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The Impact of NCLB Reforms in the Elementary Schools  
Comparing Perceptions/Practices of 2002 to 2011

By:

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Dissertation

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education  
In Educational Leadership

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## ABSTRACT

Gosnell-Lamb, Judith, December 2011

Educational Leadership

The Impact of NCLB Reforms in the Elementary Schools: Comparing Perceptions/Practices of 2002 to 2011 to see the extent of change in educational practices and the perceived impact on leadership and curriculum at the local level.

Committee Co-Chair(s): Dr. Frances O'Reilly  
Dr. John Matt

With the advent of No Child Left behind in 2002, public education in the United States entered into a reform movement with mounting consequences and ramifications. This unprecedented federal in-road into public education became the umbrella regulator over programs, staff, budgets and students. The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine to what extent federal mandates, specifically, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), had impacted educational leadership and classroom practices as educators have strived to serve their students and the federal mandates at the same time.

A request for participants went out over the internet to over 1000 elementary principals. Asking if they had been in the same assignment since 2002 and if they had been would they complete a survey and have five of their teachers who had been in the same assignment as well complete it. A total of 123 principals responded and 95 teachers. The survey requested number of years in education, years their district had or had not made AYP, and a list of their top five professional priorities for 2002 when NCLB was signed. The survey asked further to list their current top five professional priorities and state whether they had changed due to NCLB. If there had been a change, did it have a positive or negative effect on student learning.

The responses were tallied and multiple comparisons were made between the two years. The study compared staff responses between those that had made AYP and those that hadn't. It also looked for the changes where respondents had said there was a negative impact on student learning. There were differences between teachers and principals.

Findings included time restraints due to the addition of the required components of NCLB. Educators are doing more, faster and with less autonomy. Their autonomy is restricted by the limited amount of time and resources which are the leftovers once they get through the NCLB mandates. Even those respondents from districts that met AYP a majority of the time had to change their priorities to meet the requirements of federal mandates.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

The main theme of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was the concept of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). President George W. Bush signed this education bill in January of 2002. Until this newest reauthorization, Title I had never encompassed so many programs. The 1,148 pages include programs, definitions, timelines for implementation, reporting, and measuring, as well as benchmarks for accountability with the rewards and consequences spelled out across the ensuing years. This demonstrated a substantial departure from past practice where guidelines had been laid out for students in poverty. Re-authorization of Title I in 2001 made the states, their schools, and individual buildings accountable for the success of all students.

### **Problem Statement**

The nature of the ranked scores on standardized tests creates winners and losers. Half of the students and schools will always appear to be doing poorly because of their rank when in actuality there may be very little differences in the overall number of correct on the assessment and the expectation/requirement was that all will be proficient. This was the primary tool of NCLB in determining success and failure in the public schools called making adequate yearly progress (AYP). AYP directives were applied to districts as a whole as well as to disaggregated populations. If one group failed to make the AYP test goal, the entire district failed.

As the AYP bar pushed higher each year, and schools were expected to continue to reach higher levels of achievement, would there be enough time in public education for schools to follow current programs in standards and curriculum reform while

simultaneously implementing the out-come testing mandates as set forth in NCLB? With a finite school day school administrators and classroom teachers would have to manipulate time structures, curriculum, instruction, planning and reporting to carry on the local public school as defined by the local school board as well as remain accountable to the NCLB mandates. Educational leadership as well as classroom teachers would have to change in order to target disaggregated groups who needed more support, create time for testing and reporting to make AYP in order to preserve their district unit from failing status, loss of autonomy, and possible dismantlement. The problem remained determining if educational leadership and best instructional practices could remain intact under the strain.

*A Nation at Risk* (1983) crystallized the idea and desire to make education accountable to quantifiable numbers like business production standards. The standards movement began soon thereafter. Assessments were developed within districts to measure student outcomes across the curriculum, inclusive of application testing strands that included projects, portfolios, and essays, all striving for authentic assessment. The State of Kentucky and others who had already begun state assessments and accountability systems had found assessment, scoring, and standardization across teachers and schools were time intensive and expensive. This resulted in schools abandoning the process (Reidy, 1997). In the same time frame, the federal government selected other assessments that were relatively quick to administer, score and compile results. In the interest of time and costs, detailed accurate reporting of student skills and achievement was being replaced with a single-time, standardized achievement test (Clark & Clark, 2000, ¶ 8).

Froese-Germain cautioned research shows again and again “while useful for sorting and ranking of students, standardized tests are inadequate in assessing student learning and development” (2001, p. 112). Actually research has found standardized test scores tell more about the size of students’ houses than about the quality of their learning (Kohn, 2001, 349a). Popham (1999a) believed one of the chief reasons children’s socioeconomic status was so highly correlated with standardized test scores was that many items really focused on assessing knowledge and or skills learned outside of school, knowledge more likely to be learned in some socioeconomic settings than in others. NCLB determined success or failure of students and schools on the basis of sorting and ranking of scores. Unless improvement was shown in the year to year test scores, federal money could be cut and channeled into other programs. Schools were publicly identified as failing or in need of remediation. Graduation for students was jeopardized as well as their ability to gain entry into higher education and in qualifying for grants and scholarships. Teachers and administrators were questioned as to their capability to educate and lead. The community, its citizens, and its children were impacted by the published test results.

NCLB distributed Title I funds according to the outcomes of the testing. Formulas were crafted to initially boost instructional programs of struggling schools. If annual yearly progress (AYP) was not met after the initial boost in finances, those same funds were to be made available to outside agencies for contracts to provide supplementary instructional programs. Vouchers were offered to students to take their portion of funding and transfer to more successful schools. Teachers and administrators lost their jobs or were reassigned. Schools were threatened with takeovers by the state with the potential of

being run by private companies. Communities were faced with a loss of attractiveness for industries and families to relocate to their area or even for established ones to stay with a failing mark for their local school.

Inclusive of national and state policy makers and through “to the educators in local districts, most of us are committed to helping all children achieve high standards of performance and preparing them to be successful citizens” (Herman, 1998, p. 17). The annual ritual of measuring the success of teachers and schools tied assessment closely to the current political theme of accountability (Davis, 1998, p. 15). The Department of Education has helped to establish the initial use of springtime normed testing as a basis for Title I funding. Each state has adopted its own criterion referenced tests (CRT) to demonstrate AYP (IES, ¶ 17). Funding was used as an incentive to increase student test scores and used as well as a punishment for those who didn’t. The authors of the bill believed this funding formula forced schools to make adjustments in programs that would guarantee success in education for every student. “Standardized accountability systems [NCLB] are predicated on the idea that all students will learn a predetermined body of knowledge to a particular level of mastery” (Hess & Brigham, 2000, p. 12). Even though percentile ranks were used in national norm based tests, by their nature percentile ranks cannot be used to demonstrate the student knowledge base, learning increases, or school success. Educational leaders had to quickly identify strategies to respond to the testing mandates of NCLB by increasing scores in order to maintain Title I programs as well as the integrity of the school. These quick responses expected of school leadership came directly from the timelines that were laid out by NCLB. Many of the provisions including

hiring practices, school choice in failing schools, and testing requirements, were made law on the day the bill was signed.

An example of the comprehensiveness of the NCLB was the Reading First component. Susan Neuman, former Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, stated it was the “largest reading initiative ever undertaken by the federal government” (Lewis, 2002, p. 4b). The entire NCLB package reflected Sergiovanni’s (1999) follow me, authoritative type leadership the federal government used to institute NCLB. This directive was management intensive providing an external force that pushes or pulls people in a desired direction. The top down directive needed follow-up monitoring to ensure the required movement continues. NCLB was such a directive where educators were called upon to follow the prescriptions and to be accountable for the results even though they played no role in their formulation (Goodlad, 2004, Sergiovanni, 1992). In a text on standards based instruction, the authors reported that “resulting mandates had teachers being told by their states what to teach, when to teach it and how” (Zemelman, Daniels & Hyde, 2005, p. viii). Choice and autonomy for teachers, administrators and their schools were gone in the face of federal regulation.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the responses of local educational leadership and classroom teachers in the face of high stakes federal mandates which included punishments for failure to comply. This study questioned if their local curriculum and community based priorities have been altered by NCLB’s mandates. Student achievement was and will continue to be the highest priority for educational leadership. This study considered if the classroom curriculums had changed to support

federal mandates and leaving leadership to regress to a management emphasis. Diana Lam, Superintendent of Schools in Providence, RI explained in an interview with the *Kappan* (Neuman & Pelchat, 2001) that schools need to remain focused on increasing student achievement. There's a strong tendency in schools to focus on the periphery, the mechanics of running a school and meeting deadlines. School reform packages have shown a tendency to pull time, energy, and funds into the support of managing the reform rather than on enhancing student achievement. Proponents of NCLB believed school reform and student achievement could both be realized within its structure. Were administrators able to maintain leadership while managing the NCLB timeframes of testing, reporting and making AYP?

A Public Agenda/Wallace Foundation Survey had superintendents reporting money was the most pressing issue with the implementation of new mandates (Farkas, Johnson, & Duffett, 2003). School budgets had been declining over the last several years. State superintendents of public schools supported NCLB primarily to keep the ESEA dollars flowing (Elmore, 2003). The addition of federal mandates provided new dollars to fund the required testing but no infusion of funds to support the other required components. NCLB increased total current expenditures by \$733 per pupil. Close scrutiny found that these increases were funded by state and local revenue (Dee & Jacob, 2010).

Eighty-eight percent of superintendents responded there had been an enormous increase in responsibilities without getting the additional resources needed to meet the mandates. Implementing the new requirements often meant eliminating other programs and initiatives to save costs and time. Another survey question found over 80% of school

leaders reported keeping up with the variety, scope, and number of local, state and federal regulations took too much time away from educational leadership (Farkas, Johnson, & Duffett, 2003).

NCLB was primarily a civil rights law with its roots in 1965 fulfilling the *Brown v. Board of Education* mandate (Paige & Jackson, 2004) and an agenda crafted to equalize educational outcomes and punish those who don't. It was secondarily an education act to promote better education practices and outcomes for the children in public school settings. The public forum has reported primarily about school failings and the federal ramifications rather than changes which have resulted in positive learner outcomes. Arne Duncan, the Obama administration's Secretary of Education, has added another level of competition in 2008. In order to get additional Title I dollars, schools must *Race to the Top*, a competitive grant which required states to create more new standards before or as a piece of their application for the funds.

Most schools provided well for their students under the current model of leadership and instruction (Bracy, 1997). In comparative studies against other industrialized nations, students in the United States generally performed above the average. According to the Department of Education (DOE) since the advent of NCLB, the nation's students have made notable gains. More than half of the progress in reading seen over the last 30 years was made in the first five years of NCLB. The reading scores for 4<sup>th</sup> graders though have remained flat since then as shown on the 2011 National Assessment Educational Progress (NAEP) with math only showing slight gains. Over the same first five years, thirteen year-old minorities made significant gains in math. Eighth graders moved from 19<sup>th</sup> in 1999 on the Trends in International Mathematics and Science

Study (TIMMS) to 15<sup>th</sup> in 2003 to 9<sup>th</sup> in 2007 (Robelen, 2009a, 2011). The test score gaps between whites and minorities is the smallest it has ever been. Even with gains in test scores, the gap between minority and white students stayed significantly the same between 2009 and 2011 (Robelen, 2011). The percentage of high school students completing advanced math courses climbed from 26 percent in 1982 to 45 percent in 2000. In science that percentage rose from 35 percent to 63 percent (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2004).

Some schools though have not been able to achieve overall positive educational experiences for their students and changes had to be considered. Urban superintendents reportedly believed that NCLB would help them improve their districts and close achievement gaps (Farkas, Johnson, Duffet, Syat, & Vine, 2003). Micklewait and Wooldridge (1996) cited these same issues stating that when it is a federal ruling of one overarching idea, it gets imposed without any sensitivity to the local context. Schools respond differently to the same stakes. High capacity, high performing schools respond quickly to accountability systems while low capacity, low performing schools do not (Elmore & Fuhrman, 2001). The mandate was the same for all schools regardless of their size, culture, socio economic setting or location; all students would be at proficiency levels by 2014.

Proponents of NCLB and especially the former Bush administration spokesperson, Margaret Spellings, believed there was a great deal of latitude given to the states and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in implementing the ESEA. John Goodlad (2002) lamented though that as with so many other earlier reform packages, “There is scant debate over what to do or how to do it [NCLB]. The charge to school principals

and teachers is to just do it” (p. 22). NCLB’s accountability for school improvement focused on educators with the possibility of rewards and sanctions. Successful school improvement efforts depend on district level leadership and support (Cawelti & Protheroe, 2003). Were there enough supports and leadership opportunities at the district level for NCLB to be regarded as school improvement?

### **Research Question**

The research question explored in this study was; has an increasing federal involvement in public education changed the role of educational leaders and classroom teachers therein to promote and maintain local control of a school culture and curriculum or in favor of implementation of federal mandates? With more than 1,148 pages of the original NCLB Act and the potential addition of more program requirements and data collection in the re-authorized ESEA, it is important to determine how school leaders, teachers and the students they serve are impacted by the law. The primary purpose of this research was to survey principals and teachers for their perceptions regarding the increasing federal involvement in public education. Questions were asked about whether the changes made in the ensuing years were directly linked to the mandates and whether student learning had been positively or negatively impacted.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are defined in the context in which they are utilized in this research.

*Accountability.* The evidence that states adopted to help determine if students are achieving the required success of academic standards, assessments and proficiency levels (Popham, 1999b).

*Achievement.* State defined growth target to demonstrate linear incremental improvement in student performance toward meeting AYP each year with 100% proficiency in reading and math for all students by 2014 (Goertz, 2005).

*Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).* Shall be defined by each state according to its lowest achieving schools. Annual yearly progress will then be defined in raises by equal increments in order for 100% of students to reach proficiency by 2012 (NCLB, 2001).

*At Risk Schools.* Rod Paige, former Secretary of Education, after one year of not achieving adequate yearly progress, schools will have been immediately identified as needing improvement (Keebler, 2001).

*Authentic Assessment.* Nathan (2002) described it as assessing students' ability by demonstrating knowledge level, along with the ability to make connections to other situations, to describe the perspective of the original author, and to analyze their own perspectives.

