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Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of the Effectiveness of a Teacher Evaluation System and Its Impact on Student Learning

Portia Junor-Carty

Clark Atlanta University, portia.junon_carty@students.cau.edu

ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

JUNOR-CARTY, PORTIA   B.A. LEHMAN COLLEGE, CUNY, 2002

M.S.ED. LEHMAN COLLEGE, CUNY, 2005

ED.S. MERCER UNIVERSITY, 2014

TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR PERCEPTION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS

OF A TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM AND ITS IMPACT

ON STUDENT LEARNING

Committee Chair: Trevor Turner, Ph.D.

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The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship of teachers' and administrators' perception of the effectiveness of a teacher evaluation system to the effects of the system on student learning. Teacher surveys were administered electronically and administrator and teacher focus group discussions were held to determine the relationship between the following variables: Teacher perception of evaluation activities, teacher perception of the effectiveness of the evaluation system, administrators perception of evaluation activities, administrator perception of the effectiveness of the evaluation activities, professional development of teachers and teacher perception of the effects of the evaluation system on student learning.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to analyze the relationship of teacher performance on a teacher evaluation system to teacher perception of the teacher evaluation system, teacher development, and teacher demographics and its impact on student learning. According to Darling-Hammond (2014), "The United States is at a critical moment in teacher evaluation. The evaluation process is undergoing extensive changes, some of them quite radical, in nearly every state and district across the country" (p. 4). In order to improve the quality of teaching while avoiding pitfalls that could damage education, it is crucial for schools, teachers, and especially students that an effective evaluation system is implemented. Darling-Hammond also stated, "It is imperative that we not substitute new problems for familiar ones, but we instead use this moment of transformation to get teacher evaluation right" (p. 4). Hence, the implementation of a new evaluation system was developed in many states.

According to the Shakman et al. (2014), teacher evaluation has been in a weak state, and there was a definite need for reform. The National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance conducted a study focused on five states: Delaware, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. The article states that most teacher evaluations neither differentiate among teachers and the quality of their instruction nor emphasize teachers' influence on student achievement.

The evaluation system within the five states, focused on a binary rating system, in which teachers received an overall rating of either satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The binary evaluation system was criticized for lacking rigor, as nearly 99% of teachers in some districts earned satisfactory ratings. Before the new evaluation system was implemented in these states, many agreed that teacher evaluation in the United States needed an overhaul. The existing system rarely helped teachers improve or clearly distinguished those who are succeeding from those who are struggling. The essential features of good teaching were not always represented by the tool used. Furthermore, professional learning required to improve teaching practice was not provided to teachers even when unsatisfactory teaching was identified. Thus, evaluation with a binary rating system and limited observations contributed little to either teacher or learning and did not provide timely verbal or written feedback for personnel decision (Darling-Hammond, 2014).

This dissertation offers policymakers and practitioners valuable lessons learned from TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement. The TAP system is a comprehensive strategy to boost teacher evaluation through opportunities for career advancement, professional growth, performance evaluation, and competitive compensation. TAP was developed by Lowell Milken and colleagues at the Milken Family Foundation and is now managed by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET). TAP's rigorous evaluation system—including value-added measures of student growth—has been implemented in schools across the country for more than a decade (Jerald & Hook, 2011).

The problem of teacher evaluation existed in studies reaching as far back as the 1980s. Although there was a widespread consensus that teacher evaluation in the United States required attention and change, simply changing on-the-job evaluation by itself was not going to transform the quality of teaching. The focus on teacher development or ongoing staff development needed to be an essential component of the new evaluation system. It was imperative that the new system prepare and cultivate committed career-long learners, rather than focusing on identifying and removing poor teachers. Continuing learning, in turn, depends on the construction of a strong professional development system and valuable career development approaches that can help spread expertise. Finally, improving the skills of individual teachers would not be enough; it was necessary to create and sustain productive, collegial working conditions that allow teachers to work collectively in an environment that supports learning for them and their students (Darling-Hammond, 2014).

The United States is in need of a conception of teacher evaluation as part of a teaching and learning system that supports continuous improvement, both for individual teachers and for the profession as a whole. Such a system should improve teachers'teaching quality, while at the same time ensuring that teachers who are retained and tenured can effectively support student learning throughout their careers (Darling-Hammond, 2014).

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA or the Recovery Act) of 2009 provided an unprecedented level of funding for k-12 education. The program created a historic opportunity to save hundreds of thousands of jobs, support states, and

school districts, and advance reforms and improvements that would create long-lasting results for our students and our nation. Specifically, the Recovery Act allocated $70.6 billion in funding for k-12 education, of which $6.8 billion was awarded to states through a combination of newly created and existing grant programs, including the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) formula grants, Race to the Top (RTT) discretionary grants, and additional funding for the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program. In return for Recovery Act grants, recipients were required to commit to four specific core reforms or assurances:

- Adopting rigorous college-ready and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments,

- Establishing data system and using data to improve performance,

- Increasing teacher evaluation and the equitable distribution of effective teachers, and

- Turning around the lowest performing schools.

By linking a commitment to the four assurances with receipt of funding, the Recovery Act signaled federal priorities; provided states, districts, and schools with incentives to initiate or intensify reforms in each area; and encouraged states to pursue a combination of mutually supporting reform strategies (Webber et al., 2014).

Due to the ARRA of 2009, states raced to address the four major components of the act. Many State Education Agencies (SEA) fulfilled many of the Act's requirements; however, fewer SEAs met the reform indicators for educator evaluation and compensation systems. Many states did not report at least one type of reform activity in

the evaluation and compensation areas. For example, 33 SEAs reported playing some role in supporting local-level teacher evaluation system during 2010-2011. The most common strategy was providing guidance/technical assistance to Local Education Agencies (LEA) on system design and implementation. Only, 2 of the 33 SEAs, however, supported all three components of a rigorous teacher evaluation system encouraged by the Recovery Act, thereby meeting the indicator. Among the SEAs implementing some component of Recovery Act-promoted evaluation systems, more were implementing the multi-level ratings and multiple annual observations than were implementing the use of achievement gains in individual teacher performance ratings. However, most SEAs were not providing support for evaluation and compensation systems that specifically included student achievement data as an evaluation criterion as the Recovery Act encouraged (see Figure 1).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to analyze the relationship of teachers' and administrators' perception of the effectiveness of a teacher evaluation system and the effects of the system on student learning.

Significance of the Study

At the highest levels of education policymaking, teacher evaluation has emerged as a major focus for reform. The Obama administration awarded states more points for plans to improve teacher evaluation in their Race to the Top applications than for nearly any other policy area, and it required all states to deliver information about local teacher evaluation systems in exchange for formula-based stimulus finance.

	SEAS	
	Number	**Percent**
Method of SEA Support:		
Administering a state developed principal evaluation system in which LEA participation is		
Required	8	16
Optional	7	14
Setting standards and guidelines for LEA-designed system that are:		
Required	15	29
Optional	5	10
Providing guidance/technical assistance to LEAS on system design and implementation	12	24
Requiring LEAS to submit principal evaluation system design and implementation plans for SEA approval	7	14
Requiring LEAS to report on principal evaluation system operations and effectiveness	9	18
At least one of the above	30	59
Components of SEA system:		
Use student achievement gins or growth to determine principal performance ratings	10	20
MET INDICATOR (at least one role _and_ all components)	9	18

Note: Respondents include to states and DC.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, Charting the Progress of Education Reform: Evaluation of the Recovery Act's Role: Spring 2011 State Education Agencies Survey.

Figure 1. State Federal Agency (SEA) Survey.

In March, the administration went a step further; its blueprint for reauthorizing the

Elementary and Secondary Education Act required states to revamp teacher evaluation

in order to continue receiving significant amounts of formula funding (Jerald & Van

Hook, 2011). The unparalleled policy push stemmed partly from a spate of reports

revealing deep flaws in how districts evaluated their teachers. In most places, teacher

evaluations were infrequent, were based on scant evidence, relied on crude instruments, included few dependable quality controls, failed to use effectively trained evaluators, provided almost no useful feedback to teachers, and yielded massively inflated performance ratings that were not taken seriously enough to inform basic personnel decisions (Jerald & Van Hook, 2011).

One study by The New Teacher Project found that in five districts with "binary" rating systems (usually "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory"), more than 99% of teachers received satisfactory ratings; in five districts with more than two possible performance levels, 70% of tenured teachers received the very highest rating, and an additional 24% received the second-highest. Despite low levels of student performance across many schools in those districts, nearly three-quarters of teachers in those districts received no specific feedback about how to improve their instruction. (Jerald & Hook, 2011).

Clearly, reformers and national policymakers are right to push for major improvements in teacher evaluation. How can schools, districts, and states hope to dramatically improve teacher Evaluation when they lack any reliable way even to measure it? At the same time, states and districts currently have little access to informed advice and practical guidance on how to exactly redesign teacher evaluation systems. While there are many ways to design and implement better approaches to teacher evaluation, there are also many ways to get it wrong. Indeed, research has shown that districts can adopt new evaluation systems that fit criteria suggested by reformers only to find that their new systems reproduce many of the

same old problems—including vastly inflated performance ratings—as traditional evaluations.

This study focuses on the new evaluation system called the Teacher Evaluation System in a large metro Atlanta school district. Before the implementation of this system, this school district also utilized a binary system of ratings. The teacher evaluation system that was previously in place did not allow the district to differentiate levels of satisfactory performance. The district believed there was a difference among those teachers currently identified as Satisfactory. There were teachers in the district who were "satisfactory plus." The new evaluation system would provide an opportunity for the district to show evidence of great teaching practices. It would also be a system that would allow both teachers and leaders to be reflective practitioners and make strides in their growth areas. A change in teacher evaluation was necessary to improve teacher evaluation and student learning.

The school district in this study partnered with Georgia Department of Education to develop the teacher evaluation system and adopted the system's multiple components. The evaluation system was designed to provide information that would guide professional growth and development for each teacher, as well as provide information that will be used in the calculation of the annual Teacher Evaluation Measure. The collection of educator Evaluation data and feedback to educators would occur throughout the teacher evaluation process.

According to Georgia Department of Education (n.d.), primary purposes of the Teacher Evaluation System are to:

- Increase student achievement for all students;

- Identify areas of strength and growth for each teacher; and

- Individualize professional growth based on specific needs.

During the first full implementation year, teachers were evaluated using the entire teacher evaluation system. After the first full year of implementation the following teachers will be evaluated using the full process cycle:

- All teachers who did not meet the specified Teacher Evaluation Measure score in the previous school year;

- All beginning teachers in years one, two, and three;

- All teachers new to the district; and

- Any teacher, regardless of years of experience or years in the district, who is on a professional development plan (PDP) due to demonstrated in evaluation or need for improvement.

In subsequent years, teachers who obtain specified Teacher Evaluation Measure scores will be evaluated using an adjusted process cycle, requiring fewer formative observations using the Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards. The Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards component of the Teacher Evaluation System is comprised of five domains and 10 performance standards as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1

Teacher Assessment of Performance Standards and Domains

TEACHER ASSESSMENT ON PERFORMANCE STANDARDS	
Domains	Standards
Planning	1. Professional Knowledge
	2. Instructional Planning
Instructional Delivery	3. Instructional Strategies
	4. Differentiated Instruction
Assessment of and for Learning	5. Assessment Strategies
	6. Assessment Uses
Learning Environment	7. Positive Learning Environment
	8. Academically Challenging Environment
Professionalism and Communication	9. Professionalism
	10. Communication

  The Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards provides evaluators with a qualitative, rubric-based evaluation method by which they can measure teacher performance related to quality performance standards. The Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards includes observation and documentation of a teacher's practice, as well as student perception surveys, and utilizes 10 standards-based performance rubrics to guide multiple formative assessments and one summative assessment during the school year.

Teacher Assessment of Performance Standards

Performance Rating

Within this new system, evaluators would rate teacher performance using a minimum of two formal observations and frequent, brief observations, as well as a summative rating on each teacher. On both types of assessments, teachers are rated on all 10 performance standards using a performance appraisal rubric. There must be documented evidence of each performance standard to inform the summative assessment at the end of the evaluation cycle. The rubric rating describes each performance standard. The scale states the measure of performance expected of teachers and provides a general description of what the rating entails. Table 2 provides suggested criteria for each of the Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards performance rubric ratings.

