THE IMPACT OF TITLE I DESIGNATION ON TEACHER MORALE IN MIDDLE

SCHOOLS


By

Jennifer Lyons

Liberty University



A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement for the Degree Doctor of Education



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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this quantitative causal-comparative study was to determine the impact on Title I designation on teacher morale of middle school, grades 6 through 8, English and math teachers in school districts in Virginia. The study focused on two research questions using the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire. A Mann-Whitney $U$ test was conducted to determine if there is a difference in the morale of middle school English and math teachers in Title I versus non-Title I designated schools, and a Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to determine if there is a difference in the morale of middle school English and math teachers in rural, suburban, and urban Title I designated schools. Participants took the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire in February. The participants were chosen based on the type of middle school, Title I and non-Title I schools, geographical locations of the schools, content taught, math and English, and the grade level taught (grades 6 through 8). The Mann-Whitney $U$ and Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted to determine if a statistically significant difference exists between teacher morale in Title I and non-Title I middle school math and English teachers and to determine if a geographical location, rural, urban, and suburban, has lower teacher morale among Title I middle school math and English teachers.

*Keywords*: teacher morale, Title I, middle school, annual measurable objectives, adequate yearly progress

**DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my amazing parents, Betty and Tim Lyons, who have been supportive through all my academic endeavors.  Without their support throughout the years, I would not be where I am currently.  I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to an outstanding, wonderful grandmother, Viola "Ody" Lyons Caffarel, who unfortunately we lost in 2013.  She was my biggest cheerleader for academic accomplishments.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Annual Measurable Objective (AMO)

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

English Language Learners (ELL)

Graduation and Completion Index (GCI)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Supplemental Education Services (SES)

Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (PTO)

Supplemental Education Services (SES)

United Stated Department of Education (USED)

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## Background

As educational policies continue to change, one constant remains the same: teachers are the foundation of the educational system. Schools and districts are trying to identify ways to increase teacher morale in the high demand, post-No Child Left Behind (NCLB) education world. According to Nicholas-Omorege (2009), morale is described as the interest one displays towards the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation. Morale can be connected to Bandura's social cognitive theory: self-efficacy. Self-efficacy for a teacher can be demonstrated through a teacher's ability to believe he or she can carry out a task, a teacher's emotions and ability to deal with cultural situations, and a teacher's thoughts about his or her capabilities. Low morale can lead to a decline in student achievement, reduction in teacher effectiveness, and reduction in motivation for one's job (Dipaola & Wagner, 2011; Ghazanfar, Chuanmin, Khan, & Bashir, 2011; Klassen, 2010; Muller & Hanfstingl, 2010). In another study, Byrd-Blake et al. (2010), concluded that NCLB has had a negative impact on teacher morale with teachers having more than five years teaching experience. In addition, middle and high school teachers also believed that NCLB had a negative impact on student morale (Byrd-Blake, 2010).

The pressure of the high-stakes standardized testing becomes even greater with Title 1 funding. Any school, including Title I and non-Title I schools, that does not meet the requirements is classified as a school in "need of improvement." One of the mandates is to provide additional remediation programs such as Supplemental Education Services (SES). SES programs are free programs for students to provide additional tutoring or remediation, before or after school or during the summer, for mathematics and English to eligible students enrolled in schools that are not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress. School districts must set aside Title I

funds to pay for SES programs. In June 2012, the federal government granted the state of Virginia a waiver: Schools in Year 2 or beyond do not have to provide SES services (VDOE: ESEA, 2012). Year 2 means a school has not met AYP or AMO for two consecutive years.

The topic of teacher morale has been studied previously (Byrd-Blake et al. 2010; Hyun-Jun, Ssang-cheol, & Sung-soo, 2012; Rowland, 2008) from different aspects such as how the leadership of the school or the conditions of the building affect teacher morale. Creating a pleasant and inviting school climate for staff and students has a significant impact on improving staff morale and their efforts in their work. School administrators should frequently show enthusiasm about their observations, value their employees, explain policies in detail, and put trust in their teachers to do their jobs (Nicholas-Omoregbe, 2009). Nicholas-Omoregbe (2009) continued to make suggestions on how to improve teacher morale from an administrator's perspective. Some of the suggestions were to have an open-door policy for communication, ensure teachers clearly know what is expected of them, provide opportunities for social interactions and advancement or professional development, and be aware of good contributions to the school community (Nicholas-Omoregbe, 2009).

The important role of leadership correlating to teacher morale was also present in a dissertation, Rowland (2008). Through his research of the relationship between leadership and teacher morale, he was able to establish that leadership does affect teacher morale (Rowland, 2008). Reardon (2013) conducted a study to determine the relationship between academic achievement and family income. One of his findings is that the income achievement gap has not closed in the past three decades. The reading achievement gap between high-income and low-income families, with children born during the 50s, 60s, and early 70s, was about 0.9 standard deviation (Reardon, 2013). The reading achievement gap increased by 40 percent, 1.25 standard deviations, in standardized test scores in the 90s and 2000s (Reardon, 2013). Another finding is

that "the income achievement gap is already large when children enter kindergarten and it does not grow significantly as they progress through school" (Reardon, 2013, p. 12). To improve teacher morale, retention of teachers will help to improve student achievement, which in turn helps to improve teacher morale (Ronfeldt, 2013). However, there is a gap in the research to determine if the designation of "Title I" affects teacher morale.

## Problem Statement

The problem presented in this study is that teacher morale has not been investigated in relationship to Title I designation and geographical location in middle school English and math teachers. Research conducted by Rowland (2008) determined how leadership correlates to teacher morale. Byrd-Blake et al. (2010) conducted research using mixed methods to determine the teacher morale in high poverty schools. Hyun-Jun, Ssang-cheol, and Sung-soo (2012) conducted research into the effects of performance-based incentives on the motivation of teachers. With all the research conducted, there is a lack of research into the impact of Title I designation on teacher morale.

With the continued stress and pressure of getting students to meet the expectations of Schools are determined eligible for Title I funds if the school's percentage of students on free or reduced lunch is equal to or above n the average percentage of free or reduced lunch student population of the district. School districts are required to rank the schools within the district and consider serving those schools whose free or reduced lunch percentage is equal to or above the average for the district. Evidence has shown that most students living in poverty have lower academic success when compared to their peers living in non-poverty conditions (Palmer, 2015). Studies have not been conducted to determine whether the Title I designation impacts teacher morale. In addition, there has not been a study to determine whether a geographical location with the Title I designation has higher or lower teacher morale than the other locations. All this

information would aid administrators and educational professors increase teacher morale.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this causal-comparative study was to examine the impact of Title I designation on the morale of English and math middle school teachers through comparing the difference of mean scores on the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire based on designation and geographical location. The designation of Title I and the geographical location (rural, urban, and suburban) were considered when determining if there was a significant difference in the teacher morale of Title I and non-Title I middle school English and math teachers.  To determine the impact of the teacher morale, teachers in the district were given the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (PTO) in February.  The month of February was chosen because it marked the end of the second quarter and students were becoming increasingly familiar with their environments.  Teachers were also becoming familiar with their students at this point in the school year. The data of Title I versus non-Title I middle school English and math teachers' morale were used to determine the impact of Title I designation on teachers' morale.  Years of experience and geographical location (rural, suburban, and urban) were used as covariates to determine how these factors might impact the morale of middle school teachers.