*Best practices.* "A thoughtful, informed, responsible, state-of-the-art teaching" (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 2005, p. vi).

*Educational Leadership.* To provide the sense of purpose and vision for the school organization toward the possibilities of the future (Foster, 1986). It is oriented toward change and toward the realization of wants, needs, and values of the community and culture. Imbued with a sense of value, of what is important and what is not.

*Failed Schools.* This is defined to be that three consecutive years of not achieving adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward state standards, accountability measures, and

remediation will be required by ESEA such as replacing certain staff or adopting a new curriculum (Keebler, 2001).

*ISLLC.* The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, a council of the Chief State School Officers charged with improving educational leadership training (CCSSO, 1996).

*Leadership.* A mutual relationship of influences toward the common goal between the leader and the followers (Yukl, 2002).

*Management.* A set of technical skills based on Taylor's scientific management based in finding the most efficient use of time for increased productivity and to achieve organizational goals (Rost, 1993).

*NCATE.* The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is the profession's mechanism to help establish high quality teacher preparation. Through the process of professional accreditation of schools, colleges and departments of education, NCATE works to make a difference in the quality of teaching and teacher preparation today, tomorrow, and for the next century. (NCATE, 2010, ¶1)

*National Standards Movement.* Began with *A Nation at Risk* (1983) which put the impetus into developing standards for core subjects and mandated states to implement school improvement plans (Kirchhoff, 1998).

*No Child Left Behind.* The title of the Re-Authorized ESEA 2002 which encompassed many of the smaller federal educational assistance programs under the

same umbrella as Title I. NCLB included requirements for accountability to the law with public reporting and potential consequences if directives are not fulfilled (NCLB, 2001).

*Standards-based Reform.* Required that states set high standards for performance and held schools accountable to meeting those through performance based monitoring. (Willms, 2000).

*Standardized Testing.* One type of measurement used to judge school effectiveness. Test scores which reported how local school students did relative to a national sample (Popham, 1999b).

*Successful Schools.* ESEA requires each state to define adequate yearly progress (AYP) according to the baseline of test scores in the first year of NCLB in achieving state standards (NCLB, 2001).

*TIMMS.* Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study exam given to the top 38 industrialized countries.

### **Delimitations**

The survey questions and data collection were directed to a random sample of K-8 building administrators and teachers having been in the same building and assignment in the grades which have been going through annual mandated testing since the 2001-2002 school year and who had been in the same position and school system since 2002 from across the United States. The survey looked at time prioritization of administrators in the 2010-2011 school year under NCLB implementation.

### **Limitations**

This study was reflective of educational leadership and classroom instructional practices of educational administrators and teachers nine years into the NCLB mandates. Not all administrators would have attended the same educational preparation program at the same time. The districts varied in size, socioeconomic status and AYP attainment. Although NCLB had been in place since January 2002, the mandates with rewards and consequences grew more numerous each year. The increased mandates were reflected by the reactions and strategies of educational leadership to mitigate change which may or may not have been supportive of their local philosophies and practices.

Although instructions were given to the principals to forward the survey to five teachers that met the required parameters, there is no way to match the principal and teacher responses. In addition, reflection over the 9 year span from the implementation of NCLB may have been clouded by the educators' ability to recall. Information acquired in this study is based on the perception of educators.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study showed how the curriculum had been impacted by federally directed mandates and goals and whether that impact altered local control. Political educational reform has been inevitable and something that school leadership has been working with throughout the years. Yet constitutionally, education was left to the states and further to the local community. School leaders had to stand at this point with a foot in each camp, both carrying out federal mandates and being responsive to community priorities. Reauthorization of ESEA was scheduled for 2007 but continued on with no agreement leaving the NCLB mandates progressing with higher levels of school accountability. In

the interim, the Obama administration provided new dollars through stimulus packages and additional mandates through federal specific grant formulas. The professional education community should know the outcomes of the mandates as perceived and reported by their colleagues beyond the published test scores before they are asked for input on re-authorization.

Leadership practice has moved in the direction of creating vision and philosophy for the leader-follower relationship. This leader-follower relationship was supported as well in school reform studies which showed that schools are unlikely to be strengthened by either teachers or administrators working separately (Murphy, 1999). The leader-follower relationship gave organizations the strength to move in new directions.

Management issues were viewed as separate from the construct of leadership. Those management skills or mandates were not negated but were also not viewed synonymously as terms or in practice with leadership traits. Cuban (1988) identified superintendents do indeed have a strand of management as well as politics and teaching/leader as a basis for their role in the schools. Increased mandates from federal projects create a greater management demand in carrying out the plans which may diminish the overall success of the superintendent when the other two strands are weakened.

With increased availability of funding through federal projects came increased accountability in the management of programming, tracking funds, compiling information, and proving accountability in reporting. Fullan (1999) looked at the complex nature of change and reported that governments make things worse by focusing on structural reform. Structures can be important, but not if they neglect and consequently

undermine capacity (the motivation, skills, resources) to concentrate on improvements in teaching and learning.

If leadership was altered by the introduction of high stakes federal mandates, any change would have been immediately apparent to the current school administrators, but the changes went beyond them. Teachers and their students had to make shifts in classroom processes to accommodate the testing requirements and the preparation for the tests. The format of the tests was primarily the recall of facts and dates across the curriculum, time was lost to study any unit at great length or depth in able to cover breadth of the information required by the standards (Kohn, 2001).

Researchers have claimed the hope of school reform and standards based improvement rested in the development of high reliability in organizations and professional learning communities. These needed to be constructed and sustained through a dramatically different type of leadership (Covey, 1996; Drucker, 1996; Fullan, 1999). The findings affirmed the structures and philosophy currently in place have been strained to capacity with administrators taking on more and more responsibilities. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, their educational leadership department was uninterested in redesigning their program “if the only driving force was compliance with the new standards” (Bredesen, 2004, p. 715).

### **Summary**

Chapter One of this dissertation focused on the impact of the federal mandates of NCLB. The mandates’ primary objective was to raise all students’ test scores to proficient levels by 2014 regardless of background, cultural ethnicity, disability, or English as a second language. First (2004) described the mandates as creating a tension

between external and internal control over education and schools. The primary purpose of this research was to survey principals and teachers for their perceptions regarding the increasing federal involvement in public education and whether the changes made in the ensuing years were directly linked to the mandates and whether student learning had been positively or negatively impacted. Underlying issues were established to discover how much if any of the local curriculums had been altered in order to carry out federal mandates and whether administrators reported shifts moving the balance between educational leadership and organizational management as they strove to implement and follow federal law.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Review of the Literature**

The 1992 annual report of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) posited the declining levels of health care, child care, family, housing, education and the group's president coined the mantra Leave No Child Behind (Frankel, 1993). Welfare reform, early child intervention, and health insurance reforms have been bolstered by that vision. President G.W. Bush used the wording, changing it slightly, to include school reform and packaged it in the reauthorization of the ESEA. School reform as a national agenda closed out the twentieth century and was re-issued in the early part of the twenty-first century.

At the center of this reform movement were content standards that provided schools with a focus for their efforts to assist students in reaching their academic potential. Whether the accountability systems of standardized testing tied to standards would result in better instruction and academic success remained open to question (Moon & Callahan, 2001).

### **Historical Perspective**

The public school and school reform were birthed at the same time by our country's Revolutionary fathers. The role of the public school has been debated since the horn books in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the seventeenth century. There was disagreement on the role of business and religion in the schools' purpose and what type of outcomes should be expected from students who attended. Were they to be prepared for work and serve the established business? The Old Deluder Satan Act of 1647 made

the primary duty of schools was to teach the Bible so that damnation could be avoided. At issue still today is the belief that education will raise the standard of living, eliminate poverty and produce a moral populace. The question was bluntly phrased by Spring (1986) as to whether public education most serves public need or corporate greed. Many of these same issues are debated now more than three centuries later, even though evidence suggests only a very weak link between higher educational standards and workplace productivity (Levin & Jacks, 1998).

The common school concept continued for rural communities into the twentieth century but by the end of the nineteenth century, industrialization spurred urbanization and mass immigration which changed the role of schools in the major cities. These changes created the need to make the school serve as a social agency and community center to support the families struggling with urban problems. John Dewey (1902) believed that this social support was indeed the role of the school. Dewey's progressive education ideas were to develop the psychological and social aspects of the child with experiential learning rather than continue in the tradition of rote learning. His ideas ran counter to the conservative trends of politics and business and were not dispersed very far beyond university discourse. There still is a cultural difference between urban and rural schools. The urban centers have a higher diversity level than suburban and rural areas with divisions in class, race, language, and ethnicity. Pockets of poverty and the needs of families are a part of the school structure and support whether formally or informally. Issues and impacts of poverty have often been the underlying issue in school reform throughout the history of the American public school system.

At the turn of the twentieth century school administration began to take on a management type of role reflected in the hierarchical set-up of the industrial markets. Callahan (1967) reviewed the texts for that era and determined “the focus of training for school administrators was not scholarship and learning, but principles of management” (1967, p. 200). This was the era of Henry Ford and Andrew Carnegie. They were able to put out products with little waste and great profits. That was the expected pattern for the schools and the training background school administrators were given at the university. Scientific Management was the ideal of the times.

The Progressive educational philosophy prevailed with bigger, urban schools leading to more programs and varied outcomes for the learners according to their abilities. This movement was primarily led by Ellwood P. Cubberley, long time head of Stanford’s Department of Education, and the consolidation of schools began. He believed schools needed to be larger in size to have more specialized programs, efficiency of management, and better facilities at lower costs (Berry, 2004, p. 58).

Spring (1997) summarized the events of the twentieth century for schools explaining that, school administrators continued to align themselves more closely with business through the early decades until the Great Depression. At that time there was a sudden shift of business aligning itself with government and politicians to secure legislation which supported business. This was reflected in a drop in public school funding by both government and business in finances as well as the historical endorsement of the public school structures particularly staff and curriculum. Callahan (1960, pp. i-ii) wrote about the influence of business throughout the history of American education in his research.

What was unexpected was the extent, not only of the power of the business – industrial groups, but the strength of the business ideology in the American culture on the one hand and the extreme weakness and vulnerability of schoolmen, especially school administrators, on the other. (p. i)

Franklin Delano Roosevelt created the New Deal in the 1930s with business and the American people to put America back to work and making a profit. The new mandates, safeguards, and government work did not include the nation's public schools and public schools were not offered as an answer or as a culprit to the nation's economic ills. The New Deal recognized the war economy fueled business and created the badly needed jobs through either the military or as a manufacturer supporting the military effort.

When the servicemen came home from World War II, there were not enough jobs to meet the need. Education was used for economic purposes to help solve the work shortage. Students were encouraged to attend school through the twelfth grade with 50% of the eighteen year olds graduating from high school by 1950. The returning servicemen were granted the opportunity to go to college with the GI Bill (Senge, 2000b).

George Counts saw the victory of the United States in World War II as a time to rebuild the American educational system (Guttek, 1984). He saw education as the means to eliminate ignorance and poverty and for it to build a free and equal democratic society. Counts' vision was beyond the conservative norm of the times making him a target for the McCarthyism scare tactics of communist agendas. Rose (2004) noted the shift of local control of the public schools into the foray of national politics at that time, writing:

And finally, education has become more politicized as we have moved from a society in which higher levels of education were considered the province of the few to one in which a high quality education is viewed as both a universal right and necessity for individual welfare. (p. 123)

When Sputnik was launched by the Soviet Union in 1957, government, business, and the military blamed the public schools for America's weak defense against communism. Admiral H.G. Rickover, father of the modern Navy, accused schools, pointing his finger at John Dewey, of anti-intellectualism in interviews in business and scientific publications (Stormer, 1964). Education was then directed toward specific outcomes in science and mathematic reforms that would serve the nation and business. At the same point of redirecting curriculum, schools were serving more students than ever before. Just as at the beginning of the nineteenth century the 1960s brought tremendous new numbers of students pouring into schools as the baby boomers reached school age. In order to deal with their needs in a stream lined fashion, schools adopted more business like efficiency practices to promote an economical use of resources (Begley & Stefkovich, 2004, pp. 132-133). As school districts became larger, day-to-day activities were governed by the professional administrative staff rather than the elected boards. "From 1930 to 1970 about 9 out of 10 school board positions disappeared" (Berry, 2004, p. 58). Local control was weakened and state governments gradually extended their authority over issues such as accreditation, curriculum, and teacher certification.

In the 1960s even as schools were focusing on the science and math mandates in the space race, schools were at the same time being blamed for youth rebellion. The university campuses were carrying out protests against the Viet Nam War. The First

Amendment was put to the test as politicians struggled with young people questioning the politics and the politicians of the time. “Independent thinking, while a laudable goal in American democracy, can be an embarrassment to entrenched politicians” (Lutz & Merz, 1992, p. 28).

This loss of local control, the commitment of the 1960s for the Great Society and the economic slowdown made the American climate ripe for more educational changes. The economic slowdown created inconsistent funding of federal programs for children in free and reduced lunch and Title I making it difficult for schools to plan year to year for programming and budgets. Schools and particularly the teacher unions lobbied hard for a federal office in hopes of bringing consistency to the funding levels for these programs. President Jimmy Carter as a promise to the teachers’ union for their vote, created the Department of Education (DOE) in 1979 which ensured the role of the federal government in establishing national educational policy. Education had become a national issue with two clearly defined political constituencies.

In 1978, J. M. Burns’ *Leadership* reviewed leadership and its evolution through U.S. history. His work sparked the discussion and renewed interest in the field of educational leadership and its distinct differences from business and governmental leadership. Joseph Rost reviewed the leadership studies of the 1980s and saw mainstream leadership literature was “overwhelmingly industrial in its concept of leadership, demonstrating that the transformation of leadership thought to be a postindustrial framework had only just begun” (Rost, 1991, p. 100). This industrialized hold on the schools can in part be attributed to the call for better results from the public schools. From this mind set came the terminology used for students linking them with products

and outcomes. The longevity of that mindset was put in place early on by the university training programs at the first quarter of the twentieth century. The school leaders graduating at that time took scientific management as the goal with them across the nation's schools for the next forty years (Lutz & Merz, 1992).

