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An Examination of the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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M.ED. UNIVERSITY OF WEST ALABAMA, 2007
M.ED. UNIVERSITY OF WEST ALABAMA, 2008

AN EXAMINATION OF THE GEORGIA TEACHER KEYS EFFECTIVENESS SYSTEM

Committee Chair: Sheila Gregory, Ph.D.

Dissertation dated December 2017

This study examined the Georgia Teachers Effectiveness System and its effects on teachers’ teaching practices, including teacher motivation and teacher behavior. This was a mixed method study that included a focus group, surveys, and document analysis to address the independent variables: Teacher Assessment Performance Standards, Professional Growth, Student Growth Percentile, Student Learning Objectives and Teacher Effectiveness Measurement.

The researcher found that the teachers that participated in this study were intrinsically motivated and the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System is a tool used
to provide additional support and guidance in the classroom. A conclusion drawn from the findings suggested that the Georgia Teachers Effectiveness System has had a positive influence on teachers’ teaching practices.
AN EXAMINATION OF THE GEORGIA TEACHER KEYS EFFECTIVENESS SYSTEM

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

AMY B. BATTLE-EDWARDS

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

DECEMBER 2017
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank my children, Renee and Jordan, for their overwhelming love and support and prolonged patience with my long hours.

I also extend my heart-felt gratitude to my Clark Atlanta University Department of Educational Leadership family for seeing me through and holding me up with encouraging words throughout this journey.

I will continue to give all honor and glory to God who provides me with all that I need to continue to walk tall, sit straight, and face life with confidence.

Finally, I will continue to work hard to make all those who poured positivity into me proud.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCLB</td>
<td>No Child Left Behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED</td>
<td>US Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RttT</td>
<td>Race to the Top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GaDOE</td>
<td>Georgia Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESEA</td>
<td>Elementary and Secondary Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>Local Educational Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TKES</td>
<td>Teacher Keys Effectiveness System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAPS</td>
<td>Teacher Assessment Performance Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG</td>
<td>Professional Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>Student Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEMS</td>
<td>Teacher Effectiveness Measure System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGP</td>
<td>Student Growth Percentile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLO</td>
<td>Student Learning Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GaPSC</td>
<td>Georgia Professional Standards Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOCT</td>
<td>End of Course Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSSO</td>
<td>Council of Chief State School Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGA</td>
<td>National Governors Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSPI</td>
<td>Local School Plan Improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Teacher evaluations are not a new concept; evaluations have been in existence since the mid 1800s. Fredrick Taylor introduced the idea of measuring specific behaviors to improve productivity. This idea was modeled after factory workers and then applied to education. Edward Thorndike and Ellwood Cubberley expanded this concept of scientific measurement with schools, teachers and administrators:

Our schools are, in a sense, factories in which the raw products (children) are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life. The specifications for manufacturing come from the demands of twentieth century civilization and are the business of the school to build its pupils according to the specification laid down. (Cubberly, 1922, p. 338)

The 20th century education focused more on the individual teacher. Emphasis was placed not only on assisting the teacher to develop his or her unique skills, but also tending to his or her emotional needs (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). Clinical supervision was introduced during the 1950s. Marzano and his colleagues stated that few models in the entire field of education, let alone in the specific domain of educational supervision, have been as widely deployed, as widely disparaged, or as widely misunderstood (Marzano et. al., 2011).
The United States Department of Education became a cabinet level department in 1980 under the Carter Presidency. Creating a cabinet-level department sent a message that education was important and thus has been a part of future presidential agendas. The No Child Left behind Act 2001 (NCLB) under President George W. Bush required teachers to be highly qualified. As published on the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) website in the highly qualified fact sheet, to be deemed highly qualified, teachers must have: (a) a bachelor’s degree, (b) full state certification or licensure, and (3) prove that they know each subject they teach (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Under No Child Left Behind, the teacher evaluation process was still handled at the state and local level, if at all. One of the challenges with No Child Left Behind was recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers. Several strategies were suggested by the federal government to help minimize this dilemma; however, the implementation process varied from state to state and district to district. High poverty areas that housed Title I schools developed partnerships with local colleges and universities as a recruiting resource. In addition, high-poverty and high-minority districts were most likely to offer financial incentives and alternate certification routes to recruit highly qualified teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Rise to the Top (RttT), an education initiative under President Barack Obama, is a competitive grant administered by the U.S. Department of Education. The reform initiative consists of four key areas:

1. Development of rigorous standards and better assessments.

2. Adoption of better data systems to provide schools, teachers, and parents with information about student progress.
3. Support for teachers and school leaders to become more effective.

4. Increased emphasis and resources for the rigorous interventions needed to turn around the lowest performing schools. (The White House, 2012)

The standards being referenced are the Common Core Standards which most states, including the State of Georgia and local school districts, are using as the basis of their educational framework. In addition, a component built into the support for teachers and school leaders to become more effective is an evaluation system. The Race to the Top grant laid out guidance in six areas, including the criteria by which states plans would be evaluated. For the teacher evaluation area, these criteria included whether states proposed to:

- Establish clear approaches to measuring student achievement growth for individual students.
- Design and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers.
- Differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take student achievement growth into account as a significant factor and are designed with teacher involvement.
- Conduct annual evaluations that include timely and constructive feedback and provide teachers with data on student achievement growth for their students, classes, and schools.
• Use evaluations to inform decisions about staff development, compensation, promotion, tenure, certification, and removal of ineffective teachers. (U.S. Department of Education, 2014a)

The State of Georgia, under the leadership of Governor Nathan Deal and State School Superintendent John D. Barge, concluded that the purpose of the teacher evaluation process according to the Georgia Department of Education [GaDOE] (2012a) is to:

1. Optimize student learning and growth;
2. Improve the quality of instruction by ensuring accountability for classroom performance and teacher effectiveness;
3. Contribute to successful achievement of the goals and objectives defined in the vision, mission, and goals of Georgia Public Schools;
4. Provide a basis for instructional improvement through productive teacher performance appraisal and professional growth; and
5. Implement a performance evaluation system that promotes collaboration between the teacher and evaluator and promotes self-growth, instructional effectiveness, and improvement of overall job performance.

Through all these different initiatives in recent education history, the most affected by changes has always been Title I schools. Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended, provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet
challenging state academic standards (U.S. Department of Education 2014b). Title I schools historically have had the hardest time recruiting and maintaining exemplary teachers. As a result of increasing accountability when receiving federal funds, Title I schools find themselves in the position of having more to lose than gain.

In 1957, the high school that is the focus of this study opened its doors. At that time, the location of the school was considered rural and 100% of the students were Caucasian. As decades passed and the demographics of the population changed, this rural school, which was a part of a rural county, became part of the metro Atlanta community.

Table 1 describes the overall population of the city where Atlanta High School is located from 1960 to 2010. A significant growth in population took place from 1970 to 1980, with the addition of 6,000 people to this once rural area. Another 4,000-person increase took place from 1980 to 1990 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Table 1

City Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1,990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>8,514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>12,084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>15,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>18,242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As of the 2010 census, this city, as a part of metro Atlanta area, consisted of more than 18,000 people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The racial and ethnic makeup of the city in 2010 was 61% Caucasian, 30% African American, .3% Native American, 1.5% Asian Indian, 1.8% Asian, .1 Pacific Island, 2.7% other, 2.6% multiracial, and 7.4% Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

This Atlanta area Title I high school is started the 2016-2017 school year with over 2,400 students. The Title I status has remained stable over the past 4 years, as there were no major fluctuations in the free and reduced lunch percentages. In addition, the minority population has also remained relatively stable over the past 4 years.

Table 2 describes the demographic breakdown of the school during the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years (Gwinnett County Public Schools, 2015).

Table 2

*Atlanta High School Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>2,409</td>
<td>2,397</td>
<td>2,550</td>
<td>2,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>74.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESOL</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free/Reduced</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statement of the Problem

What influence does The Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System have on teachers’ teaching practices in this Atlanta area Title I high school? This is a statewide evaluation system for teachers. The U.S. Department of Education has often initiated reform packages, programs and policies to better help the State Departments of Education. The most recent reforms are No Child Left Behind Act and Race to the Top. Both policy changing reform acts have influenced teachers’ teaching practices. The No Child Left Behind Act mandated the requirements of highly qualified teachers. Race to the Top implemented an evaluation policy as a requirement for receiving federal grant monies.

States set out to implement evaluation programs without having all the necessary tools to have a successful implementation process. The state of Georgia struggled with the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act in the area of attracting and retaining highly qualified teachers. Swanson (2011) wrote that Georgia has developed “grow your own teacher” programs in rural and suburban school districts. These programs were designed to attract and retain highly qualified teachers by offering a signing bonus, competitive salaries and overall better benefit packages. The Georgia Professionals Standards Commission also offers alternative routes as a way of attracting and retaining highly qualified teachers in high need, shortage fields such as mathematics, science, foreign language, and special education (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2006).
The State of Georgia also struggled with the implementation of *Race to the Top*. This educational reform required creating and designing a transparent evaluation process to improve the quality of effective teaching and student achievement. In general, the state of Georgia suffered setbacks in the implementation process due to election turnover in key leadership positions such as governor and state superintendent. Developing and implementing a valid, reliable, and effective statewide teacher evaluation system under the best of circumstances requires consideration and management of significant technical, administrative, political, and cultural issues (Economic Policy Institute, 2013).

This state-wide evaluation system, known as Georgia’s Teacher Keys Effectiveness System, is not without concerns. The Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS) is the foundation of the evaluation process. The teacher evaluations are subjected to human errors made by the trained and untrained evaluators. The evaluators to which this research refers are principals, assistant principals, and sometimes other school leaders, such as department chairs. Similar to teachers grading papers, the mood and personal disposition of the evaluator can adversely affect the evaluation and the evaluation process. Trained evaluators can conduct multiple observations; however, a minimum of two 10-minute brief observations and one 30-minute formative observation is required per semester. School leaders that are well trained using Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System can lead to improved teacher teaching practices, ultimately leading to student achievement. This is what the system has been designed to accomplish. School leaders that have not received effective training can have an adverse effect on the school climate, teacher and student growth. On the other hand, a great
incentive for teachers to receive exemplary evaluations is to receive merit pay increases. Merit pay, also known as pay for performance, is designed to provide exemplary teachers with bonuses if their students show academic growth. Merit pay was written in as a part of the original *Race to the Top* grant and the states were given 5 years to implement it. The statewide evaluation system known as Georgia’s Teacher Keys Effectiveness System does have a merit pay component built in the implementation. The details of that component are determined by the local education agencies; they have not been established statewide.

The Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) includes the following components: Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS), which counts for 50%; Professional Growth (PG), which counts for 20%, and Student Growth (SG), which counts for 30%. All of these components add up to the Teacher Effective Measurement System (TEMS). The Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System measures student growth through the use Student Growth Percentile (SGP) exams and Student Learning Objectives (SLO). Figure 1 depicts the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (Georgia Department of Education, 2012).
Purpose of the Study

College-age students are not flocking to the teaching profession; they find the profession to be financially dismal and unrewarding. Duke (1984) wrote that the demands for teachers grow as funds and resources decrease. Classroom teachers are the foundation of the educational system without question, yet the education profession is often asked to prove itself as a profession. As a result, this newly implemented U.S. Department of Education initiative, Race to the Top, has a teacher evaluation component tied to receiving federal grant monies. The state of Georgia has designed an evaluation system for school districts to use called the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System. Teachers are evaluated on teaching practices as defined by the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS), Professional Growth (PG), Student Growth (SG),

Figure 1. Teacher Keys Effectiveness System.
Student Growth Percentile (SGP), and Student Learning Objectives (SLO), which create the overall Teacher Effectiveness Measurement (TEM).

According to the Georgia Department of Education (2012a), the intent of the teacher evaluation process is to:

- Optimize student learning and growth;
- Improve the quality of instruction by ensuring accountability for classroom performance and teacher effectiveness;
- Contribute to successful achievement of the goals and objectives defined in the vision, mission, and goals of Georgia Public Schools;
- Provide a basis for instructional improvement through productive teacher performance appraisal and professional growth; and
- Implement a performance evaluation system that promotes collaboration between the teacher and evaluator and promotes self-growth, instructional effectiveness, and improvement of overall job performance.