## Significance of the Study

This study measured the impact of the Title I designation on the morale of middle school math and English teachers.  Morale relates to Bandura's social cognitive theory with the thought that preparation, training, leadership, and thoughts about the climate and the environment (Pas, Bradshaw, & Hershfeldt, 2012).  This topic must be researched because the morale of teachers can affect many aspects of the educational setting, including student achievement, student performance, and the instructional process on a day to day basis.

Morale includes such things as feelings of status, attitudes towards the administration,

feelings of belonging to the school community, and feedback about successes and failures (Minor, Wells, Lambert, & Keller, 2014).  Twenty to twenty-five percent of beginning teachers leave the profession within the first five years (Clark, 2012).  The teacher turnover rate after the fifth year in low-income schools can be up to 50% higher when compared to higher-income schools (Clark, 2012).  Morale can be an important factor in teacher retention and teacher turnover.

Administrators and educational professors can work to develop ways to counteract the negative impacts of conditions of the building, climate in the building, and the stress of improving student achievement.  In addition, administrators and educational professors may be able to predict teachers that might have higher teacher morale in conditions such as geographical location, Title I designated middle schools, and non-Title I designated middle schools.  Finally, administrators can see how the Title I designation can impact teachers' morale in different geographical locations: rural, suburban, and urban.

## Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

**RQ1:** Does a statistically significant difference exist between the morale of middle school English and math teachers in Title I versus non-Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire using a Mann-Whitney *U* test?

**RQ2:** Does a statistically significant difference exist in the morale of middle school English and math teachers in a) rural, b) suburban, and c) urban Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire using a Kruskal-Wallis test?

**Definitions**

1. *Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)* - A way the federal government uses to determine whether schools are making progress with student achievement.

2. *Annual Measurable Objective (AMO)* - Annual Measurable Objectives are the minimum required percentage of students determined to be proficient in each content area

3. *Middle School-* Grades 6th through 8th "The National Middle School Association (NMSA) defines *middle school* as one that meets the developmental needs of young adolescent ages 10 to 15" (Powell, 2011, p. 3).

4. *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)-* In 2001, with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as the No Child Left Behind Act, states were required to implement state-wide educational standards and standardized testing to ensure that students were meeting certain criteria ("VDOE: ESEA," 2012).

5. *Non-Title I* - A school that does not meet the requirements or did not apply for Title I designation.

6. *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (PTO)* - an Opinionaire used to determine factors affecting teacher morale

7. *Teacher morale* - the professional interest and happiness that a teacher displays towards the achievement of individual and group goals for a specific job or task (Nicholas-Omorege, 2009).

8. *Title I* - Schools are determined eligible for Title I funds if the school's percentage of students on free or reduced lunch is equal to or above n the average percentage of free or reduced lunch student population of the district. School districts are required to rank the schools within the district and consider serving those schools whose free or reduced lunch percentage is equal to or above the average for the district. (VDOE: ESEA, 2012). Federal

programs designed to help children who are behind academically or at risk of falling behind.

Title I funding is based on the number of low-income children in a school, generally those

eligible for free or reduced-fee lunch programs.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Introduction

The positive morale of teachers is essential to recruiting and maintaining quality instructors and creating a climate that is conducive to teaching and learning. Nicholas-Omorege (2009) described morale as the professional interest and happiness that a person displays towards the achievement of individual and group goals for a specific job or task. Several factors can affect the morale of teachers in a school, including the conditions and climate of today's educational society, the lack of administrative support, and the salaries. High student achievement has been attributed to the presence of a strong education leader (Kutsyuruba, Klinger, & Hussain, 2015). Higher teacher morale can lead to a reduction in teacher turnover and a higher rate of student achievement. A high level of job satisfaction translates into a teacher's eagerness and commitment to spend additional time to improve student achievement (Duyar, Gumus, & Mehmet, 2013). Low teacher morale can lead to a negative impact on schools and districts through a high turnover rate, reduction in student achievement, and reduction in satisfaction of one's job.

The National Center for Education Statistics surveyed teachers about turnover and 40% of teachers left for better opportunities due to job dissatisfaction (Labat, Labat, Lee, & Thibodeaux, 2005). Learning climate and characteristics of the school building, along with teacher, student, and parent perceptions have continuously proven a link to academic performance (Berry, 2012; Marzano, 2003; Rutter et al., 1979; Wentzel & Watkins, 2002). Thus, as federal mandates continue to seek improvement in student achievement, teacher morale can play an important role in meeting the state objectives. To hold districts, schools, administrators, and teachers accountable for student achievement, in 2001, the Elementary and

Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was reauthorized.

The reauthorization of the ESEA in 2001 as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act required states to implement state-wide educational standards and standardized testing to ensure that students were meeting certain criteria. As one of the new requirements of the reauthorization, mathematics and reading standardized testing was required to be completed annually in grades third through eighth. In addition, schools were required to have 100% of the students labeled as proficient by meeting the state objectives by the 2013–2014 school year. Districts, schools, and the public were provided annual reports based on the results of the standardized testing from the previous year. In this report, student achievement is divided into subgroups: white, African American, students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged, to determine if the school and district met the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements. A second requirement of the NCLB was teachers needed to become "highly qualified". To be "highly qualified", teachers need to be certified in their content area, obtain a bachelor's degree, and show proficiency in their content area.

Finally, the last part of NCLB was a change in the allocation of Title I funding. Title I is a federal program to provide financial assistance to districts and schools to help with the challenging academic standards in areas with a high population of low-income families (Title I, Part A, 2014). A school needs to complete an application process to receive the Title I designation. After the designation of Title I is given to the school, the school receives funding to provide additional educational opportunities for students in greatest need (VDOE: ESEA, 2012).

This chapter presents an overview of the current literature involving factors that affect teacher morale. The relationship between teacher morale and lack of support, conditions/climate of the school and district, student achievement, student behavior, stress, motivation, job satisfaction, and salary are discussed. In addition to the factors affecting teacher morale, some

resolutions are explained.  The Title I designation is defined and described from information

presented in the NCLB Act.  The requirements for designation of Title I are presented, and the

implications of becoming a Title I school or district are reviewed.  Specific information that

Virginia is using to improve student achievement and hold schools and districts accountable is

detailed through the explanation of the flexibility waiver Virginia received in 2012.

<div align="center">**Theoretical Framework**</div>

**Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory: Self-Efficacy**

"Bandura has emphasized *self-efficacy* – people's perception of their competence in

dealing with their environment and exercising influence over events that affect their lives"

(Miller, 2011, p. 243).  "Teacher self-efficacy, which is based on the social cognitive theory, and

Bandura's self-efficacy concept, is defined as teachers' belief that they can influence learning of

students, including that of students with low motivation learning difficulties" (Ozkilic, 2014, p.

257).  Teachers play the role of one of the most influential people in the educational arena.

Teachers serve as the public relations agents for the performance of the school and the events

within the four walls of the school building – and the four walls of individual classrooms.

Teacher morale is an example of self-efficacy.  "The types of teachers' efficacy are the

following: behavioral self-efficacy, cognitive self-efficacy, emotional efficacy, and finally the

culture of his/her self-efficacy" (Gkolia, Belias, & Koustelios, 2014, p. 328).  Behavioral self-

efficacy can be defined as the teacher's belief in his or her ability to carry out a plan for a

specific situation.  Cognitive self-efficacy is explained through a teacher's thoughts about his or

her capability to overthink.  Emotional self-efficacy deals with a teacher's own emotions.

Finally, cultural self-efficacy deals with a teacher's ability in a cultural situation (Gkolia et al.,

2014).  Working conditions such as lack of materials and establishing a good working

environment affect the level or perception of teacher morale.  Teacher morale can affect

retaining and attracting teachers to the district or school.  When morale is low, teachers will want to leave, and new teachers may not want to come.  Teachers may seek other job opportunities with schools or districts that can provide materials for adequate instruction, and new teachers may seek other employment opportunities where their needs may be met.