John Goodlad in *What Schools Are For* (1979) raised concerns about school reforms and their backers. Goodlad warned schools needed to get back to education as its only responsibility. Politics, business, and religion should not be allowed to make policy for education. Beyond schooling, schools have been made to carry out functions of the surrounding society. Schools operate as though its social purpose is exclusively educational and they are evaluated strictly by an educational test score, but it is rarely recognized for those goals it achieves in the social arena.

As a presidential candidate, Ronald Reagan had promised to abolish the Department of Education. When elected president in 1980 twelve years of conservative politics followed, but the DOE remained. Business/corporate America again became a major voice in educational policy (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). In the 1980s the reports of lack of high test scores in competition with Japan and Germany were culminated in 1983, by *A Nation at Risk* which alleged schools' poor academic quality lowered economic production, created a loss in the technological race and was in need of reform. There was no call for increased federal aid to help the public schools as the tone of the Reagan administration and the Contract with America was to eliminate federal involvement and support in many programs towards the privatization of governmental services. As a second term president, Ronald Reagan's agenda focused more on foreign policy leaving educational issues and promises to fall from view.

In the 1990s, conservative groups began the push for school choice and vouchers (Bartlett, Frederick, Gulbrandsen, & Murillo, 2002). Cuban (1990) noted education reform occurs over and over again with only slight changes in the titles and slightly different conditions. Notwithstanding the change from Republican President George H.W. Bush to a Democrat, President Bill Clinton, Goals 2000 bluntly argued the need for choice, competition, and technology in the schools defining students as human capital and the public schools as a protected monopoly offering goods and services (Ohanian, 2002, p. 313). The federal government encouraged schools and industry to form partnerships to better meet the needs of local business establishments. Thus the Clinton administration was able to appease the business community with control as they were directly investing in schools and the school community by giving them often needed technology and some funds via the partnerships while the federal government did not offer additional funds.

Ten years after *A Nation at Risk* hit the news stands, the New York Times headline read “America’s Economy: Back on Top”. Gerald Bracey editorialized then that the schools must have turned things around, right? Three months later in the New York Times, the CEO for IBM wrote an op-ed titled “Our Schools are Failing” (Bracey, 2005, p. 476). Public schools have a transparency for funding and staffing which is laid out before the public annually as they ask the voters for funding approval. This transparent and expensive system for educating the nation’s youth made it an easy target for criticism where other bureaucracies have more opaque layers not so easily dissected for public viewing.

Depending on each state's established funding mechanisms, American school districts typically have the right to tax citizens locally to support the school district. There has not been equity in educational offerings at anytime in our history as wealthy districts are able to raise money at a level much higher than poor districts. Schools have not been able to be an avenue out of poverty with the stratification of funding based on local taxes. This was one reason why the ESEA funds were so welcomed in the districts that served disadvantaged communities.

To be sure, local control, while an esteemed tradition for most communities also has a tendency to lead to inequities of funding and quality of education. Despite that, the public still supports local control as a general concept and believes that local educators and leaders will have the best ideas on how to fix schools. (Schwartzbeck, 2004, p. 62)

During the Reagan administration, conservative think tanks with the religious right at the core pushed for the abolishment of the department of education because of its interference with local control, cultural values, and traditions (Lips, 2001). But somehow through the course of the following twelve years inclusive of the George H.W. Bush and Clinton administrations, the control of the public school system by the federal government became highly desirable in the belief that outcomes could be controlled (Bartlett et al., 2002). Standards were written and tests as well to mark achievement of them (McLaughlin, 1994). Goodlad (2004) warned "in the name of school reform [business and politics] have usurped local debate, control and responsibility while imposing local accountability" (p. 15). There was a middle ground achieved, bi-partisanship, between Republicans and Democrats in the final draft of NCLB. Democrats

had a system of national testing and accountability while giving Republicans school choice and supplemental services parents could choose from private or public providers if their school consistently did not meet AYP. NCLB had bi-partisan support in congress and Margaret Spellings, a co-writer of NCLB was named as the new head of the Department of Education by George W. Bush and was also confirmed in a bi-partisan manner.

### **Introduction of Federal Funding**

There are no references to education in the United States Constitution. Under the Tenth Amendment it explains that whatever is not power granted to the federal government will instead be granted to the states. In the Federalist Papers James Madison wrote:

The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and well defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite... The powers reserved to the several States will extend to all the objects which in the ordinary course of affairs, concern the lives, liberties, and properties of the people, and the internal order, improvement, and prosperity of the State.

(1787, No. 45)

This left the states to legislate and enforce rules on attendance, graduation, and teacher certification. Local districts were granted much of the autonomy in the development of curriculum and programs. No single force created the American public school, instead it was multiple factions based in religion, politics, philosophies, social, and economic concerns which had an uneasy meld that continues today.

The fact that responsibility for education was not expressly delegated to the federal government by the Constitution did not mean Congress would avoid all educational issues. The general welfare clause of Article 1 provided ample excuses for the federal government to enact and implement a great deal of educational policy. After World War II there was a dramatic increase in Federal involvement in education within the realm of general welfare otherwise known as the spending clause. These programs included the GI Bill, School Lunch and Milk program, Impact Aid, *Brown v. the Board of Education*, and the National Education Defense Act investing in the math and sciences.

President Lyndon B. Johnson signed more legislation declaring a war on poverty with the passage of both the Civil Rights Act (withholding federal funds from segregated schools) and the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) of 1964. Three of the programs coming from that legislation were the Job Corps, Upward Bound, and Head Start. Then in 1965 the ESEA was passed. Title I was the most significant part where funds were earmarked for educational programs to help disadvantaged children.

This was a national agenda, and the federal government played a major role in prodding local educational agencies to change by providing financial incentives and legal mandates. The values of equity and efficiency loomed large as a basis for educational policy making.

The Congress hereby declares it to be the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance... to expand and improve... educational programs by various means... which contribute particularly to meeting the special education needs of educationally deprived children. (U.S. Congress, 1965, p. 236)

Walter Heller's report to Congress in the Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisors was foundational in both the EOA and the ESEA advocating the use of education to end poverty (Spring, 1997, p. 352). Title II was directed toward the purchasing of texts, library resources and instructional materials. These resources could also be accessed by private schools thus winning their support for the bill (Spring, 1997). Title V had money and enforcement powers for state agencies of education. The purchase of resources to aid the end of poverty allayed the fears the federal government was usurping states rights but it also took away more local control (Spring, 1997, p. 354).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, though not a funding bill, swept reforms across the public school system as well. Title IV helped support and enforce the Brown Decision in desegregation and antidiscrimination and Title VI established the precedent for using disbursement of federal money as a means of controlling educational policies (Spring, 1997). This allows the withholding of federal funds from institutions that did not comply with its mandates. Part of the spending clause is the understanding that the state and federal government agree to a contract of sorts which spells out the terms. If the state did not fulfill the terms, the money could be withheld.

In 1975 President Gerald Ford signed the Education for the Handicapped Act (EHA: P.L. 94-142) mandating a Free Appropriate Public Education for children with handicaps. When states originally tried to refuse the EHA and all its mandates because of its costs and limited funding, all federal education funds (ESEA, Carl Perkins, Free and Reduced Lunch) were jeopardized for that state. States had begun to rely on federal support to serve children with high needs and therefore could no longer say "no" without hurting students.

In May 1994, President Bill Clinton signed the Goals 2000 Educate America Act. This embodied life long learning and had additional funding for Head Start and other preschool programs as well as establishing and funding the School to Work Opportunities Act. Other reforms became available as well (with seed or partial monies) but none had the federal mandate so strongly attached until the reauthorization of ESEA where many of the smaller reforms and grants were rolled under the new umbrella law. In January 2002 George W. Bush signed the revised Elementary and Secondary Education Act called the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). This new revision of Title I shifted the emphasis from supporting minorities, the disadvantaged and the disabled school entry and participation to mandating outcomes of 100% proficiency of subject matter for all students. NCLB created a much larger federal presence in educational policy and funding and set the foundation for a national testing/accountability system.

Gerald Bracey (2005) provided analysis that public school students were doing better in school each generation. More children have been served from a greater diversity than ever before and the schools have been rising to the challenge. These achievements may be discounted because of an underlying philosophy of the public and especially the test makers “that there are only a few with high potential” (Davis, 1998, p. 5). In actuality those test makers have been using the testing for both sides of the argument. They have created criterion referenced tests which states need to use to show proficiency for ultimately all children but at the same time, tests were developed on the normal curve where there is a spread of test scores across the range. If they reported there were only a few with high potential meaning two standard deviations above the mean, they were exactly right as that is how the normal curve works. By the nature of test construction and

the norming of results, it may be more beneficial to provide supports to students in the middle who can push the percentage higher on AYP and not spend time on the lower or higher achievers (Azzam, 2007).

Educators and politicians alike have asked science to respond to standardized assessment and resulting levels of accountability. Caine and Caine (1999) report scientists involved in brain research have tried to dissuade the usage of a single standardized assessment that reports the mean in an attempt to define or quantify knowledge. Generally standardized tests of achievement test surface knowledge. Research does not justify assessment of surface knowledge because it reveals little about the real, usable knowledge of the individual. “When we focus almost exclusively on teaching for and assessing surface knowledge, we also tend to interfere with and inhibit a student’s capacity to learn effectively” (Caine & Caine, 1999, p. 12). The testing as prescribed by NCLB was gathered on separate classes every year. Students as individuals or cohorts weren’t followed in their education leaving little meaningful data on individual student learning (Elmore, 2003).

Moon and Callahan (2001) proposed if educators are interested in evaluating students’ abilities to perform complex tasks that require applying knowledge and skills to open-ended real-life situations, then performance assessment is the more appropriate tool. The Inverness Alternative School in Baltimore used wrap around services to support students socially, physically, and intellectually. A daily plan of success was developed for each student to build on student strengths and to strengthen student weaknesses. In light of this discussion, most schools at the local level have not adopted a single test or

measurement to show student success. They have traditionally used a report card listing multiple factors that indicate success.

While many politicians have suggested tests act only to expose inferior teaching, those inside the schools have refuted that stand with research in assessment.

“Longitudinal studies have shown that test scores derived from traditional assessments have very weak relationship with students’ future economic success” (Levin & Jacks, 1998, p. 4). Higher test scores have been mistakenly equated with more effective schooling.

Leadership will have changed to a more transactional focus as a result of the emphasis on testing. Transactional leaders will have had the attainment of knowledge as their goal while transformational leaders would allow for the focus to be on the student. School leaders have been held accountable to the socio-economic class of the students they serve rather than the true quality of the school if the standard for successful leadership is test scores (Popham, 2000).

Have political forces reformed schools according to party affiliation or have educational leaders been able to continue to set practice and policy? “School finance is second only to politics as a deterrent to school reform” (Hottenstein, 1999, p. 25). Politicians interested in getting re-elected have offered only lip service to school reform not wanting to leave any child behind. But they needed to demand only what they had been willing to fund - assessment. More tests were given, more often, covering more standards since that was where the initial NCLB funds were destined.

Other authors (Ambrosio, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2002; Hess & Brigham, 2000) raised concern about the potentiality of low-test scores being used to punish

schools. Students from low socio-economic backgrounds traditionally score lower on standardized tests. Those are the students ESEA was developed to help. Taking away the federal funds and closing their local schools could indeed be viewed as punishment. Goode (1997) submitted it was a myth that anyone can rise out of poverty on one's own efforts despite race. She also disputed the notion schools were the great equalizer of the nation's immigrant population. Instead, the hope of upward mobility and acculturation was based on an expanding economy. The USA has been in a recession since March of 2000.

The literature reflected opposing views of educational reform and the question of assessment and success is answered differently depending upon whether it is a report from a political reference or a report from an educational reference. With Goals 2000 and the standards movement, teachers weren't threatened by their implementation but rather saw them as a tool to chart growth (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 2000). When teachers realized that it was a single test score driven by accountability systems that would judge their performance the sense of efficacy is drained when we need teachers the most (Berryhill, Linney, & Fromewick, 2009). Goodlad (1979) encapsulated that most federal and state decisions or mandates as having little relevancy to the needs of particular schools. The money sent with the programs had too many restraints regarding its use and the money was far less than was needed. Schools were grateful for additional funds but the initiatives ended with the funding.

NCLB set a new tone in the relationship with educators. The rules, requirements, and threats of NCLB applied to all public schools whether or not they received Title I funding. Several states and educational organizations drafted lawsuits to challenge the

intrusive nature of the NCLB mandates. “What makes NCLB’s design flaws so important is that they come with an unprecedented nationalization of educational policy. This nationalization overrides the usual corrective processes where the 50 states moderate through adaptation the mistakes of federal policy” (Elmore, 2003, p. 8). This federal mandate limited the traditional framework of local control under states’ rights guidelines because to refuse NCLB meant refusing all aspects of federal educational funding on which schools and states had come to rely.

Local control with the establishment of the local school board has been the invention and hallmark of the U.S. public education system, making it different than the rest of the industrialized world (Edwards & Richey, 1947). Local Education Agencies (LEAs) hired an educational leader to support the local culture of the community and to be the guarantor of the educational quality for the children of that community (Lutz & Merz, 1992). Those leaders then selected the best teachers for the job. Curriculum emphasis was based on community culture and mores (Kaestle, 1976). Yong Zhao compared China’s education system to the U.S. and emphasized that local schools looked and acted differently from each other even as they produced the leaders of tomorrow. This sparked the trend in other industrialized to decentralize education to better meet the needs of diverse student populations in order to reproduce the same type of non-conformity in thinking as the American public schools. Yet at the same time, the U.S. federal government (not only within the current administration) has stated its desire to emulate other countries’ systems and shifted towards a format some of those countries no longer use (Zhao, 2009).

By accepting Federal education funds which are on average only 7-10% of the total school budgets, states and local schools agree to implement the changes required by the Federal mandates (Robelen, 2002). Recent studies have revealed some insight into how or whether the local curriculum has been impacted. In rural Missouri schools, researchers found in order to preserve time for science and social studies teachers made cuts in recess, lunch, and prep time (Powell, Higgins, Aram, & Freed, 2009). Teachers and principals in Connecticut reported NCLB had had little influence on the curriculum there (Luizzi, 2006). But somehow in their day, teachers are reporting to spend more time in test preparation (Pedulla et. al. 2003). The mandates have been implemented by administrative and teaching staffs, but did they have any time left for other aspects of public school leadership or classroom autonomy? This study considered if the classroom curriculums had changed, away from local curriculum, to support federal mandates.

