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, setting instructional expectations demonstrating knowledge of resources, designing coherent instruction, designing student assessments)?

Instructional planning begins with the teachers' deep understanding of the content and pedagogy. Not only do the teachers need to understand the "what", they also need to understand the "who". Who are the students? What background information are they bringing with them that will influence learning? What will keep the students engaged? Instructional planning also encompasses lesson design, instructional strategies, learning outcomes, student assessment design, sequencing of events, and making adjustments when necessary (Danielson, *Implementing the Framework for Teaching in Enhancing Professional Practice*, 2009).

During the teacher focus group sessions and principal interviews, the recurring themes for research question one were that the Danielson's Framework for Teaching embedded in the newly implemented teacher evaluations system provided the necessary structure and focus for effective planning, and the newly implemented teacher evaluation system lends itself to refining pedagogy. The teachers discussed how the evaluation system influenced lesson design, instructional strategies, and the ability to make

necessary adjustments, through purposeful planning. This, in turn, was allowing teachers to walk into their classrooms well prepared to facilitate learning for every student in the classroom (Strong, 2007). A lesson plan is the instructor's road map for teaching and learning. The lesson plan is intended to provide the teacher with a road map or outline of teaching goals, learning objectives, and the means to accomplish them. It is a reminder of what, when, and how a teacher intends to present the lesson. Planning and preparing for teaching includes everything teachers do to get organized for the role as a teacher. Thus, structure is paramount. A productive lesson may not go exactly as planned; however, if the students master the learning outcome and the teacher is able to reflect on the lesson to learn from it, then the lesson was effective (Mikova, 2015).

As teachers reflect on lesson outcomes, this newly implemented evaluation system has allowed teachers to share best practices with their colleagues. A couple of the teachers shared that during the grade level or subject level planning meetings, they break down the TEK as a team and develop engaging lessons with input from each team member. One teacher stated, "We even help modify for special education and GT students". The teachers stated that they seek out best practices to address various learning styles. Tapping into each child's learning style is critical. Domain one of the teacher evaluation system focuses on planning and preparation. The smartcard provides a structure for the planning and preparation process. Teachers are coming together in their planning teams and designing relevant lessons using tried and true research based best practices.

How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing classroom instruction (communicating with students,

questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, assessment, and flexibility and responsiveness)?

Teachers must deploy instructional strategies and skills to fully execute the instructional planning ideas. As principals measure classroom instruction, it is important they focus on the authenticity and level of student engagement. Students should be authentically engaged in meaningful activities that are both rigorous and relevant. Danielson (2007) contends that engaging students in learning is the reason for schools' very existence; it is through active engagement that students learn complex context. Schlechty (2002) defines five levels of student engagement:

- **Authentic Engagement**- students are immersed in work that has a clear meaning and immediate value to them
- **Ritual Compliance**- the work has little or no immediate meaning to students, but there are extrinsic outcomes of value that keep them engaged
- **Passive Compliance**- students see little or no meaning in the assigned work but expend effort to avoid consequences
- **Retreatism** - students are disengaged from assigned work and make no attempt to comply, but they are not disruptive to the learning of others
- **Rebellion** – students refuse to do the assigned task, and disrupts the learning for others

Theme 1: The teachers are operating more as a facilitator of learning

Theme 2: The evaluation system has influenced the level of student engagement.

Two themes emerged for research question two including the evaluation system pushes teachers to operate more as a facilitator of learning which influences levels of student engagement. Both groups shared a strong belief that authentic student

engagement was a key factor in classroom instruction. One teacher said that the smartcard is used in the instructional planning process to ensure that they include all of the components needed during lesson delivery. They shared that the evaluation system helped them to focus on delivering meaningful hands on, minds on lessons that are student centered. They also stated that the students are taking more of an active role in the classroom, leaving the teacher in the role of facilitator. Allowing the students to take a leadership role in their learning provides time for coaching students one-on-one or in small group settings. This suggests that the newly implemented evaluation system does positively influence teachers' instructional planning process.

How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing teachers' and administrators' professional practice (growing and developing professionally, showing professionalism, participating in a professional community, reflecting on teaching)?