On the contrary, "teachers with a strong sense of personal efficacy are more open to new ideas and innovations, show commitment to certain teaching and improve student achievement" (Gkolia et al., 2014, 333).  With the evolving world of education, new ideas are always being shared and tried; teachers must be open to trying and experimenting with those new ideas to be up to par in the educational arena.  Improving student achievement and closing the achievement gap is the largest priority in the educational society and in the current times; a teacher's personal efficacy plays a huge role in this area.  If teachers are closed off to new ideas, then the same results or levels of student achievement will continue to occur.

**Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs can be connected to teacher morale.  "In a 1943 paper called A Theory of Human Motivation, Maslow presented the idea that human actions are directed toward goal attainment" (Maslow, 1943, 370).  Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs includes five levels: self-actualization, esteem, belongingness, safety, and the physiological.  "The reason that these are related to morale is that if the low-level physiological, safety, and social needs are not satisfied, then the individual is not likely to have a positive morale" (Whitaker, Whitaker, & Lumpa, 2013, p. 4).  When an individual, or in this case a teacher, has the lower level of the hierarchy met, he or she can move onto working on getting the higher levels met.  Esteem and self-actualization includes recognition, self-respect, and working to one's potential.

Beginning at the lower level, a teacher must feel safe and secure in his or her teaching environment.  Safety and security can come in many levels in the teaching professions.  In the

wake of many horrific violent events, teachers should be able to come to work with a secure and safe building to have their needs met (Gregory, Cornell, & Fan, 2012). In addition to the literal meaning of safe and secure, teachers need to have the opportunity to have a voice or opinion in their teaching environments. When teachers are empowered to speak their opinions, they are more likely to have their needs met, remain in their position, and have higher morale (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, and Loeb, 2011; Kurland, Peretz, & Hertz- Lazarowitz, 2010).

At the higher levels, esteem and self-actualization, teachers like to be recognized for their hard work. Teaching is no longer an 8-hour day; many teachers stay after school to grade papers, create lessons, and assist students (Klassen, 2010). The long hours can tend to lower morale; however, when a teacher is recognized, the teacher tends to have higher morale (Klassen, 2010). Self-actualization incorporates what a teacher believes he or she can become. Feeling safe and secure, having physiological needs meet, developing a sense of belonging, and having high esteem, teachers can have high morale leading to higher student achievement, lower teacher turnover, lower teacher burnout, and higher job satisfaction and motivation (Gregory et al. 2012).

## Empirical Evidence

Many topics have been researched in connection with teacher morale. Rowland (2007) conducted a study to determine whether certain schools have higher overall teacher morale, and if they did have higher morale, was it connected with the Leadership Practices Inventory. Rowland (2007) determined that rapport with principals made a significant difference in the schools. He also determined that collaboration among colleagues led to higher levels of teacher morale. In another study, Cheng (2014) investigated how principals dealt with incompetent teachers and the effects of their approaches. With this study, Cheng was able to determine that creation of a positive environment, through collaboration with the principal and colleagues, and

encouragement lead to improving teachers' performance.  However, it was found that transferring incompetent teachers to other jobs or asking incompetent teachers to retire had a negative impact on teacher morale (Cheng, 2014).

Thibodeaux, Labat, Lee, and Labat (2015) studied how high-stakes testing had an impact on teachers remaining in the profession.  They also studied the relationship between principal leadership styles and morale and job satisfaction.  Thibodeaux et al. (2015) determined there was not a significant difference in job satisfaction of teachers who were responsible for high-stakes testing versus teachers who are not responsible for high stakes testing.  Findings included that the principal put more pressure on teachers who oversee classes with high-stakes testing.

Pas, Bradshaw, and Hershfeldt (2012) saw a gap in the research predicting factors that affect teacher efficacy and burnout.  Findings determined that over a period of two years, burnout grew at a more rapid rate than teacher efficacy.  The handling of classroom management and instructional challenges lead to higher efficacy when a teacher reported being capable of handling these situations.  In addition to being able to handle challenges, when teachers felt supported by their and administrators, they were more likely to feel less burned out (Pas et al., 2012).

Teacher collaboration has been linked to the attitude of teachers.  Duyar, Gumus, Bellibas (2013) conducted a study to predict teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction.  From this study, Duyar et al. (2013) determined that teacher collaborating increases self-efficacy and job satisfaction.  Providing opportunities for teacher collaboration through professional development can be a way to increase job-satisfaction.  Professional development should not only occur for new teachers, but also for veteran teachers.  Teacher efficacy, burnout, leadership style, teacher collaboration, and administration support have been tied to teacher morale through various studies (Cheng, 2014; Pas et al., 2012; Rowland, 2007; Thibodeaux et al. 2015).  Increasing

collaboration among teachers and between teachers and administrations can lead to a more positive climate, increasing morale. With the demands of high-stakes testing, collaboration and a positive environment can lead to a reduction in teacher turnover and burnout.

## Related Literature

### Background of No Child Left Behind

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed the NCLB Act of 2001. NCLB was the reauthorization of the ESEA, which was created to reform K through 12 education for economically disadvantaged students. NCLB came at a time when the American public was worried about the state of American public education. With the implementation of NCLB, the federal government took a greater role in the public educational system (No Child Left, 2011).

The major driving factor of NCLB was to improve student achievement through holding states and schools more accountable for decreasing the achievement gap. During the 2005–2006 school year, states were mandated to test students in reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 every year. Beginning in the 2007–2008 school year, students were required to test in science at least once at every level: elementary, middle, and high school. States were to correlate the tests to the state standards for each grade level and content area. By the end of 2013–2014, the expectations were all students were to be "proficient" on the state tests. Using the data from the state tests, schools were required to make "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) for the overall population of the school and individual subgroups as directed in NCLB Act. Additional mandates were placed on schools receiving Title I funding. When a Title I school failed to meet AYP for two years, they would receive assistance, and students would be offered the opportunity to attend another public school. After three years of failing to meet AYP, the school was required to offer supplemental educational services; a portion of the funding for these services comes from Title I funding. With the continuance of failing to meet AYP, the school would

have to undergo corrective measures with the possibility of staffing changes.  Using the test

results, in 2002–2003, the school and district would receive a yearly report card based on student

achievement broken down into the subgroups (No Child Left, 2011).

One way to improve instruction and student achievement is to make sure teachers have an

adequate amount of training (Harris & Sass, 2011).  At the end of the 2005–2006 school year,

teachers were required to be "highly qualified" in the content they taught.  To be "highly

qualified," a teacher must demonstrate proficiency in the subject matter in which they teach.  In

addition to the "highly qualified" teachers, at the end of the 2005–2006 school year,

paraprofessionals hired through Title I funding must have an associate's degree or higher and

demonstrate knowledge through passing an assessment.  Reading First program was to bring

research-based programs into the classroom for K–3 students to improve early literacy.

However, funding to this program was drastically cut due to budget issues (No Child Left, 2011).

The last implication of NCLB was the changing of funding for Title I.  The formula to

receive Title I funding was changed to target a specific population.  Low socioeconomic students

were the target for the funding.  In addition, the law provided more flexibility of how the money

could be spent, based on the needs of the states and districts (No Child Left, 2011).