Proficient is the expected level of performance. Teachers who earn an *Exemplary* rating must meet the requirements for the *Proficient* level and exceed the standard consistently. Teachers who are rated *Exemplary* on a standard would be considered model teachers who may provide building and district leadership in performance on that standard.

Table 2

Teacher Assessment of Performance Standards Rating Definitions

Rating Category	Description	Definition
Exemplary	The teacher performing at this level maintains performance, accomplishments, and behaviors that continually and considerably surpass the established performance standard, and does so in a manner that exemplifies the school's mission and goals. This rating is reserved for performance that is truly exemplary and is demonstrated with significant student learning gains.	Exemplary performance: • continually meets the standards • empowers students and exhibits continuous behaviors that have a strong positive impact on student learning and the school climate • acquires and implements new knowledge and skills and continually seeks ways to serve as a role model to others
Proficient	The teacher meets the performance standard in a manner that is consistent with the school's mission and goals and has a positive impact on student learning gains.	Proficient performance: • consistently meets the standards • engages students and exhibits consistent behaviors that have a positive impact on student learning and the school climate • demonstrates willingness to learn and apply new skills

Table 2 (continued)

Rating Category	Description	Definition
Needs Development	The teacher inconsistently performs at the established performance standard or in a manner that is inconsistent with the school's mission and goals and may result in below average student learning gains. The teacher may be starting to exhibit desirable traits related to the standard, but due to a variety of reasons, has not yet reached the full level of proficiency expected or the teacher's performance is lacking in a particular area.	Needs Development performance: • requires frequent support in meeting the standards • results in less than expected quality of student learning • needs guidance in identifying and planning the teacher's professional growth
Ineffective	The teacher continually performs below the established performance standard or in a manner that is inconsistent with the school's mission and goals and results in minimal student learning gains.	Ineffective performance: • does not meet the standards • results in minimal student learning • may contribute to a recommendation for the employee not being considered for continued employment

Note: Adapted from the Georgia Department of Education - Performance Standard Rubric

Table 3 provides clarity on the applied use of the terms "consistently" and "continuously" from the performance rubrics.

Table 3

Frequency Terminology

Terms Ranked by Degree of Frequency	Definition	Example
Consistently	Occurs at regular intervals	Every week
		(Regular intervals will vary depending on the standard and task)
Continually	Occurs with high frequency, appropriately and over time	Every day, every class *(Frequency will vary depending on the standard and the task.)*

Under this new evaluation system, teachers would be observed using the Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards rubrics to determine formative ratings on the 10 performance standards. Formative Observation would be done two times for a minimum of 30 minutes per observation. Written feedback would be provided on the Formative Assessment Report Form for the teacher within 10 school days as a follow-up to the observation.

Frequent, brief observations will also be used to inform the Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards. Brief observations are 5-10 minutes in length and include specific feedback to teachers. At least four brief observations are required and should be distributed throughout the school year. A teacher will receive a total of six observations

per school year, two briefs, formative, two briefs and then a final formative. At the end of

the evaluation cycle for the school year, the evaluator will complete a Summative

Assessment Report for the teacher that is based on the totality of the two Formative

Assessment Reports, brief observation data and any other applicable data sources.

Conferencing

Throughout the Teacher Evaluation System evaluation process cycle,

conferencing with the teacher at the following designated times is required and important

to the feedback process.

1. A Pre-Evaluation Conference (August/September) is a follow-up to the

    Orientation and Familiarization Process as well as to review the self-

    assessment. It shall occur before the observations begin with the teacher.

2. The Mid-Year (December/January) Conference should focus on Student

    Performance Goals data and performance standards feedback. The conference

    will be documented within a teacher evaluation online tool.

3. A Post-Evaluation Conference (May) will be held to provide written and oral

    feedback to the teacher regarding the Summative Assessment Report. Teacher

    Assessment on Performance Standards and student achievement data trends

    should be included in the post-conference discussion.

The teacher and the evaluator may submit documentation about the performance

standards. Documents may be uploaded within the evaluation online tool as needed to

support the ratings and commentary. Upon request from the administrator, the teacher is

responsible for submitting documentation to the evaluator for consideration in the

formative assessment, either before or following the actual classroom observation. Specifically, if any of the 10 standards was not observed during the period of the formative assessment, the teacher will be responsible for submitting requested documentation to the evaluator. The documentation shall provide evidence of the teacher's level of performance on the standard. Documentation evidence may be collected from the weeks preceding the beginning of the school year up until the completion of the Teacher Evaluation System summative assessment. Documentation may be requested by the evaluator at any time and is not necessarily associated with a formal observation.

Documentation of data from the Student Perception Surveys is required for standards 3, 4, 7, and 8. This documentation should be used by evaluators to inform formative and summative assessment ratings for those standards. The use of survey data is recommended for the formative assessment and required for the summative assessment. Significant discrepancies between evaluator ratings and student perception survey results must be explained in the performance standards comments.

Neither specific documents nor a specific amount of documentation are required. All documentation relative to a classroom observation must be finalized within five school days following the classroom observation. Evaluators may upload additional documentation of a teacher's performance relative to the Teacher Evaluation System standards, as needed, at any time during the year. The documentation should accurately reflect and support the evaluator's rating of the teacher on the formative and summative assessment.

Summative Assessment

The evaluator will provide each teacher with a summative evaluation on the Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards that is based on a totality of the evidence and most consistent practice during the evaluation period. In completing a summative assessment on each of the 10 teacher performance standards, the evaluator will determine where the totality of evidence and most consistent practice exists, based on observations and the documentation of practice and process.

Evaluators will provide feedback to teachers on the summative assessment at the summative evaluation conference. The summative evaluation on the Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards will be scored as follows. *Exemplary* ratings earn 3 points, *Proficient* ratings earn 2 points, and *Needs Development* ratings earn 1 point. *Ineffective* ratings have no point value. The summative assessment is not an average of ratings on the standards during formative observations. Table 4 provides an example of the ratings.

Table 4

Example of Summative Rating

Rating	Point Value	Number of Standards Rated at that Level	Computation	Summative Rating
Exemplary	3	2	3 x 2 = 6 pts	25-30 pts.
Proficient	2	6	2 x 6 = 12 pt	17-24 pts.
Needs Development	1	1	1 x 1 = 1 pt	6-16 pts.
Ineffective	0	1	0 x 1 = 0 pts	0-5 pts.
			Total = 19 pts	

The implementation process for the Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards portion of the Teacher Evaluation System is depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Teacher assessment of performance standards annual process.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide the study.

RQ1:   Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' perception of the effectiveness of a teacher evaluation system and its effects on student learning?

RQ2:   Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the evaluation activities and its effects on student learning?

RQ3:   Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of teacher's professional development and its effects on student learning?

RQ4:   Does teacher perception of the effects on student learning varied by teacher demographic variables?

RQ5:   Does teacher perception of the overall effectiveness system varied by teacher demographic variable?

RQ6:   What are the perception of administrators' and the effectiveness of the system?

Summary

Teacher evaluation continues to be an area of concern and required improvement from the binary system in previous years. As part of the Race to the Top (RT3) initiative, Georgia in collaboration with other Race to the Top districts embarked on a journey to develop a new evaluation system. Various researches were conducted on evaluation system across the nation. From the researchers, Georgia adopted the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TEKS). Several educational agencies piloted a new system and adopted one as a result of the pilot. The purpose of this study was to examine teacher perception of a Teacher Evaluation System and the impact of the system on student learning.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

Organization of the Literature Review

The review of the literature in this section examines research on the teacher and administrators perception on of evaluation system. Secondly, the chapter addresses the question, "does the teacher evaluation system increase teacher practice through professional development?" This portion of the literature review also examines the extent to which the system was put in place to develop teachers through the implementation of staff development that suits their needs. Finally, the literature review provides and examination of the extent to which the teacher evaluation has a direct correlation with student achievement. When the evaluation is done correctly with administration feedback and teacher goal setting, does it lends itself to student achievement?

Teacher Perceptions

According to Donaldson (2012), teachers viewed the new evaluation program implemented in one northern, urban and medium-sized school district as positive rather than negative. The study was conducted in four high schools and six K-8 schools. One of the main findings of this study revealed that teachers were most positive about the opportunity to set their individualized goals and worked towards them which was a component of the evaluation system. Secondly, teachers affirmed that the evaluation

reform was necessary, teachers with the highest performance ratings tend to express positive or neutral opinions about the program, and teachers with the lowest performance ratings were not likely to express negative opinions about the evaluation program. Additionally, teachers in this study identified several aspects of the evaluation program as particularly valuable. Valuable portions of the evaluation included, its emphasis on teacher-select goals based on student performance growth measures; inclusion of more data points on teacher performance than in prior evaluation system; increased accountability for teachers; safeguard capricious treatment of teachers, and the program's status as homegrown reform as opposed to a state-mandate change.

Stecher, Holtzman, and Hamilton (2012) reported that teachers found the new evaluation system to be largely beneficial. In order to better recruit, retain, and reward effective teachers and ensure that students with the highest needs are taught by effective teachers, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced the Intensive Partnerships for Effective Teaching initiative in June 2009, to support districts and charter management organizations to "implement bold reform plans over the next several years to better recruit, retain, and reward effective teachers and ensure that the highest-need students are taught by the most effective teachers" (p. 40). The initiative's long-term goal is to increase dramatically college readiness and college attendance for all students, particularly those from groups that were traditionally underrepresented in higher education. At the core of the initiative is developing rich measures of teacher effectiveness and using them to manage teacher human capital more efficiently. The Gates Foundation identified four sites where conditions seemed suitable to initiate these reforms because there was broad

stakeholder from the site administration, teachers, unions, and community. The sites were Hillsborough County Public Schools in Florida, Memphis City Schools in Tennessee, Pittsburgh Public Schools in Pennsylvania, and a group of charter management organizations (CMOs) in California (The College-Ready Promise). Researchers asked teachers and school leaders about aspects of the initiatives that research suggests are likely to influence their responses to the system and their support for it via the use of surveys, interviews, and school case studies. A sample size of 4,444 teachers (response rate 81%) and 1,193 school leaders (response rate 76%) were used in the survey. The survey and interview data suggest that teachers in these four sites viewed the initiatives as promoting worthwhile goals. Across the four locations, majorities of teachers indicated they believed their evaluations were intended to help improve instruction, identify areas for professional development, and determine whether teachers needed additional support. It would be significant to observe any changes in teachers' perceptions of the goals of these initiatives as the sites begin to use the evaluations for other purposes, such as placement or compensation. Based on the study, initial evidence indicated that teachers and leaders in the four sites viewed the evaluation systems largely as beneficial, and leaders reported being well prepared to carry out their new evaluation responsibilities.

A third study regarding teacher perception on a new evaluation system conducted in a Cincinnati school system in 2004, revealed both positive and negative reaction to the system based on a general conclusion. The standards-based teacher evaluation system focused on two key issues; inter-rater agreement and teachers' reactions to the system. The most pronounced and widespread positive response was teachers'

understanding and acceptance of the four performance domains (planning and assessment, creating an environment for learning, teaching and learning and professionalism) and accompanying standards. Teachers saw these as highly job relevant and consistent with their conceptions of good practice. In short, the new evaluation system was built around a competency model that teachers understood and accepted. A second very important feature was that the district was receptive to feedback from teachers, administrators, and researchers about problems and glitches in the system discovered during the ongoing evaluation process. Finally, teachers saw the potential of the new system and it helping them to improve their practice.