Hole and McEntee (1999) contend using a guide to reflect on teaching practices improves the quality of teaching. Deliberate reflection on teaching practices contributes to improving instructional strategies and learning outcomes. The theme generated from the focus groups and interviews was the evaluation system has provided opportunities for reflective practices through increased dialog and strengthened relationships. The teachers and administrators agreed that the newly implemented teacher evaluation system has influenced the communication between teachers and administrators with the goal setting conferences, data conferences, pre-, post-, and summative conferences. Therefore, the increased dialog allowed for reflecting on instructional strategies and best practices. Some of the campuses have taken advantage of teacher-to-teacher reflection

opportunities. On one campus, master teachers served as coaches as they guided novice teachers in reflection on instructional strategies. The principal on the same campus commented that coaching was intertwined in the reflection process in a way that guides the teachers' professional development. Jones (2014) contends that mentoring is a way of managing career transition, whereas coaching is used whenever an individual feels the need to evaluate their professional capabilities, allowing for genuine continuous professional development. Domain 4 not only allows for coaching and mentoring, but it lends itself to reflections. Schon (1983) indicated that we learn more from our reflection on our experiences than from the actual experiences. Reflection entails both asking and answering questions regarding the teaching and learning process as well as student outcomes. Lastly, the teachers and administrators also stated that the evaluation system has influenced not only teacher to administrator relationships, but it has also influenced teacher-to-teacher relationships.

What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the quality of training they received with the newly implemented teacher evaluation system?

According to White, Cowhy, Stevens, and Sporte (2012), early and continuous training can help ensure that district personnel receive consistent information about the evaluation system. The training helps facilitate teachers' understanding of the importance of the system and how it works. Administrators bear a certain responsibility for establishing and maintaining a culture of professional inquiry within a school. Professional learning requires time and support (Danielson, 2009). Promoting teacher quality is a key element in improving primary and secondary education in the United States (Harris & Sass, 2007). In this study, both teachers and administrators expressed

concerns regarding the training. Thus, the themes that emerged for the teachers were the training was overwhelming for teachers; however, the training for administrators was beneficial. The last theme to emerge with question four was the clarity of content is an important factor for adult learning. The teachers wanted the training broken down into smaller chunks as not to experience information overload. The teachers and administrators voiced trepidations in regard to some of the content not being completely clear during the training, especially components relating to performance pay.

What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system being tied to performance pay?

One component of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system is that pay is tied to teacher performance, determined by student growth. The model compares the changes in each student's achievement score to all other students in the district who had the same achievement scores in the previous year. Students receive a student growth percentile (SGP) and the teacher is assigned an overall SGP based on the median SGP of the class. According to Schacter (2012), the VAM was first applied to school analysis by Sanders at the University of Tennessee. This approach uses test data to measure "growth" or "value-added," meaning it measures students' improvement from one year to the next. The results are then aggregated at the teacher, grade, and school levels. However, some researchers disagree with VAM. Education Secretary Arne Duncan contends performance pay in his department is a high priority. President Obama's administration created a \$4.3 billion dollars fund to encourage state implementation of performance pay standards (Rosales, 2015). Scherrer (2012) listed criticisms as being unable to control influencers,

and there is no information on how to assist teachers in improving their pedagogical practice. An additional criticism is the validity of the evaluation scores.

The teachers and administrators in this study expressed similar concerns resulting in two salient themes. Findings revealed the teachers and administrators question the fairness of tying student growth measures to teacher performance pay, and they are unclear about the process for determining teacher performance pay.

Implications and Recommendations for School Leadership

Districts across the nation are taking a closer examination of teacher evaluation systems to measure teacher effectiveness, inform teacher practice and drive staff development (Education, 2009). One goal of evaluating teacher effectiveness is to collect information that will lend itself to designing appropriate strategies to promote improved instruction. It is important for school and district leaders to develop a clear set of teaching standards rooted in best practices for effective teaching when adopting a new teacher evaluation system. District leaders should assure the evaluation process encourages frequent observations, goal setting, action planning, and teacher and administrator reflections to promote reflective and improved practice, increased dialog, and strengthened relationships.