James Stronge (2010) stated it best: “Given the evidence regarding the central role that teachers play in school success, it seems safe to say that reform cannot happen without teacher improvement” (p. 86).

**Research Questions**

The study addresses the following questions:

RQ1. What influence does the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS) component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?
RQ2. What influence does the Professional Growth component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?

RQ3. What influence does the Student Growth Percentile component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?

RQ4. What influence does the Student Learning Objectives component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?

RQ5. What influence does the Teacher Effectiveness Measure component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?

**Significance of the Study**

The evaluation process has always been a challenge in the workforce. Implementing a statewide evaluation system simply means someone will judge and determine the value of someone else as it relates to a person completing their job responsibilities well enough to meet the needs of the organization. The introduction of a statewide evaluation system to education is even more challenging as it involves many variables. *Race to the Top* requires effective teaching practices to lead to student achievement. The significance of this study is to provide educational leaders in local education agencies and the Georgia Department of Education with information about the influence the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System has on teachers’ teaching practices.

There are several components of the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES). This study examines those components and the influence each has on teachers’ teaching practices.
Summary

A national teacher evaluation system has now made its way to 21st century education by the way of Race to the Top. The same concerns Marzano (2011) spoke of that existed in the 1950s still exist today. As student achievement will always be the main focus of education, it is important to understand how Georgia’s new Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) and its many components influence teaching practices. This study provides educational leaders with information about how the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System influences teacher teaching practices.
Effective teachers have a strong core of beliefs—principles that guide their decisions, touchstones that help them distinguish right from wrong, goals that define their vision for the school year (Whitaker, 2004). The Teacher Keys Effectiveness System is a newly created evaluation system by the State of Georgia Department of Education. This system’s pilot year was 2012-2013, thus there is very limited scholarly literature in existence. This literature review presents scholarly information about each component of the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System individually and thus makes the connection to the emerging theme of influence and behavior of teacher teaching practices.

The Georgia Department of Education has created a teacher evaluation called The Teacher Keys Effectiveness System. The Teacher Key Effectiveness System has several components: Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS); Professional Growth (PG); Student Growth (SG) [Student Growth Percentile (SGP) and Student Learning Objectives (SLO)] and Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM).

The research for this mixed method study took place in a Title I high school in the Atlanta Area. This Atlanta High School has been participating in the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System starting in the 2012-2013 school year. The name Atlanta High
School is a name created to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the school, the faculty and students where the study was conducted.

**Brief History of School/District**

The high school examined has a long rich history in the Atlanta area. This school opened in 1957, when the area was still considered rural. Since opening its doors, this Atlanta area high school has seen 13 different principals, with the most recent being in place since 2016. This high school has over 2,400 students and 150 certified teachers. This high school is one of twenty high schools in a large school district that serves over 170,000 students. This Atlanta area high school has been a Title I school since 2011, which was one year before the inception of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System pilot year of 2012-2013. Figures 2, 3, and 4 describe this Atlanta area high school teacher certification levels, years of experience teaching, and demographics.

*Figure 2. Teacher certification level.*
Figure 3. Teacher’s experience in education.

Figure 4. Teacher demographics.
Figures 2, 3, and 4 provide specific information about the teaching staff at this Atlanta area high school. This high school has 90 teachers with ten or more years of experience and 115 teachers or more with a master’s degree or higher. The teacher information also describes the population of teachers from which individuals were invited to participate in this study.

**Brief History of Race to the Top/GaDOE Requirements**

*Race to the Top*, an education initiative under former President Barack Obama, is a competitive grant administered by the United States Department of Education. The reform initiative consists of four key areas:

1. Development of rigorous standards and better assessments.
2. Adoption of better data systems to provide schools, teachers, and parents with information about student progress.
3. Support for teachers and school leaders to become more effective.
4. Increased emphasis and resources for the rigorous interventions needed to turn around the lowest performing schools. (The White House, 2012)

Georgia was a phase 2 winner of 400-million-dollar *Race to the Top* grant in August 2010. Per the requirements of the grant, Georgia had 4 years to implement the requirements. Georgia’s vision for applying for the competitive *Race to the Top* grant was to do the following:

To equip all Georgia students, through effective teachers and leaders and through creating the right conditions in Georgia’s schools and classrooms, with the knowledge and skills to empower them to (1) graduate from high school, (2) be
successful in college and/or professional careers, and (3) be competitive with their peers throughout the United States and the world. (Georgia Department of Education, 2015)

The State of Georgia, under Governor Nathan Deal and State School Superintendent John D. Barge, added that the purpose of the teacher evaluation process, according to the Georgia Department of Education (2012b), is to:

1. Optimize student learning and growth;

2. Improve the quality of instruction by ensuring accountability for classroom performance and teacher effectiveness;

3. Contribute to successful achievement of the goals and objectives defined in the vision, mission, and goals of Georgia Public Schools;

4. Provide a basis for instructional improvement through productive teacher performance appraisal and professional growth; and

5. Implement a performance evaluation system that promotes collaboration between the teacher and evaluator and promotes self-growth, instructional effectiveness, and improvement of overall job performance.

The Atlanta area high school that is the basis of this study has been implementing the teacher evaluation program since inception including the pilot year of 2012-2013, although, that has not been the case for most schools in the state of Georgia. Miller and Hanna (2014) wrote an annual report for the State Department of Education indicating that Georgia has struggled with the implementation of the teacher evaluation system (Miller & Hanna, 2014). While student achievement is always the ultimate goal when
any type of educational reform is implemented, in this case when given the standards and
the rubric to measure the teaching skills is this Teacher Keys Effectiveness System
influencing teachers teaching practices.

**Teacher Evaluation System**

The history of teacher evaluation systems dates back many decades. Marzano,
Frontier, and Livingston (2011) stated that teacher evaluations have been in existence
since the beginning of formal education in the United States. A comprehensive approach
to developing teacher expertise and teaching pedagogical skills is necessary. The
foundation of education is in the hands of the teacher. Teaching and learning at their core
are only as good as the teachers delivering the material. The only way to determine
highly effective, highly qualified teachers and to train them to become exemplary
teachers is to evaluate and observe their performance. The purpose of an effective
teacher evaluation system was stated best by Stronge and Tucker (2003):

> Without capable, high-quality teachers in America’s classrooms, no educational
reform effort can possibly succeed. Without a high-quality evaluation system, we
cannot know if we have high-quality teachers. Thus, a well-designed and properly
implemented teacher evaluation system is essential in the delivery of effective
educational programs and in school improvement. (p. 3)

The Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS) are as follows (Georgia
Department of Education, 2012b):
1. TAPS provide evaluators with a qualitative, rubrics-based evaluation method by which they can measure teacher performance related to quality Performance Standards.

2. Observations by a credentialed evaluator shall inform the Summative Performance Evaluation each year.

3. All ten Performance Standards shall be rated on the Summative Performance Evaluation.

Teachers are permitted to use the school district’s local complaint process to file grievances related to procedural deficiencies on the part of the local school system or charter school in conducting TKES evaluations. A teacher’s performance rating(s), professional growth goals(s) and/or plan(s), and job performance cannot be disputed through the complaint process.

The Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS) instrument is an educative coaching device used to grow exemplary teachers. Teachers are evaluated on the following Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS) within the teacher evaluation system created by the Georgia Department of Education (2012b) as a part of the Race to the Top grant:

**Domains**

1. Planning

2. Instructional Delivery

3. Assessment of and for Learning

4. Learning Environment
5. Professionalism and Communication

**Performance Standards**

- Professional Knowledge
- Instructional Planning
- Instructional Strategies
- Differentiated Instruction
- Assessment Strategies
- Assessment Uses
- Positive Learning Environment
- Academically Challenging Environment
- Professionalism
- Communication

In addition to being measured on the preceding standards, the evaluator uses a rubric to rate the level of teaching proficiency. The rubric states Level IV, Level III, Level II, and Level I. A Level IV rating means a teacher continually demonstrates expertise and is considered teaching at an exemplary level. A Level III rating means a teacher consistently demonstrates expertise (this is the expected level for all teachers per Georgia Department of Education) and is considered teaching at a proficient level. A Level II rating means a teacher inconsistently demonstrates expertise and is considered teaching at a developing/needs improvement level. A Level I rating means a teacher inadequately demonstrates expertise and is considered teaching at an ineffective level. Although proficient is an acceptable teaching standard as defined by the GaDOE, this Atlanta area
high school encourages teachers to excel to exemplary status by providing growth opportunities (by becoming content area leads) and department chairs to meet the standards of continually demonstrating expertise.

**Professional Growth** (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b)

- Professional Growth may be measured by progress toward or attainment of Professional Growth Goals. These goals may or may not be reflective of the Professional Learning Goals or Professional Learning Plans as defined by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC).

**Student Growth** (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b)

- Student Growth Percentile Measures: For teachers of SGP grades and courses, this component is comprised of a Student Growth Percentile which shall be calculated annually for student growth based on state assessment data.

- LEA Determined Measures: For teachers of non-SGP grades and course this component is comprised of LEA Determined Measures which may be Student Learning Objects, the School or District Mean Growth Percentile, or another measure identified or developed implemented by the LEA.

- Student Growth data shall be a lagging measure; when available, the prior year’s growth measures will inform the current annual Summative Performance Evaluation.

Student Growth Percentiles describe growth in terms of percentiles and capture the progress students make through the course of an instructional period (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b). Student Learning Objectives (SLO) are local
educational agencies selected and/or developed, measureable, academic goals for teachers and students that apply to courses that do not currently have a state mandated End of Course Test (EOCT) (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

Those inside and outside the education profession understand the importance of the teacher evaluation system. However, only those inside the educational circle deal with the negative side of the teacher evaluations. Teacher evaluations are very time consuming on the part of the evaluators who normally are the assistant principals and/or principals. According to the Georgia Department of Education (2012b), teachers are required to receive multiple observations at varying times and frequency. The Atlanta area high school, which is the basis of this study, requires four 10-minute observations per year, one 30-minute formative observation, and one 30-minute summative observation per year. The four 10-minute observations per year can be completed without advance warning to the teachers. The 30-minute formative observation requires advance notice to the teacher; however, the 30-minute summative observation does not require advance notice. Each observation requires feedback to given to the teacher. It is during the teaching observations when teachers receive ratings of levels 4, 3, 2 or 1 based on the 10 performance standards with level 3 being proficient.

Jacob and Lefgren (2008) stated that the majority of teachers receive a score of proficient on evaluations even if they are not performing at a satisfactory level. Alyson Klein (2014) wrote an article in Education Week in June of 2014 that parallels the sole purpose of this study. She wrote that Georgia’s pilot run of the teacher evaluation system showed the majority of the teachers earned proficient scores on the rating system.
Although, that is not the focus of this study, in the research reviewed it is has been discussed as an area of concern.

**Dependent Variable**

**Teacher Behavior**

The *Science of Psychology* defines behavior as “everything we do that can be directly observed” (King, 2008, p. 5). To expand on this definition, behavior is everything we do that can be directly observed in an academic setting. Many books have been written that discuss the topic of teacher behavior including *How to be an Effective Teacher the First Days of School* by Harry K. and Rosemary T. Wong (1998) and *What Great Teachers Do Differently 14 Things that Matter Most* (2004) by Todd Whitaker. In addition to many studies have been done related to behavior including *The Influence of Teachers Caring Behavior on High School Students Behavior and Grades* by Richard M. Miller (2008) and *The Power of Teacher-Student Relationships in Determining Student Success* by Michael David Camp (2011). The teacher behaviors examined in this study are the performance standards outlined in the Teacher Keys Evaluation System.

**Independent Variables**

**Teacher Assessment Performance Standards**

**Professional Knowledge.** Professional knowledge is demonstrated through the teacher’s understanding of the curriculum, subject content, pedagogical knowledge, and
the needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b). Professional knowledge does not end where the teacher receives their formal education. The purpose of professional knowledge at its core is a complete deep and accurate understanding of the content being taught. A strong pedagogical knowledge is learned in teacher education programs and built upon throughout the teaching career. In addition, teachers must have a profound complete understanding of the age group being taught.