Administrator Perceptions

Administrators tend to have an overall positive perception of teacher evaluation. According to a study conducted in Chicago pubic schools on their evaluation system called the Recognizing Educators Advancing Chicago's Students (REACH), survey data revealed from REACH's second year of implementation that administration perception on the evaluation system was generally positive. Administrators reported that the observation process was accurate and useful for improving instruction and has potential to improve teaching and learning. Additionally, changes in teacher practice due to observation feedback and student growth results were reported. Over 80% of administrators reported that the teachers they observed and provided feedback to, had changed in their instruction practices to do better on REACH, and almost all administrators reported that teachers had made noticeable improvement in their classrooms. The study also reported that both principals and teachers agreed that the

evaluation system improved communication between leadership and staff within their schools. Eighty eight percent of administrators agreed or strongly agreed that the observation process led to better instruction in the schools. Administrators also reported that they are able to use the observation result to target support for teachers and identify professional learning needs. The first year results of the Chicago Public School evaluation system yielded positive results; the second year the positive perception of the evaluation system decreased. On the question "Is a useful tool for identifying teacher effectiveness in this school,

> Eighty eight percent of administrators agreed to some or a great extent the second year of implementation and ninety three percent of administrators agreed to some or a great extent the first year of implementation. In the second year of implementation, administrators wondered if the evaluation system is worth the time and effort. Finally, administrators reported that the system is very time-intensive and how they struggle to balance the additional demands in place. (Jiang & Sporte, 2014, p. 9)

A second study done in Arizona revealed that administrators viewed classroom observation as the most credible form of evidence about teacher effectiveness. They reported that classroom observations, coupled with feedback, were the most beneficial components of the Arizona Education teacher evaluation system. According to a question in the study on changes on work behaviors following implementation, 6 out of the 10 of the study districts, administrators reported that their instructional leadership abilities had

improved and administrators from all five pilot districts reported that their interactions with teachers were more collaborative (Ruffini, Makkonen, Tejwani, & Diaz, 2014).

Professional Development

Alligning professional development with teacher performance data stregthens the practices of teachers. "Teacher evaluation and professional development need not be hermetically sealed off from one another; in fact, education leaders should take deliberate steps to ensure they are tightly integrated" (Jerald & Van Hook, 2011, p. 31).

Mitchell, Ortiz, and Mitchell (1987) and Rowan (1990) support the conclusion that evaluation as a stand-alone policy process is unlikely to have a vast effect on improving teacher pracice. It is by itself a "weak lever" for significant and meaningful improvement of teacher performance and practice. Literature has repeatedly stated this conclusoin regaridng teacher evaluation. One could conclude that there is a powerful relationship between evaluation and opportunities for teacher improvement.

Darling-Hammond (2013) stated that evaluation is seen as most effective when it is part of what she calls a strong "teaching and learning system" that supports continuous improvement of individual teachers, groups of teachers, and the teaching occupation as a whole. According to Darling-Hammond, such a system would bring evaluation and opportunities for teacher learning together with other elements into an integrated whole to promote teachers' performance and improvement at every stage of their careers. She further stated the following:

It is important to link both formal professional development and job-embedded

learning opportunities to the evaluation system. Evaluation alone will not improve

practice. Productive feedback must be accompanied by opportunities to learn.

Evaluations should trigger continuous goal-setting for areas teachers want to work

on, specific professional development supports and coaching, and opportunities to

share expertise, as part of recognizing teachers' strengths and needs. (p. 99)

Howard and Gullickson (2010) asserted that one of the primary "threats" to the

potential of teacher evaluation to improve teaching is the lack of connection to

professional development. They further stated that this is a weak link problem—teacher

evaluation should be tightly linked to professional development.

Few studies discrribe specifics of teacher evaluation policies and practices and

teachers' experiences with them. In a study conducted of more that 1,000 teachers across

the country, Duffet, Farkas, Rotherham, and Silva (2008) found that only a quarter of

teachers considered their most recent formal evaluations useful and efficient. One

primary reason for such dissatisfaction is provided by another study of experiences of a

group of teachers associated with the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards

with their districts' teacher evaluation policies (Accomplished California Teachers, 2010,

cited in Darling-Hammond, 2013). These teachers reported that these polices focused

little on how to improve classroom practice. They observed that these policies were rarely

used to help teachers access opportunities for professional learning development to

address their particular needs (Smylie, 2014).

A variety of research-based guidelines and models highlighted the importance linking evaluation and professional development. The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders of the American Institutes of Research identifies "alignment with professional development" as one of the eight key components of effective comprehensive teacher evaluation models (Goe, Holdheide, & Miller, 2014). In its practical guide to designing comprehensive teacher evaluation systems, the Center argues the need to design "an aligned teacher evaluation and professional learning system" (Goe et al., 2014, p. 43). It concludes that "providing job-embedded, ongoing, individualized professional learning and support is necessary for teacher evaluation to have positive impacts on teacher practice" (Goe et al., p. 43).

The Center for Teaching Quality (2013) suggested that evaluations should link to professional development plans for every educator. Teachers require formative evaluation results to improve professional practice, just as students require formative feedback from teachers to improve their abilities and understanding before a final project or test, teachers need formative evaluation results to improve professional practice. However, frequency of feedback only matters if the feedback is of high quality. Formative evaluations are imperative because it inform teachers not just whether they are proficient or satisfactory in a given area of classroom practice but specifically identifies where teachers' strengths and challenges lie and exactly what they can do to serve their students better. Teachers in this article also share that it is important for their evaluations to be linked to professional practice. Most of all, these linked evaluation and professional development programs should be available to all teachers and school staff, not just early-

career or struggling educators in core academic subjects. Increasingly, educators are working collaboratively to improve student learning experiences and outcomes through team and co-teaching among classroom teachers, the involvement of specialists and pull-out teachers and related services staff who help students become ready to learn. Evaluation systems are seeking opportunities to included support personnel as part of the evaluation system.

Student Achievement

Of all school factors, from extended learning opportunities to family and community engagement to smaller class-size, teachers exert the largest impact on student achievement (McCaffrey, Lockwood, Koretz, & Hamilton, 2003). The statement, *teachers make a crucial difference in students' academic performance,* is now a well-established fact. This fact was once fervently believed by practitioners and parents but questioned by teachers. Despite this reality, efforts to improve teacher quality through performance evaluation have made little ground. The consequences of evaluation have generally been negligible in terms of teachers' instructional improvement or continued employment. There is scant evidence that evaluation has improved the quality of teachers' classroom instruction or led to the dismissal of underperforming teachers (Donaldson, 2009). Additionally, teachers have mixed views on whether or not their evaluation has an impact on student achievement.

According to a study conducted in one northeastern, urban, and medium-sized school district called Studyville, to maintain confidentially, a vast majority of teachers reported that the teacher-evaluation syssstem did not generally affect their pedagogy but

that many said it did affect their planning and overall approach to teaching. The most

consistently reported impacts of the evaluation program were related to its goal-setting

component and, in particular, the use of student performance data goals (Donaldson,

2012). This study was based on a new evaluation system implemented in 2010 called the

Teacher Evaluation Program, or TEP, which evaluated teachers based on their students'

growth on academic performance measures and more conventional observation-based

data. The study presented views of the teachers on the district's evaluation reform and the

extent to which it has affected their instructional practice. Researchers conducted

interviews with 92 educators, including teachers and school leaders during the 2011-2012

school year, which was the valuation program's second year in existence. In this study,

the views of teachers differed according to their evaluation rating. Ratings provided were

on a scale ranging from a low of 1 (needs improvement) to a high of 5 (exemplary). The

study revealed that teachers with low-performance ratings (1 and 2) were more likely to

sreport that the evaluation program affected their instruction. They were also more likely

to say that it affected their approach to planning and preparation. Teachers with higher

ratings (3,4, and 5) were much less liable to say that the evaluation program had changed

their work in any capacity. Many teachers in this study identified that the primary impact

of the evaluation as increasing teacher self-assessment and productivity. Some teachers

shared that their specific instructional practices had not changed. However, many

reported that the evaluation system had allowed them to view a broader approach to

teaching. They made some adjustments, particularly by establishing goals based on

student achievement and examining student data more closely (Donaldson, 2012).

Researchers found significant relationships between teachers' ratings and their students' gain scores on standardized tests, and evidence that teachers' practice improved as they were given frequent feedback in relation to the standards in a study of three districts using standards-based evaluation systems. In the schools and districts studied, assessments of teachers were mailnly based on well-articulated standards of practice evaluated through evidence including observations of teaching along with teacher pre- and post-observation interviews and, sometimes, artifacts such as lesson plans, assignments, and samples of student work (Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, & Rothstein, 2011).

Research by Taylor and Tyler (2011) revealed that students assigned to teachers participating in a teacher evaluation system scored approximately 10% of a standard deviation higher in math than similar students taught by the same teacher prior to implementation of teacher evaluation system. One question addressed in the study was: does evaluation improve teacher performance, as measured by student achievement gains, during the evaluation period? Data collected from the Cincinnati Public Schoold, where there is a history of a long-running Teacher Evaluation System (TES) revealved that teacher evaluation has a positive impact on student achievement. Cincinnati Public Schools' evaluation system is considered to be more developed than most existing teacher evaluation programs (Fairman, Johnson, Munger, Papay, & Qazilbash, 2009). TES evaluates teachers' professional practice through multiple, detailed classroom observations and a review of work products (but not student test scores). They compared teacher differences in performance over time for a sample where the timing of evaluation

is plausibly exogenous. The study focused on classroom observation-based evaluation for two reasons. First, much has been written about the potential use of test-score-based measures in teacher evaluation, particularly in selective retention policies (Taylor & Tyler, 2011). Classroom observation measures have received little attention by comparison, all though the two approaches are increasingly combined in policy proposals. Second, the inherent focus on observable practice increases the chances that classroom observation-based evaluation will indicate persistent changes in performance through improved skill. Test-score measures provide little solutions for changes in performance. We find that high-quality, classroom-observation-based evaluation improves mid-career teacher performance both during the period of assessment and in subsequent years, though the estimated improvements during evaluation are not always robust. Specifically, students assigned to a teacher after she participates in TES score about 10% percent of a standard deviation higher in math than similar students taught by the same teacher prior to TES participation. Effects of this size represent a potentially substantial gain in welfare given the program's costs.

Summary

Although most states are currently developing or implementing teacher evaluation systems, such systems cotinue to experience dificulties in reference to student learning and teacher staff development. The lack of attention to professional development in relation to these systems is one of the most serious problems. Policies governing teacher evaluation systems tend to make only vague and weak provisions for professional development, and they fail to ensure that these opportunities are of high quality and of

value in improving practice. If we are to improve the effectiveness of teacher evaluation systems, we should make the provision of high-quality professional development to all teachers a critical element of the evaluation systems. Additionally, of all school factors – from extended learning opportunities to family and community engagement, to smaller class-size teachers exert the largest impact on student achievement (McCaffrey et al., 2003). What was once fervently believed by practitioners and parents but questioned by teachers is now a well-established fact: Teachers make a crucial difference in students' academic performance.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Interest has again turned to teacher evaluation, driven partly by research that confirms that good teachers enhance student learning (Firestone, 2014) and partly by federal policies such as the Teacher Incentive Fund (Heyburn, Lewis, & Ritter, 2010) and Race to the Top (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The hope is that new data-based approaches provide a firmer basis for offering formative feedback to teachers, motivating them to improve their practice, and removing the ineffective ones. According to the article *Teacher Evaluation Policy and Conflicting Theories of Motivation* (Firestone, 2014), there are two motivation theories often used to guide the thinking regarding teacher evaluation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The teacher evaluation system draws on intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. The candidate that's extrinsically motivated may work extremely hard towards obtaining exemplary ratings. The exemplary rating thereby becomes the extrinsic motivator. The candidate that is intrinsically motivated works hard and is focus on the work and the goal is to do the work right. The exemplary rating is the byproduct of the work but the end goal of their work. Theories of instrinsic motivstion also suggests that internally motivated individuals experience both autonomy and self-efficacy. No additional incentive is needed for autonomously motivated people as they find the activity itself interesting (Firestone, 2014).

In addition to intrinsic and extrinsic factors, the teacher evaluation draws upon Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs. The frequent feedback meets the esteem needs of recognition of the candidate. These needs are standards in the evaluation system which leads to continual self-development throughout the process. The esteem needs and self-actualization needs cannot take place without the base needs of psychological, social and safety needs being met. In order for this evaluation system to meet the esteem and self-actualization needs the candidate lower base needs have to be met. Teachers have to know that the purpose of the elevation system is for improvement and self-development not violating the lower hierarchy needs of social, safety and psychological (i.e., if the system is used to create an environment of distrust).