Donaldson & Donaldson (2012) noted the assessment of teacher quality fails more often because of organizational neglect than because of technical deficiencies. Therefore, organizations must commit to ongoing training and professional development to further teacher growth. Districts should assure district leadership across all levels are well-informed regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system and are equipped to explain processes and address concerns. District leaders should form a

district-wide core training team to deliver district-wide professional development rather than rely solely on campus administrators to deliver turn-around training to teachers and other campus level administrators. Teachers and administrators alike shared concern regarding the length of training and the clarity of content. Districts should scaffold training in smaller segments to allow adult learners to synthesis and process information more deeply. District and campus leaders should take into account how adults learn. Malcolm Knowles (1980) theoretical approach to adult learning is Andragogy; The framework presents the following principles of adult learning:

- Adults prefer self-direction in learning,
- Adults bring a vast reservoir of experience that should be considered in planning the learning experience,
- Adults exhibit a readiness to learn that is based on a need to know something or do something,
- Adults exhibit an orientation to learning that is task or problem centered rather than subject centered, and
- Adults exhibit a relatively high degree of internal motivation.

District and campus leaders should be well versed on the pros and cons of pay for performance as it relates to teachers. There is a tremendous amount of controversy focusing on performance pay being tied to teacher evaluation systems. In this study, both the teachers and administrators shared deep concerns regarding the fairness of teachers being paid for performance. The teachers and administrators were also confused about the process. Researchers indicate that the VAM assessment process perpetuates teacher quality by using teacher evaluations and quantifiable test data to support student growth

as a criterion for performance-based pay in the public school system (Hinchey, 2010; Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). However, Scherrer (2012) shared some criticism of the value-added model. The VAM process claims to improve accountability. Scherrer contends practitioners are unable to control influencers such as socioeconomic statuses of students and schools as well as the validity of the test. This was reinforced by comments made throughout the teacher focus groups regarding extraneous and confounding variables outside of teacher quality variables that may influence student performance. In an article published in the Houston Chronicle, Ericka Mellon (2015) wrote performance-based pay for teachers remains a controversial idea in most places, although there are probably more experiments taking place now than ever before, thanks to a federal program that's been awarding funds since 2006 to seed the programs. The Texas Tribune (2014) reported in a new article that seven teachers sued a local school district over instituting a policy linking their pay to standardized test results. The lawsuit was backed by the local branch of American Federation of Teachers and the national labor union. District and campus leaders will have to address such apprehensions. Training is vital. District and campus leaders will need to ensure that all stakeholders understand the process and are able to articulate it. Another crucial aspect of easing teachers' and administrators' apprehensions would be to dispel the notion that pay for performance is unfair. The learning curve as districts implement new teacher evaluation systems into practice is monumental.

Implications for Further Research

The findings of this study lend itself to additional opportunities for further research. One option for further research focuses on the training involved when

implementing new evaluation systems. The study could address best practices for disseminating information to adult learner as they synthesis and process information during the implementation process for new evaluation systems.

Due to the large amount of controversy surrounding pay for performance or VAM, there continues to be a need for research regarding performance pay being tied to the evaluation systems. Additional research can focus on the perception of performance pay being fair and equitable.

Conclusion

As the district embarked on implementing a new multi-measure evaluation system, the goal was to differentiate and improve teachers' instructional performance using an evaluation system that focused on five domains. In addition, the goal was to have a system that promoted productive conversations between teachers and the administrators, as well as create more accurate representations of teachers' performance across campuses. The ultimate goal was to increase the number of highly effective teachers deploying quality instruction. The study revealed teachers and administrators perceived the evaluation system provided structure as well as it helped them to reflect on their own professional practice. Some commented, "I have seen that the new system has made me reflect on my philosophy and improved areas of instruction delivery". "It lays everything out on a smartcard and you can go back and reflect after each lesson". "There are some things about the evaluation tool that helps teachers actively reflect on their teaching practices".

Robertson (2005) contends reflection is a vital process in the changing of experience into knowledge, skills and attitudes. Reflection requires the person to take

time to think about the lessons learned, record small wins and setbacks, document conflicts and notice trends that emerge overtime (Reeves, 2006). As a result of this reflection process, the district teachers are designing more coherent lessons to include all learners. Their PLC members are more focused as they share best practices such as a book study of Marzano's book *The Art and Science of Teaching* used by one campus. Tomal, Schilling, and White (2014) said teacher should be able to share leading edge instructional techniques, classroom best practices, and have access to research supporting these practices. In an effort to execute some of the best practices, the teachers are focusing on increasing the level of student engagement.