Professional knowledge involves knowing the curriculum standards. Common core is the current standards handed down by the federal government through Race to the Top. A majority of the states have adopted the common core state standards. Kendall and colleagues stated that 45 states have adopted mathematics standards and 46 states have adopted English Language Arts and Literacy (Kendall, Ryan, Alpert, Richardson, & Schwols, 2012, p. 4). The state and local departments of education are still responsible for how the curriculum is developed and implemented. Standards have been created for all four core areas of study: science, mathematics, language arts, and history. The Georgia Department of Education has established a curriculum for local school districts use; however, flexibility is allowed.

Another measurement of professional knowledge involves developing students’ higher-level thinking skills. Higher-level thinking skills in general include being able to problem solve and think critically. This process can be difficult for the teacher that may not be fully knowledgeable and confident in their subject matter. However, simple lesson
plans that include group discussions and cooperative learning guide students to move toward developing higher-level thinking skills.

Professional knowledge can link content to past and future learning experiences, other subject areas and real-world experiences. Exposing students to many different learning opportunities outside of the brick and mortar school building helps to build and link their education experiences. Teachers can help bridge the gaps by getting students excited and involved in learning by making real-world connections. An example of a teacher creating an authentic learning experience is Ms. James, a political science teacher at Atlanta High School. Ms. James is also an active community member and part of the local city government. Ms. James annually takes her political science class to witness city council meetings to further explain the democratic process. Ms. James’ personal involvement and obvious interest in politics demonstrate deep knowledge of the political science subject matter. Ms. James’ actions also demonstrate a high level of motivation to expose students to this level of knowledge.

Teachers with strong professional knowledge also exhibit pedagogical skills relevant to subject area and best practices based on research. However, knowing and understanding the content being taught is equally important. There is a distinct difference between having content knowledge and having pedagogical knowledge and skills to teach students (Tichenor & Tichnor, 2005).

Administrators need a foundation of what to expect in the classrooms and from teachers when completing evaluations. The following are some things to look for when walking through and completing an evaluation of a teacher in the area of professional
knowledge. The Atlanta High School administrative team considered the following as possible ways to measure professional knowledge:

- Present contents to students in a way students can easily understand;
- Clarify difficult aspects of the lesson;
- Relate content to real world experiences. (High School Teacher Effectiveness System Evaluation Form, 2012)

The Georgia Department of Education (2012b) provides evaluators with the following “look fors” when completing evaluations:

- Develop plans that are clear, logical, sequential, and integrated across the curriculum, and
- Plan for instruction effectively for content mastery, pacing, and transitions.

**Instructional Planning.** Instructional planning is demonstrated when the teacher plans using state and local school district curricula and standards, effective strategies, resources, and data to address the differentiated needs of all students (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b). “Great teachers have a plan and purpose for everything they do” (Whitaker, 2004, p. 127). Instructional planning is a guide created by the teacher for the teacher to address the following questions:

1. What should be taught?
2. How should it be taught?
3. How should learning be assessed? (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b)

While addressing what should be taught during the instructional planning phase, the teacher should plan to teach the curriculum. The teacher should look at the standards to
make certain the standards are taught as part of the lesson. The most relevant teaching practices serve as best practices when demonstrating how the curriculum should be taught. Madeline Hunter (Russell & Hunter, 1976) created the 7-step lesson plan that serves as the foundation to lesson planning today, which includes objectives, standards, anticipatory set, teaching, guided practice, closure, and independent practice.

Analyzing student data to inform planning is a necessary step that has been added as a part of instructional planning. One of the requirements to receiving the Race to the Top grant is to build data systems that ensure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). A major part of instructional planning is assessing the academic needs of the students. This need can be met by analyzing the student data.

Creating exciting engaging lesson plans that present standards clearly in a sequential manner is an important factor in lesson planning. This Atlanta High School district has developed pacing guides for subject areas to help support teachers through the teaching process. The pacing guides support teachers as they plan for instruction. All plans should include differentiated instruction. Since students learn in a variety of ways, the plans address technology, group work, and lecturing.

An evaluator’s walk-through can further assess a teacher’s instructional planning process; this should be seen as a part of the instruction. The standards can be listed on the board, printed on the student documentation, and the teacher can address the standards through the teaching process. Another example of visible intentional
instructional planning process can be documented when teachers have differentiated groups established within the classroom.

**Instructional Strategies.** Instructional strategies refer to ways in which the teacher promotes student learning by using research-based instructional strategies relevant to the content area to engage students in active learning and to promote key skills (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

The goal of instructional strategy is to enable learning, motivate students and engage them in learning and mastering the curriculum (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b). Teachers should be aware of the most current relevant instructional strategies that better support how teachers teach and students learn.

Engaging students in active learning is foundational part of learning for students and the key word is active. Students must be doing something at all times. This does not mean that lecturing information and/or students taking notes from a power point is not effective. Students learn by doing. Active learning can assist with the reinforcing of learning goals throughout the lesson by creating an activity to check for understanding periodically throughout the lesson. Active learning is an essential part of building upon existing knowledge and skills. Learning should not be done in isolation. The teacher must figure out what the student already knows and add to that knowledge base. The curriculum from one grade level to the next provides a foundation for the knowledge base a teacher can use to build upon existing knowledge.

The key to reinforcing learning goals throughout the lesson is to use a variety of research based instructional strategies and resources and incorporate the most relevant
research based instructional strategies in the classroom as a part of lesson benefits the students. A true understanding that not all students learn the same way has been clearly defined as a part of this 21st century educational system. It is also clear that all students can learn the same content, per the No Child Left Behind Act. As a result, it is now up to the teacher to deliver the same content to different learning styles and this can only be done through a variety of research based instructional strategies. Myriam Met stated the following in Harry Wong’s (Wong & Wong, 1998), *The First Days of School*:

Research cannot and does not identify the right or best way to teach, nor does it suggest that certain instructional practices should always or never be used. But research can illuminate which instruction practices are most likely to achieve desired results, with which kinds of learners, and under what conditions. (p. 30)

Effectively using appropriate instructional technology to enhance student learning is vital. The use of technology as an instructional strategy is one of the most recent strategies effective teachers use as part of instruction. As an example, “clickers,” also known as classroom response systems, can provide a teacher with immediate data to determine learning through formal and/or informal assessments. In addition, an effective instructional strategy communicates and presents material clearly and checks for understanding. A clear understanding of instructions better prepares students to be successful. If a teacher should discover through an informal assessment that the majority of the students do not comprehend the assignment, perhaps a reexamination of the directions for clarity may be required.
This Atlanta area school district has created research-based quality-plus teaching strategies that are used to help guide teachers. The strategies include assessment, modeling and practice, collaboration, vocabulary, summarizing, literacy, questioning, problem-solving, background knowledge, technology and student goal-setting. The quality-plus teaching strategies should be used along with providing students with step-by-step directions for clear understanding.

**Differential Instruction.** Differential instruction refers to strategies teachers use to challenge students by providing appropriate content and developing skills which address individual learning differences (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b). Tomlinson and Strickland (2005) refer to differentiated instruction as “a systematic approach to planning curriculum and instruction for academically diverse learners” (p. 6).

Differentiation instruction was created out of a realization that not all students learn the same and at the same pace, however, they can learn the same content. The term differentiation instruction came into the education realm when educators discussed the learning needs of students with special needs. The discussion has now moved to including all students benefiting from a teacher using differentiating instruction. The inclusion of students with disabilities, students with language backgrounds other than English, students with imposing emotional difficulties and a noteworthy number of gifted students, reflects the growing diversity of today’s students (Tomlinson, 2001).

Common core standards define what most state and local school districts are using as the basis of their educational framework. The design, development, and adoption of standards have been led by states and supported by the Council of Chief State School
Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA). The Common Core standards designed by the federal government (U.S. Department of Education, 2007) is not a curriculum or a set of lesson plans. Standards set forth clear concepts that students need to know and understand, while curricula and lesson plans are the steps and methods teachers use to support their students in reaching mastery of the standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

All students learn the same content within the same standards. This has not always been the case. The creation of No Child Left Behind brought to the attention of mainstream American educational system that all children can learn, all children should be taught the same content, and that all teachers are responsible for all children learning, hence the title No Child Left Behind. The No Child Left Behind Act will strengthen Title I accountability by requiring states to implement statewide accountability systems covering all public schools and students. These systems must be based on challenging state standards in reading and mathematics, annual testing for all students in grades 3-8, and annual statewide progress objectives ensuring that all groups of students reach proficiency within 12 years (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

Teachers have flexibility when it comes to how they teach the curriculum. Teachers use different types of instructions, such as lecturing, note taking, and direct instruction. Teachers also differentiate the process by the use of different resources and pacing. The product of differentiated instruction is visible in the form of assessments. Based on a formal and/or informal assessment a teacher may now decide to either provide remediation and/or enrichment for the students. Students that did not fully understand the
content based on the assessment the teacher now may remediate. The remediation can be performed by grouping those students that need more support using different types of activities. On the same level, students that performed at a high level on the assessment can now move forward, and the teacher can provide content enrichment for those students. Enrichment and acceleration is provided by the teacher for those students that have performed on an exemplary level on the assessment. All students are learning the same content although the content may be presented and taught differently.

Through the annual evaluation process that includes the 10 and 30 minute observations the observer should determine if the teacher is differentiating the instruction. Increased graduation rates over several years since the inception of the Teacher Keys Evaluation System is an indicator of reaching more students through differentiated instruction. The evaluator cannot rely on the standardized assessments to determine if a teacher is differentiating. The evaluator should be able to visually identify evidence of this performance standard through classroom instruction. Visible differentiation in the classroom is achieved at the instructional planning level by adjusting the learning environment to meet students’ individual needs.

**Assessment Strategies.** Assessment strategies refer to the strategies the teacher systematically chooses a variety of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment methods and instruments that are valid and appropriate for the content and student population (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b). Assessment strategies have become necessary in the current state of education and they are getting a great deal of negative attention. Most teachers, schools and school districts feel that they are
administering too many standardized assessments that are required from the state and/or federal departments of education. The Georgia Department of Education Teacher Key Effectiveness System quick guide streamlines assessment as a way of gathering, interpreting information about a student’s performance to determine mastery toward defined learning objectives or standards (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

Aligning student assessment with curriculum and benchmarks can look differently from class to class, school to school and district to district. A classroom assessment should directly reflect curriculum standards required by the school and school district, taught by the teacher, and to meet individualized student needs. Classroom assessments are administered on a more frequent basis as compared to standardized assessments, which may be administered on an annual basis. Classroom assessments also allow for teachers to assess in a variety of different ways. As an example, writing a paragraph about a story that was read in language arts class can assess student comprehension. Another example of a quick assessment teachers are using more frequently now are referred to as a “ticket-out-the-door.” The ticket-out-the-door requires student to write about what they learned during that class period. This informal assessment provides the teacher with knowledge as to whether the students learned the teaching objectives.

Students and teachers equally involved in setting learning goals and monitor progress improves the learning process. A teacher that implements a student progress monitoring process as a part of their teaching strategies has a greater impact on student success. Safer and Fleischman (2005) wrote that using student progress monitoring to include frequent assessments helps to evaluate the effectiveness of the teachers teaching
practices. In addition, Valencia (2002) pointed out that when students learn how to self-assess their individual work, that directly creates an actively engaged student and they become more focused on their learning.

The use of various types of modified assessments to determine individual student needs should be part of the instructional planning process. Different learning modalities call for different assessment options. Long gone are the days of only assessing students via paper and pencil methods. Today’s 21st century students are being assessed through different methods such as projects, portfolios, interviews, essays and observations. The use of formal and informal assessments for diagnostic formative and summative purposes is a sign of an effective teacher.

Assessments are designed to help teachers become better teachers. Assessments highlight what students learned or did not learn. Assessment is feedback for teachers that should prove to be useful to either move forward or re-teach. Assessing learning is the most recent area of change in education that has prompted considerable discussion. Assessing learning through formative and/or informative assessment practices is the only way to determine if a student is learning. Informative assessments built into the lesson plans through instructional planning sometimes can best determine if students comprehend the lesson. An informative assessment can be as simple as a class discussion or answering questions.