**Title I**

Accepting Title I funding increases the pressure and stress of the high-stakes standardized

testing.  Schools are determined eligible for Title I funds if the school's percentage of students

on free or reduced lunch is equal to or above n the average percentage of free or reduced lunch

student population of the district.   School districts are required to rank the schools within the

district and consider serving those schools whose free or reduced lunch percentage is equal to or

above the average for the district.  If the school applies to have a Title I designation then they

receive additional funding called Title I funding (VDOE: ESEA, 2012).) If a Title I school

cannot meet the federal mandates for two consecutive years, the school will receive strict guidelines to follow to improve student achievement. To improve student achievement, the school will be required to host Supplemental Educational Services (SES). Another mandate of a school in need of improvement is the in-depth documentation entitled, "A School Improvement Plan," is required. To show progress is being made, the school administrators must collect extensive documentation to demonstrate change is being made to improve student achievement. A teacher's level of anxiety has been documented to be higher when a teacher must get students to pass a standardized test, and a teacher's level of anxiety can negatively impact student achievement (Grissom, Crotty, & Harrington, 2014).

Byrd-Blake et al. (2010) conducted a study comparing teacher morale at the time of the study compared to teacher morale five years prior to the implementation of NCLB. The study determined teacher morale was lower which the researchers attributed to the NCLB Act (Byrd-Blake et al., 2010, p. 462). Norman (2010) conducted a case study documenting teacher morale is lower in low-performing school settings with low-income families. With the implementation of NCLB accountability, teachers have come under scrutiny to close the achievement gap and improve student achievement.

**NCLB and Title I in Virginia**

"In June 2012, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) granted Virginia waivers from certain requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)" (VDOE: ESEA, 2012). In the flexibility waiver, Virginia requested to develop their own objectives which they called Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO). The AMOs were aimed towards reducing the achievement gap in mathematics and English between the lowest and highest achieving schools. To determine the AMOs for mathematics and English, the 2011–2012 mathematics Standards of Learning (SOL)

data were used to set the percentages, and the 2010–2011 English SOL data were used to set the percentages (VDOE, 2012).

In addition to setting the AMOs through the 2016–2017 school year, Virginia determined some Title I schools needed additional support in cutting the proficiency gap between the lowest and highest-achieving schools. Virginia set up categories called Priority Schools and Focus Schools.  For schools to be identified as a priority school or exit the identification, the state developed the following chart.

Table 1

*Criterion for Entrance and Exit of Identification of Priority School*

| | **Reason for Priority School Identification** | **Exit Criteria** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Criterion A | Schools receiving School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds under section 1003(g) of ESEA in Federal Fiscal Year 2009 (Cohort I) or 2010 (Cohort II) and identified and served as a Tier I or Tier II school | Will exit priority status at the conclusion of implementation of the chosen three-year intervention model |
| Criterion B | Title I high schools with a federal graduation indicator of 60% or less for two or more of the most recent consecutive years | Will exit priority status after full implementation of a three year intervention and sustaining a 10 percent reduction in the percentage of students not earning a standard or advanced diploma within a four year period for two consecutive years |
| Criterion C | Title I school based on the "all students" performance in reading and/or mathematics performance on federal AMOs | Will exit priority status after full implementation of a three year intervention model and meeting federal AMOs for the "all students" for two consecutive years |
| Criterion D | Title I schools failing to meet the 95 percent participation rate in reading and/or mathematics for three consecutive years | Will exit priority status after full implementation of a three-year intervention model and meeting the participation for the "all students" for two consecutive years |

Ten percent of Virginia's Title I schools (72) are identified as priority schools.  The identification of a priority school is determined based on the percentages of the proficiency in the gap groups in reading and mathematics.  The state of Virginia defined three Gap Groups.  Gap Group 1 includes students with disabilities, English Language Learners (ELL), and economically

disadvantaged students.  Gap Group 2 includes African-American students, not of Hispanic origin, including students with disabilities, ELLs, and economically disadvantaged students.  Gap Group 3 includes Hispanic students, of one or more races, including students with disabilities, ELL, and economically disadvantaged students.  In order to be identified as a priority school, the Title I schools will have failing scores or not meeting the participation rate, 95%, in one or more gap groups in mathematics and reading (VDOE: ESEA, 2012).

**School Improvement in Virginia**

**Virginia's Standards of Learning.** In the mid-1990s, Virginia students began declining on national assessments.  Due to drastic decline in student achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores, Virginia's government officials determined "the need for more rigorous academic and instructional standards in the Commonwealth's public schools" (VDOE: Historical, 2013, p. 32). Collaboration between the Virginia Board of Education, Governor George Allen's Commission on Champion Schools, and former Superintendent of Public Instruction William C. Bosher Jr. paved the way for reform in Virginia's public schools.  The Standards of Learning (SOL) objectives in English, mathematics, history, and science were revised to be more specific and rigorous to improve instruction in June 1995.  In January 1996, Governor Allen's commission determined there was a need to develop a new accountability program based on the new standards.  The new program would include testing in the four content areas, an achievement-based school accreditation system, and the publication of annual school report cards.  The Standards of Learning program was established in Virginia.  It was created based on the recommendation of the Commission on Champion Schools and the revision of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* by the Board of Education.

Testing of the SOLs began in 1998 with assessments in reading, writing, mathematics,

history, and science in grades third, fifth, eighth, and high school. Results from these testing

sessions were used to develop the proficiency standards for all students in these grades. In 1999,

schools were assigned an accreditation rating based on the results from the SOL tests. At that

time, only 6.5 percent of Virginia's public schools met the standard; however, the Virginia

Department of Education (VDOE) saw an increase in student achievement through the test

results. In addition to revamping the SOLs to be more rigorous and specific, the General

Assembly developed the Virginia Early Reading Initiative for early intervention for

kindergartners and first graders in 1997. This program was extended to third grade in 2000.

Also in 2000, an Algebra Readiness Initiative was established to help with intervention for

students in grades 6 through 9 who were in danger of not passing the Algebra I SOL test. In

addition, new courses were developed to help with algebra-related topics, and middle and high

school math teachers had new professional development opportunities created for them.

The year 2000 was a big year for the General Assembly of Virginia in the area of

education. A technology initiative began by providing school districts with grants to obtain

hardware to do online testing and increase access to technology for students. Fifteen school

divisions began partially online testing in the fall of 2001. Also in 2000, the Board of Education

listened to the concerns of school districts about having cumulative eighth grade history/social

science tests. Three new course-specific history/social science tests were developed, and in

2008, the cumulative test was phased out.

**Helping to reduce the achievement gap.** Academic review teams began visiting low-

performing schools to help develop school improvement plans in 2000. A school was visited due

to low reading and mathematics student achievement. Schools were required to select and

implement an instructional program that had proven effectiveness. The Board of Education

allowed students to meet assessment-related diploma requirements through alternative testing

such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and other SOL end-of-course assessments in the same content area.

Under the leadership of Governor Mark R. Warner, elected in 2001, the superintendent of public education, Jo-Lynne DeMary was re-appointed. The Office of School Improvement was developed as a subcommittee of the VDOE to help low-performing schools implement best practices. Through collaboration with the VDOE, Governor Warner created the Partnership for Achieving Successful Schools (PASS) to assist Title I schools not meeting the objectives and having to implement sanctions under NCLB. PASS paired schools not meeting objectives with a similar school meeting the objectives. Community and private sector partners were identified to help provide resources and opportunities for students and teachers through PASS.