The teachers and administrators agreed that the new evaluation system has influenced classroom instruction as it focuses on authentic student engagement. The teachers take on a facilitator's role and equip the students to take a lead in their learning process. The teachers work with small groups of children or work with students one-on-one as a way of work on their individual needs. The teachers confer with students as they coach them on how to develop their skills. Teachers contend this process provides opportunity for student reflection and teacher coaching which is optimal learning. According to Thomas Del Prete (2013), teachers and students know when they are working in the "sweet spot". The sweet spot is the space of optimal learning and growth; where students feel free enough to reach their capability and authentic learning is the key.

Just as the students are receiving individual information from the teachers when they are meeting with them one-on-one or in small groups, principals are meeting with teachers one-on-one facilitating a reflective practice. The evaluation system allows for several opportunities for the principal and teacher to dialog about teaching and learning

in the classroom. During this dialog, the principal has a chance to guide the reflection process. Reflection is effective because it is experienced over time. The teachers can come back to their administrator and explore different approaches or ideas (Aguilar, 2013). The whole premise of reflection is immersed in the notion of professional growth which is a cornerstone of this district's newly implemented evaluation system. Teachers and administrators both benefit from the reflection process.

As the researcher explored the training centered on the evaluation system, the teachers and administrators had concerns regarding the manner in which the training was initiated and implemented. Several comments were made in reference to not fully understanding the information given, especially as it related to performance pay. Some stated it was too much information given at once and after a while they were no longer attentive. Malcolm Knowles' (1973) theory of andragogy is a theory for adult learning emphasizes that adults are self-directed. Therefore, district leaders may consider taking into account how adults learn and using that information to develop training.

The last question explored performance pay being tied to the evaluation system. The teachers and administrators have apprehensions about performance pay being tied to the evaluation system. Some of the teachers and administrators are unclear on the process and voiced concerned about it being fair. Gratz (2009) reported that although today's performance pay plans take many forms, the most commonly proposed version in which teachers are rewarded on the basis of their students' standardized test scores flows from flawed logic and several troublesome assumptions. Diane Ravitch (2011) commented in the Washington post that merit pay undermines collaboration and teamwork. She also stated merit pay would corrupt the school's culture. Therefore, when districts are

implementing a VAM or performance pay component, it is imperative the district leadership research effective implementation processes. District leaders should also consider the challenge of assessing effectiveness with single high stakes test.

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Appendix A

Approval from the University of Houston Human Subject Research Committee

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH

May 1, 2015

Gladys Smith
c/o Dr. Robin McGlohn
Dean, Education

Dear Gladys Smith,

The University of Houston's Institutional Review Board, Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1) reviewed your research proposal entitled "TEACHERS' AND ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF A NEW MULTI-MEASURE TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM IN ONE LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT IN TEXAS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT LEADERS" on March 27, 2015, according to federal regulations and institutional policies and procedures.

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: May 1, 2015**
- **Expiration Date: April 30, 2016**

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 March, 2016** 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 Samoya Copeland at (713) 743-9534.

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 sponsors(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: 15328-01

Full Review: ☐ Expedited Review: ☒

316 E. Cullen Building Houston, TX 77204-2015 (713) 743-9204 Fax: (713) 743-9577

COMMITTEES FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS.

Appendix B

Invitation for Teacher Participants

Script to Invite Teacher Participation

Thank you so much for coming to the focus group meeting. My research topic is:

TEACHERS' AND ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF A NEW MULTI-MEASURE TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM IN ONE LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT IN TEXAS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT LEADERS

As part of this program, I will be conducting a research study to seek a deeper understanding of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of a newly implemented evaluation system and how they perceive it influencing their instructional planning, classroom instruction, and professional practice. Teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the quality and effectiveness of the training they received during the implementation process of the teacher evaluation system will be explored. Finally, teachers' and administrators' perceptions of this newly implemented evaluation system incorporating performance pay as a component will be examined.

Results from this study will provide district leaders and policy makers with additional knowledge about teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding a newly implemented evaluation system and how they perceive it influencing instructional planning, classroom instruction, and professional practice, the quality of the training they received, and perceived impact of performance pay being tied to the teacher evaluation system.