Faculty, content groups, and grade level collaborations are a vital part of determining learning progress as it relates to standards being taught to all students. It is not effective for schools to use independent teacher assignments and grading practices to
report the sole final mastery in relationship to content goals and objectives. Collaborative and common assessments developed by curriculum teams help inform whether curriculum benchmarks are mastered school-wide.

Today’s classroom assessment strategies come in many different forms. The evaluator can determine if a teacher is using assessment strategies if they witness a teacher checking for factual comprehension as a part of the lesson. For instance, the evaluator can check if the teacher has built into the lesson a system of calling on students to receive direct knowledge and/or have students provide a summary of information periodically through the lesson.

**Assessment Uses.** Assessment refers to ways in which the teacher systematically gathers, analyzes, and uses relevant data to measure student progress, to inform instructional content and delivery methods, and to provide timely and constructive feedback to both students and parents (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

Assessments are used to determine effective teaching and student learning. “Teachers who develop useful assessments and use the assessment data to provide corrective instruction along with giving students second chances to demonstrate success can improve their instruction and help students learn” (Guskey, 2003, p. 6).

Andrade and Cizek (2010) established a list of ten factors that determine the purpose of assessment uses:

- Requires students to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Communicates clear, specific learning goals.
• Focuses on goals that represent valuable educational outcomes with applicability beyond the learning context.

• Identifies the students’ current knowledge/skills and the necessary steps for reaching the desired goals.

• Requires development of plans for attaining the desired goals.

• Encourages students to self-monitor progress toward the learning goals.

• Provides examples of learning goals including, when relevant, the specific grading criteria or rubrics that will be used to evaluate the students’ work.

• Provides frequent assessment including peer and student self-assessment and assessment embedded within learning activities.

• Includes feedback that is non-evaluative, specific, timely, and related to the learning goals, and that provides opportunities for the student to revise and improve work products and deepen understandings.

• Promotes metacognition reflection by students on their work.

A National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (2013) position paper noted that in order for assessments to have an impact on instruction and student learning, teachers’ must be involved every step of the way and have the flexibility to make decision throughout the assessment process.

**Positive Learning Environment.** Positive learning environment is when the teacher provides a well-managed, safe, and orderly environment that is conducive to learning and encourages respect for all (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b). Positive learning environment is a major factor leading to a successful student. A
positive learning environment reduces the opportunities for classroom discipline problems. Wilson-Fleming and Wilson-Younger (2012) wrote that creating a positive classroom environment requires high expectations, student involvement, visually appealing classrooms, positive praise, and feedback to students.

A positive environment also requires establishing classroom rules and routines. Classroom rules and routine are no different than a set of house rules that are established by parents; basic rules are stated early and often to the children. Teachers have to do the same thing in their classroom: establish classroom rules on the first day, make them visible, and repeat them often. Whitaker (2004) stated great teachers establish clear expectations at the start of the year and follow them consistently throughout the year. Students develop a sense of safety and positive academic expectations when consistent classroom rules and routines are in place.

Inevitably, classroom disruptions will happen from time to time. A teacher’s focus should not allow those disruptions interfere with the teaching and learning process. The teacher in control of his or her classroom should act quickly and consistently each time with each student. Students will pay close attention to see if the teacher handles the situation with fairness. Whitaker (2004) wrote What Great Teachers Do Differently and created a list of 14 things that matter most. One of the items included on this list was “great teachers have the ability to ignore trivial disturbances and the ability to respond to inappropriate behavior without escalating the situation” (Whitaker, 2004, p. 127). Teachers have a choice: they can respond in a negative manner that can possibly
perpetuate the negative behaviors or respond in a positive manner to gain the trust of the students.

Students trust the caring, fair teacher. Whitaker (2004) stated great teachers care about their students and treat each student as an individual, not taking in consideration what the previous teacher may have said about them, regardless of how their siblings may have behaved models caring and fairness. He noted that “great teachers treat every person with respect” (p. 127). A teacher interaction with each student should be warm and genuine. Students are able to detect insincere interactions.

Respecting diversity, actively listening and arranging the classroom to promote group/individual activities are all attributes that contribute to a positive learning environment. A positive classroom environment makes good use of all classroom space. All students should be able to move easily throughout the room. The furniture should be arranged to support individual and group work. The classroom should be organized neatly with clean bright colors to encourage learning. Students’ work should be displayed on the boards to promote and encourage learning.

Positive learning environments are simple to assess when conducting evaluations. An evaluator can look at a classroom to see how attractive it is for the students to feel comfortable. A teacher making positive comments to students, calling students by their names and using an established positive behavior reward system are all modeled behaviors conducive to learning and building positive relationships with students. An active teacher walking throughout the classroom to establish proximity with all students also reduces classroom disruptions.
**Academically Challenging.** An academically challenging environment is when the teacher creates a student-centered academic environment that is conducive to learning that occurs at a high level and where students are self-directed learners (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b). In addition, an academically challenging classroom environment is a combination of all the previously discussed performance standards. In sum, a teacher’s strong professional knowledge should lead to consistent and collaborative instructional planning with diverse instructional and assessment strategies that include differentiated instruction and assessment uses, all conducted within a positive learning environment. The key to ensuring this environment is the teacher having high expectations that all students can learn and the students believing the teacher. However, if a teacher is missing any of those performance standards it is quite possible students may not be challenged at their highest level.

An academically challenging environment is required for students to continue to build on the knowledge and skills previous learned and to surpass that level of learning. Rubie-Davies (2006) wrote that students’ perceptions about their own abilities increase to the level of the teachers’ expectations. A well-structured classroom that protects the learning time and embraces the ideas of trial and error is part of the learning process.

An academically rigorous environment conveys the idea that learning is the only focus for the classroom. A teacher provides bell-to-bell instruction with several transitions that include specific learning objectives that have not been watered down so everyone learns the same information and the same pace. The teacher that actively employs Bloom’s Taxonomy of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis,
synthesis, and evaluation is most likely the same teacher that will explore new ideas that allow for academic risks (Bloom, 1956).

Evaluators have to look beyond students passing/failing classes to determine an academically challenging environment. Students receiving a proficient and/or exemplary rating on standardized assessments can infer they were taught in an academically challenging classroom.

**Professionalism.** Professionalism is when a teacher demonstrates a commitment to professional ethics and the school’s mission, participates in professional growth opportunities, and contributes to the profession (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b). Table 3 describes three essential elements of teacher professionalism, as determined by the Georgia Department of Education.

Table 3

**Three Essential Elements of Professionalism**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional standards and ethics of the profession</td>
<td>• Adhere to legal and ethical guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Adhere to standards defined for the profession.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrate professional demeanor and positive interaction with others.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Respect the diversity of ethnicity, race, gender, and special needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuous self-professional development</td>
<td>• Act as reflective practitioner.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Acquire and refine professional knowledge and skill.</td>
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Table 3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Engage in ongoing professional renewal. Act, as appropriate, as risk taker, stepping out of comfort zone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Embrace practices of life-long learner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions to the profession</td>
<td>• Serve as role model for other educators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Serve on school, district, regional, and state educational committees, work groups, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Participate in professional associations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contribute to the development of the profession (e.g. through presentations, writing).</td>
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</table>

In addition, the teaching profession requires flexibility. Changes due to federal and state laws, changes due to local district requirements and/or changes do to local school requests sometimes require teachers to end a school year under a different circumstance than when they started the school year. Carpenter and Stimpson (2007) remarked that “If practitioners in the field act professionally, think professionally, and hold themselves out to be professional they will go a long way toward making their preferred social constructions-actual” (p. 269).

**Communication.** Communication is when the teacher communicates effectively with students, parents or guardians, district and school personnel, and other stakeholders in ways that enhance student learning (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b). Effective communication from teachers to students, parents, colleagues, community, and
all stakeholders involved with the success of students in school is essential. The sharing of instructional goals and the direction of the classroom in an effort to promote teaching and learning is a major responsibility for the teacher. The 21st century classroom communication comes in many forms of verbal and non-verbal communication. Teachers are now using websites, emails, text messages, as well as phone calls and letters home. All forms of communication represent the teacher and the schools level of professionalism. All forms of communication must reflect high standards. Epstein wrote the three circles of influence in a student’s life are family, school, and community (Epstein, Sanders, Simpson, Clark Salinas, Rodriguez et al., 2002). In order for a teacher to be highly effective with the students it is important to communicate regularly with the student’s circle of influence, an open-door policy is always helpful.

Efficient communication skills inside the school building and inside the classroom directly with the students are a necessary part of this equation. Step-by-step written instructions clear learning objectives that model caring and fairness with cultural awareness is adequate communication for students. The Georgia Department of Education (2012b) stated collaboration and networking with colleagues to reach educational decisions to promote student learning is an indicator of teacher effectiveness in the area of communication.

**Professional Growth.** The Georgia Department of Education (2012b) described the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System as a coaching tool designed to provide support for teachers to grow. This system is not meant to be punitive. DeMonte (2013) understood that in order for school leaders to achieve high performing schools, they must
change the behaviors of teachers. A teacher’s professional growth should be created with the assistance and support of the school leadership. A professional growth plan has an established timeline with clearly defined goals and objectives that support student growth. A strong growth plan should meet the SMART goal criteria that consist of:

- **S** - Specific
- **M** - Measureable
- **A** - Attainable
- **R** - Relevant
- **T** - Timely

The established SMART goals should align with the local school and school district standards, mission and vision statements, and the teachers’ personal professional growth plan. The professional growth plan as a part of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System weighs 20% of the overall Teachers Effectiveness Measurement (TEM). School leaders should be able to assess the intrinsic motivation of a teacher by the development of their professional growth plan. Intrinsic motivation is a necessary prerequisite for learners of all ages (Maslow, 1965).

**Student Growth Percentile.** Student growth percentile is how the State of Georgia measure student growth. “SGPs describe a student’s growth relative to his/her academic peers” (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b). Student growth percentile is a part of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) that is a measuring component for teachers that teach subjects that are tested by the Georgia Milestones Assessment.
The creation of student growth percentile allows the Georgia Department of Education to collect data that answer more detailed questions about student growth, such as:

- Did this student grow more or less than academically-similar students?
- Are students growing as much in math as in reading?
- Did students grow as much this year as last year?
- What level of growth is necessary for students to reach or exceed proficiency?
- Did students grow sufficiently toward meeting state standards?

Since this part of the teacher evaluation system is very new, limited scholarly information exists about the use of this process. Damien Betebenner (2011) of the National Center of Educational Policy questioned the normative issues and the equality of measuring student growth. Betebenner wrote that it is a common misconception that to quantify student progress in education, the subject matter and grades over which growth is examined must be on the same scale—referred to as a vertical scale. The State of Georgia is no different; it does not require a vertical scale in order to describe student growth. In addition, the State of Georgia not only shows how an individual student is progressing from year to year, but it also shows how groups of students, schools, districts, and the state are progressing (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b). Some school districts within the State of Georgia have some flexibility in how they implement and use the Student Growth Percentile as a part of the teacher evaluation system.

**Student Learning Objectives.** Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) are content-specific, grade-level learning objectives that are measurable, focused on growth in
student learning, and aligned to curriculum standards for teachers that teach subjects not tested by the Georgia Milestones (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) should correlate to the district’s curriculum and/or the Georgia Performance Standards and/or the Common Core Standards. The Georgia Department of Education (2012b) stated that SLOs should be measurable, rigorous and written for the entire instructional period equal to one year. Although many early adopters of SLOs expect them to be set collaboratively by teachers and their evaluators, there is no hard and fast rule for their development. “Georgia, for instance, is piloting a process through which SLOs are developed at the district level and then approved by the State” (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b, p. 1).

**Teachers Effective Measurement.** As determined by the Georgia Department of Education (2012b), the Teacher Effective Measurement (TEM) is the combination of the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS), which is 50% of the overall score; Professional Growth (PG), which is 20% of the overall; and Student Growth (SG), which is 30% of the overall score. There are many different ways to effectively measure teacher effectiveness, including classroom observations, leader evaluations, classroom artifacts, and student evaluation.