As the year progressed with the Virginia SOL program, the public, school divisions, and the VDOE continued to see improvement in student achievement where effective, research-based instructional practices were implemented. More school divisions were taking tests online. "During the spring 2003 test administration, students in 94 school divisions took approximately 76,000 online assessments" (VDOE: Historical, 2013, p. 34). Despite the continued success, there were still some areas in need of improvement. One of those issues was ensuring students were passing the required number of SOL tests to graduate with a standard or advanced diploma. In 2003, Project Graduation, launched by Governor Warner, was geared towards rising seniors meeting the requirements of passing SOL tests in order to graduate. Project Graduation focused on remediation in reading, writing, and Algebra I with opportunities to retake SOL tests. Instruction could be provided during summer regional academics or during the school year. "Thanks to Project Graduation and similar local initiatives – and the efforts of Virginia teachers in preparing students for higher diploma standard – predictions that tens of thousands of seniors would be denied diplomas in 2004 did not materialize" (VDOE: Historical, 2013, p. 35).

**Academic achievement progressing.** Ninety-two percent of Virginia schools had the accreditation status of fully accredited by 2005 as student achievement increased by SOL data. This data showed a 10-year trend of higher student achievement, and fourth and eighth grade students from Virginia were scoring higher than their national and regional counterparts. NAEP proficiency standards in mathematics rose from 19% in 1996 to 39% in 2005 for fourth graders meeting or exceeding the standards, and eighth grade math was 33% compared to 21%. During the 2005 NAEP test in science, Virginia fourth graders were leading the nation.

In 2006, Virginia designed new reading and mathematics SOL tests for grades fourth, sixth, and seventh to meet the requirements for annual testing in reading and mathematics in grades third through eighth. After the implementation of the mathematics tests, math pass rates drastically declined. "While 9 out of 10 schools still earned full accreditation for 2006–2007, 86 of the state's 307 middle schools were accredited with warning" (VDOE: Historical, 2013, p. 36). A second setback for Virginia in the 2006–2007 school year was six schools were denied accreditation due to consistently low-performing achievement on the SOL tests. Specific interventions from the VDOE's Office of School Improvement began in the six schools and other divisions with low test scores. The VDOE and school divisions determined that in order to support the mathematics teachers with the new tests, they must collaborate to develop materials. On the VDOE's website, the series of videos that were created were posted along with other resources.

**New area of improvement needed.** In 2006, Governor Timothy M. Kaine urged the Board of Education to include graduation rate as part of school accreditation in high schools. The board revised accreditation standards for high schools, beginning in the 2011–2012 school year, to include graduation rates as part of the determination of a high school's accreditation status. A data system, created in 2008, was used to calculate cohort graduation and dropout

rates.

**Recognition for demonstrating improvement.** Governor Kaine also suggested that the Board recognize schools and divisions that were far exceeding state and federal accountability standards. The Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) was established by the Board in 2007. With all of these things in place, Virginia was seeing higher student achievement, more students completing high school, and more students continuing onto college than other states. Due to this, in January 2007, the Education Week Quality Report noted Virginia's progress under the SOL program.

The Board of Education asked the VDOE to study elements contributing to success in postsecondary education while they were reviewing the SOLs in mathematics and English. VDOE is legislatively required to review the SOLs every couple of years. To help with the collection of data about postsecondary readiness, the VDOE sought help from the College Board, ACT, and the bipartisan education reform organization Achieve to compare standards for postsecondary readiness and the English and mathematics SOLs. From the report, the board determined that the SOL program needed to be more rigorous "by shifting its focus from grade-level competency to college and career readiness" (VDOE: Historical, 2013, p. 38). Using the recommendations, Virginia revised the mathematics standards in 2009 and the English and science standards in 2010. Governor Robert F. McDonnell, taking office in 2010, agreed with the implementation of increasing more rigorous SOL tests rather than changing to Common Core State Standards in Virginia. In January 2011, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Patricia I. Wright, warned that with the new rigorous standards, there would be a short-term decline in pass rates. When the results from the 2010–2011 school year were made public in the fall of 2011, pass rates were at an all-time high, and only eight middle schools remained on academic warning.

**Changes to the testing standards.** With the new standards, the VDOE developed new types of questions beyond multiple choice. Due to the new types of questions, the online test format was needed, and the VDOE required all testing be conducted on the computer except for special education students, whose disability makes it necessary for them to complete the test with a paper-and-pencil version of the test. New technology enhanced items (TEI) were introduced in mathematics in the 2011–2012 year and in reading, writing, and science in the 2012–2013 school year. Students were required not only to apply their content knowledge, but also to utilize problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. Some types of TEI included creating a graph, multiple answer, click-and-drag, and fill-in-the-blank.

As predicted, student achievement in mathematics dropped; however, the following year, gains were made on all grade levels and end-of-course mathematics SOL tests. After the first test administration of the new mathematics tests, several school divisions expressed concerns about the amount of time it took students to complete the new tests. In response, the VDOE determined, through a survey at the end of the 2011–2012 school year, that teachers wanted the VDOE to provide them more SOL-related information and resources to them directly. In January of 2013, a weekly email bulletin from VDOE, TeacherDirect, for teachers about the latest SOL resources and professional development, put an end to funneling information through division central offices. Once again, in the fall of 2013, accreditation rating declined due to implementation of the college and career-ready standards. "Seventy-seven percent or 1,413 of Virginia's 1,828 public schools were rated as fully accredited for 2013–2014, compared with 93 percent for 2012–2013. The number of schools accredited with warning nearly quadrupled to 395, and six schools have been denied state accreditation because of chronically low achievement" (VDOE: Historical, 2013, p. 40). Despite the results, since the implementation of the new rigorous tests and SOLs, Virginia students were becoming more prepared for

postsecondary education or postsecondary work with the development of the new college and career-ready standards.

**School Accreditation Ratings in Virginia**

Upon developing accountability for schools and divisions, Virginia developed a school accreditation rating. When a school met all the objectives set forth by NCLB, the school's accreditation status would be Fully Accredited. Accredited with Warning would be the accreditation status of schools who did not meet one or more objectives. Schools could remain in this status for no more than four consecutive years. If a school received an accreditation with warning, they were required to develop a school improvement plan, and they would need to improve progress to be removed from warning. After the fourth year in Accredited with Warning, a school would receive one of two accreditation statuses: Conditionally Accredited or Accreditation Denied. Conditionally Accredited was given to schools that did not meet objectives, but were showing progress in meeting the objectives. This status is renewable for schools for three years if the progress continued in meeting the objectives. Accreditation Denied status would be given to schools not making progress toward objectives or that did not continue to make progress after the status of Conditionally Accredited was given.

Beginning in the 2015–2016 school year, the VDOE and Board of Education instituted new accreditation ratings to explain more clearly to parents and the public the progress of schools. The accreditation levels include Fully Accredited, Partially Accredited, Conditionally Accredited, and Accreditation Denied. When a school receives a Partially Accredited rating, they can remain in this rating for no more than three consecutive years unless the Board grants an extension.

For an elementary or middle school to earn the rating Fully Accredited, the school must achieve the following pass rates: 75 percent or higher in English and 70 percent or higher in

mathematics, science, and history.  In addition to the pass rates, high schools must attain a point value of 85 or greater based on the Graduation and Completion Index (GCI).  The status of Fully Accredited has not changed from the previous implementation of the standards to the new standards.

A new rating for the 2015–2016 school year was Partially Accredited, and this rating has multiple levels and distinctions.  A school with a rating Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate means that the school was within a two-point narrow margin of the adjusted SOL pass rates.  For example, the school has a 73% on English or a 68% on mathematics, science, or history/social science.  Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Graduation and Completion Index is a rating for high schools that met the objectives for pass rates in English, mathematics, science, and history/social science, but were within one point of the GCI.  Partially Accredited: Improving School-Pass Rate is given to schools that did not qualify for Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate but are making acceptable progress toward full accreditation pass rates.  Acceptable progress, defined by VDOE and the Board of Education, is shown in the following table.