I am inviting you and other teachers in the district to participate in a focus group. The focus group will allow you to respond to questions based on your own experiences and point of view. The focus group will last approximately 60 minutes and will consist of closed and open-ended questions. All participants identifying information will be confidential.

At the close of this information meeting, I will give each of you a short form to complete indicating if you are willing or not willing to participate in this study. Those of you who are willing to participate will be placed on a list in alphabetical order so that a random selection of 3-6 participants may be selected from each of the participating campuses. Those selected to participate will receive an email with an electronic copy of the Informed Consent Form (ICF), (review the ICF) as well as a demographic instrument (a questionnaire) for you to answer questions regarding your name, email address, years of experience, school name gender and ethnicity. Those willing participants who are not selected will also receive an email informing you that you were not selected for this particular study. Thank you for allowing me to speak with you today. Are there any questions?

Appendix C

Participation Interest Form

Participation Interest Form

**TEACHERS' AND ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF A NEW MULTI-
MEASURE TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM IN ONE LARGE URBAN
SCHOOL DISTRICT IN TEXAS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT
LEADERS**

Name:_____

School:_____

E-Mail address:_____

_____ **Yes, I am willing to participate**

_____ **No, I am not willing to participate**

“This project has been reviewed by the University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (713)743-9204.”

Appendix D

Invitation Letter for Teacher for Teacher Participation

Invitation Letter for Teacher Participation in a Program Evaluation

Dear Educator,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the research study. To accept this invitation for participation, I have included an Internet Informed Consent Form (ICF), as well as the research demographic instrument (a questionnaire) for you to answer questions regarding your name, years of experience, school name gender and ethnicity.

To ensure safe and proper research procedures, auditors of University of Houston Institution Research Board and regulatory authority (ies) will be granted direct access to the research data without violating the confidentiality of the participants. In addition to this, the University of Houston Institutional Review Board (IRB) phone number is (713) 743-4965.

If there are any questions about this study, you may contact me. My phone number and email are: gladysmoton7@gmail.com or gmoton@aldine.k12.tx.us or 832-752-0422. If you have any concerns about this research, my advisor's contact information is Dr. Robin McGlohn, PhD robinmcglohn@sbcglobal.net or (713) 743-4965.

Your signature will serve as an acknowledgement that you have reviewed the Informed Consent Form and your willingness to participate.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and participation.

Sincerely,

Gladys Smith Moton

"This project has been reviewed by the University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (713)743-9204."

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form for Questionnaire

Informed Consent Form for Questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

PROJECT TITLE:

TEACHERS' AND ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF A NEW MULTI-MEASURE TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM IN ONE LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT IN TEXAS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT LEADERS

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by Gladys Smith Moton from the Department of Education Executive Ed.D Program at the University of Houston. This research is a part of a dissertation is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Robin McGlohn and Dr. Angus MacNeil.

NON-PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Taking part in the research project is voluntary and you may refuse to take part or withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any research-related questions that make you uncomfortable.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to seek a deeper understanding of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of a newly implemented evaluation system and the impact it has on their classroom instruction, classroom environment, professional practice, and

instructional planning. In addition, this study will examine teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the performance-pay component of this newly implemented evaluation system.

Study results will provide the district with knowledge of the teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding a newly implemented evaluation system and its impact on teachers' classroom instruction, classroom environment, instructional planning, and professional practice, as well as performance pay.

PROCEDURES

You will be one of approximately five principal or 15-25 teacher participants asked to participate in this project. The single interview will take place either at your campus or by telephone, at a day and time convenient to your schedule. The actual interview should not take more than 60 minutes of your time. You will be asked questions regarding your perception of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system. The researcher will tape record your responses and transcribe them for your review. You will be asked to read your transcript to make sure it captured your perceptions.

CONFIDENTIALITY

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

RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

There are no foreseeable risks, discomforts, or inconveniences during this study.

BENEFITS

By answering these questions about your perceptions regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system, you may have an opportunity to reflect on your commitment to professional growth and instructional improvements. As participants in the pilot program, you have been in the trenches and the lessons you have learned may help the process be less painful in subsequent years for fellow educators.