### **The Educators' Struggle Between Leadership and Management**

Leadership in American education has moved in and out of educators' hands throughout history. The founding fathers wanted schools to perpetuate the new democracy with a literate populace and develop a separate American identity apart from their fatherland cultures. The common school was an attempt to do this. Local control of the small rural schools was held by the elected board. This group set the tone and culture for the local curriculum.

School administration became a necessity as schools became larger and more complex in programming and staffing. These administrators were primarily managers of the functions of the school operations leaving the local boards still as the primary leaders in school curriculum and format (Faber, 1991).

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, colleges and schools of education began to recommend teaching methodology and curriculum for the new modern age. Changes though were small away from the universities' influence. Educational settings, school programs, and curriculum primarily changed as a result of community needs in the urbanization of the industrialized era rather than because of an articulated educational philosophy. Schools looked very different as determined by the local politics and demographics (Spring, 1997).

After World War II schools were inundated with the baby-boomers. In 1950, half of the 18 year olds in industrialized nations expected to graduate from secondary school; many of these people got relatively good jobs even though they had little more than sixth-grade level math and reading skills (Senge, 2000, p. 9). In the interest of efficiency schools took on a more rigid and factory type of look than they ever did before. Schools like factories were controlled by “the function of management to achieve organizational goals” (Rost, 1993, p. 77). Callahan (1967) argued educators would have to break with the traditional practice, strengthened so much during the *age of efficiency* of asking how our schools can be operated most economically and begin asking instead what steps need to be taken to provide an excellent education for all children... “We must face the fact that there is no cheap, easy way to educate a human being” (p. 264).

In the 1960s, reflective of the era of students/young adults seeking peace, socio economic equity, and civil rights, leadership definitions showed increasing support for viewing leadership as behavior that influences people toward shared goals (Rost, 1997). Leadership practices though primarily reflected the industrialized era, where leadership was defined to be excellent management (Rost, 1997). In the 1970s when J. M. Burns

introduced a post-industrialized paradigm of leadership that was transactional leadership with the underpinnings of transformational leadership. The beginning of the postindustrial era severed the leadership as management theories. Rost proposed a new definition of leadership as “an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes” (Rost, 1997, p. 102), and therefore not a management function.

Ironically it was the ties to make schools more like business operations that helped to create the superintendency. Superintendents were given some freedom in leadership to create a vision and a strong organization based on the vision. These structures were copied from business studies. School superintendents regarded themselves as CEOs as they were responsible for the entire school organization. NCLB limited superintendents’ autonomy to change the course or vision of a school organization to what is leftover time and resources after the implementation of the federal requirements. With authority so widely distributed or even dismissed through state and federal regulations, the business CEO is no longer an effective model (Houston, 2001).

Accountability reports of mandated objectives required by an outside agency do not get mentioned in the business definition of leadership. “Strategic leaders are vision builders. That is they collaboratively build a strategic vision for an organization that is broadly owned, clearly understood, and powerfully reinforced” (Thompson, 2003, p. 493). The voices of business are more clearly than ever separating management issues from leadership. “Few, if any, organizations could rival public school systems for their degree of dynamic complexity” (Thompson, p. 495). So if dynamic and complex businesses have abandoned the factory format to survive into the next century, the

complex organism of American public schools will need to do so as well for its continued survival. Datnow and Castellano (2001) found in researching *Success For all Schools* strong leadership was critical for school reform. Instead schools have been frozen in time by the political culture. Even with the increasing demands and changing expectations in the role of school administration, researchers, practitioners, and policy makers have focused primarily on accountability (Normore, 2004). Elmore (2005) highlighted schools were always accountable, regardless of the policies under which they operated. An umbrella policy for all schools has been established at the federal level through NCLB with accountability to predetermined outcomes. School districts and states became beholden to the federal mandate to keep funding streams available and the local schools in local hands.

The change of the national and world economies and power along with the end of the industrial era of America, may have generated fear and a look back to the familiar, the basics, the predictable nature of the past. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) discussed the natural dread that people have when making lifestyle or cultural changes when they have historically been successful in the current paradigm. Public schools have been historically controlled by the upper middle class and elite of society. The model of basic education that they remembered from childhood served them well as shown by their financial success and change at this point may not secure the same advantage that school had for their own children. People don't fear change. They fear giving up what they know or have (Fullan, 1999). Because of the fear of making an adaptive change is so high, technical changes like the national testing are used to show that the change has been addressed or slowed to calm those who are concerned. Back to the basics is a specific

mantra that has shown the desire to return to the past (Kohn, 1999). Yong Zhao in his book *Catching Up or Leading the Way* (2009) recommended that indeed American public schools should go back to the traditions of decentralization and having a broad rich curriculum that embraces diversity instead of striving to make all schools the same.

One approach used to make schools follow the mandates of accountability has been to subject professionals to managerial control. The argument here was professional autonomy and judgment must be subordinated to the broader corporate and/or governmental purposes (Normore, 2004). The primary educational stake holders were no longer viewed as the local community and school system but instead the nation and the international business community became education's primary stake holders.

From choice comes autonomy. Autonomy is the necessary condition for leadership to arise. "Without choice, there is no autonomy. Without autonomy, there is no leadership" (Cuban, 1988, p. xx). Leadership may have been removed from the local superintendents and communities if indeed there has been a loss of autonomy. Higher levels of local autonomy are usually granted to high performing schools while schools with low performing students are managed through layers of regulations meant to aid those students (Berliner & Biddle, 1995).

The Council for Chief State School Officers developed the ISLCC standards in 1996 to raise the bar on school leadership training and practices to enable school administrators in the field to face the mandated changes with effective strategies and best practices. Sergiovanni (2000) encapsulated them with the demands for school accountability stating that what schools need to cope with the standards was "leadership that encourages and enables schools to be more adaptive to changes in their environment;

and leadership that seeks to change the environment itself”( pp. 6-7 ). Current educational leadership studies and practices presume autonomy for decision making in instruction, staff, and facility, so long as the vision of providing a quality education to the students is honored and achieved. This philosophy was the foundation of the ISLLC recommendations (CCSSO, 1996). They were based on model schools and model school administrators as well as on what was known about effective educational leadership at the school and district levels. An international study of principals found conversely that the primary skills needed when facing challenges was knowledge of prescriptive laws, regulations, and role expectations (Lazaridou, 2008). The reality of management of requirements may have created a disconnect in best practices taught in educational leadership.

### **Current Relationship Between Federal Mandates and School Leadership Practice**

NCLB mandates with an emphasis on a uniform product have been hard to meet because the basis for the industrialized school no longer exists due to demographic changes. “Traditional schools depended on traditional family structures that no longer exist” in high proportionality in the twenty-first century (Senge, 2000b, p. 50). These demographic changes have been crystallized by the disaggregation of scores in district wide assessments of minority groups inclusive of racial minorities, socio-economic groups, students with disabilities, and English language learners because standardized tests measure the socioeconomic status of the student as well as academic knowledge (Popham, 1999). These students historically do not show test scores at par with the traditional student for whom the public school system has been based (Popham, 1999).

NCLB holds schools accountable to raise these scores so that all learners become proficient.

Berliner and Biddle lay out in *The Manufactured Crisis* that policy making in American education seems to have been made up mostly of responding or reacting to distorted media reports. More and more the policy has not been written by educators who are on the job in education but by a government agency that has had little practical knowledge of the day to workings in the schools (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). When a problem, issue, or situation arises that is not adequately addressed by existing mechanisms (e.g. legal, procedural, regulatory), policies are revised to better respond to the new context. When the state or federal government has created solutions, they don't speak to the issue directly in the circumstances where it exists. Instead what were enacted were blanket rules written for all schools regardless of the need of a new policy (Boaz, 2001). The federal entitlement programs unto and including NCLB have been a prime example of this over and over again: the science push after Sputnik, the ESEA to relieve poverty in combination with Free and Reduced Lunch programs, and Goals 2000 to incorporate national standards so students scored better against other industrialized nations' students.

NCLB was supposed to ensure every student would become proficient in reading, math, and science by 2014. A goal many call utopian (Resmovits, 2011). Sergiovanni (2000) believed there is great potential for improving teaching and learning with the push for rigorous and authentic standards linked to quality assessments. All or nothing standards can be harmful (Popham, 2000). Test score measures can spot trouble but don't actually do away with it. NCLB used testing as reform, not for reform (Meier, 2002).

Meier continued, holding schools accountable for test scores have fit some aspects of the national mood. “The trouble is, as we keep relearning generation after generation, it contradicts what we know about how human beings learn and what tests can and cannot do” (Meier, 2002, p. 192).

Many of the school reforms have been initiated by federally funded programs. The funds were adequate to initiate a reform but not enough to sustain it over time (Kennedy, 2007). The funds also have had so many restraints and the district had many budgeting needs that there has been little ability to tailor the programs to a district’s specific needs and culture (Zellmer, Frontier, & Pheifer, 2006). To carry out change, schools need committed, intelligent leadership, an agenda, an awareness of the conditions that have to be put in place, a grasp of the strategies that one has to use to effect change (Goodlad, 1999). The MCREL Balanced Leadership Framework articulated the leadership traits needed that correlate with increased student achievement and the traits needed in times of great change (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Has there been time enough left in the day to be a school leader with those traits while the leader has been spending time managing the federal mandates? A study from Miami-Dade Schools directed principals to spend more time on organizational-management tasks than on leadership activities to get a greater return for their time (Robelen, 2009b).

The NCLB Act laid out precise time frames to follow. If a school failed to improve within the time allotted, the law tells states exactly what they must do inclusive of taking over a failing school.

In a final paradox, however, while strong leadership and community support are key baseline conditions for successful implementation, the

demands and requirements of improvement programs may undermine the very authority the school community needs to adapt and integrate programs and initiatives and to articulate its own theories of action.

(Hatch, 2002, p. 634)

A study released October 1, 2009 by the Center on Educational Policy (CEP) stated that although gains had been made in overall student achievement, there was still a significant achievement gap between white students and their minority peer groups. So even with documented growth, the impact of disaggregated scores from multiple subgroups made AYP harder to achieve each succeeding year in the process regardless of whether districts had made the goal or benchmark in the last several years.

### **Summary**

The literature suggested American educators have wrestled with various ideas and practices regarding the purpose of schools, the purpose of tests and what they can say about schools, and local control verses state and federal governance. The No Child Left Behind Act has placed a much higher level of perceived accountability on the public schools and has been met with acclaim and resistance by including directives for testing, training, and hiring, as well as on student achievement. There are now consequences attached if those goals are not met. This study examined how school administrators allocated their time and the time of their staffs from the beginning of NCLB to 2011. The unforeseen consequences in the classroom in the areas of the curriculum and the instructional freedom of the classroom teacher were also revealed.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

#### Overview

States' and local school districts' budgets have been stretched, fighting off deficits and the ongoing economic malaise. School administrators are continuing to understand, implement and fund the provisions mandated by NCLB at a time when they struggle to meet the demands already in place. NCLB is not an option; it is a mandate (Jones, 2003). State dollars are not increasing and new federal dollars are coming through conduits in the President's stimulus package, competitive grants such as *Race to the Top*, or through bargaining to be a pilot project school or state. The funding for the implementation of the re-authorization of NCLB has not increased and all but stalled since 2007.

During the 2008 presidential campaign, then presidential candidate Obama pledged to fix the accountability system. This interim has allowed Congress and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to solicit more input for changes within the law but there is no discussion on whether or not the law should remain (Derthick & Rotherham, 2011). The question will remain as to whether NCLB's increasing federal involvement in K-12 education through sanctions and incentives significantly altered the role of the educational leader and altered the classroom curriculum away from local control in order to fit in the mandates of the law.

#### Methodology

The purpose of the study was to examine the responses of local educational leadership and classroom teachers in the face of high stakes federal mandates which included punishments for failure to comply. This study questioned if their local

curriculum and community based priorities have been altered by NCLB's mandates. A quantitative non-experimental survey research approach was used to discover those trends. This was an inquiry where the researcher had no direct control of the variable because the manifestation had already occurred (Kerlinger, 1986) and had been reported through the perceptions of educators for two points in time.

### ***Research Design***

This research was primarily of a description of the data collected. Creswell's (2009) sequential exploratory strategy was used to organize and review the quantitative data of changes made across the last nine years within each building and compared those results with staff perceptions on whether NCLB directives have been the cause of those changes. By looking to the data, the researcher determined if local control as perceived by leadership was maintained despite the additional demands made of administrators, and if classroom teachers had had to cut out time or even curriculum in order to fit in program mandates for AYP performance.

A direct comparison was made by the respondents comparing the demands of 2011 with those of January 2002. They were further asked if noted changes were due to the NCLB mandates. Responses were tallied and coded for relationships and context. Further comparisons were made by comparing the percentages of responses in each area to see if there was a preponderance of educator perceptions showing instructional and leadership changes or trends stemming from the federal mandates.

The data was descriptive in that the research was formed by the individuals' concepts of the duties and the time that was required to meet those duties. Using frequency tables, the data compared the average responses between the principals and

their building teachers in the changes of their professional responsibilities. No inferential statistical processes were utilized as there is no consistent pretest or standard baseline information available prior to the NCLB tests.

### *Sample Description*

The sample was selected from a list of elementary school districts (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005) across the United States. In order to have a representative sample across the nation, each state had twenty elementary school principals contacted to solicit responses from across the nation. All the states had an equal opportunity to participate in the surveys. Elementary school districts and thus their principals were selected using a randomization table. This initial contact was made through direct emails to the principals asked if they and five staff members met the criteria (having been in the same building and assignment in the grades which have been going through annual mandated testing since the 2001-2002 school year) and secondly they were asked if they were willing to participate in a brief, confidential study of the impact of NCLB. The principals connected with a hot link to the survey and forwarded that link as well to their selected teachers who fit the criteria. Email reminders were sent across the list of initial contacts to boost responses. The first 200 surveys returned were used for the sample. Questionnaires were coded so that follow-up could be done with non-responders as well as with participants. The questionnaire related to time and activities spent on the job in the 2001-2002 school year and the 2010-2011 school year. The same survey questions were used for both principals and teachers.