The constructivist theory is another theory that can be used to support the feedback teachers receive and the impact on student learning. According to an article in the *American Communication Journal* entitled "The Impact on Education: Language Discourse and Meaning" by Jones and Brader-Araje (2002), constructivism in education emerged after the behaviorist movement as a welcome and refreshing view of learning that centers on the active learner within the teaching-learning process. This emphasis on the individual (within the greater social context) during instruction has drawn attention to the prior beliefs, knowledge, and skills that individuals bring with them. The influence of constructivism in education today is observed in a variety of published curricula as well as instructional practices. Vygotsky (1976, cited in Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002)) stated that understanding learning is best to understand in light of others within an individual's world. This continual interplay between the individual and others, is described by

Vygotsky as the zone of proximal development (ZPD). He defined the zone of proximal

development as the intellectual potential of an individual when provided with assistance

from a knowledgeable adult or a more advanced child. During this assistance process, an

individual is "other regulated" by a more capable peer or an adult. "Other regulation"

refers to cues and scaffolding provided by the most capable peer or adult. The individual,

using this assistance, can move through a series of steps that eventually lead to "self-

regulation" and intellectual growth. Vygotsky stressed the importance of the zone of

proximal development because it allows for the measurement of the intellectual potential

of an individual rather than on what the individual has achieved. Thus, an administrator

can utilize the teacher evaluation system to observe whether or not learning is occurring

within the classroom. The teaching practices of teachers can improve based on the zone

of proximal development as the intellectual potential of an individual increase when

provided with assistance from a knowledgeable adult—the evaluating administrator.

Teacher evaluation has been a topic studied for several years. Many school

districts are re-shifting the focus of teacher evaluation from merely providing a rating for

teachers to effectively identifying teacher effectiveness and student learning. Changes

within teacher evaluation systems continue to occur across the United States as states

compete to have the best educational programs that prepare children for a global

economy. The efficient use of a teacher evaluation tool can be an extremely useful tool

for improving teacher effectiveness and student learning. Teacher perceptions and

attitudes can be affected by the type of evaluations used and the methods in which

evaluations are carried out. As districts develop new teacher evaluation systems to meet

the guidelines provided by new state mandates, districts should consider how the evaluation is carried out and which evaluation tool is best.

The purpose of the study was to analyze the relationship of teachers' and administrators' perception of the effectiveness of a teacher evaluation system to the effects of the system on student learning (see Figure 3).

Independent Variables

Teacher perceptions of evaluation activities

Teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of the evaluation system

Dependent Variable

Administrative perceptions of evaluation activities

Teacher perceptions of the effects of the evaluation system on student learning

Administrator perceptions of the effectiveness of evaluation activities

Professional Development of Teachers

Teacher Demographics

Figure 3. Theoretical framework of the study.

Definition of the Variables

Dependent Variable

Teacher Evaluation System: For this study, this variable is defined to mean teachers' perception of the extent to which the teacher evaluation system has a positive effect on student learning.

Independent variables

Teacher Perception of the Effectiveness System: This variable is defined to mean the perception of teachers of the usefulness and adequacy of the feedback from their evaluators, the fairness of the effectiveness of the system standards and accuracy of the standards and whether or not teacher perceived that the standards capture all that the teacher has to do.

Teacher perception of the Evaluation Activities: For this study, the variable is defined to mean the teacher's perception of the usefulness of frequency of classroom visits, their confidence in the competence of the evaluator and on inter-rater reliability where more than one evaluator is in operation.

Administrator Perception of the Usefulness and Convenience of the evaluation system: For this study, the variable is defined to mean the administrator's perception on the usefulness of the frequency of classroom visits, the convenience of the classroom visits, evaluation write-ups, and teacher conferences and the extent to which the evaluation may be causing stress to teachers and administrators.

Teacher perception of Professional Development: For this study, the researcher defined this variable to mean the teacher's perception of the alignment of professional

development activities with the instructional needs of the teacher and their views of the usefulness of feedback from the formative observations.

Teacher Demographics: For this study, the researcher examined teacher qualifications and teacher experience in the school district and the school.

Justification of the Variables

Teacher and Leaders Perception

Based on several studies across school districts within the United Sates, studies revealed initial evidence that teachers and leaders in the four sites viewed the evaluation systems largely as beneficial. Teacher attitudes and perceptions about teacher evaluations tend to be positive when teachers are allowed to be a part of planning, designing, implementing and creating follow-up processes for evaluation tools (Koster, Brekelmans, Korthagen, & Wobbles, 2005). Teachers should also play a role in identifying a profile of the responsibilities and duties of the teaching staff. By allowing teachers to play a part in the identification of the profile of the teaching staff enables teachers to reflect and identify what is needed to provide quality instruction for increased student achievement. Several studies found veteran teachers and those who have obtained tenure to be more accepting of the evaluation process. However, other studies have revealed quite the opposite. Veteran teachers are opposed to new initiatives, particularly teacher evaluation systems. Teachers overall perceived that life-long learning is important and are willing to accept constructive criticism to identify areas in which the teacher may need to improve or develop their practice. Some teachers, however, tend to be more accepting of new evaluation systems when a government body has enforced new policies; teachers seem to

understand new policies also have an impact on those who must perform the evaluations (Clipa, 2011; Faculty of Science of Education, 2011; Tuytens & Devos, 2009).

Professional Development

Aligning professional development with teacher performance data strengthens the practices of teachers. "Teacher evaluation and professional development need not be hermetically sealed off from one another; in fact, education leaders should take deliberate steps to ensure they are tightly integrated" (Jerald & Van Hook, 2011, p. 31).

A variety of teacher evaluation tools can be useful in developing professional development for teachers. The use of portfolios as evaluation tools identifies areas needing improvement and provides data for administrators to plan professional development (Attinello, Lare, & Waters, 2006). The Faculty of Science of Education at Stefan cel Mare University (2011) found that formative evaluations help the teacher identify their strengths and weaknesses and are used to help make improvements through professional development. A study of Cincinnati teachers using the Cincinnati Public Schools' Teacher Evaluation System suggests schools provide professional development in classroom management skills first and then instructional issues, followed by thought-provoking questions and engaging students in discussions when wanting to increase student achievement and teacher effectiveness (Kane, Taylor, Tyler, & Wooten, 2011). Moore (2006) suggested promoting professional development by having co-workers share best practices and experiences amongst each other. When the teacher evaluation reveals a need for professional development, and the professional development is

designed to improve classroom content, process, and enrich context, it may increase teacher effectiveness and student achievement (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008).

Student Achievement

Studies have shown that an effective teacher evaluation system can impact teacher practices which in turn increase student achievement. One of the most important variables influencing the learning process is the teachers (Clipa, 2011). Kane, Taylor, Tyler, and Wooten (2011) looked at whether classroom observations by trained evaluators, using an extensive set of standards, can identify teaching skills that raise student achievement and increase student learning. Evaluation records of Cincinnati teachers reviewed between 2000-2001 and 2008-2009 for this quantitative study. Cincinnati Public Schools' calculated the scores for each teacher on the eight Teacher Evaluation System (TES) standards. Averaging the ratings assigned during four different observations of each teacher for each element in the standard was used to determine the scores. The eight standards were collapsed into three summary indexes that measured various aspects of a teacher's practice. The aspects included overall classroom practices, classroom management vs. instructional practices, and question/discussion vs. standards/content.

A statistical technique, referred to as principal components analysis, was used to predict teacher effectiveness in raising student achievement (Kane et al., 2011). The technique identifies the smaller number of underlying constructs captured in the eight different standards. The study found 87% of the total variations in teacher performances across the eight standards can be found in the three summary indexes. Overall classroom practices were found to be between proficient and distinguished, with one-quarter of the teachers rating closer to distinguished and another quarter rating at a basic level. Teacher

ratings were compared to student achievement test data for reading and math for each teacher's students. The comparisons were made with students' test scores the year following the year a teacher taught the student.

Kane et al. (2011) found the results of the study to show classroom practices can predict differences in student achievement growth. A sample of 365 teachers in reading and 200 teachers in math has proven when a teacher's overall classroom practice score increases from proficient to distinguish a student's reading achievement score increases one-seventh of a standard deviation and math scores rise one-tenth of a deviation. While achievement score results do not make drastic jumps, the change is significant enough to see the influence improved instruction can have on student achievement.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide the study.

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' perception of the effectiveness of a teacher evaluation system and its effects on student learning?

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the evaluation activities and its effects on student learning?

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of teacher's professional development and its effects on student learning?

RQ4: Does teacher perception of the effects on student learning varied by teacher demographic variables?

RQ5: Does teacher perception of the overall effectiveness system varied by teacher demographic variable?

RQ6:   What are the perception of administrators' and the effectiveness of the

system?

Definition of Key Terms

Accountability: Accountability is defined as the delivering of results (Marzano,

McNulty & Waters, 2005). Teacher evaluation is one method used to determine the

accountability of teachers.

Formative Evaluation: Formative evaluation is a type of evaluation that has the

purpose of improving programs. The primary focus of this type of evaluation is teaching

and learning (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2005).

Teacher Evaluation: Teacher evaluation is the process of collecting data and

making professional decision on teacher performance.

TES: Teacher Evaluation System

Summary

To ensure that teacher evaluation is "done right," school districts have taken on

the challenge of implementing a rigorous evaluation system that will yield effective

teacher results. Teacher evaluation should be a tool that increases teacher practice and in

turn improve student learning. Studies have shown that consistently improving teacher

professional development enhances student learning. Studies have also shown that

teachers can perceive evaluations to be an "I got you tool," but if evaluators are

thoroughly trained and effective feedback is received teacher evaluation can be viewed

positively.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to analyze the relationship of teachers' and administrators' perception of the effectiveness of a teacher evaluation system to the effects of the system on student learning.

> The importance of teacher effectiveness in providing quality learning experiences for the students of all ages is evident. In fact, there is ample evidence to support the claim that, of all the variables within the control of schools, the quality of the teacher's teaching has one of the most powerful effects on student learning. (Catano, Richard, & Stronge, 2008, p. 65)

Research Design

A mixed method design model was used to conduct the study confined to one school. This method design involves the combination or integration of qualitative and quantitative research and data. Multiple methods of research may have bias and weaknesses and the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data neutralizes the weaknesses of each form of data. The explanatory sequential mixed method was used to conduct this study. This method is one in which the research first conduct quantitative research, analyzes the results and then builds on the results to explain them in more detail

with qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). Quantitative data were first collected electronically from a teacher survey to explain the impact on student learning and teacher perception of the evaluation system. The qualitative portion of the study included teachers and administrators focus group discussions. The qualitative and quantitative aspect was conducted sequentially. The surveys were first administered electronically, and then the teachers and administrators the focus group discussions were held.

Setting for the Study

The study was conducted at one school in a large metro Atlanta school district. Demographic information was collected from the school district website's accountability report. The school currently has a total of 685 students, with a population of 75% students eligible for free or reduced lunch. The school consistently made adequate yearly progress (AYP) consistently for years; AYP was a measuring factor for schools. On the state's College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI), the school scored an 80% out of a possible 100% (see Figure 4). Currently, the school is an average performing school that ranked 63 among the 79 elementary schools in the district.

Sample Population

The school has a low number in student enrollment in the district and is among the smallest of four compared to the 79 elementary schools. There are 108 kindergarten students, 6 teachers and professionals who support the teachers.
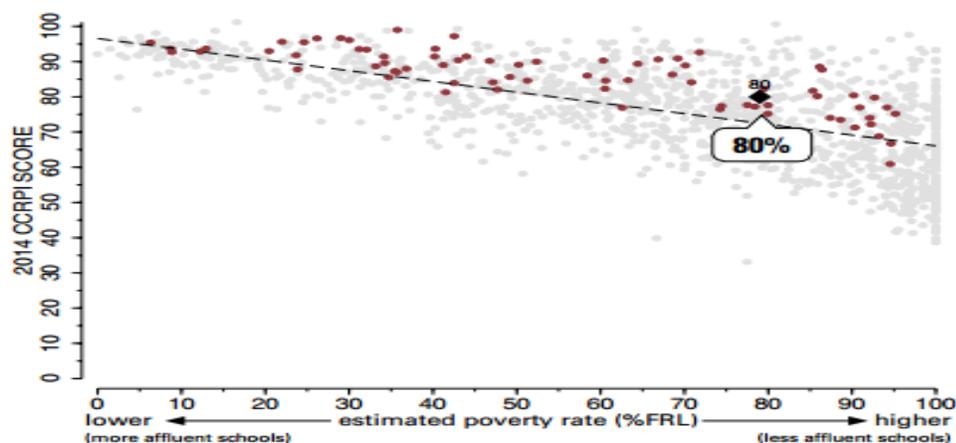
Figure 4. CCRPI score.