Classroom observations can be very beneficial as school leaders are able to see directly a teacher’s teaching practices, yet they can be subjective and have extreme time constraints. Leader evaluations can observe specific requirements required by schools but may not be qualified to evaluate highly specialized areas such as special education. Classroom artifacts such as established unit and lesson plans that are reviewed by school
leaders can be useful if the artifact measured has an established standard of measurement. Student evaluations can provide information to improve teacher teaching practices as viewed by students; however, students are unable to speak to specific content and curriculum knowledge. School leaders are able to observe teacher motivation, behavior and teaching practices through classroom artifacts, lesson plans, and teaching.

**Summary**

The Georgia Department of Education has established a system (the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System) that consists of direct teacher measurement via the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (50%), an established plan for Teacher Growth designed with teachers and school leaders (20%), and Student Growth (30%).

The literature review covered the 10 TAPS standards - professional knowledge, instructional planning, instructional strategies, differential instruction, assessment strategies, assessment uses, positive learning environment, academically challenging environment, professionalism, and communication. In addition to, the literature review examined student growth percentile and student learning objectives to complete teacher effectiveness measure. The teachers at this Atlanta area high school are evaluated based on the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System. This literature review covers expected independent variables that effect teachers teaching practices.

The TKES pilot year was 2012-2013, thus there is limited scholarly literature in existence. This literature review presents scholarly information about each component of the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System individually and thus makes the
connection to the emerging theme of influence and behavior of teacher teaching practices.
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Teacher evaluation systems in some form have been around for decades. Most recently, as a result of Race to the Top 2009, all states receiving Race to the Top grant monies are required to implement a teacher evaluation system.

Research Design

This is a mixed method study on the Examination of Georgia’s Teacher Keys Effectiveness System. Specifically, the study employs surveys and focus groups with teachers that have participated in the evaluation system at this Atlanta area Title I high school since the TKES inception year (2012-2013).

Theory of Variables

The Examination of Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System in an Atlanta area Title I high school focused on several theories that relate to these independent variables: Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS) (including professional knowledge, instructional planning, instructional strategies, differential instruction, assessment strategies, assessment uses, positive learning environment, academically challenging environment, professionalism, and communications), Student Growth Performance (SGP), and Student Learning Objectives (SLO). The theories used in this study are Frederick Hertzberg’s Motivation-Hygiene Theory (King, 2008), Abraham

Motivation

The textbook Science of Psychology defines motivation as “the force that moves people to behave, think, and feel the way they do” (King, 2008, p. 364). The psychology of motivation has spawned several theories. The Incentive Theory of Motivation describes people’s motivations based on positive rewards. The Drive Theory of Motivation describes people’s motivations based on internal needs. This study focuses on the Motivation-Hygiene Theory as it relates to the motivation of behaviors in the work environment, specifically toward job responsibilities.

During the 1950s, Hertzberg created the Motivation-Hygiene Theory (King, 2008). This theory studies overall job satisfaction as it relates to achievement, company policy, administration, recognition, work-itsel, responsibility, advancement, salary, supervision, interpersonal relations and working conditions. The key question of interest is: Do these work environment factors positively and/or negatively impact people’s attitudes at work? As an example, does the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS) influence the teacher’s teaching practices?

As a result of receiving Race to the Top grant monies, the Georgia Department of Education created the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System. The Teacher Keys Effectiveness System uses 5 domains, 10 standards and several indicators to evaluate teachers. The system requires the evaluators to conduct four 10-minute and two 30-
minute evaluations per year, along with a 4-level rubric to determine below adequate performance up to excelling beyond consistent. Teachers are aware of and have been trained on the rubric used during the evaluation process. As a result of this evaluation system, have teachers changed their teaching practices to meet average requirements to excel beyond average or still teaching in the below average area? The Teacher Keys Effectiveness System does not include any positive and/or negative reinforcements to influence teacher teaching practices. A financial bonus is not attached to those teachers that receive a level four evaluation nor is a threat of job security attached to those teachers that receive a level one evaluation, as of yet. Financial incentives are still under discussion and a process of how these will be structured is expected to be released soon.

The Motivation-Hygiene Theory implies that teachers that enjoy working and enjoy their schools do not need outside motivation to create ongoing instructional plans to be effective. Highly motivated teachers are seeking out instructional and assessment strategies to meet the needs of all the students. Motivated teachers, normally self-starters, are aware of the positive impact of differential instruction, positive learning and academically environments. A motivated teacher most likely takes communicating about the teaching profession very seriously and seeks out many ways to stay involved to advance the profession, a highly motivated teacher takes the data from student growth performance assessments seriously enough to improve upon their teaching to have a positive impact on student learning and their professional growth.
Hierarchy of Human Needs

The textbook *Science of Psychology* defines the hierarchy of needs as Maslow’s view that “individuals’ main needs are satisfied in the following sequence: physiological, safety, love and belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization” (King, 2008, p. 379).

This study focused on the safety and security level of Maslow’s Theory in an education setting. The Figure 5 represents Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory as it relates specifically to education (Edutopia, 2014).

![Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Diagram](image)

*Figure 5. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.*

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory has five different levels: physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem and self-actualization. This study focuses on level two—safety, which can refer to personal safety, financial safety, safety of family and friends and/or safety from major life changing events. Level two—Safety was used in relation to job safety and security and the factors that relate to that area.
An evaluation system with a rubric to determine the level of teaching proficiency as determined by the standards is now in place. Teachers that perform at average and/or below average at level one and/or two, feel unsafe and insecure as it relates to job security. In contrast, those teachers that perform at level four on the evaluation rubric experience a high level of safety and security at work. Other extenuating factors go into performing at a high level in the work place that the evaluation system does not address such as safe working conditions, fair rules, salaries, and benefit plans.

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs—Safety has more of an impact on teachers. At a foundational level, all teachers have a need to feel safe and secure and work. The impact of an evaluation can lead to a teacher not feel as secure within their jobs. If the teacher’s evaluations results come in at a level one or two, which is below average, that can lead to feelings of uncertainty at work. The feeling of inadequacy and/or uncertainty can be compounded when it is decided that students have not shown growth as determined by the annual assessment data provided by the Georgia Department of Education through analyzing SGPs. A school leader and teacher should then collaboratively develop a professional growth plan to improve teaching to ultimately diminish the unsafe feelings.

**Behaviorism-Operant Conditioning**

The textbook Science of Psychology defines behaviorism as a “theory of learning that focuses solely on observable behaviors, discounting the importance of such mental activity as thing, wishing, and hoping” (King, 2008, p. 248). Operant conditioning is defined as “the consequences of a behavior change the probability of the behaviors occurrence” (King, 2008, p. 255).
Behaviorists believe that any person can be trained to behave a certain way. Skinner is the father of the Operant Conditioning Theory. Through observations, Skinner (King, 2008) believed that behaviors are cause and effect actions involving positive and negative reinforcement. The Operant Conditioning Theory states that positive and negative reinforcements strengthen and/or decrease behaviors. Any person can be trained to behave in a certain manner with the presence of positive and/or negative reinforcements. Can the same thought process of positive and negative reinforcement change workplace behaviors?

A teacher that receives a level four evaluation may feel an intrinsic motivation to do more, to continue to excel. The positive reinforcement received from an excellent evaluation may propel a teacher to continue to excel. A teacher that receives a level one evaluation may have negative feelings and become unmotivated to do better. The Race to the Top grant did attach a financial award to those teachers consistently receiving level four evaluations. At this time, local school districts have been unable to determine the fairness and properly implement an impartial system to allow for financial gains under such a policy. As for those teachers that consistently perform at level one or two, there are no procedures in place to negatively affect their behaviors. The positive/negative reinforcements are a nonexistent part of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System.

Theory X and Y

The textbook Science of Psychology defines the main tenet of Theory X as “Work is innately unpleasant and people have a strong desire to avoid it; these types of employees need direction dislike responsibility and must be kept in line” (King, 2008,
p. 503). The textbook further defines Theory Y as a theory of “People who seek out responsibility and for whom motivation can come from allowing them to suggest creative and meaningful solutions” (King, 2008, p.503).

Douglas McGregor created Theory X and Theory Y which discussed two types of workers (King, 2008). Theory X is the worker that does not want to work and avoids responsibility. Theory Y worker, which is discussed in this study, is the opposite. Theory Y worker enjoys working, seeks out responsibilities and wants to be a part of making the organization better. Theory Y teachers are the teachers performing at levels three and four. Level three teachers look at the rubric, examine the standards, and seek to improve by asking how they can better themselves in order to better the students. Theory X teachers consistently perform at levels one and two, with concern or fear, and mostly view the teaching profession as a job.

The theories used in this study all have a humanistic component that reaches to the core of a person’s incentive to work at a high level and to become successful as defined by that work. A component of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) is conferencing. As a result of the conferences conducted between the leader and teacher, the leader provides the teacher with feedback based on the overall Teacher Effectiveness Measurement (TEMS).

**Definition of Variables**

**Behavior** is defined as everything we do that can be directly observed (King, 2008).
Creativity is the use of the imagination or original ideas, especially in the production of an artistic work (www.oxforddictionaries.com).

Responsibilities are defined as the state or fact of being accountable for something (www.oxforddictionaries.com).

Professional knowledge is when a teacher demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum, subject content, pedagogical knowledge, and the needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

Instructional planning is when a teacher plans to use state and local school district curricula and standards, effective strategies, resources, and data to address the differentiated needs of all students (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

Instructional strategies is defined as a teacher’s promotion of students’ learning by using research-based instructional strategies relevant to the content area to engage students in active learning and to promote key skills (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

Differential instruction is when a teacher challenges students by providing appropriate content and developing skills which address individual learning differences (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

Assessment strategies are used when a teacher systematically chooses a variety of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment strategies and instruments that are valid and appropriate for the content and student population (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).
Assessment uses are engaged when a teacher systematically gathers, analyzes, and uses relevant data to measure student progress, to inform instructional content and delivery methods, and to provide timely and constructive feedback to both students and parents (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

Positive learning environment is when a teacher provides a well-managed, safe, and orderly environment that is conducive to learning and encourages respect for all (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

Academically challenging environment is when a teacher creates a student-centered, academic environment that is conducive to learning which occurs at high levels and students are self-directed learners (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

Professionalism is when a teacher demonstrates a commitment to professional ethics and the school’s mission, participates in professional growth opportunities, and contributes to the profession (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

Communication is when a teacher communicates effectively with students, parents or guardians, district and school personnel, and other stakeholders in ways that enhance student learning (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

Student Growth Percentile describes a student’s growth relative to his/her academic peers—other students with similar prior achievement (i.e., those with a similar history of scores) (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

Student Learning Objectives (SLO) are content-specific, grade level learning objectives that are measureable, focused on growth in student learning, and aligned to curriculum standards (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).
**Title I** provides financial assistance to local educational agencies and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

**No Child Left Behind Act 2001** is a landmark in education reform designed to improve student achievement and change the culture of America’s schools (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

**Race to the Top** is a competitive grant to reform schools in the following areas; improve low achieving schools; recruit, develop, reward and retain effective teachers and principals; build data systems that measure student growth and success; adopt standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed globally (Georgia Department of Education, 2012a).

**Georgia Department of Education** oversees education throughout the state, ensuring that laws and regulations pertaining to education are followed and that state and federal money appropriated for education is properly allocated to local school systems (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

**Teacher Keys Effectiveness System** is an effectiveness system for teacher evaluation and professional growth (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

**Council of Chief State School Officers** (CCSSO) is a nationwide nonpartisan and nonprofit membership organization that brings together the top education leaders from every state in the nation (www.ccsso.org).
National Governors Association (NGA) is the bipartisan organization of the nation’s governors. Governors share best practices, speak with a collective voice on national policy and develop innovative solutions that improve state government and support the principles of federalism (www.nga.org).