### *Survey Design*

Building principals have been held accountable through the NCLB mandates as to whether their buildings met AYP each year just as teaching staffs have been accountable to reach their grade levels' AYP goals. The first group of questions requested the state where they worked, identified whether the respondent was a teacher or principal, and how many years they had been involved in education. They were then asked to identify how many years their building had met AYP or not.

The next group of questions were directed specifically about the respondents own professional priorities at the advent of NCLB. They listed their own top five professional priorities with no additional prompt or qualification from the survey question.

The final set of questions asked the respondents to list their top five professional priorities nine years into the system of testing, reporting and realignment. The respondents reported on each change in priority and as to whether they believed it was due to NCLB or not and whether the change had had a positive or negative impact on student learning.

Traditionally, Title 1 legislation required the alignment of curriculum and instruction but only required testing at grades 4, 8 and 11 for reporting purposes to the state wide grant. More grade levels and subjects at present have required testing with accountability not only assigned to the Title 1 program and staff, but to the entire district with public reporting and consequences. Principals and teachers who had been in the same assignment across the multiyear implementation had the advantage of first person reporting on whether or how their professional educational priorities had changed and whether they believed those changes were due to NCLB mandates.

## **Variables**

This study was a reflective look at educational leadership and instructional practices nine years into the No Child Left Behind mandates. The districts varied in size, socioeconomic status and AYP attainment. Other variables included the size of the district as well as the area population density.

Although NCLB was put in place in January 2002, the mandates with rewards and consequences have grown more numerous each year. This made AYP's impact at the local level a multiple variable. The history of meeting AYP on an annual basis as well as across school years was also asked of respondents.

The impact of leadership and classroom demands was demonstrated on time allocation and whether striving to meet the AYP standard caused a shift of time allocation. AYP standards were set by each individual state yet the pressure of meeting the cut offs of a high stake test was actually the primary variable for both principals and teachers across the states. The data reflected the individual perceptions, reactions and strategies of educational leadership and classroom teachers who tried to mitigate change which may or may not have been supportive of their local philosophies and practices.

## **Levels of Data**

The levels of data are primarily nominal. In the descriptive narrative, the responses were sorted according to frequency of response as well. Those responses were sorted according to changes caused by NCLB requirements and those which were not. Even though the comparison of district size, AYP years, and levels of change were collected, the data was reported in percentages. It was through the compilation of the responses on frequency tables and through reporting where comparisons and contrasts

were discovered across district size, AYP performance, and the respondents' priorities. Frequencies and descriptive data described the responses of the participants. Administrative responses and teacher responses were compared as the same point in experience across years.

### **Instrument**

The instrument used for this study was a questionnaire designed by the researcher to ascertain the primary time demands of elementary building administrators and teachers. Principals and teachers were asked how they prioritized their time both in 2002 and 2011. They were asked if these priorities had changed, if the changes were due to NCLB and if the changes had had a positive or negative influence on student outcomes.

Demographic information as well as AYP reports were not asked of the respondents but instead were pulled from the published NCES reports. A study of Iowa public schools (Stevenson & Waltman, 2006) reported no significant differences in teacher responses regarding curriculum between targeted schools and successful schools. The NCLB law though raised the bar for performance every year and this national survey brought out different relationships between the respondents who had made AYP and those who had not.

### **Procedure**

Prior to official data collection, the questionnaires were piloted to five principals and five teachers who were not included in the study sample. Each respondent was asked to complete the survey and give suggestions as to clarity and ease in completion. Changes were made based on the comments received.

A short request went out to elementary district principals through an electronic survey format, asking if they personally met the criteria of having been in the same administrative assignment for the past seven years as well as having several of their teachers meeting the same criteria (see Appendix A for contact letter). If they did meet criteria, they were asked if they were willing to fill out a short survey which asked about changes in professional priorities across the years and if they believed the changes were due to NCLB requirements.

One thousand emails, twenty per state, were sent across the nation to elementary principals listed on their district web page. The response goal was 200. The responses gathered were tallied and recorded by percentages see (Appendix B for percentage rate of response) as well as in written responses. They were then recorded and charted according to frequency of responses in the five primary demands of the respondent's time. Results were compared through frequencies per question or per that section of the survey in principal perceptions and teacher instructional practices.

### **Treatment of Data**

The responses were recorded by tally using spreadsheets listing the answers and then coding them according to frequency given. Averages were determined by the demographic information and the comparisons between 2001-2002 and 2010-2011. Relationships between responses were explored as well as to whether the school district met AYP were observed. Respondents were asked to attribute their responses about change to either a natural school based progression or as a response to NCLB. The respondents' personal/professional perceptions guided the interpretation of the data as to whether they perceived the response was due to mandated changes or naturally occurring

professional development in the school that may have changed their perceptions of the curriculum and time spent on various duties.

### **Hypotheses**

The hypotheses for this study were as follows:

H<sub>1</sub> Local curriculum areas have been reduced or dropped from daily schedules in favor of making time for federal mandates in reading, math, and science instruction, test preparation and test administration.

H<sub>2</sub> Local curriculum areas supportive (non-academic subject) activities have been reduced or dropped to have adequate funds and time to support the new district costs in the NCLB subject area material, test preparation and administration.

H<sub>3</sub> Local school administrators have become managers of federal mandates rather than local/community educational leaders because of the time and funding issues of NCLB.

H<sub>4</sub> There is a relationship between student instructional outcomes and the changes in teacher professional classroom priorities.

### **Summary**

A probe of professional practice was conducted of elementary district principals and their staff who have been in the same professional assignment over the course of the implementation of NCLB. The information included demographic information as well as the individual reports of time demands for meeting their school districts' job description against the additional demand of NCLB implementation and compliance. The results were summarized to show (a) the primary duties of building administrators, (b) the primary duties of the classroom teachers, and (c) if there was a demonstrable change

between pre-NCLB practices and practices nine years into the program, and (d) if the local curriculum had been changed.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Findings**

This study was conducted to provide the practitioner's perspective of professional priorities as educators in the public school setting. Principals and teachers across the nation were asked to list their top five priorities in their professional school setting for both the year 2002 when No Child Left Behind was rolled out and now as the Federal Government looks at the reauthorization of the ESEA. The National Association of Elementary Principals reported that the "fragmentation of time" was a major concern in the role as elementary principal prior to NCLB. Another report (Duke, 2006) midway into the implementation, reported that using test data to target instruction and assist teachers would improve teaching and learning. The data from this study only partially corresponded to prior reports. The information reported is broken out by total responses and the demographics of the responders. A then and now probe was conducted of both principals and teachers with their perspectives reported. Their responses are gathered by priorities and the perceived impact which NCLB has had on their responses. The chapter ends with a summary of findings reflecting the perceptions of educator practitioners with the phenomena of the federalization of public education's priorities and practices.

### **Data Collection**

Using the website of the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) with a randomly generated list of numbers, initially 1000 elementary building principals (twenty from each state) were sent an email inviting them to participate in the study (Appendix A). After six months into the survey requests, ten more randomly selected principals per

state were contacted. Two hundred sixty-seven (267) emails were returned with 194 as undeliverable and 73 recipients who declined to participate. Twelve hundred thirty-three (1233) principals were asked if they qualified and were willing to participate along with five teachers of each who had been in the same building and assignment since 2002 when NCLB was signed into law. One hundred twenty-three (123) principals participated (10%) and 95 of their teachers. The email contacts/requests were sent from May 2010 through April 2011 to reach the threshold of 200 participants.

### *Demographic Information*

Responses were recorded by state, building size and area designations according to the Urban-Centric Locale Codes under four broad categories of city, suburbs, town, and rural as defined by the NCES. Of the 218 responses, Forty-six states were represented (Figure 4.1.). Rural schools were the largest responders with 109 or 50%. City school staff responded 42 times or 20% with responses from staff in Lexington, Saint Paul, Shreveport, and Phoenix in the pool. Suburban responses were 16% of the total with towns at 12 % (Figure 4.2.).

**Figure 4.1. SURVEY RESPONSE by STATE**

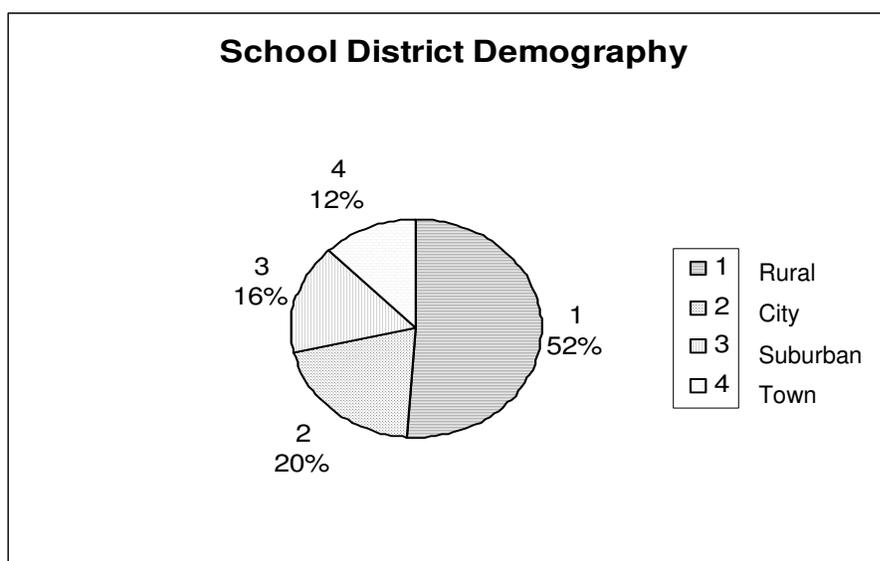


The survey process began with initial contacts in of May 2010. Every state had an equal opportunity to participate. Several principals responded saying they couldn't answer at that time (May) since they did not have current AYP information. In the summer months, many emails bounced back with out-of-office messages. Some principals did email a personal response. One from Hawaii explained that all surveys had to have pre-approval from their state superintendent's office. A Baltimore principal said that they also were not permitted to participate without written board approval.

The states with larger responses represent principals who did forward the survey to their teachers who in turn responded. The most populace states on the west and east

coasts had a much lower rate of response than the heartland. This in turn is represented below with 50% of the responses coming from schools in rural demographic areas.

**Figure 4.2. Demography of Elementary Schools Represented in Survey**



The initial requirement for participants was that they had been in their professional position since 2002 when NCLB went into effect. Principals had an average career length of 22.4 years while their reporting teachers had an average of 19.5 years.

After years of experience was established for being eligible to participate, the survey asked schools to give the number of years their building had met AYP and the number of years it had not. Many respondents were unable to answer this with an exact number. Of those participants responding, 34% reported to have met the standard every year. Fourteen percent (14%) did not make it for four years or more. Twenty-four percent (24%) did not meet AYP 3 years or more. Nine percent (9%) reported never having been able to meet AYP standards reporting.

### ***Changing Priorities***

The remainder of the survey encompassed open ended responses having school staff list and rank their priorities as a professional in the time frame of 2002 and again for the 2010-2011 school year. Subsequently, they were asked if the changes in their priorities were driven by NCLB mandates and whether those changes impacted student learning in a positive or negative direction.

### ***Relationship/Influence of AYP***

The survey responses did not include a 100% response rate when questioned about their district's AYP rate over time. The responses did show a clear distinction between schools with responses including success status across the continuum with sixty-five schools reporting that they had made AYP every year and sixty-five schools having met AYP two years or less since 2002.

Further comparisons were made with responses with the data from participants fully reporting on the 2002 and current priorities. Responses were divided by Principals and Teacher groups as well as those whose buildings made AYP five years or more and those who made AYP four years or less.

### **Principals' Responses**

Principals' 2002 priorities were primarily management issues of teachers, students, and school operations, secondarily were school leadership topics with professional development, and then addressing student achievement and standards. Forty principals reported having met AYP for the majority of the years with complete responses (Table 4.1) compared to 16 who had not met AYP more than 4 years. Most changes in principal priorities were reported as having a positive impact on student

learning. The principals not yet at the 50% mark in annual AYP report higher percentages of positive change.

**Table 4.1.**

*Changes in Principals' Professional Daily Priorities*

<u>Priority Rank</u>	<u>Met AYP more than 50% of years</u>		<u>Met AYP less than 50% of years</u>	
	<u>Priority Changed</u>	<u>Reported as Positive</u>	<u>Priority Changed</u>	<u>Reported as Positive</u>
1	55% (22)	82% (18)	69% (11)	82% (9)
2	58% (23)	65% (15)	56% (9)	67% (6)
3	55% (22)	77% (17)	69% (11)	73% (8)
4	43% (17)	59% (10)	56% (9)	89% (8)
5	38% (15)	47% (7)	63% (10)	70% (7)

Principal priorities, for individuals who had met AYP goals for over five years, showed reading and math achievement as a priority for their buildings. Professional development with superior instructional techniques was identified as priorities then as well. Management duties with scheduling, supervision and planning were close to equal with the other priorities. Also, principals referred to state standards and student achievement. Other responses were so individualized that they could not be grouped into a broad topic.

**Table 4.2. Principal Priorities where schools have met AYP 5 or more years**

Priority Rank	2001-2002		2010-2011	
	Responses	Percentage	Responses	Percentage
1	Reading time/Math achievement	20% (9)	Test scores, compliance, achievement gaps, Student achievement State standards,	29% (14)
2	Superior Instructional techniques, Prof Development	20% (9)	Superior Instructional techniques, Prof Development	24% (12)
3	Doing My Job, management, Teacher evals, Scheduling...	18% (8)	Reading time/Math achievement	12% (6)
4	Prep Time & Grade level Meetings	18% (8)	Prep Time & Grade level Meetings	10% (5)
5	Student achievement, Test scores, compliance, State standards	14% (6)	Doing My Job, budget, staffing, Teacher evals, Scheduling...	8% (4)

The issue of whether local control has been maintained even while No Child Left Behind has been implemented in a cumulative fashion across time was inconclusive. The top five priorities listed by building principals where they had met AYP for 5 or more years were essentially the same across time but their order in priority changed. The issues of test scores, student achievement and compliance with standards did move from fifth place at 14% of the responses to first place in 2010 with 29% of the responses.