In first grade there are 128 students and 6 teachers; second grade, 120 students, and 4 teachers; third grade, 107 students and four teachers; fourth grade, 106 students and four teachers; fifth grade, 114 students and 4 teachers. Table 5 shows the total number of students enrolled for the 2015-2016 school year.

Table 5

Enrollment Count: Teacher vs. Students

Grade Code	Grade	Student Count	Teacher Count
KK	Kindergarten	108	13
01	First Grade	128	18
02	Second Grade	120	20
03	Third Grade	107	16
04	Fourth Grade	106	15
05	Fifth Grade	114	17

The total number of teachers depicted in Table 5 includes general education teachers, teachers who support the grade levels (i.e. speech teachers, interrelated resource teachers, early intervention support teachers, special areas teachers, recovery teachers, and English of second language learners' teachers) and special education self-contained teachers.

Figure 5 shows the student ethnicity and population for the 2015-2016 school year. There are 60% African Amercian students, 28% Hispanic, 6% white, 4% Hispanic, and 3% Asian/Specific Islander.
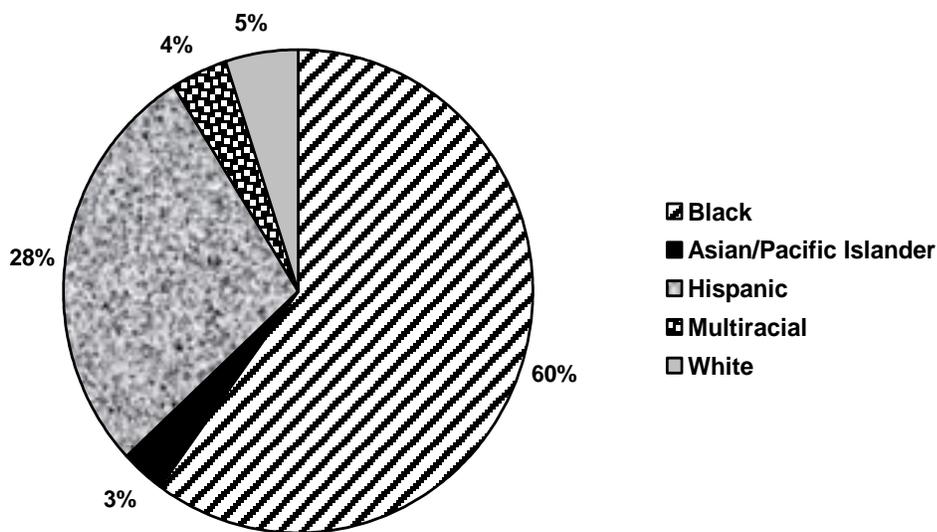
Figure 5. Student ethnicity.

Figure 6 depicts the percentage of students enrolled in each program for the 2015-2016 school year. There were 23% English learners, 14% special education teachers, 6% gifted, and 75% free and reduced lunch students.
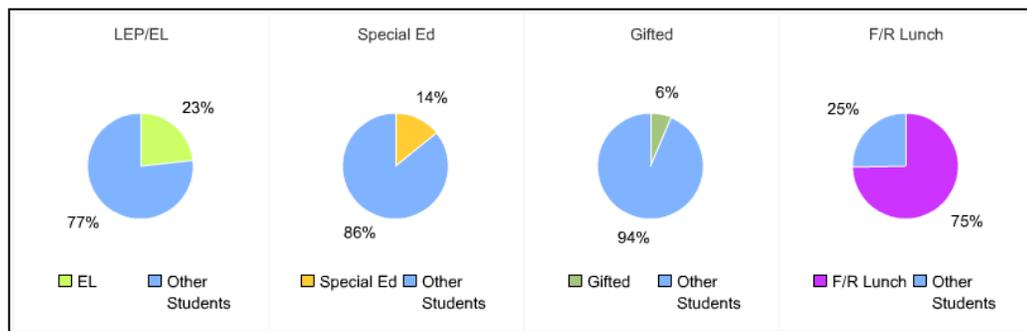
Figure 6. Program enrollment.

Figure 7 depicts the total number of staff certification level and education experience for the 2014-2015 school year. School staff certification level and education experience are unavailable for the 2015-2016 school year as results from the Results Based Evaluation system (RBES – the system's accountability system for improving schools), and CCRPI scores are not in as of yet. There are approximately 13 certified staff member with a bachelor's degree, 22 with a master's degree, 17 with a specialist degree, and 3 with a doctoraal degree.
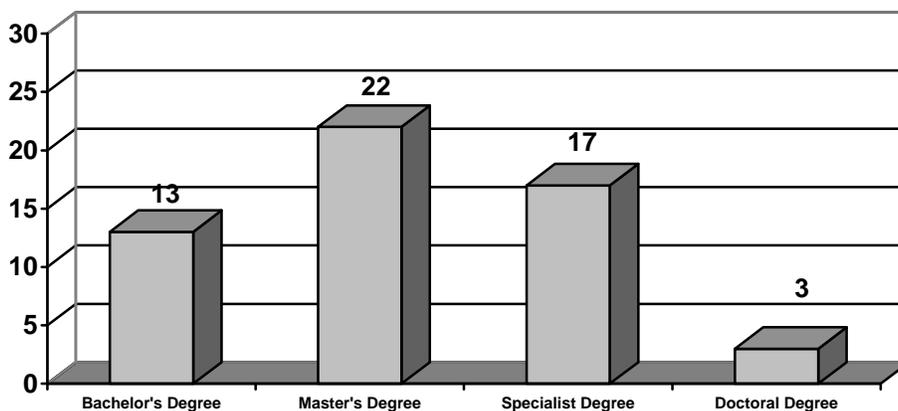
Figure 7. Staff certification, 2014-2015.

A focus group discussion was held with survey participants for more comprehensive data. Teachers were randomly selected from all grade levels to participate in the focus group. Teachers' names were stratified by grade level then randomly selected to participate in the focus group. All administrators in the school participated in the focus group dicussion to gain their perception of the evaluation system. The sample for the study consists of teachers in grades K-5, approximately 36 teachers, and 3 administrators.

Instrumentation

A survey was used to collect data on teacher perception of the independent and dependent variables. Additionally, teachers and administrators focus groups were conducted to provide a more in-depth analysis on teachers' and administrators' view of the teacher evaluation system (see Table 6).

Table 6

Alignment of Variables with Data Collection Instruments

Independent Variables	Data Collection Method
Teachers' Perception of Evaluation Activities	Survey Item #s-7-9, 12, 17-20
	Teacher Focus Group
Teachers' Perception of the effectiveness of the evaluation system	Survey Item #s- 10-11, 13-16, 31
	Teacher Focus Group
Administrators' Perception of Evaluation Activities	Administrator Focus Group
Administrators' Perception of the Effectiveness of the evaluation activities	Administrators Focus Group

Table 6 (continued)

Independent Variables	Data Collection Method
Professional Development of Teachers	Survey Items #s- 21-25
	Teacher Focus Group
Teacher Demographics	Survey item #s- 1-6

Dependent Variables	Data Collection Method
Teachers' Perception of the effects of the evaluation system on student learning.	Survey Item #s -26-30
	Teacher Focus Group

Data Collection Procedures

After receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, the surveys were administered electronically to the teachers. The focus group discussions with teachers and administrators were conducted following the collection of the teacher survey data for a more in-depth teacher perception of the variables.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the study consist of the following:

- sample confined to the one school

- variables not considered in the study that could affect teacher performance such as their prior training or their relationship with administrators

- self-reported surveys

- surveys were sent through researcher's email and the researcher could be identified by respondent

- the researcher is an administrator of the school

Summary

This study provides data on a school in a large metro Atlanta school district. Studies have shown that there is a positive correlation between teacher evaluation, teacher practice, and student learning. Data collection was analyed to determine the relaibaility of the evaluation system and the impact on student leanring.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of the study was to analyze the relationship of teachers' and administrators' perception of the effectiveness of a teacher evaluation system to the effects of the system on student learning.

> The importance of teacher effectiveness in providing quality learning experiences
> for the students of all ages is evident. In fact, there is ample evidence to support
> the claim that, of all the variables within the control of schools, the quality of the
> teacher's teaching has one of the most powerful effects on student learning.
> (Catano, Richard, & Stronge, 2008, p. 65)

Overview of Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected two ways: (a) teacher surveys and (b) teachers' and administrators' focus group. Teachers at the research site were administrated a survey instrument electronically that assessed their perception regarding a teacher evaluation system and their perception of the effects of the system on students' learning. The teacher survey was distributed to all teachers that were employed during the selected school during the 2016-2017 school year. Additionally, following the collection of the survey results, a total of six teachers were selected to participate in a focus group discussion, and all administrators at the school also participated in a focus group discussion.

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Survey Participants

Figure 8 reveals the experience level of the survey participants. The figure shows that 16% are in the 0-3 years range, 8% are in the 4-6 range, 12% are in the 7-9 range, 16% are in the 10-13 years, 12% are in the 14-17 range, and 36% have over 18 years of teaching experience. Sixteen of the 25 respondents had more than four years of experience. Nine of the 25 respondents had six or more years of experience. Table 7 shows the frequency distribution for the variable: "years as teacher."
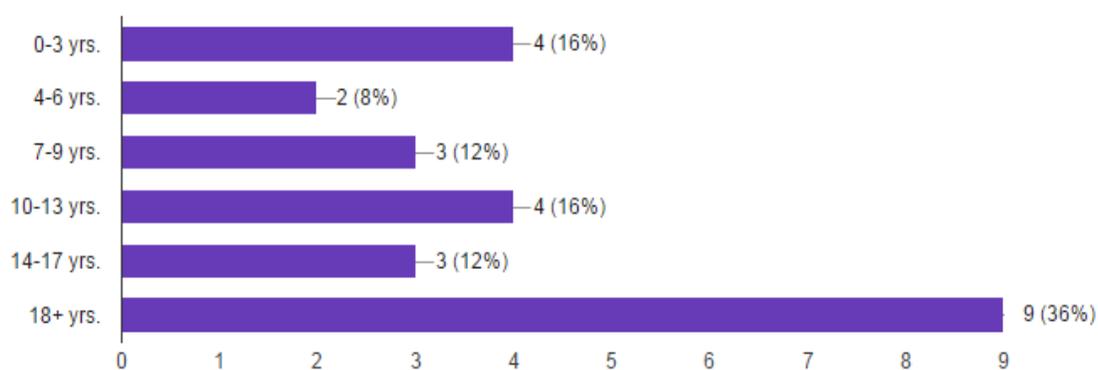
Figure 8. Years as a teacher (n = 25).

Table 7

Frequency Distribution: Years as a Teacher

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Years	0-3 years	4	16.0	16.0	16.0
	4-6 years	2	8.0	8.0	24.0
	7-9 years	3	12.0	12.0	36.0
	10-13 years	4	16.0	16.0	52.0
	14-17 years	3	12.0	12.0	64.0
	18+ years	9	36.0	36.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Figure 9 illustrates the number of years teachers worked in the district: 36% of teachers who responded to the survey worked 0-3 years in the district, 4% had 4-6 years, 8% had 7-9 years, 32% had 10-13 years, 8% had 14-17 years, and 12% has a total of 18+ year experience in the district. Approximately half of the research sample is relatively new to the district with three of fewer years in the district. Table 8 shows the frequency distribution for this variable.
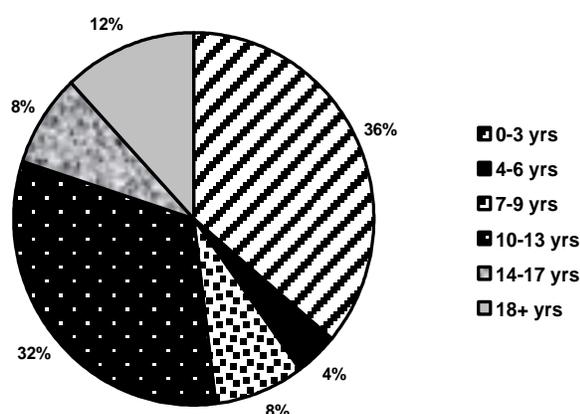
Figure 9. Teachers' years in the district (n = 25).