Table 2

*Acceptable Progress for Partially Accredited: Improving School-Pass Rate*

| Acceptable Progress for Mathematics, Science, and History/Social Science | | Acceptable Progress for English | |
|---|---|---|---|
| If the school's adjusted pass rate for the previous year was: | If the school's adjusted pass rate for the previous year was: | The school's adjusted pass rate must have increased by at least | The school's adjusted pass rate must have increased by at least |
| 65 | 70 | 2 points | 2 points |
| 60 – 64 | 65 - 69 | 4 points | 3 points |
| 50 – 59 | 60 - 64 | 7 points | 9 points |
| 40 – 49 | 45 - 59 | 11 points | 10 points |
| Below 40 | Below 45 | 15 points | 15 points |

Schools with previous pass rates of 71–72% in English and/ or 66–67% in mathematics, science and/or history/social science, are ineligible for a Partially Accredited: Improving School rating and must meet the criteria for Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate, or be rated as Partially Accredited: Warned School (VDOE: Stats, 2015, p. 2).

Partially Accredited: Improving School – GCI is awarded to schools who have improved their GCI by at least one point, and they have meet the content area objectives. Partially Accredited: Warned School – Pass Rate is given to school who are not making acceptable progress toward adjusted SOL pass rates or are not within a narrow margin. Partially Accredited: Warned School-GCI is a high school achieving the SOL pass rates, but is not made acceptable progress towards meeting the GCI objective or not within a narrow margin. When a school does not meet the AMOs for four years and receives permission from the Board of Education, the school can receive a status of Partially Accredited: Reconstituted School. Once a school has this rating, they must meet full accreditation with agreed upon terms or must complete an annual application for a status of Partially Accredited-Reconstituted School renewed. If the application is not completed or they do not meet the agreed-upon terms, the school will receive a status of Accreditation Denied.

Accreditation Denied is a status a school will earn if for four consecutive years it has not achieved accreditation. If a school receives this rating, the schools must provide parents and other stakeholders with the following:

- Written notification of the accreditation status within 30 calendar days when the division receives the notification from the VDOE;
- The school division's proposed corrective action with specific information detailing what steps are being done to raise achievement to meet the objectives and a timeline

for implementation; and

- Prior to the adoption and the agreement between the local school board and Board of Education, there must be an opportunity for comment on the proposed correct action.

In the case of Accreditation Denied, the principal, superintendent, and school board chairman may be required to appear before the Board of Education. When one-third or more of the schools have been denied accreditation, the school board is required to evaluate the superintendent and by December 1 turn in a copy of the report to the Board of Education. The Board of Education may take action against the local school board for failure to maintain accredited schools (VDOE: School, 2015).

Conditionally Accredited is a rating given to a new school. This rating is only given for one year as the students previously attended one or more existing schools the previous school year. Schools are given this rating to give them an opportunity to evaluate the students' performances on the SOL tests and other statewide assessments.

There are specific adjustments that can be made to a school's pass rate prior to the determination of the accreditation status. On the state standardized tests, if a student scores 375 to 399, they are eligible for an expedited retake. The student should receive remediation prior to retesting. If the student passes on the retest in the same school year, the first test is not counted in the accreditation calculations. Another reason for an adjustment would be the exclusion of Limited-English Proficient (LEP) students. An LEP student can be excluded from accreditation if they have been enrolled in Virginia public schools for fewer than 11 semesters. The level of participation of LEP students is based on the decision of a school-based committee. Finally, at times, transfer students may be excluded from the accreditation calculations. The Board of Education has very limited circumstances to determine whether the failing scores of some transfer students will not be included in the accreditation rating calculations.

In addition to the accreditation percentages, 75 for English and 70 for mathematics, science, and history/social science, Virginia has AMOs in reading and mathematics for specific subgroups of students. Each subgroup has their own AMO for each assessment year with increasing percentages each year. The subgroups include the following: all students, proficiency gap group 1, proficiency gap group 2, proficiency gap group 3, students with disabilities, LEP students, economically disadvantaged students, white students, and Asian students. When the VDOE releases the report card for individual schools and divisions, the report cards include the school or division's pass and failure rates for each subcategory for reading and mathematics, and then the report breaks it down for each individual SOL test. The final requirement of Virginia in order to meet AMOs is 95% participation rate in each of the subcategories. Byrd-Blake et al. (2010) determined from middle and high school teachers that NCLB requirements lowered teacher morale within a five-year period.

<div align="center">**Factors Affecting Teacher Morale**</div>

**Administrative Support**

Administrative support should come in the form of emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support (Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2013). Leadership within a district is essential to motivate employees to meet the organizational goals and objectives. In education, leadership can come in the form of principal or Central Office administrators. For teachers to buy in to the leaders' vision or mission, the teachers need to be involved in the creation of the vision or mission (Kurland et al., 2010). Teachers need to know the goals and objectives for meeting the vision or mission by the administrator setting forth clear expectations and guidelines. Without this information, teachers are coming to work every day without the idea or purpose in mind (Naile & Selesho, 2014).

The first task of administrators is informing the teachers of the mission or vision and

getting teachers to share their vision. To help teachers share the same vision of the administrators and possibly help teacher morale, the teachers need to assist in the development of the vision, making it a shared vision. Kouzes and Posner (2007) provide five exemplary leadership practices: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. Maxwell (2007) provides 21 laws of leadership. Both authors discuss how leadership should be seen and experienced. These five practices explain to leaders to lead by example, get people to buy in to their vision, seek new ways to improve the climate, create a collaborative environment, and help their staff to continue the mission and vision even through the exhaustion and frustration. "The role of the principal is to guide and direct the behavior of teaching staff in the school environment" (Naile & Selesho, 2014, p. 179). Without this guidance, the teachers do not feel a part of the school, lack the leadership, and tend to have lower morale.

Norman (2011) suggests improving leadership will improve teacher morale. His case study shares this information:

> This case study confronts the issues of staff motivation and teacher retention that face administrators in low-paying and/or low-performing small school settings when teacher pay is low and morale is lower, especially in communities having a lower economic base. (Norman, 2011, p. 7)

Norman (2011) suggests involving communication between administrators and teachers, recognizing hard working teachers, providing opportunities for advancement, and addressing teacher concerns in a timely manner.

A strong leadership and professional learning community can help to improve a school and allow it to have a successful culture. Principals and school leaders can help to improve a collaborative leadership through various activities. One of the activities would be allowing

teachers to take risks through experimenting with new ideas and changes. Allowing a teacher to take risks allows them to feel as if they are part of the decision-making progress. Encouraging and helping with collaboration through listening to ideas and input during meetings is an efficient way to improve the culture. Finally, when making changes, gaining faculty input can be helpful with improving collaborative leadership (Sterrett & Irizarry, 2015).

**Conditions/Climate**

Lack of materials has a negative impact on teacher morale. In order to meet the needs of their students, teachers, the essential part of the educational system, often must resort to purchasing materials with their own money. In 2016, Time reported that, "on average, most spent nearly $500 last year, and one in ten spent $1,000 or more. All told, a total of $1.6 billion in school supply costs is shifted from parents — or, increasingly, from cash-strapped districts — onto teachers themselves" (White, 2016). Even with the additional funding from Title I, there may be a shortfall of money. Title I funds are geared towards students at risk or failing in the content areas of mathematics and English. As stated previously, teachers attempt to reduce the shortfall by spending their own money, leading to a reduction in teacher morale (Bivona, 2002, p.22). "Or, at the very least, we need a critical mass of such teachers who, through their collaborative actions, can begin to shift our educational priorities, values, and practices, and consequently create a more helpful and supportive climate in schools" (Hytten, 2010, p. 2).