ALTERNATIVES

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

COSTS

Participants will not incur any costs related to this project

PUBLICATION STATEMENT

The results of this study may be published in scientific journals, professional publications, or educational presentations; however, no individual respondents will be identified.

AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF AUDIO/VIDEO TAPES

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

- ☐ I agree to be audio taped during the interview.
- ☐ I agree that the audio tape(s) can be used in publication/presentations.
- ☐ I do not agree that the audio tape(s) can be used in publication/presentations.

- ☐ I do not agree to be audio taped during the interview.

CIRCUMSTANCES FOR DISMISSAL FROM PROJECT

Your participation in this project may be terminated by the principal investigator

- ☐ if you do not keep study appointments;
 - ☐ if you do not follow the instructions you are given;
 - ☐ if the principal investigator determines that staying in the project is harmful to your health or is not in your best interest;
 - ☐ if the study sponsor decides to stop or cancel the project;
 - ☐ or if you decide you no longer want to participate any time before or during the project.
-

SUBJECT RIGHTS

1. I understand that informed consent is required of all persons participating in this project.
2. 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.
3. Any risks and/or discomforts have been explained to me, as have any potential benefits.

4. I understand the protections in place to safeguard any personally identifiable information related to my participation.
5. I understand that, if I have any questions, I may contact Gladys Smith Moton at 281-446-1576. I may also contact Robin McGlogn faculty sponsor, at 713-743-3902.
6. **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.

SIGNATURES

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 to my satisfaction. I give my consent to participate in this study, and have been provided with a copy of this form for my records and in case I have questions as the research progresses.

Study Subject (print name): _____

Signature of Study Subject: _____

Date: _____

I have read this form to the subject and/or the subject has read this form. An explanation of the research was provided and questions from the subject were solicited and answered to the subject's satisfaction. In my judgment, the subject has demonstrated comprehension of the information.

Principal Investigator (print name and title): _____

Signature of Principal Investigator: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F

Teacher Demographic Survey

Teacher Demographic Survey

1.School Name: _____

2.Teacher Name: _____

3.Gender: Male OR Female (CIRCLE ONE)

4.Ethnicity: (CIRCLE ONE)

African American

Asian

Hispanic or Latino

Native American or American Indian

White

Other

5.Years Teaching in Public Education: _____

6. Years Teaching in Current School District: _____

7.Grade Levels Taught in Public Education: _____

Appendix G

Email Letter for Teacher Participation not selected

Email Letter for Teacher Participation not selected

Dear Educator,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the research study. Unfortunately, your name was not selected in the random selection process to participate in this study.

“This project has been reviewed by the University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (713)743-9204.”

Appendix H

Qualitative Data Interview Instrument

Qualitative Data Interview Instrument

Main Research Question: What are teachers' and administrators' perception of a new multi-measure teacher evaluation system?

Opening question: In reflecting on your own experiences with the newly implemented teacher evaluation system, what are your overall thoughts and feelings?

<p>1. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system impacting instructional planning (demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, setting instructional expectations demonstrating knowledge of resources, designing coherent instruction, designing student assessments)?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you think the newly implemented teacher evaluation system has influenced your own instruction planning? 2. If so, how has the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influenced your own instructional planning? If not, why do you think this is so? 3. Have you noticed a change in your own planning process as a result of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system? If so, how has it changed? If not, why do you think that is so?
<p>2. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing classroom instruction (communicating with students, questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, assessment, and flexibility and responsiveness)?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Do you think the newly implemented teacher evaluation system has influenced your own classroom instruction? 5. If so, how has the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influenced your own delivery of classroom instruction? If not, why do you think this is so? 6. Have you noticed a change in your approach to classroom instruction as a result of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system?