Table 8

Frequency Distribution: Years in the District

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Years	0-3 years	9	36.0	36.0	36.0
	4-6 years	1	4.0	4.0	40.0
	7-9 years	2	8.0	8.0	48.0
	10-13 years	8	32.0	32.0	80.0
	14-17 years	2	8.0	8.0	88.0
	18+ years	3	12.0	12.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Figure 10 illustrates the total number of years the respondents have in the school in which they are currently employed, 52% of the respondents served in the school for 0-3 years, 24% served in the school for 4-6 years, 4% for 7-9 years, 8% for 10-13 years, 8% for 14-17 years, and 4% for 18+ years. The majority of teacher respondents served in the school for 0-3 years. Table 10 shows the frequency distribution for number of years at current school.
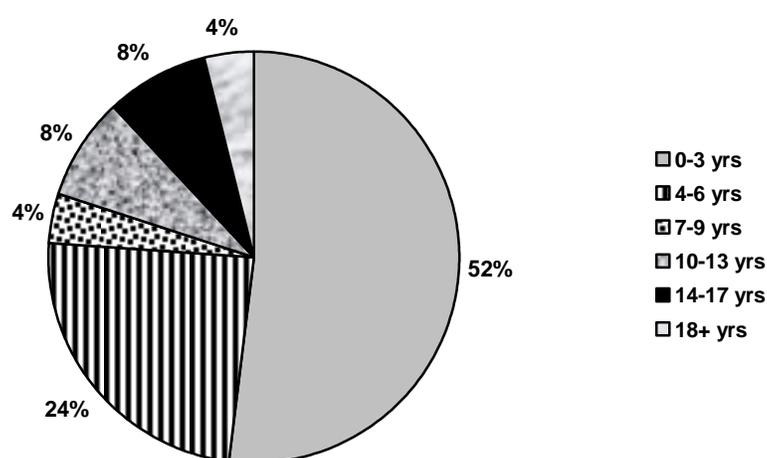
Figure 10. Teachers' years at current school (n = 25).

Table 9

Frequency Distribution: Years at Current School

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Years	0-3 years	13	52.0	52.0	52.0
	4-6 years	6	24.0	24.0	76.0
	7-9 years	1	4.0	4.0	80.0
	10-13 years	2	8.0	8.0	88.0
	14-17 years	2	8.0	8.0	96.0
	18+ years	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Figure 11 illustrates the primary grade level taught in the current school: 12% of

respondents teach kindergarten, 12% teach first grade, 16% teach second grade, 12%

teach third grade, 16% teach fourth grade, 8% teach fifth grade, and 24% are support

personnel who may fall into one of the following categories: instructional coaches, early

intervention teachers and or special education teachers. The majority of the respondents

were in the "other" category. Table 11 shows the frequency distribution of participants'

grade level.
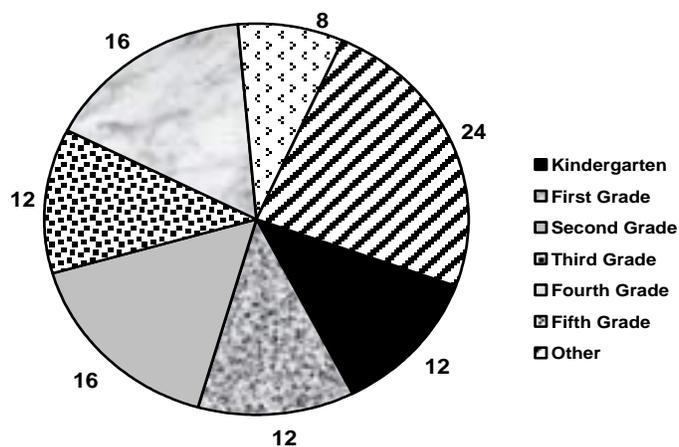
Figure 11. Primary grade level taught (n = 25).

Table 10

Frequency Distribution: Primary Grade Level Taught

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Grade Level	First Grade	3	12.0	12.0	12.0
	Second Grade	4	16.0	16.0	28.0
	Third Grade	3	12.0	12.0	40.0
	Fourth Grade	4	16.0	16.0	56.0
	Fifth Grade	2	8.0	8.0	64.0

Table 10 (continued)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Other	6	24.0	24.0	88.0
Kindergarten	3	12.0	12.0	100.0
Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Figure 12 illustrates the respondents' highest degree completed: 25% of respondents hold a bachelors degree, 37.5% hold a master's, 33.3% have a Specialist degree, and 4% have a doctoral degree. The majority of the respondents hold a master's dergee. Table 11 shows the frequency distribution of the variable: highest degree completed by participants.
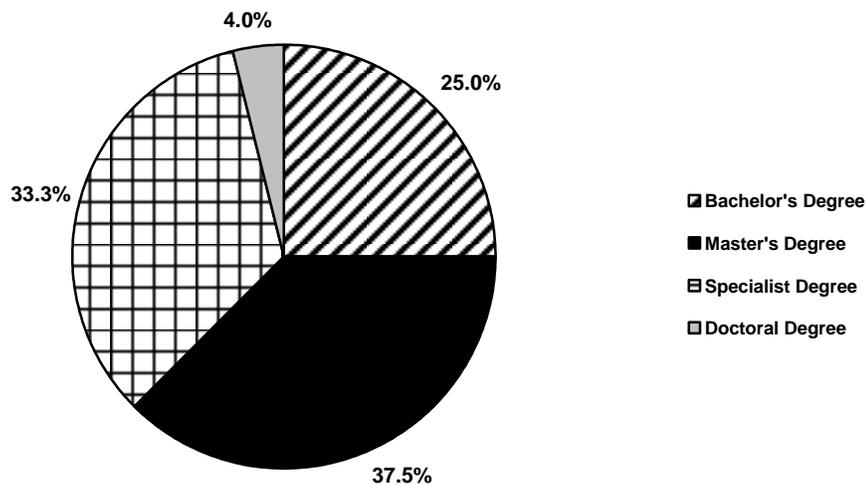
Figure 12. Highest degree completed (n = 24).

Table 11

Frequency Distribution: Highest Degree Completed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Degrees	Bachelor's	6	24.0	25.0	25.0
	Master's	9	36.0	37.5	62.5
	Specialist	8	32.0	33.3	95.8
	Doctoral	1	4.0	4.2	100.0
	Total	24	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	4.0		
Total		25	100.0		

Figure 13 illustrates the type of teaching certificates and endorsements held by the respondents: 84% of the respondents hold an Early Childhood Education Certificate, 24% hold English to Speaker of Other Language Endorsement certificate, 28% hold a Gifted endorsement, 8% hold a Reading Endorsement, 4% hold a Math Endorsement Certificate, and 36% hold another type of certificate (i.e. reading recovery, coaching endorsement, etc.). The majority of the respondents hold an Early Childhood Certificate.
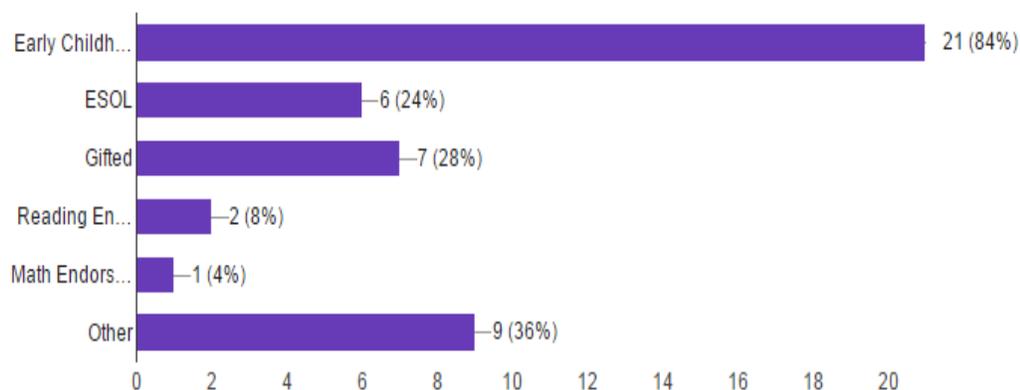
Figure 13. Teaching certificate/endorsement level (n = 25).

Table 12 shows the frequency distribution of certificates and endorsements held by teachers. Several teachers hold an Early Childhood Education Degree along with one or two teaching endorsements.

Table 12

Frequency Distribution: Teaching Certificate/Endorsement Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Early Childhood Ed	21	84.0	84.0	84.0
	Other	4	16.0	16.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

The following research questions were answered using the following research questions:

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' perception of the effectiveness of a teacher evaluation system and its effects on student learning?

The Pearson correlation was used to analyze the data for these research questions. The data analysis in Table 13 for research question 1 found a correlation coefficient of .677 and a significance of .000. This is statistically significant beyond the .01 level. There is a significant relation between teachers' perception of the effectiveness of the teacher evaluation system and its effects on student learning.

Table 13

Pearson Correlation: Student Learning

		Student Learning Impact	System Effectiveness	Evaluation Activities	Professional Development
Student Learning Impact	Pearson Correlation	1	.677[**]	.685[**]	.912[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	25	24	24	25
System Effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.677[**]	1	.718[**]	.674[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	24	24	24	24

[**]. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ2:   Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the

evaluation activities and its effects on student learning?

From Table 14 it can be seen that the correlation coefficient between the impact on student learning and teachers' perception of the evaluation activities is .685 with a significant of .000. This is statistically significant beyond the .01 level.

Table 14

Pearson Correlation: Evaluation Activities

		Student Learning Impact	System Effectiveness	Evaluation Activities	Professional Development
Evaluation Activities	Pearson Correlation	.685[**]	.718[**]	1	.762[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	24	24	24	24

[**]. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ3:   Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of teacher's

professional development and its effects on student learning?

The correlation coefficient between teacher perception of teachers' professional

development and its effects on student learning is .912. This is statistically significant

beyond the .01 level (see Table 15).

Table 15

Pearson Correlation: Professional Development

		Student Learning Impact	System Effectiveness	Evaluation Activities	Professional Development
Prof. Dev.	Pearson Correlation	.912**	.674**	.762**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	25	24	24	25

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ4:   Does teacher perception of the effects on student learning varied by

teacher demographic variables?

There is no significant difference between teacher perceptions of the effects on

student learning when considering teacher demographic variables as represented in Table

16. Whether they are senior or junior teachers, it made no difference. The grade level or

degree completed made no significant difference on their perception of student learning.

The number of teaching years made no difference on their perception of student learning.

No significant relationship was found between teacher demographics and their perception

of the effects on student learning.