In 2010-2011 the principals' top priorities (for those who met AYP five or more years) were very much the same as 2002 with some shifting in rank where compliance and test scores are the highest ranked topic. Respondents were asked if the changes they made were due to NCLB mandates and if they were positive or negative. Principals reported ninety-nine examples of positive change due to the NCLB mandates primarily in the areas of staff development, progress monitoring/RTI, student assessment followed by data driven decision making. Conversely, fifty incidents were reported where changes

caused by NCLB had negatively impacted administrative duties, available finances, and additional consequences or issues of struggling to meet state and federal mandates

**Figure 4.3. Principals' comments on Priority Changes that have had a Negative Impact.**

AYP had been met Five Years or more.

<b>Changes reported as being caused by NCLB mandates.</b> Grouped by themes	
<p><b>Common, formative assessments</b> Assessment of student abilities</p> <p><b>Data training</b></p> <p><b>Cover as much curriculum as possible before the CRT</b></p> <p><b>Making NCLB's AYP</b> *same respondent giving this answer as the top three priorities with negative impact</p> <p><b>Making NCLB's AYP*</b></p> <p><b>Making NCLB's AYP*</b></p> <p>Meeting state standards</p> <p><b>State mandated reports</b></p> <p><b>Assuring accountability</b></p> <p><b>Math improvement</b></p> <p><b>Reading Improvement</b> Student learning</p> <p><b>Student achievement</b> Student achievement Student achievement</p> <p><b>Special Education</b></p> <p>Parent involvement</p>	<p>Reading curriculum adoption and alignment</p> <p><b>Scheduling</b></p> <p><b>Policy Issues</b> Funding</p> <p><b>Budget and allocations</b></p> <p><b>Spending time getting grants to fund educational needs</b></p> <p><b>Spending time getting volunteers/locating resources</b></p> <p>Money for speakers and resources</p> <p>Staff stress</p> <p>Teacher evaluations</p> <p>Time together</p> <p>Professional development days</p> <p><b>Teacher quality</b></p> <p><b>Finding HQTs</b></p> <p><b>Professional development</b></p> <p><b>Behavior supports</b></p> <p><b>Behavior</b></p>

**Note: Bolded responses** indicate that the building had made AYP 5 years or more.

Only five principals whose buildings had not met AYP more than half the time listed their priorities from 2002. For those five principals whose buildings did not meet AYP, only fifteen of the twenty-five priorities had changed because of NCLB with all but four being reported as a positive change ( See Figure 4.4).

**Figure 4.4. Principals whose buildings did not subsequently meet AYP more than 50% 2002 top five Priorities**

Priority Rank	Principal 1	Principal 2	Principal 3	Principal 4	Principal 5
1st	Instruction	Curriculum	Student learning	Literacy training	Instructional leadership
2nd	Discipline	Prof. Development	Parent contacts	Math training	Climate/culture
3rd	PR	Interventions	testing	Technology training	Character ed
4th	Parental Involvement	Literacy	Copying papers	Data training	Management
5th	Data	Common planning time	No response	Common planning time	Discipline

### **Teacher Responses**

Teachers had fewer responses in the survey not consistently giving five priorities in each year sample. In 2002 the primary concern and priority for teachers was the need for planning time for lessons, collaboration, and paperwork, secondly curriculum issues of alignment placement and enhancement were voiced, and last tied for third and fourth priorities were enhancing student achievement and meeting students' individualized needs. Priorities in 2010 for teachers had planning time and NCLB issues tied as top priorities, related, as third in rank, was increasing student achievement, tied for fourth and fifth were teaching and not losing curriculum areas to be taught.

Teachers were asked if the changes they had made were due to NCLB mandates and if the changes had a positive or negative impact on student learning. Forty-two examples were given as having made changes with negative impacts due to NCLB. The primary negative response was reported as impacting their planning time. Tied for second were teaching for test results and consequently losing curriculum areas to the new

demands of NCLB; tied responses for fourth were the assessments themselves and trying to meet varied students needs. Thirty six examples were given where NCLB mandates had had a positive result on student learning. The first positive impact was planning time with colleagues. Secondly was using standards for instruction and planning. Three issues were tied for third, inclusive of getting students to grade level, differentiating instruction, and data driven decision making.

Teacher responders were less likely to fully complete the survey. Sixteen reported having met AYP five years or more listing out the priorities while eleven teachers whose buildings were less than 50% successful meeting AYP listed their priorities. Looking at the actual listed priorities of those whose buildings met AYP for five years or more, teachers only responded fifteen times as to their top priority in 2002 while more than twice as many answered for 2010.

**Table 4.3.** *Changes in Teachers' Professional Daily Priorities*

Priority Rank	Met AYP more than 50% of years		Met AYP less than 50% of years	
	Priority Changed	Reported as Positive	Priority Changed	Reported as Positive
1	63% (10)	70% (7)	45% (5)	40% (2)
2	38% (6)	83% (5)	72% (8)	25% (2)
3	63% (10)	30% (3)	64% (7)	43% (3)
4	50% (8)	12% (1)	72% (8)	38% (3)
5	56% (9)	44% (4)	72% (8)	50% (4)

Teachers reported having enough time was a top priority in 2002 and have reported it as a higher priority in the 2010-2011 school year now. This explains why the priority rank had the smallest change but more than half believe that this need for planning and organizational time has had a negative impact on student outcomes.

**Table 4.4. Teacher Priorities where schools have met AYP 5 or more years**

Priority Rank	2001-2002		2010-2011	
	Responses	Percentage	Responses	Percentage
1	Planning Time	27% (4)	Organization Time for new demands, plus lessons and grading	38% (13)
2	Meeting Student Needs	27% (4)	Student success/ Closing grade level gaps	18% (6)
3	Improving Reading Scores	20% (3)	Best Instructional Practices	20% (3)
4	Collaboration time	13% (2)	Teaching Time	9% (3)
5	Standard Core Skills	7% (1)	Technology Demands	9% (3)

Looking further into the responses of current day priorities of 2002, the data did not reflect instructional time in and of itself as a priority or even as one of the top ten responses. Instructional time as a response only came up eight times in the 2010-2011 list with teacher respondents. Four answers stated that its priority rank had not changed due to NCLB. The other four responses were that yes, its priority had changed due to NCLB with a 50-50 split on whether it was positive or negative. Only four principals as well had instructional time as a current top five in priority (other than the specific reading time response) with the same ratio of responses. Two said this priority change was due to NCLB; two said it wasn't. The two who said it was were split between whether the change was positive or negative.

Another question of interest was whether meeting AYP made a difference in overall instructional time changes in the view of the participants. With so few even mentioning instructional times, it is hard to present a finding. But it is interesting to see

the teacher and principal responses were equally split on whether the changes made were positive or negative.

Less than half (44%) of the changes driven by NCLB were reported by teachers as to having a positive impact on student learning. Teaching to the standards, more time for planning and interpreting data for better planning were the top three responses at 58%. Fifty issues were listed out by teachers as NCLB changes which were perceived to have a negative impact on student learning (Figure 4.5). All these issues of negative consequence had an underlying issue of the need for time: time to prepare, time to teach, time to reach out to students, time to test, and time to report.

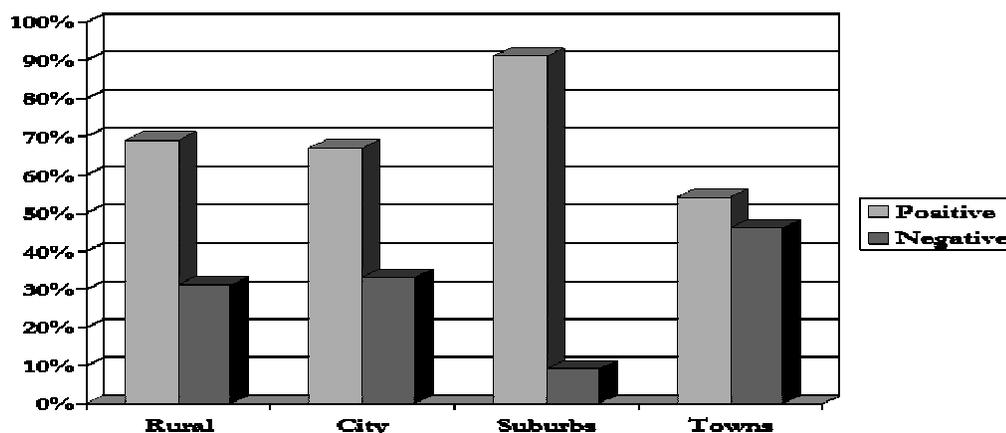
The actual recorded responses from both teachers and principals that the individuals gave in regards to the changes made from NCLB mandates in their professional priorities which had had a negative impact on student learning were far greater in number than those listing changes caused by NCLB which had a positive impact.

**Figure 4.5. Teacher’s Comments on Priority Changes that had had a Negative Impact on Student Learning.**

<b>Changes reported as being caused by NCLB mandates.</b> Grouped by themes.	
<p>Meetings and committees            Administrative duties and meetings            Grade level meetings            School wide meetings</p> <p>How to get students to meet AYP</p> <p>Adequate resources  <b>Lack of extra support; no remedial help</b>            Resources for extra support such as aids            Resources to meet the needs of my students</p> <p>Time needed per child            Plan for special needs students  <b>Getting IEPs for those who need it</b></p> <p>Teacher collaboration            Collaboration with colleagues</p> <p><b>Teaching core subjects</b>            Support reading and math mandates            Prepare for special activities and art            Technology            Teaching 8<sup>th</sup> gr. US History  <b>Science</b>  <b>Social Studies</b>            Teaching as much content as I can  <b>Writing</b></p> <p>Organizing of activities and discipline            Providing extra curricular supports</p> <p>Not enough time in the day            Getting the paperwork done            Having sufficient time</p>	<p>Assessments, report cards, etc.            Assessments  <b>Giving, grading and evaluating assessments</b>  <b>Common assessments</b>            Improving test scores            Using data to understand student levels</p> <p>Teaching students test taking strategies            Covering standards before the statewide assessment takes place  <b>Understanding the required state core to be tested</b>            Just trying to get everyone in class at the same time</p> <p><b>Managing negative student behaviors</b></p> <p>Trying to get everyone signed up for class</p> <p><b>Overall student success</b>            Student achievement            Student needs  <b>Trying to build homework time into the school day.</b></p> <p><b>Finding resources and ideas that meet objectives</b>  <b>Creating “best practices” lessons with instructional technology</b>            Preparing for lessons            Need for time to plan more individualized lessons            Lesson planning            Writing detailed lesson plans</p>

Note: Bolded responses indicate that the building had made AYP 5 years or more.

**Figure 4.6 Were NCLB Changes Positive or Negative Based on Locale**



Pooling the responses of principals and teachers, the data shows for rural and city schools (72% of the survey responses) a perception that changes due to NCLB were two to one favorably viewed. The school staffs in towns were split on the changes' impacts. Those who responded from the suburban area (16%) overwhelmingly believed that the changes had been positive for students. This small indicator may very well be tied to the socioeconomic condition generally attributed to suburban areas (Lifto, 2000). To make further comparisons within this study, there would have needed to be a more equal representation with the other demographic groups.

### **Summary**

This quantitative non-experimental survey research gathered principal and teacher perceptions nearing the ten year mark of NCLB provided a descriptive account of the phenomenon of the implementation of the largest federal public education mandate in American public education's history. Changes in priorities over time and the consequences of those changes were reported and described in narrative form. The data was analyzed through frequency and percentage comparisons along with descriptions of the categories of concerns of the public educators.

The study outlined the issues of historical basis of federal in-roads as well as the current controversies surrounding this federal mandate. This descriptive survey research out-lined the multiple requirements of NCLB and reported the educational professionals' perceptions of those mandates on their professional priorities and the impact on student learning. Responses were tabulated to answer whether (a) local control remained in public education, (b) curriculum had been narrowed to improve test scores, (c) principals were school leaders or managers, and (d) student learning had been impacted positively or negatively.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusion and Implications**

No Child Left Behind has not been the first educational reform package to impact America's public schools but it was the largest, encompassing all public schools and all students. The ESEA had traditionally targeted funds for children from low income homes to remediate skills in reading and math. NCLB held schools accountable not just for spending ESEA grants appropriately for those identified students' programs but also held schools accountable for the academic performance of all students.

This is the hour of promise for America's public schools. My signature is now on the law, but it was the work of many hands. Together we have overcome old arguments and outdated policies. And now, together let us see these changes through until every school succeeds and no child is left behind. (Bush, 2002, p. 38)

In 2011, after nearly ten years of NCLB and as the culmination of the act's goal of 100% proficiency grows closer for 2014, the question looms as to what extent schools have changed. Within the schools' walls were those charged with implementing the mandates: the principals and teachers. How have they changed and what did they see as the impact on the students they served?

### **Summation of the Research Question**

Has an increasing federal involvement in public education altered the role of educational leaders and classroom teachers to promote and maintain local control of school culture and curriculum in favor of implementation of federal mandates?

*H<sub>1</sub> Has local control been altered due to the demands on both principals' and teachers' time as reflected by their own shift in priorities over time?*

Principals' listing of their top priorities showed that concerns regarding student achievement, test scores, compliance issues, and state standards moved from fifth place in 2002 to first place in 2010-2011 with 29% of principals listing it as the top demand. Professional development stayed as the number two priority for both time probes. Principals reporting that all the duties of "Doing my job" (inclusive of principal remarks involving day to day management, student issues of attendance, discipline, safety, and budget and facility issues) were ranked third in 2002 with nearly the same number given to that area as were given to the top two ranks. In 2010-2011 that same response was pushed down to the 5<sup>th</sup> priority among other administrative duties i.e. having grade level meetings, curriculum, safety and discipline, special education, etc. These other issues in priorities appeared in responses when more time was given to the compliance issues of NCLB. This study showed those other issues are now on the priority list because the administrators did not have the time to deal with "Doing my job" and now are left to a reactive response and actions rather than on-going development of the school culture.