Earthman and Lamasters (2009) conducted a study demonstrating the conditions of the working environment, such as the classroom, can lower teacher morale. Schools with the Title I designation often have run-down buildings and a lack of resources, as money is specifically geared towards a project based on the requirements of the funding. Most the money in Title I funding is geared towards meeting the educational needs of the low-income students, not to repairing broken furniture or replacing aging technology. Due to the lack of materials and poor

working conditions, teachers will try to seek better employment opportunities. According to

Ronfeldt (2013), retaining teachers will assist in improving student achievement, and higher

student achievement leads to higher teacher morale.

Earthman and Lemasters (2009) conducted research with the design, "This research was

designed to investigate the possible relationship between the attitudes teachers have about the

conditions of their classrooms when the classrooms were independently assessed" (Earthman &

Lemasters, 2009, p. 323). The authors of this research surveyed principals to determine whether

conditions were satisfactory or unsatisfactory. After the initial survey, 22 schools, 11 with

unsatisfactory and 11 with satisfactory conditions were chosen. Teachers voluntarily completed

the My Classroom Appraisal Protocol© (MCAP), 2003, to provide information on their

impressions and attitudes about the environment. Topics included classroom components/

conditions, teacher attitudes, and health of teacher and students. The article stated that there was

a difference between teachers with satisfactory buildings versus teachers with unsatisfactory

buildings. The finding concluded that physical environment influences the attitudes and

productivity of teachers, which could result in morale problems with the staff (Earthman &

Lemasters, 2009). "In such conditions, where morale is low, anxiety is high, budgets are

insufficient, and the life prospects for students in the community are grim, we need much more

than individual teachers who are hopeful to change the course of our educational future" (Hytten,

2010, p. 2).

**Student Achievement**

Dipaola and Wagner (2011) concluded from a study investigating academic optimism

that:

The first part of this study examined the component structure of the academic

optimism construct and confirmed that each of the three dimensions of academic

optimism continues to appear as a unique and objective social characteristic of schools that positively affect student achievement, even when controlling for student SES. Results of the first-order factor analyses confirmed that a significant percentage of variability in school-level student achievement was explained by collective teacher efficacy (30%), faculty trust in students and parents (51%), and academic emphasis (45%). (p. 893)

An analysis of the results indicate that academic achievement is tied to the teacher's ability to reach students to have a positive effect on their academic achievement.

**Stress**

Teachers encounter stress from excessive workloads, student behavior, turmoil with teacher-parent relationships, conflicts with colleagues, and lack of support from administrators (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009). Many of these stresses lead to teachers leaving the school, district, or even the profession (Buchanan et al., 2013; Hughes, Matt, & O'Reilly, 2015). As the demands of accountability continue to grow, the stress on teachers increase, as according to NCLB all students must be "proficient" by the end of 2013–2014. This mandate does not consider the differences in the learning of the individual students. It also does not consider that all students do not learn at the same rate.

In addition to the stresses of accountability, teachers are dealing with the stress of lack of resources to meet the individual needs of students. One class may consist of special education students, gifted students, slow learners, students with English as a Second Language, and some average students. Furthermore, the number of students within the classrooms continues to grow due to budget cuts, causing positions to be eliminated. Discipline issues may arise as the number of students within the class rise, and with discipline issues come the contacting of parents. Contacting parents in lower income schools may present an issue, as phone numbers change

frequently or parents may be working multiple jobs to support the family. All of these issues add to the stress of the teachers.

"Teaching is a stressful occupation and high levels of occupational stress have a strong effect on teachers' performance, career decisions, physical and mental health, and overall job satisfaction" (Klassen, 2010, p. 342). According to Klassen (2010), stress can come from school policies, issues with colleagues, lack of support from leadership, and high demands. In addition to teachers teaching, they are required to complete a significant amount of paperwork such as lesson plans, attend multiple meetings, and maintain documentation. As schools move to school improvement for not meeting the mandates of NCLB, the lesson plan components become extensive to document the requirements needed to demonstrate improvement. The number of meetings doubles when schools are not achieving the federal mandates. With budget cuts, the lack of materials becomes an issue of stress. Teachers who are worried about not having enough materials or proper materials to provide adequate instruction to meet the accountability requirements can be in a stressful situation.

Budget cuts can result in pay freezes for teachers, creating additional personal issues for teachers. While salaries remain the same, the world does not stop raising prices on necessities such as food, gas, and clothing. Insurance premiums tend to rise yearly, cutting into the teachers' paychecks even more. Personal stress can carry over into the professional world, and professional stress can carry over into the personal world. This can lead to teacher burnout early in a career. When burnout occurs, teachers are likely to retire early, take time off, or even leave the profession (Buchanan et al., 2013; Keller, Chang, Becker, Goetz, & Frenzel, 2014). Valuable teachers are leaving the profession due to burnout and stress. A study was conducted in Boston Public Schools to determine the cost of teacher turnover. Using the district's budget information, the cost to recruit, hire, provide professional development, and handle terminations for 194

teachers in their second and third year of teaching cost the district $3.3 million (Levy, Joy, Ellis, Jablonski, & Karelitz, 2012).

One of the most impactful ways to improve morale within a teacher force has to do with money (Ghazanfar, 2011). In the current society, money and possessions are a level of status: the more money and better possessions, the higher status people think. "Money possesses significant motivating power in as much as it symbolizes intangible goals like security, power, prestige, and a feeling of accomplishment and success" (Ghazanfar, 2011, p. 122). The salary scale of a district can attract and retain teachers from year to year. As salaries increase, teachers are more likely to stay in the same district, and teachers are more motivated to work as the pay increases. When given financial incentives such as performance-based pay, teachers are more likely to work harder to obtain goals set forth. Teacher morale can be affected by the pay scale. However, lower pay leads to more teachers leaving the school and the district, and teacher retention has been linked to lower teacher morale. To help increase teacher retention and morale, districts should have competitive salaries with surroundings counties, and districts should be willing to negotiate to get the "highly qualified" teachers to come and stay in the district.

To help reduce the stress of teachers, administrators should know some solutions to help solve the problems. The first solution is handling student discipline in a timely and efficient manner. At the first sign of a discipline issue, the teacher and administrator should have a conversation about how to handle the situation (Long, Abbey, & Bryson, 2015). Another solution is trying to reduce the amount of paperwork required of teachers (Thibodeaux, Labat, Lee, & Labat, 2015). When making new guidelines for paperwork, make sure the teachers know the expectations for what needs to be documented and when it is due. A third solution is to keep the lines of communication open and constant; teachers are less likely to get stressed and upset

when they know in enough time to adjust schedules or plans to meet the needs of the requirements (Sterrett & Irizarry, 2015).

**Motivation**

The survival of a successful school relies heavily on the motivation of the teachers. Teachers are the foremost resource in the operation of the school. In order for the school to operate, there need to be administrators and teachers to provide instruction and leadership for the students. "Employees with high level of motivation tend to work hard and perform better in their work as compared to employees with low level of motivation" (Ghazanfar, Chuanmin, Khan, & Bashir, 2011, p. 121). To improve motivation within the school, the teachers need to understand the expectations for their job, and administrators need to understand the concerns and needs of the teachers. Teacher motivation can affect student learning and classroom instruction. When teacher motivation is low, teachers will not put their best efforts into developing engaging lessons, hindering students' academic achievement (Muller & Hanfstingl, 2010).