Table 16

Pearson Correlation: Student Learning and Teacher Demographics

		StudentLearnImpact	1 Teacher Years	2 District Years	3 Current School Years
Student Learn Impact	Pearson Correlation	1	-.338	-.296	-.134
	Sig. (2 tailed)		.099	.150	.524
	N	25	25	25	25
1. Teacher Years	Pearson Correlation	-.338	1	.759[**]	.518[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.099		.000	.008
	N	25	25	25	25
2. District Years	Pearson Correlation	-.296	.759[**]	1	.642[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.150	.000		.001
	N	25	25	25	25
3. Current School Years	Pearson Correlation	-.134	.518[**]	.642[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.524	.008	.001	
	N	25	25	25	25
4. Grade Level	Pearson Correlation	.241	.128	.020	.185
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.246	.543	.925	.375
	N	25	25	25	25
5. Degree Completed	Pearson Correlation	-.256	.536[**]	.752[**]	.279
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.228	.007	.000	.187
	N	24	24	24	24
6. Certificate Level	Pearson Correlation	-.062	.040	-.081	-.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.768	.849	.702	.912
	N	25	25	25	25

		4 Grade Level	5 Degree Completed	6 Certificate Level
Student Learn Impact	Pearson Correlation	.241	-.256	-.062
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.246	.228	.768
	N	25	24	25
1. Teacher Years	Pearson Correlation	.128	.536[**]	.040
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.543	.007	.849
	N	25	24	25

Table 16 (continued)

		Grade Level	Degree Completed	Certificate Level
2. District Years	Pearson Correlation	.020	.752**	-.081
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.925	.000	.702
	N	25	24	25
3. Current School	Pearson Correlation	.185	.279	-.023
Years	Sig. (2-tailed)	.375	.187	.912
	N	25	24	25
4. Grade Level	Pearson Correlation	1	-.065	.138
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.763	.509
	N	25	24	25
5. Degree	Pearson Correlation	-.065	1	-.351
Completed	Sig. (2-tailed)	.763		.093
	N	24	24	24
6. Certificate	Pearson Correlation	.138	-.351	1
Level	Sig. (2-tailed)	.509	.093	
	N	25	24	25

Figures 14 and 15 show a distinct difference between those with 0-3 years of experience in the district compared to those with 10-13 years in the district. Also, the novice teachers in the district have a higher positive perception of the evaluation systems' impact on student learning. Those with less than three years have a positive view of the system and their positive perception decreases the longer they are in the district. There seems to be a challenge for those with 10 or more years of experience in the district.
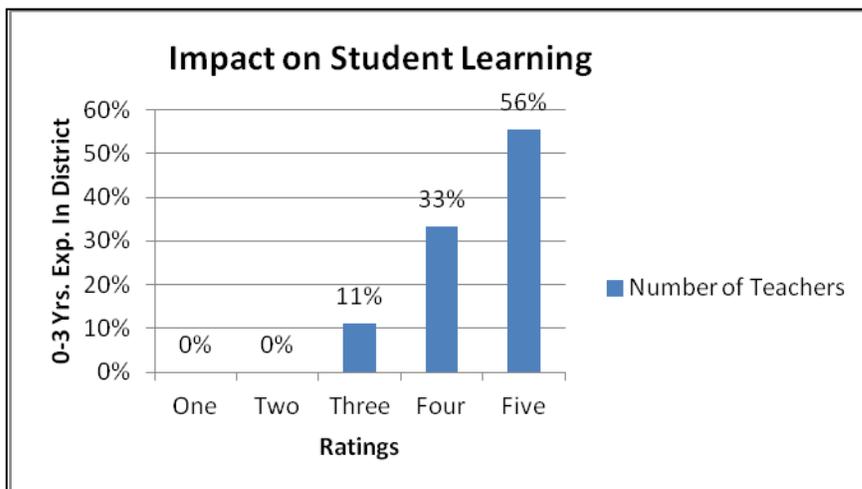
Figure 14. Teachers' years in the district (0-3 yrs.): Impact on student learning.
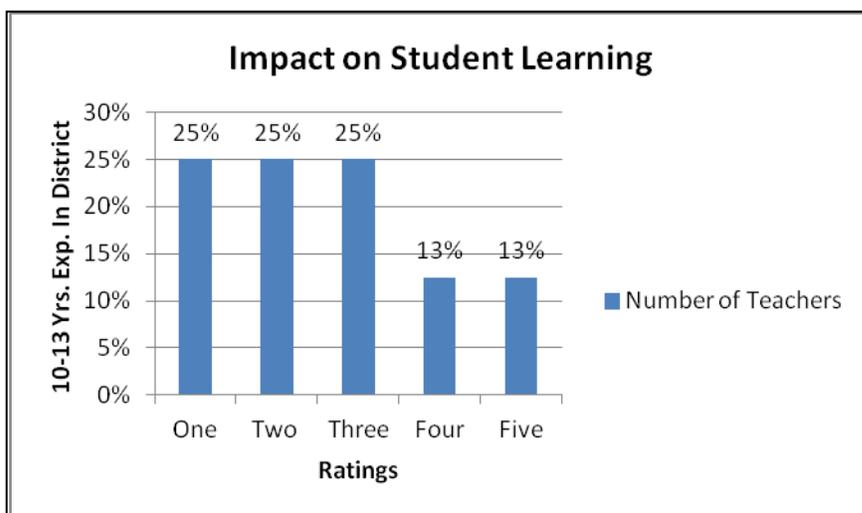
Figure 15. Teachers' years in the district (10-13 yrs.): Impact on student learning.

RQ5: Does teacher perception of the overall effectiveness system varied by teacher demographic variable?

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if each of the demographic variables made any difference to Teacher Rating of the Effectiveness of the system. The teacher perception of the system was examined by teacher certificate held,

degree completed, grade level taught, years at current school, years in district, and by

teacher experiences and none of the demographic information presented had a

statistically significant difference to teachers' perceptions of the usefulness of the system.

Significance levels range from .075 with years in district to .861 when considering

teachers' degrees (see Tables 17-22). The ANOVA was used to identify the relationships

among the variable.

Table 17

ANOVA: Teacher Rating of System by Certificate Held

31. Scale of 1-10 by Certification Held

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.519	1	6.519	1.541	.227
Within Groups	97.321	23	4.231		
Total	103.840	24			

Table 18

ANOVA: Teacher Rating of System by Degree

31. Scale of 1-10 by Degrees

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.611	3	1.204	.250	.861
Within Groups	96.389	20	4.819		
Total	100.000	23			

Table 19

ANOVA: Teacher Rating of System by Grade Level

31. Scale of 1-10 by Grade Level

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	25.173	6	4.196	.960	.479
Within Groups	78.667	18	4.370		
Total	103.840	24			

Table 20

ANOVA: Teacher Rating of System by Years at Current School

31. Scale of 1-10 by Years at Current School

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	37.237	5	7.447	2.125	.107
Within Groups	66.603	19	3.505		
Total	103.840	24			

Table 21

ANOVA: Teacher Rating of System by Years in District

31. Scale of 1-10 by Years in district

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	40.284	5	8.057	2.409	.075
Within Groups	63.556	19	3.345		
Total	103.840	24			

Table 22

ANOVA: Teacher Rating of System by Teaching Experience

31. Scale of 1-10 by Years as Teacher

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	19.201	5	3.840	.862	.524
Within Groups	84.639	19	4.455		
Total	103.840	24			

Qualitative Data Analysis

Teacher Responses

Additional data were collected to further examine teachers' perception of the evaluation system via the use of a teacher focus group. The following research questions were answered by data collected qualitatively through the teacher focus group.

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' perception of the effectiveness of a teacher evaluation system and its effects on student learning?

Responses from the teachers who participated in the teacher focus group indicated a positive relationship between their perception of the effectiveness of the evaluation system and its impact on student learning. Teachers reported the system is effective and helps them to identify areas of growth. They also shared that initially, the frequent visits to the classroom, made them nervous. Teachers felt that all of the observations should be announced to decrease anxiety when an administrator enters that classroom. One teacher shared, "I'm not too crazy about it but it has to be done; if there was not an evaluation

system in place I would not know how I'm doing" (Teacher 4, personal communication, December 6, 2016). Some teachers shared that at the initial stage, the evaluation system seemed to be a bit overwhelming but as time progressed it got better. Teachers felt that the system helped them to increase their focus on student learning and their teaching practices. Teachers also felt that the continuous feedback from administrators helped them to make changes in their instruction.

   RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the

      evaluation activities and its effects on student learning?

   The teacher focused group indicated that there are many components to the evaluation system. They wished the process could be a little simpler. There are 10 standards and at times it is difficult to remembering all 10 standards and the indicators under each standard are difficult. Some teachers, however, reported that the different domains or standards help them to understand what to focus on in order to improve their student learning and achievement. Teachers felt that the formal observations are too long. Teachers shared that they would rather be videotaped because they tend to not be themselves when an administrator is in the classroom. Additionally, teachers shared that the component of the evaluation system not only focuses on student instruction but also colleague interaction. They also Stated that the self-assessment portion of the evaluation, allows them to reflect on their teaching practices and identify standards in which they require growth. The conferences with their administrators also help them to identify areas of growth and allow them to continually focus on skills that they can implement to improve student performance.

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of teacher's professional development and its effects on student learning?

Teachers reported that conversations with their administrators have been highly beneficial in developing them professionally. The written feedback is helpful but they preferred a sit down conversation with their administrators. These conversations have enabled them to receive effective feedback, both in the areas of strengths and needs and have helped them to improve their teaching practices. Teachers shared that immediate feedback has helped them with improving student learning. One statement from teachers on how the system has helped to improve their professional development was "My administrator noticed that I had several anchor charts posted around my classroom that were not utilized and I realized that the charts would have benefited my students if I had used one for that days' lesson" (Teacher 3, personal communication, December 6, 2016). Another teacher stated that "My administrator provided me with immediate feedback regarding making choices for literacy stations. The feedback helped me make changes to help students transition in a timely manner and get started with their stations quickly" (Teacher 2, personal communication, December 6, 2016). The teacher focus group discussions revealed that teacher has a positive perception of how the evaluation system has developed them professionally which in turn had a positive impact on student learning.

Administrator Responses

Research question six was also addressed qualitatively.

RQ6: What are the perception of administrators' and the effectiveness of the system?

Administrators' perceptions of the evaluation system reveal that the tool is effective and enables administrators to evaluate teachers in a comprehensive manner. Administrators believe that the teacher evaluation system provides opportunities for teacher growth. The system is evidence-based and requires evaluators to examine facts and draw conclusions based on a pre-established rubric familiar to the evaluatee and the evaluator. The tool allows for reflection, leaning, and improved instructional practices. The system is an effective tool to evaluate various aspects of being a teacher.

On a scale of 1-10, administrators rated the evaluation system an average of 8.6 and shared that the tool that enables teachers to reflect upon their teaching practices during conversations with the administrators. Administrators shared that the information exchanged and documented on the evaluation system provides a springboard for discussions with teachers that targets specific areas of professional growth and areas of strength. The feedback provided to teachers is useful for providing targeted support to teachers, and in many cases, teachers are receptive of the feedback shared. Administrators reported that although the system is highly effective, the time required for the observations and to provide individual teacher feedback can be time consuming and/or burdensome. Administrators also shared that meeting the evaluation deadlines can

be difficult at times as they are several others duties and responsibilities of an administrator.

Summary

The data in chapter five revealed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' perception of the effectiveness of a teacher evaluation system and the effects on student learning. There is a significant relationship between teacher perception of the evaluation activities and the effects on student learning. There is a significant relationship between teacher perception of teachers' professional development and the effects on student learning. Both teachers and administrators felt that the system is effective and has helped to improve student learning.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher and administrator perceptions of a teacher evaluation system and the impact of the system on student learning at an elementary school in the metro Atlanta area. The researcher administered the survey to identify teachers' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the system and the effects on student learning, evaluation activities, and professional development. Also, the researcher had a focus group discussion with teachers to gain a deeper insight of teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the evaluation system. Additionally, the researcher conducted a focus group discussion with local school administrators to solicit their perceptions of the system.

Findings

As a result of the analysis from Chapter V, the researcher has concluded the following findings to the research questions that guided the study.

RQ1:   Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' perception of the effectiveness of a teacher evaluation system and its effects on student learning?

According to the analysis of data, there was a statistically significant relationship between the effectiveness of the teacher evaluation system and its effects on student

learning. The teacher survey displayed a strong significant relationship between teacher

perceptions of the effectiveness of the evaluation system and its effects on student

learning. Additionally, according to the teacher and administrator focus group responses,

there is a positive teacher and administrator perception of the effectiveness of the system

and its effects on student learning. The results of the focus group indicated that teachers

are provided with thorough training on the evaluation system, adequate training on the

system was done to aid teachers with understanding its effectiveness, and that the system

is effective in helping them improve their teaching practices.

RQ2:   Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of the

evaluation activities and its effects on student learning?

According to the analysis of data, there was a statistically significant relationship

between teacher perception of the evaluation activities and its impact on student learning.

The teacher survey displayed a strong relationship of .718 between teacher perceptions of

the evaluation activities and the evaluation process. The use of written and verbal

feedback from administrators helps teachers improve student learning. The teacher focus

group shared that they utilize the standards and indicators of the evaluation system to

help them maintain focus when planning a lesson. Instructional Planning is the second

standard of the teacher evaluation. The indicators and standards help them to ensure that

all components of a lesson are planned effectively and student learning is evident.

Additionally, according to the teacher and administrator focus group responses, there is a

positive teacher perception of the evaluation activities and its effects on student learning.

RQ3:   Is there a significant relationship between teacher perception of teacher's professional development and its effects on student learning?

According to the analysis of data, there was a statistically significant relationship between teacher perception of teachers' professional development and student learning. The teacher survey displayed a strong significant relationship between teacher perceptions of teachers' professional development and student learning. The teacher focus group reported their practices continuously change and that the verbal and written feedback from their administrators helps them to develop their professional practice. According to administrators' focus group responses, there was a positive correlation between teacher perception of the professional development of teachers and its effects on student learning.