<p>3. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing teachers' and administrators' professional practice (growing and developing professionally, showing professionalism, participating in a professional community, reflecting on teaching)?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you think the newly implemented teacher evaluation system has influenced the way teachers behave in their own professional practice? If so, how? 2. What about administrators? Do you think the newly implemented teacher evaluation system has influenced the way they approach their own professional practice? 3. How have you seen the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing the way teachers and administrators work together? What about teacher working with other teachers?
<p>4. What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the quality of training they received with the newly implemented teacher evaluation system?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Have you noticed any differences in the professional growth and development of teachers and administrators as a result of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system? If so, how? 7. What training did you receive in the newly implemented teacher evaluation system? 8. What are your perceptions of the training you received regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system? 9. What were the strengths of the training you received? 10. What were the weaknesses of the training you received? 11. What recommendations would you make to improve the training you received?
<p>5. What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system being tied to performance pay?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. What is your overall impression of this newly implemented teacher evaluation system being tied to performance pay? 6. What is your understanding of performance pay being connected with teacher evaluations? 7. Do you think educators should be paid for their performance? If so, why? If not, why not?

	8. In looking at performance pay, do you think there is a fair and equitable way of tying pay to teacher performance? If so, what?
--	--

Closing questions: As we wrap up this focus group, are there any other comments or suggestions related to the newly implemented teacher evaluation system that you would like to express before we end?

Appendix I

Script for Focus Group Meeting

Script for Focus Group Meeting

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this program evaluation. Prior to starting our discussion, let's get acquainted with one another by way of introductory comments about ourselves. ____ why don't you start and we will go clockwise around the room. Give your first name and tell something you like to do when you are not at school.

During this portion of the focus group, you will be asked to complete a short 5 minute demographic survey. Immediately following the survey, you will participate in a 60 minute focus group with approximately 3-6 teachers. There will be open-ended questions asked in the focus group. Three (3) minutes will be allotted for each question.

As a participant in this focus group, you will have the opportunity to share your perceptions of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system and how our perceive it influencing instructional planning, classroom instruction, and professional practice. You will also share your perceptions regarding the quality and effectiveness of the training you received during the implementation process. Finally, you will have the opportunity to share your perceptions of this newly implemented evaluation system incorporating performance pay as a component.

You should know that the focus group will be audiotaped so that I can refer to the discussion when I write my report. Make sure that you speak loudly and clearly. Please have only one person speak at a time. Please feel free to give your honest opinion. Do not worry about what you think I want to hear or what your table partner thinks. We are here to gather your true perceptions.

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 refuse to answer any question.

The focus group will manage its own discussion and time. The entire focus group discussion will be audio taped and be self-managed. The researcher will act as the moderator to manage the groups' dynamics and manage the discussion. Additionally, each group is asked to identify a time keeper that will track the time allotted for each of the questions. There will be 3 minutes allotted for each of the 14 questions. Finally, each group will have a recorder who will assure that the audio recording device is on and recording for the entire focus group. The 3 minutes will start after the question has been read to the entire group. You will be dismissed from the process when all questions are answered.

In just a minute, you will be given a short 5 minute break before beginning the survey and focus group. Get into your group and determine who will serve as the timekeeper and recorder for your group. During the 5 minute break, I will ask that the timekeeper and recorder join me up at front for a quick training in the protocols for your specific job role.

Please now determine who is willing to assume each of the three roles. (Allow 2-3 minutes for groups to determine who will serve in the roles, then break for a 5 minute break).

NOTE TO RESEARCHER: During the break, train each role by utilizing the script on the next page. After the break, allow 5 minutes to complete the survey. After the 5 minutes, launch each of the focus groups into separate rooms to complete the focus groups.

TRAINING SCRIPT FOR FACILITATOR, TIME KEEPER, AND RECORDER

Thank you for your willingness to serve in one of the three roles to complete this focus group. Just to assure that we have each role represented for each focus group, who is the time keeper? Recorder?

I will now share the protocol for each of the job roles so that you are clear on exactly what you will be doing during the focus group.

TIME KEEPER: As a time keeper, you will serve as both a time keeper and a participant in this study. Your role is to start the time **AFTER** each question is read and allow 3 minutes for response from the group to each question. Once the 3 minutes is up, you will say, “the three minutes are up, please finish that thought, and we will move on to the next question.” If a member of the group continues to keep speaking beyond their final thought or another person tries to add comments, it will be up to the facilitator to remind the group or group member that it is time to move on to the next question

RECORDER: As a recorder, you will serve as both a recorder and a participant in this study. Your role is to start the recording and to keep recording for the entire time of the focus group without interruption. It will be important to periodically check the device to assure it is still recording without stopping the recording. In the unlikely event that the recording stop (i.e. batteries die, etc.), please immediately speak up and ask the group to **PAUSE** while the issue is resolved or the battery is replaced.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix J

Script for Principal Interview

Script for Principal Interview

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this program evaluation. During this portion of the interview, you will be asked to complete a short 5 minute demographic survey. Immediately following the survey, you will participate in a 45-60 minute one on one interview. Three (3) minutes will be allotted for each question.