Relationship among the Variables

This study is an examination of The Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System. In particular, this is an examination of the relationship between a teacher’s motivation and behavior and the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS) (professional knowledge, instructional planning, instructional strategies, assessment strategies, positive learning environment, academically challenging environment, professionalism and communication), Student Growth Percentile, and Student Learning Objectives. Figure 6 describes the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables.

![Diagram](https://example.com/diagram.png)

**Figure 6.** Relationship of dependent variables to independent variables.
Limitations of the Study

As with most research studies, limitations to the research are unavoidable. This mixed method study presents several limitations. This study was conducted in one Atlanta area title I high school with a limited population of faculty that have participated in the evaluation process for four consecutive years from the beginning 2012-2013 school year. The researcher assumed all faculty members responded honestly and accurately as they took part in the survey and focus groups. The researcher is also an administrator at the school in which the study was conducted, which can have a significant impact on the results. The evaluation system has only been in existence for four years, yielding limited sampling opportunities and existing research. In addition, the TKES process (and its requirements) has been adjusted over the years since its inception.

This study focuses on the following components of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness Systems: Teacher Assessment Performance Standards, Professional Growth, Student Growth Percentile and Student Learning Objectives. A more inclusive evaluation of a teacher being evaluated using the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System includes all of the following components: Student Growth Percentiles, Student Learning Objectives, Surveys of Instructional Practice, Conferencing, and TAPS (Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards), and Professional Growth after several more years in which the school and/or school district has implemented all components.

Summary

There are many theories that that examine behaviors. This study discussed the following four theories that are relevant to the research questions: Frederick Hertzberg’s
Motivation-Hygiene Theory, Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Needs Theory—specifically Safety Level, Skinner’s Behavior Theory-Operant Conditioning, and Douglas McGregor’s Theory X and Y. Leaders can examine the use of these theories as they explain what motivates the behaviors of teachers to improve upon teaching practices to ultimately improve student learning. The researcher used the above theories to answer the research questions to further evaluate teacher behaviors as they relate to the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A national teacher evaluation system has now made its way to 21st century education by way of Race to the Top. The same concerns Marzano spoke of that existed in the 1950s still exist today (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). The value of an evaluation system in any work place is to determine and measure effective productivity; in this case, student achievement is the measurement that determines a teacher’s effective productivity. Georgia’s Teacher Keys Effectiveness System has only been in existence for a few years and, therefore, it has been unable to provide reliable data to determine student achievement. The current study is an examination of The Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System with a focus on the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS), Professional Growth (PG), Student Learning Objectives (SLO) and Student Growth Performance (SGP) at an Atlanta area Title I High School.

The researcher used a mixed method study design to examine how being evaluated by The Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System influences teachers’ teaching practices. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) explained that a mixed method research study includes a mixture of data collection analysis, including qualitative and quantitative, within a single or a series of studies. The importance of using a mixed method research study is to understand the processes of this program and to uncover an issue that may impede the program’s success. “The case study has proven particularly
useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for informing policy” (Merriam, 1998, p. 41)

The researcher used the newly implemented Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System as the bounded case. The case study includes the teachers employed from the pilot year of 2012-2013 through the next four consecutive years of 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016 2016-2017. The researcher used an in-depth data collection process that includes a survey and a focus group.

**Research Design**

The purpose of this mixed method study was to examine the influence of the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System in one Atlanta area Title I High School on teachers teaching practices. Upon the examination of this evaluation tool, a determination was made as to whether this evaluation system influences teachers teaching practices. This study gathered data using document analysis, surveys, and a focus group.

**Setting**

An Atlanta area Title I high school has a long, rich history in the Atlanta area. This school opened in 1957, when the area was still considered rural. Since opening Atlanta High School has seen 13 different principals, with the most recent being in place since 2016. This Atlanta area high school currently has over 2400 students and over 130 certified teachers. This Atlanta area high school is one of 20 high schools in this large school district; the school district serves over 170,000 students. Atlanta High School has
been a Title I school since 2011, a year before the pilot run of Georgia’s Teacher Keys Effectiveness System.

This Atlanta area high school has strong foundation of highly educated teachers with many years of experience. This Atlanta area high school has 20 teachers with 0-5 years of experience; 60 teachers with 6-15 years of experience, and 50 teachers with 16 or more years of experience; also, 60 teachers have a master’s degree and 45 teachers have a specialist degree or higher. This Atlanta area high school had over 130 teachers that were eligible to participate in the study because they had the minimum requirement of teaching at Atlanta High School consecutively since the 2012-2013 school year.

**Sampling**

Teacher Keys Effectiveness System has been used in this Atlanta area High School District since the pilot year of 2012-2013 school year. The researcher administered a survey to all teachers to determine their qualifications to further participate in the study, in an effort to create a more concise sampling pool.

The researcher presented a qualifying questionnaire (Appendix A) to the teachers asking them to participate in the study. The teachers who volunteered to participate in the qualifying questionnaire became a part of the sampling pool. The qualifying questionnaire reduced the sampling pool even further. Upon completion of the qualifying questionnaire, the remaining teachers were chosen at random to participate in the focus group. All teachers that signed the consent form and met the eligibility on the qualifying questionnaire were invited to participate in the survey. Through random sampling, out of
the qualified surveys, ten names were chosen to participate in a sit-down audio taped focus group.

**Working with Human Subjects**

This study required approval from Clark Atlanta University’s Institutional Review Board and approval from the principal of this Atlanta area high school on the Local School Research Request Form.

**Instrumentation**

The teachers that were eligible to participate in the survey (Appendix B) were selected based on the prequalifying records that indicate they have been teaching at this Atlanta area high school since the inception of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System in 2012-2013. The qualifying questionnaire consists of demographic questions, teacher education level and years of teaching and participating in the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System. The qualifying questionnaire determines if the teacher is eligible to move on to participate in the focus group or the interview in no specific order. The interview and focus group questions were designed to pull out information to answer the research questions that were discussed in Chapter I.

A random sample of 10 teachers from the pool of eligible teachers participating in the qualifying questionnaire was chosen to participate in a focus group. The focus group questions (Appendix C) were discussed with the whole group and the entire conversation was audio taped and transcribed. The focus group questions were expected to last approximately 60 minutes.
Participants/Location of the Research

The research took place at an Atlanta area high school. The teachers that were invited and provided a signed statement of consent (Appendix D) made up the random sampling pool. The random sampling pool teachers will have participated in the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System since the pilot year of 2012-2013, continuing through 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, the next consecutive four years. The participants for the focus group were selected randomly from the same sampling pool.

Data Analysis

Not all the current teachers at this Atlanta area high school were eligible to participate in this study because they have not met the minimum requirement of being a teacher at this Atlanta area high school since 2012-2013 school year, as determined by the qualifying survey.

The researcher used this Atlanta area Title I high school’s local school plan of improvement (LSPI) document. The LSPI document is created on an annual basis by school leaders. This document states the goals that are created by the school leaders that are focused on throughout the school year.

All teachers were given the qualifying questionnaire and consent form. The teachers that returned a signed statement of consent and qualifying questionnaire made up the sampling pool. Per the qualifying questionnaire, only the teachers that have been teaching in this Atlanta area Title I high school since 2012-2013 were eligible to further participate in this study. All qualified teachers participated in the survey. Only 10 randomly selected teachers from the qualified surveys participated in the focus group.
Summary

Upon a thorough examination of the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System, this study’s research methodology provides information to local educational agencies on the influence the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System as it relates to Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS), Professional Growth (PG), Student Learning Objectives (SLO), and Student Growth Performance (SGP) has on teachers’ teaching practices. A complete, thorough research process took place to arrive at answers for the research questions discussed in Chapter I.
CHAPTER V
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System has on teachers’ teaching practices. This study used a mixed method approach, which allowed the researcher to use several different data sources, such as surveys, school documents, and focus groups. The analysis of the data was completed in a triangulation form to include qualitative data from a focus group interview and document analysis and quantitative data from a survey.

Data Analysis

There are several components of the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES). This study examined the TKES components and the influence each has on teachers’ teaching practices. Three different data sources were used to conduct this study: a survey, a focus group interview, and a school’s planning document. The data collection was completed during March 2017. Permission to complete the study at this Atlanta area High School was granted by the principal through the local school’s IRB process established by the school district.

This Atlanta area high school has a strong foundation of highly educated teachers with many years of experience. This Atlanta area high school had over 130 teachers that were eligible to participate in the study, as long as they had been teaching at Atlanta
High School consecutively since 2012-2013 school year. Figures 2 and 3 in Chapter II describe the educational levels and experience levels of the teachers at this Atlanta area Title I high school.

The Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System has been used in this Atlanta area high school since the pilot year of 2012-2013 school year. The researcher presented a qualifying questionnaire to over 130 teachers asking them to participate in the study. The teachers that volunteered to participate in the qualifying questionnaire also had to meet further eligibility requirements to become full participants in this study. Those teachers eligible to further participate had to have participated in the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System since its inception, during the 2012-2013 school year. The qualifying survey resulted in 80 of 130 teachers willing to participate and move further into the process. The qualifying survey resulted in 54 of 80 teachers eligible to move on based on the criteria of teaching at this Atlanta area Title I high school since 2012-2013. Once eligibility was determined, those 54 teachers became part of the sampling pool to further participate in the focus group interview and all 54 were requested to participate in the survey. A random sample of the 54 eligible participants resulted in 10 being asked to participate in the focus group interview, with 6 of 10 accepting. An email (Appendix E) was sent to 10 random participants, and 6 accepted to participate in the focus group interview being held at the local school. All of the 54 eligible participants were chosen to participate in the survey. An email with the survey was sent out to all 54 respondents (via survey monkey); 47 respondents participated, 41 completed the survey, 6 partially completed the survey, and 7 did not complete the survey. The document analysis of this
Atlanta area high school’s (LSPI) local school plan of improvement provides information as it relates to teacher professional development and Atlanta High School’s documented requirements of Teacher Effective Measurement (TEM). Table 4 shows the alignment between data collection and the study’s research questions.

Table 4

Data Collection Alignment for Research Questions

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<th>Research Questions</th>
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<th></th>
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<td>Survey Items</td>
<td>Interview Questions</td>
<td>Document Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. What influence does the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on your teaching practices?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. What influence does the Professional Development component of the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System have on your teaching practices?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. What influence does the Student Growth Percentile component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on your teaching practices?</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Survey</td>
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<td><strong>Qualitative and Quantitative Questions</strong></td>
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<td>4. What influence does the Student Learning Objectives component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on your teaching practices?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. What influence does the Teacher Effective Measure component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on your teaching practices?</td>
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**Analysis of Survey Data—Quantitative**

The qualifying survey resulted in 80 teachers willing to participate and move further into the process. The qualifying survey resulted in 54 of 84 teachers eligible to move on based on the criteria of teaching at this Atlanta area Title I high school since the 2012-2013 school year. The survey was conducted through Survey Monkey. Figure 7 shows the number of invitations sent, the number of complete responses and the number of partial responses.
Figure 7. Survey invitations and responses.

A 10-question survey was created and sent to the 54 eligible participants. The survey was created through survey monkey and emailed directly via survey monkey. The survey questions directly addressed all the research questions discussed in Chapter I.

The quantitative data from the survey questions were used to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. What influence does the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS) component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?

- 51% of the teachers indicated the TAPS component has a very high and high influence on their teaching practices.

RQ3. What influence does the Student Growth Percentile component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?
- 37% of the teachers indicate the SGP component has a high influence on their teaching practices.

RQ4. What influence does the Student Learning Objectives component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?

- 42% of the teachers indicate the SLO component has a high influence on their teaching practices.

Table 5 describes the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System having a high influence on teachers’ teaching practices in the area of Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS), Student Learning Objectives (SLO), and Student Growth Performance (SGP).

Table 5

Responses to Survey Question #2

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<th>Answer Options</th>
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<th>Very High Influence</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Growth Performance (SGP) Exams on teaching</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered questions 41

Skipped questions 6

Analysis of Focus Group Data—Qualitative

A random sample of 10 teachers was chosen out of the eligible 54 to participate in the focus group interview. An email was sent to the ten random participants and six of those responded yes, they are willing to participate. The email invitation explained the purpose of the research request, provided information about how to withdraw from participation in addition to the need for confidentiality. The email provided the participants with the date, time, and location for the focus group interview. This email was also sent via survey monkey.