The administrators' priority has become the implementation of NCLB with little time left for other building issues in a public school. A prime example of this shift was given by a principal who listed the top three 2002 priorities as student achievement, student safety, and creating a safe, fun learning environment. In 2011 the principal listed the top three priorities as making AYP, but the focus has shifted from the student. Missouri elementary principals reported they were concerned about losing their autonomy and abilities to be instructional leaders because of the mandates (Powell,

Higgins, Aram, & Freed, 2009). Rouse (2007) also found in Florida that increased accountability reduced principal control.

For those five principals whose buildings had not met AYP and who had listed out their priorities, the data shows the fragmentation of time. Their priorities showed numerous and varied concerns. However there were few similarities in priority rank that could show a pattern. There were leadership topics but few compared to the list of topics that meeting NCLB required of districts: public relations, data, testing, and training. These principals had little local control as they struggled to carry out implementation and avoid being labeled as a failing school.

Classroom teachers reported numerous priority changes they have made since 2002. Many did not list all their top five priorities or they did but did not mark if their building had met AYP. Very few teachers whose buildings did not meet AYP more than 50% of the time chose to answer the questions regarding current priorities. The top three priorities in 2002 (74% of total responses) were:

- Priority 1: Planning Time
- Priority 2: Meeting Student Needs
- Priority 3: Improving Reading Scores

In 2010-2011 the responses show a dramatic shift in priorities. For teachers whose buildings had met AYP more than 50% of the time, their priority was organizational time for new demands, plus lessons and grading at 38% of the total. Second was student success; closing grade level gaps was less than half of the first at 18%, while the rest of the responses are divided across all other areas. A very similar fragmentation of demands was reported by the classroom teachers whose buildings have not been successfully

meeting AYP. They list task after task of requirements under NCLB which demand their time and negatively impacts students' overall success (improving test scores, teaching students test taking strategies, and covering standards before the statewide assessment takes place). Teachers' need and desire for more time was an underlying issue. The word time in responses was listed in numerous contexts over 70 times. One teacher listed 2002 priorities and then followed with current priorities stating the need for time enough to do all the previous priorities plus meet student individualized needs. The teacher also reported the building had made AYP every year.

According to this study, there has been a dramatic shift in priorities. Based on the statements above, issues of local control i.e. meeting student needs, creating student success, building school culture, community outreach were listed as impacted negatively by the implementation of NCLB. The tasks of implementation under the mandates of meeting the federally mandated objectives according to the data had become the priority. According to the data, time for planning needed to address federal mandates, individualizing instruction, enriching student learning, and reaching out to students was replaced by the time needed for implementing and monitoring federal mandates.

***H<sub>2</sub>: Did classroom teachers have to cut out time or even curricula in order to fit in program mandates and meet AYP?***

In this study, few respondents (11) mentioned instructional times or core curriculum subjects other than for reading and math. Reading and math also were not listed as having been impacted negatively by change. When other subjects were listed (social studies, science, writing and history), it was as having been negatively impacted by the NCLB mandates. It is interesting to note principals never listed a loss of curriculum subject as an issue in their priorities. This non-cutting of the curriculum or the

lack of listing it as an important priority was also found in a statewide study of rural Missouri schools (Powell, et. al. 2009). That study found primary teachers made cuts in non-instructional areas such as recess, prep time, and lunch preserving the time for science and social studies. They left the specials mostly intact PE, music, and art because those were generally taught by a specialist. These subjects' scheduled times helped the teachers get the planning time they needed. In a dissertation by Luizzi at Columbia University (2006) teachers and principals in Connecticut agreed NCLB had little or no influence on curriculum.

Other than the desire to close the grade level gaps as reported on the AYP results, all the other teacher issues were time related. They needed more time as a priority for accomplishing the new assigned tasks, for implementing technology, time to teach and time to use best practices in instruction. Non-instructional time was lost instead.

Had teachers cut out time or actual curriculum areas to deal with the increased demands of NCLB requirements? The respondents in this study did not specifically list a reduction in the curriculum. Instead, the reality of time limitation in a school day would dictate that to fit more in as breadth, depth of instruction must be relinquished. There is limited capacity to absorb more initiatives without only begrudging perfunctory time to the already assigned tasks. Teachers also reported that more than half of the changes made because of NCLB had had a negative impact on student outcomes. Teachers (who's buildings had a positive AYP success rate) had been fitting in more in the same amount of time and see it as impacting their students as they listed in the negative impacts as trying to build homework time into the school day, finding resources and ideas that meet objectives, and creating "best practices" lessons with instructional technology. All these issues are time consuming.

***H<sub>3</sub>: Do the respondents believe that the changes in their professional priorities are due to the NCLB mandates?***

Teachers identified 95 items they believed had changed due to the mandates and listed only 19 had a positive impact on student learning. Changes had been made in their priorities 84 other times which they did not attribute to NCLB. Teachers' responses showed that the changes made over time not due to NCLB requirements had a positive impact on student learning while changes made due to NCLB mandates were reported as to having negative impact 56% of the time. Principals listed 151 changes in priorities they believed were due to NCLB listing 113 other changes that were made at the same time not due to NCLB. Principals believed the changes made over time had a mostly positive impact on student learning whether they had been made due to NCLB or not. Principals whose buildings had not made AYP for 50% or more listed only fourteen changes due to NCLB with ten of those having had a positive effect on student learning.

Change across time is inevitable. Looking at the changes as perceived by teachers, 53% were caused by NCLB and principals saw 57% of their priority changes caused by NCLB. This research reports more than half of the changes made in professional priorities since 2002 were attributed to NCLB.

***H<sub>4</sub>: Did AYP rate of success reflect in the respondents' priorities and perceptions as to whether the impact on student success was positive or negative?***

Principals for the most part felt the changes made over time were positive for student outcomes. There was a dip to only 47% positive change for the principals who had successfully made AYP in their fifth priority which were issues inclusive of student achievement, test scores, compliance and state standards which were all NCLB

issues (Table 4.5). Principals who had not been able to meet AYP 50% of the time all reported high percentages in all areas of priorities in positive student impact (Figure 4.4). The principals who had made AYP listed primarily NCLB issues as causing a negative impact rather than changes not caused by NCLB.

Teachers, even though representing a smaller sample than principals, had many more priorities listed as having changed due to NCLB and that their impact 56% had had a negative impact on student achievement. The priorities listed in Figure 4-5 by the teachers whose buildings had successfully met AYP were very traditional priorities of a professional teacher such as teaching core subjects, working with special education, creating time for homework, and managing student behavior. The priorities listed by teachers whose buildings had not met AYP were all encompassing the details of the school setting with an overlay of numerous NCLB mandated pieces.

Perceiving the changes due to the NCLB mandates as positive or negative, split the respondents into their professional cohorts. Principals believed that the most of the changes required by NCLB had had a positive impact on student outcomes while teachers believed that more than half of those changes had had a negative impact. It is important to note that the majority of the respondents who listed their priorities were from schools which had successfully made AYP more than 50% of the time.

### **Summary**

This study provided a look into first hand accounts of those implementing the NCLB act with all of its mandates, rewards, and punishments. The priorities of principals and teachers were tabulated. The impact on their professional lives along with their perceptions of the impact this federal reform package has had on student achievement

was reported. Over a thousand people were contacted and invited to participate with only 218 responses. Their responses as a group did not give a clear indication as to whether they were in a school which had successfully reached and maintained AYP or not. It was not until the priorities were separated out as to having a negative impact on student achievement that reveals any distinction and this distinction was more clearly seen though in the teachers' reports. Very few of the priorities listed students as their primary concern, instead tasks are listed.

This study took a quantitative research survey approach to the analysis of self reported priorities by school administrators on how they allocate their time and the time of their staff given the interface of NCLB. The findings of their perceptions indicated whether the administrators were rooted in leadership or if a fundamental shift has happened with the interface of NCLB in their day-to-day duties. It also showed the teachers' perceptions of consequences in the classroom in the areas of the curriculum and instruction. Both principals and teachers ranked their professional priorities for the year 2002 and again for the years 2010 or 2011.

### ***Educational Leadership or School Management***

Looking at the responses from 2002 as compared to now for school principals, there was a clear shift in priorities. In 2002 the top four listed priorities were nearly equal in priority ranking (18-20% range): Reading time and math achievement, Superior instructional techniques with Professional Development, and Doing the Principal "My" Job" of building management, teacher evaluations, scheduling, and providing prep time and grade level meetings.

A study conducted in 2003 by the Education Research Service (Cawelti & Protheroe) enabling change in schools required developing coherence between expectations and what is taught, followed by high quality professional development, and time for teachers to discuss teaching. In 2002 school principals reported doing those types of activities as priorities in their day. Reading and math achievement were indeed the initial focus of NCLB. In 2010 and 2011, the principals' priorities shifted with the increasing demands of implementation. Their primary priority became test scores, compliance, state standards, and achievement gaps for 30% of the respondents. The secondary priority (24%) was the same as 2002 with professional development. Reading and math achievement was now third with prep time and grade level meetings following at fourth 10%. The principals' building management topics dropped to 5<sup>th</sup> with only 8% listing it as a priority.

The continuously increasing demands of NCLB became the primary focus in 2010-2011 of building administrators. These demands shifted the principals' priorities around what and how subjects were being taught through leadership activities to a management issue with compliance as the force behind the change. They were different from traditional building management issues which were relegated to last in the top five. Those activities were data based and measured the elementary building against the markers of school wide improvement and AYP. A case could be made that it was still an educational leadership priority but it was really a study in how to avoid failing by federal standards and risk your building facing punitive measures through media publication, student transfers, firing of staff, or even losing ones own job. "Chief state school officials, many of whom were very critical of NCLB when it passed, have undergone

battlefield conversions, realizing that their objections to the law pale beside the necessity to keep federal money flowing” (Elmore, 2003, p.8). The principals seem to have had a conversion experience as well.

This shift to management priorities affirmed Lazaridou’s international study of which principals’ thought processes were used when facing challenges (2008). Principals reported to rely on their knowledge of prescriptive laws, regulations and role expectations. They were “good at implementing externally mandated curricula and student achievement standards” (Lazaridou, 2008, pp. 9-10). A working paper examining student outcomes in the Miami-Dade Schools reported educational leadership activities require a lot of time but didn’t seem to be an effective use of their time to support reaching AYP. Principals instead would “see a much greater benefit from spending time on organizational-management tasks” (Robelen, 2009, p. 2).

### ***Changes in Curriculum and Teacher Emphasis***

During the 1990s the standards movement was taking shape in every state. Standards were written for each subject area, tests were written to mark achievement against the standards and policies were being written (McLaughlin, 1994). When asked in 2000 about the standards and subsequent tests, teachers didn’t remark about them being a national initiative but rather saw them as state initiatives, developed to demonstrate the quality of education that its children received (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 2000). They also reported it was common for teachers to get information regarding tests, policies and standards via other teachers rather than through training which made the changes seem more like a trend rather than a requirement. This same view seemed to prevail when teachers were asked about their priorities in 2002. Planning time and student needs as

first and second priorities accounted for more than half of the responses (54%). Improving reading scores, collaboration and standard core skills accounted for 40% more of participant priorities. With a clearer understanding of AYP and the possible ramifications, teachers knew they had to respond. A survey of teacher perceptions in 2003 found teachers spent far more time in test preparation activities where there were high stakes consequences in their state as compared to teachers in other states with few consequences for schools (Pedulla, Abrams, Madaus, Russell, Ramos, & Miao, 2003).

In 2010 and 2011, 38% of teachers reported their primary priority was organizing efforts and time to fit in the new demands as well as the increased demands for lesson planning and subsequent grading requirements. Meeting student needs was replaced by closing the gaps in testing (18%) at number two. Best instructional practices, teaching time, and technology demands were tied for third place accounting for 27% of respondents' priorities. No core subjects were mentioned, not even reading and math. Teachers perceived themselves as having become managers of the NCLB demands as their first priority just as the building principals had.

The data revealed some teacher concerns as changes which have negatively impacted student outcomes. This was where they listed out concerns for science, history, social studies and writing. They did not report they had cut back on the instructional time for these subjects. The teachers reporting the concerns for these areas were from buildings where they had met AYP. They were layering the requirements of NCLB on top of the current demands of curriculum and instruction. Powell, et al, (2009) supported the findings of this study; where instead of cutting out curriculum, teachers were maintaining their traditional teaching day and layering the additional demands over and

across their work day. Another study looked at NCLB and teacher burnout and reported that “teachers were often driven by the lack of time to impart all educational standards. Racing to teach all standards teachers often altered their teaching practices and had less time to pursue other goals” (Berryhill, Linney, & Fromewick 2009, p. 8).

### *NCLB’s Continued Impact*

In March of 2011, current Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan projected that 82 percent of schools would be failing to meet AYP by next year (2012) unless changes were made in the reauthorization process of ESEA. As the law progresses, the bar for AYP gets higher with the ultimate goal of 100% proficiency for all students set for 2014. With little relief in sight, some states including Montana, Idaho, and South Dakota threatened to defy regulations and were facing the potential decrease in federal education funding (Resmovits, 2011). Rather than having a face down, the Department of Education granted Idaho and Montana allowances with their AYP levels while not forcing them to apply for a waiver.

Part of the initial and continued resentment, if not resistance, to NCLB is the premise that meeting AYP would be the primary way school district success was to be measured. An important factor in successfully meeting AYP from this study is the ability of the professional staff to do more within the traditional parameters of the school day, school year, and local school curriculum. Alfie Kohn may very easily have been referring to NCLB when he wrote in 2000, “Broadly speaking it is easier to measure efficiency than effectiveness, easier to rate how well we are doing something than to ask if what we are doing makes sense” (p. 316).

The building principals have the same demands of doing more and making the grade. Traditional school management issues dropped down the scale of priorities in overall rank while demands of AYP took the top spot. Just because No Child Left Behind was an Education Reform package with demands for professional training, goal setting, and public reporting, did not mean that schools would meet success through good educational leadership. According to the findings of this study, getting it all done requires extensive management. “The leader wants to do what is right for children while the manager wants to do things right. The leader focuses on effectiveness while the manager is concerned with efficiency” (Kusssmaul, 2005, p. 45). Efficiency may very well be the underlying requirement to meet success under AYP. This finding was also reported in Stacey’s *Strategic Management*, instability and disorder (which resulted from the multilayers of NCLB) justifies the existence of managers (Stacey, 1996). If AYP is the primary way that principals are judged, the National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER) reports that educational leadership takes a lot of time and is not as effective as organizational-management tasks in meeting AYP goals (Robelen, 2009). For now principals are more influenced in prioritizing their time around making AYP and administering or managing the mandates than they are by the children’s over all success in gaining an education.