As a participant in this interview, you will have the opportunity to share your perceptions of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system and how you perceive it influencing instructional planning, classroom instruction, and professional practice. You will also share your perceptions regarding the quality and effectiveness of the training you received during the implementation process. Finally, you will have the opportunity to share your perceptions of this newly implemented evaluation system incorporating performance pay as a component.

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 refuse to answer any question.

This interview will be recorded using an audio recorder.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Appendix K

Principal Demographic Survey

Principal Demographic Survey

1.School Name: _____

2.Principal Name: _____

3.Gender: Male OR Female (CIRCLE ONE)

4.Ethnicity: (CIRCLE ONE)

African American

Asian

Hispanic or Latino

Native American or American Indian

White

Other

5.Years in Public Education: _____

6. Years as a Principal:_____

7. Years as a Principal in Current School District: _____

8.Grade Levels on Current Campus: _____

Appendix L

Qualitative Data Focus Group Instrument

Qualitative Data Focus Group Instrument

Main Research Question: What are teachers' and administrators' perception of a new multi-measure teacher evaluation system?

Opening question: In reflecting on your own experiences with the newly implemented teacher evaluation system, what are your overall thoughts and feelings?

<p>1. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system impacting instructional planning (demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, setting instructional expectations demonstrating knowledge of resources, designing coherent instruction, designing student assessments)?</p>	<p>4. Do you think the newly implemented teacher evaluation system has influenced your own instruction planning?</p> <p>5. If so, how has the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influenced your own instructional planning? If not, why do you think this is so?</p> <p>6. Have you noticed a change in your own planning process as a result of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system? If so, how has it changed? If not, why do you think that is so?</p>
<p>2. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing classroom instruction (communicating with students, questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, assessment, and flexibility and responsiveness)?</p>	<p>7. Do you think the newly implemented teacher evaluation system has influenced your own classroom instruction?</p> <p>8. If so, how has the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influenced your own delivery of classroom instruction? If not, why do you think this is so?</p> <p>9. Have you noticed a change in your approach to classroom instruction as a result of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system?</p>

<p>3. How do teachers and administrators perceive the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing teachers' and administrators' professional practice (growing and developing professionally, showing professionalism, participating in a professional community, reflecting on teaching)?</p>	<p>4. Do you think the newly implemented teacher evaluation system has influenced the way teachers behave in their own professional practice? If so, how?</p> <p>5. What about administrators? Do you think the newly implemented teacher evaluation system has influenced the way they approach their own professional practice?</p> <p>6. How have you seen the newly implemented teacher evaluation system influencing the way teachers and administrators work together? What about teacher working with other teachers?</p>
<p>4. What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the quality of training they received with the newly implemented teacher evaluation system?</p>	<p>12. Have you noticed any differences in the professional growth and development of teachers and administrators as a result of the newly implemented teacher evaluation system? If so, how?</p> <p>13. What training did you receive in the newly implemented teacher evaluation system?</p> <p>14. What are your perceptions of the training you received regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system?</p> <p>15. What were the strengths of the training you received?</p> <p>16. What were the weaknesses of the training you received?</p> <p>17. What recommendations would you make to improve the training you received?</p>
<p>5. What are teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the newly implemented teacher evaluation system being tied to performance pay?</p>	<p>9. What is your overall impression of this newly implemented teacher evaluation system being tied to performance pay?</p> <p>10. What is your understanding of performance pay being connected with teacher evaluations?</p> <p>11. Do you think educators should be paid for their performance? If so, why? If not, why not?</p>

	12. In looking at performance pay, do you think there is a fair and equitable way of tying pay to teacher performance? If so, what?
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Closing questions: As we wrap up this focus group, are there any other comments or suggestions related to the newly implemented teacher evaluation system that you would like to express before we end?