The six participants included five females and one male. The random sampling represented the following academic departments: math, science, foreign language, special
education, and business elective. The group met in a room within the school where they work and which is the focus of this study. Each participant was identified by a letter; letters A through F were used. The focus group interview lasted one hour and was documented by two different voice recorders via smart phones. The actual audio recording has been saved to a USB flash drive and transcribed into a word document. When the researcher asked the question, before providing an answer, the participants would identify themselves by saying (as an example), “Person F.”

The focus group interview consisted of 18 questions that directly addressed the research questions introduced in Chapter I. The focus group interview questions specifically addressed the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards independently. Table 6 shows how many of the participants of the focus group answered specific questions.

Table 6

Analysis of Focus Group Questions Answered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group Interview Questions</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q5</th>
<th>Q6</th>
<th>Q7</th>
<th>Q8</th>
<th>Q9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Responses</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group Interview Questions</td>
<td>Q10</td>
<td>Q11</td>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>Q13</td>
<td>Q14</td>
<td>Q15</td>
<td>Q16</td>
<td>Q17</td>
<td>Q18</td>
</tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The qualitative data from the focus group interview questions (specifically 2, 14, 15, 16, and 17) were used to answer the following research questions:
RQ1. What influence does the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS) component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?

Person A was the only person out of the 6 participants that volunteered to tackle the question about the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards, which by the way is the foundation of the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System, counting 50% of the overall evaluation. Person A was able to address two of the 10 standards: Professionalism and Communication. Person A described another two standards as evidence of lesson planning: instructional planning and classroom environment (accurately named positive learning environment).

RQ2. What influence does the Professional Growth component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?

Person F acknowledged that the professional development is something that they need to work on; however, the adjustment is not to learn more to better teach the students. Person F acknowledged the need to enhance professional development in order to maintain a high evaluation.

RQ3. What influence does the Student Growth Percentile component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?

Person D indicated they were aware of the Student Learning Objectives and they were appropriate for the course they teach. Person D stated that they learned about the specific Student Learning Objectives from school district meetings and staff development meetings.
RQ4. What influence does the Student Learning Objectives component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?

Person E stated it is difficult to use the data from the Student Growth Percentile to measure student growth in the current school year. Person E indicated concern with the pretest and the posttest given late in the school year. The pretest is given a month after school starts and the post-test is given during the last month of the school year, which does not allow for personal student remediation but does allow for teacher reflection and adjustments for the next school year.

RQ5. What influence does the Teacher Effectiveness Measure component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?

Person D indicated there are parts of the Georgia Teacher Keys Effective System that are effective and affect her teaching; however, Person D indicated a concern with the part that relates to the student survey about teachers. Per the Georgia Department of Education, the student survey became an optional part of the TKES as of the most recent revision of the system in July 2016. The district that Atlanta High School is a part of decided to remove this component of the Teacher Effective Measurement (TEMS) as of the 2016-2017 school year.

The focus group questions addressed the theories presented in Chapter III: Theoretical Framework. The Motivation and Behaviorism and Operant Conditioning Theories were the most apparent theories that were revealed during the focus group interview questioning and answering session. The final focus group question presented to the group was: Is there anything that I have not asked that influenced your teaching
behaviors, as a direct result of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System? The researcher required all six respondents to answer and four out of six respondents made a comment that pertained to the relationship between the course assessment, student and teacher relationship. The group needed clarification on the equity in EOC courses vs. non-EOC courses, such as Biology (EOC) vs. Health (non-EOC) which are state required graduation courses.

**Document Analysis**

Figure 8, in part, was taken from the Atlanta area Title I high school website. This figure describes and addresses the goal of the professional growth plan created to support teachers.

![Figure 8. Local school plan of improvement (partial document).](image-url)
Research questions two and five were addressed through the focus group interview. In addition, these questions were also addressed through document analysis. The document that was analyzed is the Atlanta area High School local school plan of improvement (LSPI). The local school plan of improvement is a document created by the school leadership team to address the needs of all stakeholders for the current school year. Atlanta High School district leadership requires this plan of all schools. The leadership team includes teachers, assistant principals and the principal. The LSPI plan document (in part) is published on the Atlanta High School website. This specific part of the document concerns how the leadership team addresses professional development for the teachers, which directly affects the 20% measurement of professional development that is a component of the Teacher Effective Measurement (TEM) of the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System. The local school plan of improvement document specifically addresses school practices by using staff development strategies to build instructional capacity.

Summary

The data for this research were collected, implemented, and analyzed with fidelity. All participants were willing to participate and received opt-out notices at every step of the study. Each research question was answered with at least two different data sources. The quantitative data from the survey was analyzed and derived from Survey Monkey. The qualitative data from the focus group was transcribed and summarized based on the emerging themes. These data were further analyzed to produce additional findings. The survey data findings yielded overwhelming evidence in favor of the
Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System, which seems to have an overall positive influence on the teaching of the teachers at Atlanta High School.
CHAPTER VI
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose of the Study

The state of Georgia has designed an evaluation system for school districts to use, called the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System. Teachers are evaluated based on the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS), Professional Growth (PG), Student Growth [Student Growth Percentile (SGP) and Student Learning Objectives (SLO)], which demonstrate an overall effectiveness called the Teacher Effectiveness Measurement (TEM).

According to the Georgia Department of Education (2012b), the intent of the teacher evaluation process is to do the following:

1. Optimize student learning and growth;
2. Improve the quality of instruction by ensuring accountability for classroom performance and teacher effectiveness;
3. Contribute to successful achievement of the goals and objectives defined in the vision, mission, and goals of Georgia Public Schools;
4. Provide a basis for instructional improvement through productive teacher performance appraisal and professional growth; and
5. Implement a performance evaluation system that promotes collaboration between the teacher and evaluator and promotes self-growth, instructional effectiveness, and improvement of overall job performance. James Stronge (2010) stated it best: “Given the evidence regarding the central role that teachers play in school success, it seems safe to say that reform cannot happen without teacher improvement” (p. 86).

The evaluation process has always been a challenge in the workforce. Implementing an evaluation system simply means someone will judge and determine the value of someone else as it relates to a person completing their job responsibilities well enough to meet the needs of the organization. The introduction of an evaluation system to education is even more challenging as it involves many variables. This study is significant because it provides educational leaders in local education agencies and the Georgia Department of Education with information about the influence the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System has on teachers’ teaching practices.

The viability of the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System lies in the hands of the local school. How the principal puts value on the implementation of a program determines the success of the program. This Atlanta area high school the principal communicates the importance of the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System throughout the school year by highlighting different teacher behaviors and what standard they are connected to.
Findings

This study was designed to provide information to educational leaders on the influence of the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System on teachers’ teaching practices. Eligible participants were 54 teachers that have been participating in the evaluation system since its inception in 2012-2013.

This was a mixed method study of the Georgia’s Teacher Keys Effectiveness System. The data used in this study were compiled from document analysis, surveys, and a focus group conducted with teachers that have participated in the evaluation system at this Atlanta area Title I high school since its 2012-2013 school year inception. A total of 41 teachers completed the survey and six teachers participated in the focus group. The survey and the focus group questions addressed the following research questions:

RQ1. What influence does the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS) component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?

The research has shown that the participants think that parts of the system are effective. The participants also revealed concerns and reservations about the evaluator understanding the specifics of the content they teach, especially if it is a special education classroom. In addition, some of the participants were trained evaluators, as well as teachers, and they too find it difficult to observe all 10 TAPS standards within a few observations per year. However, during the focus group interview, the six respondents were unable to name all 10 of the standards that make up the TAPS; yet, overall, they revealed they were making positive adjustments in order to receive positive evaluations.
The survey data indicate that 65% of the respondents agree that an evaluator can accurately observe what a teacher does using the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System.

Survey question 2 addressed the overall influence of the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards on teachers’ teaching practices. Two percent of the respondents stated the TAPS has no influence, 12% of the respondents stated the TAPS has little influence, 34% of the respondents stated the TAPS has moderate influence, 46% of the respondents stated the TAPS has high influence, and 5% of the respondents stated the TAPS has very high influence.

RQ2. What influence does the Professional Growth component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?

The focus group participants acknowledged making adjustments to enhance professional growth. The participants look for learning opportunities inside the district and outside the district. The participants that participated in all parts of this study are highly motivated teachers under normal circumstances. The survey data revealed that 63% of the respondents considered expanding their professional growth with the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System in mind and thought it may benefit their evaluation.

RQ3. What influence does the Student Growth Percentile component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?

The survey data revealed that 2% of the participants’ stated that student growth performance has no influence, 7% of the participants stated student growth performance has little influence, 44% of the participants stated student growth performance has moderate influence, 37% of the participants stated student growth performance has high
influence, and 10% of the participants stated student growth performance has very high influence on their teaching practices. In addition, five out of six of the focus group respondents teach classes that require a student growth percentile exam. The focus group respondents were asked if they track the data that result from SGP and one respondent stated yes; however, the respondent revealed the assessments are administered late in the beginning of the semester and late at the end of the second semester, which may not always allow the teachers opportunities to re-teach.

Survey question 2 addressed the overall influence of the Student Growth Percentile on teachers’ teaching practices. The results indicated that 2% of the respondents stated the TAPS has no influence, 7% of the respondents stated the TAPS has little influence, 44% of the respondents stated the TAPS has moderate influence, 37% of the respondents stated the TAPS has high influence, and 10% of the respondents stated the TAPS has very high influence.

RQ4. What influence does the Student Learning Objectives component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?

The survey data revealed that 0% of the participants stated that student growth performance has no influence, 12% of the participants stated student growth performance has little influence, 24% of the participants stated student growth performance has moderate influence, 41% of the participants stated student growth performance has high influence and 22% of the participants stated student growth performance has very high influence on their teaching practices. The focus group respondents were all aware of the student learning objectives that apply to the courses they teach. Respondents went on to
say that they evaluate the student learning objectives and find them to be appropriate for the courses they teach.

RQ5. What influence does the Teacher Effectiveness Measure component of the Georgia Teacher Key Effectiveness System have on teaching practices?

The focus group respondents indicated that they need more time to discuss feedback with evaluators and more control over the timing of SGPs. As to the open-ended responses in the survey, some of the participants indicated that the system is fair, while others stated that the system is not fair. The survey data also revealed that more training is maybe necessary for the administrators, who should look for more opportunities to evaluate with artifacts.

**Conclusion and Implications**

The research implies and concludes that the teachers that participated in this study teaching practices are influenced by the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System, specifically, within each component, Teacher Assessment Performance Standards, Student Growth Percentile and Student Learning Objectives. The themes that were addressed as a part of this study discussed motivation, behaviors, and safety/security. During the focus group interviews, the respondents spoke of adjusting their behaviors to meet the criteria set forth by the TKES. However, major adjustments were not necessary, and most indicate only minor adjustments. As a result of this research, a determination can be made that the respondents were already intrinsically motivated teachers.

As the themes of motivation, behavior, and job safety and security were examined, the data indicated that 88% of the respondents were satisfied with their jobs
and 83% felt safe in their positions. The behaviors of the teachers led the researcher to believe they were already intrinsically motivated teachers.

**Limitations of the Study**

During the process of conducting this mixed method study, several limitations became apparent to the researcher.

- This study was conducted in one Atlanta area Title I high school with a limited population of faculty that have participated in the evaluation process for four consecutive years, beginning with the 2012-2013 school year.
- The researcher assumed all faculty members responded honestly and accurately as they took part in the survey and focus groups.
- The researcher is also an administrator in the school in which the study was conducted.
- The evaluation system has only been in existence for four years leaving limited years of sampling opportunities and existing research. In addition, the TKES process and its requirements have been adjusted over the years since the inception of the system.

This study focused on the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards, Student Growth Percentile and Student Learning Objectives of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System. A more inclusive evaluation of a teacher being evaluated using the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System includes all TKES components: Student Growth Percentiles, Student Learning Objectives, Surveys of Instructional Practice, Conferencing, and TAPS
(Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards) and Professional Growth after several more years in which the school and/or school district has implemented all components.