RQ4:   Does teacher perception of the effects on student learning varied by teacher demographic variables?

According to the analysis of data, teacher perception of the effects on student learning did not vary much by teacher demographics. When considering years of experience at the school or within the district, education and certificate held, years of experience as a teacher or grade level taught, there was not a statistically significant difference between teachers. According to the teacher focus group responses, there is a positive teacher perception of the effects on student learning for teachers in all grade level.

RQ5:   Does teacher perception of the overall effectiveness system varied by teacher demographic variable?

According to the analysis of data, teacher perception of the overall effectiveness of the system did not vary by teacher demographics. However, a significant difference seems to exist between those teachers with 4-6 years of experience in the district compared to those with 10-13 years of teaching experience in the district. Also, the teachers with less experience have a higher positive perception of the effectiveness of the evaluation system than teachers with 10-13 years teaching experience. Those with four or more years have a positive view of the system and their positive perception decreases the longer they are in the district.

RQ6:   What are the perception of administrators' and the effectiveness of the system?

The administrators expressed a positive perception of the evaluation system in their responses in the focus group. Administrators rated the system as highly effective. Administrators reported that the teacher evaluation system is a tool that enables administrators to evaluate teachers in a comprehensive manner. They felt that evaluating the 10 standards of the evaluation system allows them to observe and document a teacher's ability to incorporate the standards into their teaching practice. Administrators also felt that the teacher evaluation system is a useful tool for identifying teacher effectiveness. The formative and summative components of the system provide an overall framework for pinpointing teacher effectiveness and ineffectiveness throughout the school.

Summary of Findings

The findings revealed that growth was noted in both among teachers and students. The researcher found a statistically strong relationship found between teacher evaluation and its impact on student learning; effectiveness of the evaluation system, evaluation activities, and professional development. Also, the researcher found a strong relationship between teacher professional development and the impact on student learning. Finally, there was a strong relationship between administrators' verbal and written feedback for teachers that aid in improving teacher development.

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Implications

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Based on the outcome of the mixed-method research, an effective teacher evaluation system has a significant impact on teacher professional development and student learning. The research yielded results that support the effectiveness of a teacher evaluation system. The teacher evaluation system consists of 10 standards and 5 domains:

Planning

1. Professional Knowledge
2. Instructional Planning

Instructional Delivery

3. Instructional Strategies
4. Differentiated Instruction

Assessment of and for Learning

5. Assessment Strategies
6. Assessment Uses

Learning Environment

7. Positive Learning Environment,

8. Academically Challenging Environment

Professionalism and Communication

9. Professionalism

10. Communication. The evaluation cycle consists of three phases: planning, implementation, and evaluation phase. The planning phase includes a teacher orientation, self-assessment and pre-evaluation conference with an administrator; the implementation phase includes formative observation and documentation, a mid-years conference with an administrator; and the evaluation phase comprises of summative assessment, summative evaluation conference with an administrator and an annual evaluation summary. Teachers with 0-3 years of experience receive two brief observations and one formative evaluation in the first semester and teachers with 4 years or more experience receives one formative in the first semester and a second in the second semester. All teachers receive a summative assessment and annual evaluation summary. A pre-evaluation conference, mid-year conference and summative evaluation conference is held for all teachers.

Teachers surveyed agreed that the evaluation process is effective, fair and it helps them to improve their professional development which in turn improve student learning. The Pearson Correlation measured a 0.677 probability level indicating a significant relationship between teacher perception of the effectiveness of the evaluation system and

its impact on student learning. During focus group discussions with teachers, teachers agreed that it help them to identify areas of growth and strength. They also shared that the conversations during conferences with their administrators are extremely beneficial. They appreciated receiving positive feedback about their practice. Administrators find the conferences with teachers beneficial and highly effective in improving teaching performance and student learning.

The researcher found a statistically strong relationship between teacher evaluation and its impact on student learning. The implication is when there is an effective evaluation system implemented, student learning is positively impacted. Also, the researcher found a strong relationship between teacher professional development and the impact on student learning. This indicates that improving teacher professional development can in turn improve student learning. Additionally, there was a strong relationship between administrators' verbal and written feedback for teachers that aid in improving teacher development. The implication is that teachers are able to grow and improve in their practice when they receive timely and specific feedback. Educational leaders should prepare teachers to understand, accept and apply the teacher evaluation standards and assessment findings to their instructional delivery.

Recommendations

Recommendations are provided for policymakers, district leaders, teachers and future researchers.

Recommendations for Policy-Makers and District Leaders

- Policymakers should consider that teacher evaluation is implemented effectively in every school system. An effective implementation of a teacher evaluation system would increase teachers' development.

- Policymakers may want to ensure to incorporate components that measure teacher effectiveness and impact on student learning.

- District Leaders should consider reviewing their evaluation system to ensure that the process is followed and effective verbal and written feedback is provided to teachers.

Recommendations for Educational Leaders

- Leaders should ensure that teachers have a thorough understanding of the evaluation system.

- Leaders should provide clear expectations to teachers regarding the evaluation system.

- Leaders should share effective strategies that teachers can immediately implement after conferencing with an administrator.

Recommendations for Teachers

- Teachers should know that the system is not punitive but the intended purpose is to identify areas of strength and growth that would aid in improving their professional practices.

- Teachers should become very familiar with the standards and discuss with their evaluators how to meet the demands of the standards. Discussing the

demands of the standards is a mutually beneficial exercise for both the
evaluator and the evaluatee that would impact student learning.

Recommendations for Future Researchers

- Since the research included only one school for analysis, further research
  should be conducted with a larger, more diverse sample to increase the
  generalizability of the results.

- Replicate this study with a focus on each component of the evaluation system
  and the impact on teacher development and student achievement.

- Conduct a study that examines the correlations between exemplary ratings and
  student growth. Is there a correlation between high student achievement and
  teachers who receive exemplary ratings?

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Summary

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Teacher evaluation is a part of a comprehensive system for teaching and learning.
The effectiveness of an evaluation system would aid in teacher professional development
which would ultimately impact student growth. A teacher from the focus group reported
that the different domains of the evaluation system help her to understand what she needs
to focus on for student improvement. She also stated that she continually reflects on her
practice and reviews the domains and standards to self-assess her work. Another shared
that the conversation with his evaluator has been extremely beneficial and affirms the
work he is doing in the classroom. Administrators from the focus group reported that the
evaluation systems allows for administrators to build strong relationships with teachers
which enable them to provide effective feedback that aid with teacher development.

The goal of this study was to examine teacher and administrator perceptions of a teacher evaluation system and the systems' impact on student learning. Teachers' perceptions have been reviewed regarding the effectiveness of the system and the effects on student learning, evaluation activities, and professional development. The recommendations from the study will hopefully assist in building the capacity of school leaders, teachers and school staff. An effective evaluation system encompasses components that will aid in identifying effective teachers, improve teachers' professional development, and student learning.

APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument Completed by Teachers

**Teachers' and Administrators' Perceptions of the Effectiveness
of a Teacher Evaluation System and their Perception of the
System's Effect on Student Learning**

My name is Portia Junor-Carty and I am a student enrolled in Clark Atlanta's Educational Leadership Doctoral Program. I am requesting your participation in a research study which will analyze the perceptions of administrators and teachers on the teacher evaluation system as part of my degree requirement. You were selected to take a perception survey because of your role in this district.

Your participation in the survey will take approximately 3-5 minutes and participation is entirely voluntary. The survey will be administered via a Google Survey. The link will be sent to you.

The process will be limited to your completion of one survey. Your response will be anonymous. Your name will not be collected or appear anywhere on the survey and complete privacy will be guaranteed.

Participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. There are no consequences for not participating.

Your survey completion indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you are aware of your right to withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation at any time.

Sincerely,

Portia Junor-Carty

Teacher Demographics

Please select a response.

1. Counting this year, how many years have you worked as a teacher?

   _____ 0-3 yrs
   _____ 3-6 yrs
   _____ 6-9 yrs
   _____ 10-13 yrs
   _____ 14-17 yrs.
   _____ 17+yrs

2. Counting this year, how many years have you worked as a teacher in the district?

   _____ 0-3 yrs
   _____ 3-6 yrs
   _____ 6-9 yrs
   _____ 10-13 yrs
   _____ 14-17 yrs.
   _____ 17+yrs

3. Counting this school year, how many years have you worked as a teacher in your current school?

   _____ 0-3 yrs
   _____ 3-6 yrs
   _____ 6-9 yrs
   _____ 10-13 yrs
   _____ 14-17 yrs.
   _____ 17+yrs

4. What is the primary grade you teach?

   _____ K
   _____ 1
   _____ 2
   _____ 3
   _____ 4
   _____ 5

5. What is the highest level of degree completed?

     _____ B.A.
     _____ M.A
     _____ ED/Specialist Degree
     _____ PH.D.

6. What teaching certificate/s do you hold?

     ____ Early Child Hood
     ____ESOL
     ____Gifted
     ____Reading Endorsement
     ____Math Endorsement
     ____Other

Teacher Perception of Evaluation Activities

7. Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: mid-year and post-evaluation conferences provided me with meaningful feedback on how to improve instruction?

	Strongly Agree	Agree Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Pre-evaluation Conference					
Mid-Year evaluation conference					
Post-evaluation conference					
8. The new teacher evaluation represents an improvement over prior evaluations at my school					
9. The Evaluation System is fair					
10. The number of rating categories (exemplary, proficient, needs development and ineffective) are sufficient to cover my teaching practices					

	Strongly Agree	Agree Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11. The training I received on the Evaluation System was adequate for me to effectively participate in the process					
12. The criteria on which I am evaluated are made clear to me					
13. The teacher evaluation process has provided a common language for professional practice in my school					
14. The procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent for all teachers within the school year					
15. The frequency of classroom visits by my administrators is necessary					
16. The observation comments provided by my evaluator identify opportunities for my professional development					
17. The observation comments provided by my evaluator identify areas of strengths					
18. The feedback I receive helps me to improve my teaching practices					
19. The ratings provided to me by my administrators are fair					

	Strongly Agree	Agree Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
20. My evaluation ratings are consistent among the administrators in my school					
21. I receive suggestions on how to incorporate new teaching practices to aid with improving my instruction and benefit student learning					
22. The teacher evaluation process will help me engage in professional growth opportunities targeted to my needs					
23. The teacher evaluation process will lead me to improve my instructional practice					
24. The teacher evaluation will have a positive impact on my students' learning					
25. The teacher evaluation process will have a positive impact on my students' learning					
26. I have confidence in my evaluator's ability to accurately rate my teaching practice					
27. My participation in the teacher evaluation process has benefited my students' in improving their learning					
28. The teacher evaluation process will lead to continuous school improvement					

	Strongly Agree	Agree Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
29. The final summative performance classification I receive from the teacher evaluation process will accurately reflect my overall performance this year					
30. On a scale of 1-10, how do you rate the usefulness of the evaluation system?					

APPENDIX B

Teacher Focus Group Instrument

1. How has the teacher evaluation process informed your teaching practice?

    o   Have you made any changes to your teaching practices as a result of the evaluation process?

    o   What components of the teacher evaluation process caused you to make those changes?

2. How has the teacher evaluation process impacted your students' learning? You students' achievement?

3. How have you improved your teaching practice based on the teacher evaluation process?

4. How do you feel about the number of observations that have to be completed?

5. Can you describe a conversation with an administrator that caused you to change your teaching practice?

6. Please describe what you think about the teacher evaluation process overall.

APPENDIX C

Administrator Focus Group Instrument

1. What is your perception of the teacher valuation system?

2. On a scale of 1-10, how do you rate the usefulness of the evaluation system?

3. Does the evaluation system encourage teachers in your school to reflect on their instructional practice?

4. Is the feedback required in the teacher evaluation system useful for providing targeted support for teachers?

5. Is the teacher evaluation system a useful tool for identifying teacher effectiveness in your school?

6. Does the time required of the teacher evaluation system yield the expected results?

7. Do you believe the process is too time consuming and/or burdensome?

8. Do you believe that the verbal and formal feedback you provide teachers is effective in improving teacher quality and instruction?

9. Do you feel the teachers are receptive to the feedback provided during the evaluation process?

10. Have you noticed a change in teacher practice?

11. What else would you like to share about the Teacher Evaluation System?

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