### **Implications for Administrators**

In 2011, the legislative proposals surrounding the reauthorization of ESEA include “Blueprints” which will require data reporting of educational progress but will reduce or eliminate the harsh consequences that NCLB embodied. Although pre-NCLB accountability of ESEA programs showed a lack of accountability in pursuing student

achievement for the targeted groups, with the reduced consequences being considered, building administrators must focus on the program's intent which is to address the achievement gap for underprivileged and minority students. Effective schools research has shown that resources must be directed to those most in need.

If indeed non-targeted schools will be granted flexibility, principals will again have time to be educational leaders. Effective schools research states that the principal effectively and persistently communicates the mission of the school (Levine & Lezotte, 1990). They will need to be visionary and engage their staffs to create real school reform to prepare students for the present and ever changing world in which we live.

### **Implications for Teachers**

Whether NCLB remains in tact with mounting requirements and sanctions or a less intrusive version is developed, teachers need to keep informed about the political actions and intentions of federal education policy and what testing does and does not inform us about student success. Many teachers did not know how many years their building had met AYP. It is important, if NCLB remains in place, to be able to speak with authority about the meaning of AYP and what the data tells us that children need from schools.

Collaboration, collegiality and joint planning were listed as the teacher respondents' priorities for 2002. Teachers need to return to those priorities so together they can have common goals, strategize to meet those goals, and be relevant in their instruction. Focusing on the test cannot be all consuming. Student educational success encompasses so much more than test scores.

### **Implications for Further Research**

Most of the respondents in this research who completed the survey were from schools where AYP had been met more than half of the time. It appears the staff members from schools that failed to meet AYP were more reticent to complete the confidential survey. Their perceptions were as important and as valid in investigating the full impact of working under the NCLB mandates. Further research should focus on schools in this group.

The rural and city schools viewed the NCLB changes 2:1 as positive for schools. Suburban school staffs were 9:1 positive for the changes they had made due to NCLB. The adequacy of school funding was rated by the 2011 as a top concern by both the general public and by school staff. Was the difference in perceptions on the NCLB impact on students related to adequate funding? The Center on Education Policy reported that 54% of schools listed as in need of improvement were urban as well as 90% of the schools in restructuring (Azzam, Perkins-Gough & Thiers, 2011), yet in this research city schools were reporting positive student outcomes.

The first year of increases for NCLB amounted to 0.4% of total educational spending. Dee and Jacobs (2010) calculated it through to \$733 increase per pupil. Yet with that level of investment, the federal bureaucracies expected school reform to be accomplished by 2014. For all the new requirements what did the \$733 buy for each student and how much had to be funded by the state and local school districts?

### **Implications for Policy Makers**

The writers of the new ESEA or the reauthorized NCLB, need to reflect the non-school factors which impact AYP. Even though Henig and Reville report that “attention to non-school factors is feared as an excuse to let bad teachers and schools off the hook” (2011, p. 1). It would also mean increased spending is needed in order to balance the playing field for students before they are tested for AYP purposes. Kohn reports that from as far back as 1992 showed the NAEP was impacted by the number of parents living at home, parents’ education, type of community, and poverty rate. These factors accounted for 89% of differences in state scores (Kohn, 2000a).

Many groups, including the National Education Association, felt they had standing to sue the Bush administration over non-funding or under funding of the mandate and the over reach of the federal government into a states’ rights issue. NCLB increased total current expenditures by \$733 per pupil. “Close scrutiny has found that these increases were funded entirely by state and local revenue” (Dee & Jacob, 2010, p. 3).

#### **Prohibition on Federal Government and Use of Federal Funds 9.0 General**

**Prohibition:** Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize an officer or employee of the Federal Government to mandate, direct, or control a State, local educational agency, or school’s curriculum, program of instruction, or allocation of State or local resources, or mandate a State or any subdivision thereof to spend any funds or incur any costs not paid for under this Act. (NCLB, Section 9527, p. 112)

Connecticut was one state which sued and lost over the financial provisions even when one of NCLB's original authors, Senator Edward Kennedy admitted, that the law promised increasing funding levels as the targets for performance increased year after year. "Assessment and accountability without the funding needed to implement change is a recipe for failure" (Kennedy, 2007, Washington Post, ¶, 3).

In 2011, Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, proposed to include in reauthorization, a national goal to turn around 5000 failing schools in five years with four billion dollars in Congressional appropriations. This would be an important component since he predicted that 82 percent of schools will not meet AYP in 2012. The four Turnaround Models he laid out rely heavily on firing teachers and principals, were very prescriptive, and lacked a research base on the effectiveness and efficacy of these models (Domenech, 2011). This would be contraindicated by NCLB which requires research based programs and methodologies be used in educational programming. "Research, however, rarely informs the development of policy" (Sergiovanni, 1999, p. 248).

The Senate Education Committee passed its reauthorization bill which included seven turnaround models for failing schools. It adopted 22 other amendments and was passed out of committee on party lines in November 2011. Several of those amendments included verbiage giving states and LEAs more flexibility in measuring students' academic growth by multiple indicators. At this point without changes in reauthorization there will be no relief from the current requirements. The proposals for the amended act simply included more requirements for states and districts to be held accountable with fewer dollars.

The growth of NCLB's accountability at the state and local levels, at the student performance level, teacher instructional level, district testing and state reporting levels comes at a time of frozen or reduced budgets. When states have asked for relief from the mandates or applied for a grant for financial relief (*Race to The Top*), they were asked to sign on for more requirements such as teacher evaluations linked to student scores and the adoption of core standards. More standards and more reforms tied to standards will not lead to 100% proficiency for all students. Instead, "after some 20 years of experiments, all the expected positive outcomes of standards-based reform remain elusive, while unintended and undesirable consequences have all borne out"(Hamilton, Stecher, & Yuan, 2008, p. 60). The time and energy principals and teachers have devoted to test scores and AYP, diminish the time and energy needed to devote to student learning and addressing the unique needs of the students.

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## Appendix A

## Contact Letter

DATE

Dear Building Principal:

I am a student at the University of Montana, Missoula gathering data for my dissertation investigating the impact of federal reforms on public elementary schools.

Description: This study will reveal professional education staffs' perceptions of whether schools are doing better under federal rules and mandated outcomes or if schools were providing better educational outcomes for their students under state and local controls. When the study is completed, the professional education community will have data to be able to endorse further federal mandates for education or to endeavor to regain state and local control of public education

To meet criteria for this survey the respondent must have been a professional educator for the last eight years (either a principal or teacher).

If you meet the professional eight year criteria, please complete the survey.

It should take approximately 30 minutes.

Please forward the survey to five of your teaching staff who meet the eight year criteria as well.

You, your staff and district will not be individually identifiable in any reports. Beyond demographics, all questions will address professional perceptions.

Thank you for your interest and quick response to participate in this survey.

To participate in the survey, please click here:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KCM5MX8>

Sincerely,

Judith Gosnell-Lamb  
406-271-7558

## Appendix B

## Survey Questions and Responses

## Question 1

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I accept the conditions and understand this will not affect or benefit me in anyway.	99.1%	216
I decline participation and understand that this will not affect or benefit me in anyway.	0.9%	2
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>218</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>0</b>

**Question 2**                      218 Schools

**Question 3**                      Which state:

## Question 4

What is your role in education?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Principal	56.4%	123
Teacher	43.6%	95
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>218</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>0</b>

**Question 5**                      Number of years in education

**Question 6**                      Number of years the building made AYP    188 responses

**Question 7**                      Number of years the building did not make AYP    183 responses

**Question 8**                      2002 Top 5 Priorities    197 responses

## Question 9

What is your 1st priority now in regards to time and planning needs?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	109

<i>answered question</i>	109
<i>skipped question</i>	109

### Question 10

Has this priority changed in rank due to Federal Mandates?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	53.2%	58
No	46.8%	51
<i>answered question</i>		109
<i>skipped question</i>		109

### Question 11

What has been the impact on student learning?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Positive	78.5%	84
Negative	21.5%	23
<i>answered question</i>		107
<i>skipped question</i>		111

Question 12                      What is your 2<sup>nd</sup> priority?

### Question 13

Has this priority changed in rank due to Federal Mandates?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	59.2%	61
No	40.8%	42

### Question 14

What has been the impact on student learning?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Positive	70.6%	72
Negative	29.4%	30
<i>answered question</i>		102
<i>skipped question</i>		116

**Question 15**      What is your 3<sup>rd</sup> priority    97 respondents

**Question 16**

Has this priority changed in rank due to Federal Mandates?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	58.9%	56
No	41.1%	39
<i>answered question</i>		<b>95</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>123</b>

**Question 17**

What has been the impact on student learning?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Positive	71.6%	68
Negative	28.4%	27
<i>answered question</i>		<b>95</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>123</b>

**Question 18**      What is your 4<sup>th</sup> priority    88 responses

**Question 19**

Has this priority changed in rank due to Federal Mandates?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	55.8%	48
No	44.2%	38
<i>answered question</i>		<b>86</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>132</b>

**Question 20**

What has been the impact on student learning?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Positive	69.8%	60
Negative	30.2%	26
<i>answered question</i>		<b>86</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>132</b>

**Question 21**      What is your 5<sup>th</sup> Highest priority    81 responses

**Question 22**

Has this priority changed in rank due to Federal Mandates?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	56.3%	45
No	43.8%	35
<i>answered question</i>		<b>80</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>138</b>

**Question 23**

What has been the impact on student learning?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Positive	68.8%	53
Negative	31.2%	24
<i>answered question</i>		<b>77</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>141</b>

**Question 24**

By clicking below I freely provide consent and acknowledge my rights as a voluntary research participant as outlined above and provide consent to the University of Montana's Primary Investigator to use my information in the research project.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I decline participation and understand this will not affect or benefit me in any way.	2.9%	3
I accept the above conditions and understand this will not affect or benefit me in any way.	97.1%	101
<i>answered question</i>		<b>104</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>114</b>

## APPENDIX C

### Research Question Rational

The research tool for this dissertation was developed based on information from a thorough review of the literature and careful screening by the University of Montana Institutional Review Board. During question construction, care was taken to not lead the response in any specific direction but instead, to have a direct personal response from each participant. To check reliability and validity, the questionnaire was piloted to both teachers and principals seeking their input for clarification. The survey questions sought data on demographics of the respondents as well as their perception of their own professional practices, priorities and educational impacts of their decisions across time.

The sample was selected from the National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES) as the frame giving all publicly listed elementary school districts in the United States. Lavrakas (2008) believed that using a well-constructed frame with random selection allows the researcher to generalize the research findings across that population.

The survey was a self-administered questionnaire completed on-line. This method was chosen because of its ability to reach school administrators directly by name in the work setting saving time and mailing handling. The request to forward the survey on to similarly qualified teachers also could be done with a few key strokes rather than needing duplication and interschool mailing (Fink, 2003).

### **Demographic Information**

The questionnaire begins with simple fill in the blank demographic information. Since the research question examines autonomy at both the classroom and administrative

levels, respondents were asked to identify if they were a teacher or principal. They were also requested to identify the state where they were working and how many years they had been in education. (They had already been given the requirement that they had to have been in their current assignment since 2002, eight or nine years.)

**Questions 1 -4.**

1. I accept the conditions and understand this will not affect or benefit me in anyway.

I decline participation and understand that this will not affect or benefit me in anyway.

2. Please name your state.

3. What is your role in education: Principal or Teacher

4. Number of years in education.

Separating the responses between principals and teachers in the following open ended questions of 12 – 26 clarifies differences in professional perceptions. Steven Covey (1989) explains that the lens we see the world through (teacher or principal) is also the lens through which we interpret our world.

**Questions 5 -6.**

5. Number of years your building met AYP.

6. Number of years your building did not meet AYP.

Fowler (1991) indicates the greatest factor influencing student outcomes is socioeconomic status. The second most reliable factor was that school size, regardless of socioeconomic level, had a positive influence in educational outcomes (Fowler, 1991). Yet, Schiller and Muller (2000) found in their research of external accountability that the

consequences for students and schools tied to test performance were significantly related even to the extent of mitigating socioeconomic status.

**Questions 7 – 11.**

7 – 11. Please list your top five professional priorities for 2002.

Using open-ended questions for the listing of professional priorities allowed respondents to write in their answers freely, without having to choose a predetermined response category. Open-ended questions are useful for allowing the respondent to express opinions, attitudes, or preferences. These questions sought to quantify responses on one or more variables. The past priorities were where the comparison could be made to help in determining Hypothesis One. What or how large a shift had occurred and had that shift demonstrated a loss of local control/autonomy?

**Questions 12 -26.**

Please list your current top professional priorities. (The same questions were asked five times.)

12. What is your 1<sup>st</sup> (2nd – 5th) priority now in regards to time and planning needs?

Indicate yes or no if the change was due to Federal Mandates.

What has been the impact on student learning? Indicate positive or negative

The responses of questions 12-26 were the critical piece to discover the impact of No Child Left Behind over its implementation period. It has been shown that over time external assessments can alter teachers' classroom goals to come into alignment with a testing program. But case studies have not yet shown the effect on student outcome. Alphonse Kohn (2000) believed that high-stakes testing would narrow and weaken

education. Teachers answering a National Board on Educational Testing survey agreed that state mandated testing leads some teachers to teach in ways which violate their own ideas of good educational practice (Pedulla et al., 2003). Did the respondents' priorities and perceptions of the impact reflect that curriculum had been narrowed in Hypothesis Two and were the changes due to NCLB in Hypothesis Three.

For Hypothesis Four, AYP success was linked to the responses for impact on student success. Stevenson and Waltman (2006) in their survey of Iowa teachers found that a focus on test preparation and improved scores came at the expense of genuine learning which is something that respondents indicated in their comments that overall student success had been negatively impacted even in schools with success under AYP.