**Recommendations**

The researcher makes the following recommendations for future research:

- Since the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System is now a permanent part of teacher evaluations for the State of Georgia, more research is needed to continue to provide all educational stakeholders with information to improve student achievement.

- The research was limited to one school. Further studies should expand the research to multiple schools and school districts.

- Expand the research to include all three educational levels: elementary, middle and high schools.

- The research can be replicated at different points during the school year.

- The school district and the local school should provide continuous training to evaluators to include inter-rater reliability amongst the evaluators.

- The school district and local school should offer continuous training to provide timely meaningful feedback that is time conscious.

- The school district and local school should provide ongoing professional development for teachers that receive Level One and Level Two ratings overall or on individual standards.

- The state, the school district, and local school should conduct further research on the specific impact of TKES on classroom outcomes.
Summary

Overall, this study contributes to a very small body of literature that exists concerning the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System. The research revealed a positive affirmation toward the system and a commitment to improve student achievement through improved teaching. As with most new teaching assessment tools, this process will require continuous tweaks in the forthcoming years.

The participants’ responses to this study gave indication that the Georgia Department of Education’s creation of the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System is needed and is positively received.
APPENDIX A

Qualifying Questionnaire

Please circle one of the following that best describes you.

1. How long have you been a certified teacher?
   a. 0-5
   b. 6-10
   c. 11-15
   d. 16-20
   e. 21-25
   f. 25-30
   g. 30+

2. How long have you been a certified teacher at this Atlanta area High School?
   a. 0-5
   b. 6-10
   c. 11-15
   d. 16-20
   e. 21-25
   f. 25-30
   g. 30+

3. What is your highest degree level?
   a. Masters
   b. Specialist
   c. Doctorate

4. Have you participated in the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System?
   a. Yes
   b. No

5. How many years have you participated in the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System?
   a. 1
   b. 2
   c. 3
6. How many years at this Atlanta area High School have you participated in the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System?
   a. 1
   b. 2
   c. 3

7. How would you identify yourself based on race?
   a. African American
   b. Caucasian
   c. Hispanic
   d. Asian
   e. Other

8. How would you identify yourself based on gender?
   a. Female
   b. Male

9. Would you be willing to participate in an interview or focus group, if randomly selected: Please check your choice of yes, or not below and sign the Letter of Consent.

   I would be willing to participate in an interview or focus, if selected:
   
   Yes________________

   No________________

THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!!!!!
APPENDIX B

Survey

An Examination of Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System

1. How would you rate the overall quality of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System as an evaluation tool?
   □ Very Poor Quality
   □ Poor Quality
   □ Moderate Quality
   □ High Quality
   □ Very High Quality

2. How would you rate the overall influence of the...

   A. Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) on your Teaching
      □ No Influence
      □ Little Influence
      □ Moderate Influence
      □ High Influence
      □ Very High Influence

   B. Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS) on your teaching
      □ No Influence
      □ Little Influence
      □ Moderate Influence
      □ High Influence
      □ Very High Influence
C. Student Learning Objectives (SLO) on your teaching
   □ No Influence
   □ Little Influence
   □ Moderate Influence
   □ High Influence
   □ Very High Influence

D. Student Growth Performance (SGP) Exams on your teaching
   □ No Influence
   □ Little Influence
   □ Moderate Influence
   □ High Influence
   □ Very High Influence

3. How would you rate the overall influence of the Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS) on your...?

   A. Professional Knowledge
      □ No Influence
      □ Little Influence
      □ Moderate Influence
      □ High Influence
      □ Very High Influence

   B. Instructional Planning
      □ No Influence
      □ Little Influence
      □ Moderate Influence
      □ High Influence
      □ Very High Influence

   C. Instructional Strategies
      □ No Influence
      □ Little Influence
      □ Moderate Influence
      □ High Influence
      □ Very High Influence
D. Differentiated Strategies
  □ No Influence
  □ Little Influence
  □ Moderate Influence
  □ High Influence
  □ Very High Influence

E. Assessment Strategies
  □ No Influence
  □ Little Influence
  □ Moderate Influence
  □ High Influence
  □ Very High Influence

F. Assessment Uses
  □ No Influence
  □ Little Influence
  □ Moderate Influence
  □ High Influence
  □ Very High Influence

G. Positive Learning Environment
  □ No Influence
  □ Little Influence
  □ Moderate Influence
  □ High Influence
  □ Very High Influence

H. Academically Challenging Environment
  □ No Influence
  □ Little Influence
  □ Moderate Influence
  □ High Influence
  □ Very High Influence
I. Professionalism
   □ No Influence
   □ Little Influence
   □ Moderate Influence
   □ High Influence
   □ Very High Influence

J. Communication
   □ No Influence
   □ Little Influence
   □ Moderate Influence
   □ High Influence
   □ Very High Influence

4. Did you receive training on...
   A. Teacher Keys Effectiveness System Rubric   □ Yes □ No
   B. Teacher Assessment Performance Standards □ Yes □ No
   C. Student Learning Objectives           □ Yes □ No
   D. Student Growth Performance            □ Yes □ No

5. Can an evaluator accurately observe what you do as a teacher using the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System?   □ Yes □ No

6. During your observation, can your evaluator accurately observe the following as a part of the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS)....
   A. Professional Knowledge                   □ Yes □ No
   B. Instructional Planning                   □ Yes □ No
   C. Instructional Strategies                 □ Yes □ No
   D. Differentiated Instruction              □ Yes □ No
   E. Assessment Strategies                    □ Yes □ No
   F. Assessment Usage                        □ Yes □ No
   G. Positive Learning Environment            □ Yes □ No
   H. Academically Challenged Environment     □ Yes □ No
   I. Professionalism                          □ Yes □ No
   J. Communication                           □ Yes □ No
7. Did you use the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards rubric when planning for your....

A. Professional Knowledge □ Yes □ No  
B. Instructional Planning □ Yes □ No  
C. Instructional Strategies □ Yes □ No  
D. Differentiated Instruction □ Yes □ No  
E. Assessment Strategies □ Yes □ No  
F. Assessment Usage □ Yes □ No  
G. Positive Learning Environment □ Yes □ No  
H. Academically Challenged Environment □ Yes □ No  
I. Professionalism □ Yes □ No  
J. Communication □ Yes □ No

8. Does the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards rubric allow for creativity in the following areas....

A. Professional Knowledge □ Yes □ No  
B. Instructional Planning □ Yes □ No  
C. Instructional Strategies □ Yes □ No  
D. Differentiated Instruction □ Yes □ No  
E. Assessment Strategies □ Yes □ No  
F. Assessment Usage □ Yes □ No  
G. Positive Learning Environment □ Yes □ No  
H. Academically Challenged Environment □ Yes □ No  
I. Professionalism □ Yes □ No  
J. Communication □ Yes □ No

9. Since the implementation of the Teacher Effectiveness System...

A. Are you satisfied with your job? □ Yes □ No  
B. Do you feel job security? □ Yes □ No

10. What are your thoughts about the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System?
APPENDIX C

Focus Group Questions

• Do you think the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System is effective? If so, why or why not?

• Are you familiar with the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards? If so, how did you find out? What do you know about the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards? Can you name the standards?

• Did you do anything to adjust your professional knowledge as it relates to the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System? If so, please describe what you did, how you did and why or why not?

• Did you do anything to adjust your instructional planning as it relates to the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System? If so, please describe what you did, how you did and why?

• Did you do anything to adjust your instructional strategies as it relates to the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System? If so, please describe what you did, how you did and why or why not?

• Did you do anything to adjust your differentiated instruction as it relates to the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System? If so, please describe what you did, how you did and why or why not?

• Did you do anything to adjust your assessment strategies as it relates to the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System? If so, please describe what you did, how you did and why or why not?

• Did you do anything to adjust your assessment uses as it relates to the Teacher Keys Evaluation System? If so, please describe what you did, how you did and why or why not?

• Did you do anything to adjust your positive learning environment as it relates to the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System? If so, please describe what you did, how you did and why or why not?
• Did you do anything to adjust and make your environment academically challenging as it relates to the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System? If so, please describe what you did, how you did and why or why not?

• Did you do anything to adjust your professionalism as it relates to the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System? If so, please describe what you did, how you did and why or why not?

• Did you do anything to adjust your communication as it relates to the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System? If so, please describe what you did, how you did and why or why not?

• Did you do anything to use the teacher assessment performance standards to help you grow your students? If so, please describe what you did, how you did and why or why not?

• Do you know what Student Learning Objectives you are required to teach? If so, how did you find out?

• Do you think the Student Learning Objectives you teach are correct for the subject you teach? If so, why or why not?

• Do you teach a course that requires a Student Growth Performance exam? If so, what is the name of the course?

• Do you track your student progress as it relates to the Student Growth Performance exams you teach? If so, why or why not?

• Is there anything that I, as the researcher, have not asked that influenced your teaching behaviors, as a direct result of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System? Please explain and provide an example.
APPENDIX D

Statement of Consent

RESEARCH TITLE

An Examination of Georgia’s Teacher Keys Effectiveness System

PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER

Amy Battle-Edwards

PURPOSE

The purpose of the study is to Examine Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System. Specifically, the Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS), Student Learning Objectives (SLO) and Student Growth Performance (SGP) has on the behaviors of teachers and their teaching. You are invited to participate in this study because you have been teaching at this Atlanta area High School since the inception of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System in 2012-2013 school year.

PROCEDURES

Upon agreement to participate in the study, you will be required to complete and submit a qualifying questionnaire to the principal researcher. You may be chosen at random to further participate in a one-on-one interview or a focus group on the final page of this Letter of Consent. If you agree to participate, we will include you in the random selection process.

RISKS

Participation in this research study will not subject you to any risks.

BENEFITS

Participation in this research may benefit you personally. The research may reveal your motivations and behaviors about the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System. In addition, your participation will provide information to the local school, school district and other educational agencies about teacher behaviors as it relates to Teacher Assessment Performance Standards (TAPS), Student Learning Objectives (SLO) and Student Growth Performance (SGP).
VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this mixed method study is completely voluntary. Your participation in this study is not required. You have the right to remove yourself from the study at any time if you change your mind. Your decision to remove yourself will not negatively impact you and or position at this school. Your decision to participate will not positively impact your position at this school.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information in relation to this study will remain confidential. All personal information collected in relation to this study will be presented in aggregated format to protect confidentiality of each participant. The information that will be shared for the purpose of publication of this study will not include any of your personal information because it will be coded.

CONTACT PERSON

For any questions concerning this research study and or your participation, please contact:

Amy Edwards  
Doctoral Student  
Clark Atlanta University  
Department of Educational Leadership  
223 James P. Brawley Drive S.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30134  
Email: abattleedwards@aol.com  
Phone: (770)616-5428

COPY OF STATEMENT OF CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE

If you understand the terms of the study, and this form and are willing to participate, please sign and date the form below. A copy of this form will be provided for your records.

Participant Name (Printed)

Participant Signature

Date
Hello,

Researcher, Amy Battle-Edwards, Doctoral Student at Clark Atlanta University. You recently participated in a qualifying survey. As a part of that survey you agreed to further participate if you met the qualifications.

The researcher is requesting your participation in a sit-down interview about the dissertation topic “An Examination of the Georgia Teacher Keys Evaluation System”.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Participation in this case study is completely voluntary. Your participation in this study is not required. You have the right to remove yourself from the study at any time if you change your mind. Your decision to remove yourself will not negatively impact you and or position at this school. Your decision to participate will not positively impact your position at this school.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information in relation to this study will remain confidential. All personal information collected in relation to this study will be presented in aggregated format to protect confidentiality of each participant. The information that will be shared for the purpose of publication of this study will not include any of your personal information because it will be coded.

Please reply to this email to confirm or decline your participation by Thursday, March 16, 2017.

Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2017
Time: 3:00 pm -- 4:00 pm
Location: Room A214

Thank you for all your assistance as a part of this doctoral research.

With Appreciation,
Amy Edwards
REFERENCES


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