One way of helping to improve motivation is for administrators to listen to the concerns of the teachers. Administrators can do this in a variety of ways through instituting an open-door policy to listen to the concerns of the teachers (Norman, 2011; Rowland, 2008). If teachers feel the administrator is willing to listen, they are more likely to speak with the administrator about their concerns rather than letting the issue fester. Another way to improve motivation is to recognize the hard work and achievements of teachers (Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2013). During faculty meetings, principals can recognize good lessons they have observed or a teacher's personal accomplishment, such as receiving a master's degree. As the motivation of teachers improves, job satisfaction is likely to improve (Eyal & Roth, 2011).

**Job Satisfaction**

Many of the previous factors, lack of support, stress, student achievement, climate/

conditions, and motivation contribute to a teacher's job satisfaction and the morale of the school. "Overall job satisfaction is determined by the difference between all those things a person feels he *should* receive from his job and all those things he actually *does* receive" (Evans, 1997, p. 321).  Fairchild et al. (2012) determine there are certain demographic factors that contribute to job satisfaction in the educational arena.  The first idea from the research Fairchild et al. (2012) is that teachers working with students from a higher socioeconomic status have higher job satisfaction than teachers working with lower socioeconomic status students.  Teachers working in school with a higher number of minority students are less satisfied with their jobs.  In the higher grades, teachers have expressed less satisfaction with their jobs. According to the study conducted by Fairchild et al. (2012), teachers are happiest when they are working with students of their own race.  However, evidence shows Black teachers working with Black students have expressed higher job satisfaction than White teachers working with White students.  More teachers expressed higher job satisfaction when their principal was from their own gender than if the principal was the other gender.

Job satisfaction can be linked to other issues, absenteeism, turnover, and organizational effectiveness (Gkolia, Belias, & Koustelios, 2014).  The schools with the highest poverty levels have statistically shown 40% of teachers have left due to dissatisfaction (Thibodeaux et al., 2015).  Lack of trust in leadership and lack of staff cohesion have been linked to low staff morale (Minor et al., 2014).  Absenteeism, high turnover, and leadership effectiveness have been linked to a reduction in teacher morale as demonstrated throughout this literature review.

**Teacher Retention Burnout**

Teachers work to provide solutions with education against poverty, entitlement, endurance, and environmental obstacles (Kavenuke, 2013).  Many new teachers feel as if the profession is one of "sink or swim."  When qualified, effective teachers leave the profession, this

can affect the educational society in a negative way. On the other side, when a mediocre, ineffective teacher leaves, student achievement will not be affected. Kavenuke (2013) has stated young, unexperienced teachers are more likely to leave the profession than older, experienced teachers unless they leave through retirement. Due to maternity or marriage, women have a higher attrition rate than men. Teacher retention and turnover can affect morale and student achievement in a negative manner (Simon & Johnson, 2013).

Social-economic status and family characteristics can factor into whether a teacher remains in teaching. Teachers coming from medium and low-income families are more likely to remain in the profession than are teachers coming from high-income families. The content area of a teacher can also determine the probability he or she will remain in education. Science and mathematics teachers can find work outside of the educational arena, and so they are more likely to leave the teaching profession when compared to their peers in other content areas. Teachers with degrees such as chemistry have the highest probability of leaving teaching (Kavenuke, 2013).

**Keeping teachers in the profession.** In order to keep teachers in the educational society, there are several strategies. Teachers must feel successful with personal and professional achievements. One way is to assign new teachers to a mentor, a veteran teacher. A veteran teacher can help show the new teacher the ropes of the new environment, procedures, and policies. Through observation, a veteran teacher can model strategies to assist with instructional delivery and classroom management techniques. With support and nurturing, a new teacher can gain knowledge to help the new teacher with the unfamiliar. Teachers who are more prepared feel able to educate children with a greater sense of self-confidence, meet the demands of the stressful job, develop deeper connections with students, have higher levels of efficacy, and report less burnout (Pas et. al, 2012).

Another issue with teacher retention is salary and compensation. Many new teachers have stated, "The salary cannot make ends meet." Comments like this one have made officials think about teachers' salaries. A suggestion is to ensure teachers are proportionally paid based on their qualifications, skills, and years of experience.

Regular training and professional development are essential to keeping teachers in their jobs (Whitworth, & Chiu, 2015; Zwart, Korthagen, & Attema-Noordewier, 2015). Many states require teachers to complete 180 hours of professional development to renew or continue their licenses. Training and professional development helps teachers stay current on research and strategies. At times, participants can network with other professionals outside their schools or districts. Networking and collaborating allows teachers to expand their knowledge and strategies (Stewart, 2014). Isolation or the feeling of "sink or swim" is one of the major reasons teachers leave the profession (Buchanan et al., 2013).

Allowing teachers to teach where they want will help them remain in the teaching profession. Teachers are likely to remain where people are friendly, and they feel safe (Gregory, Cornell, & Fan, 2012). They have a higher probability of staying if they feel supported by the stakeholders: central office officials, building level administrators, parents, students, and the community (Sterrett & Irizarry, 2015; Norman 2011).

**Teacher profession at risk and teacher burnout.** The teaching profession is "at risk" because of the alarming rate of teachers leaving. Administrators and human resource personnel need to invest in their new teachers to ensure they will be in the profession in five years. More than 50% of teachers have left the teaching profession between years two and five (Menon, 2012). Even more, new teachers need support to have a positive effect on the school culture and student achievement.

A major contribution to teacher turnover is burnout. Teacher burnout has been linked to

teacher performance and student achievement.  "Specifically, teacher efficacy has shown to be positively correlated with effective instruction, proactive and positive classroom management, and students' academic performance" (Pas et al., 2012, p. 130).  Burnout has been linked to emotional exhaustion, and can be linked to mental and physical health problems.  Absenteeism can be an attribute of burnout, which can increase the need for substitutes and the budget for substitutes.  Studies have shown depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and personal accomplishments are three aspects of burnout.  "For example, research on gender shows that men are more likely to report elevated levels of depersonalization specifically, whereas women report higher levels of emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment" (Pas et al., 2012, pp. 130 -131).

The type of environment can impact teacher burnout.  Teachers have reported that they are more burnt out when their jobs are very demanding, they do not have adequate materials, and there is a lack of administrative support.  In addition to teacher burnout, high demand jobs, a lack of materials, and reduced administrative support lead to lower levels of teacher efficacy. Another contributing factor to teacher burnout is support from colleagues.  Development of professional learning communities (PLC) and professional development can lead to higher levels of communication, increased support, and more collaboration between colleagues (Pas et al., 2012).

Turnover in leadership can be linked to teacher burnout.  A principal is the key leader in the school building.  With the constant turnover of principals, teachers have more instability and uncertainty as rules, policies, and procedures often change when new administrators take over (Burkhauser, 2016).  Student achievement can also be affected with the constant changing of administration (Dhuey, & Smith, 2014; Miller, 2013).  Students need to adjust to the new policies and procedures just as the teachers do, and they need to make connections with the

leadership in order to develop a level of trust.  Finally, the constant changing of the principals in a school building can reduce the morale and the climate within the building (Pas et al., 2012). Anxiety and stress, due to changing administrators, can lead to a reduction in teacher efficacy, leading to teacher burnout.

Student and parent academic involvement is a contributing factor to teacher burnout (Adnot, Dee, Katz, & Wyckoff, 2016; McNeal, 2015; Wilder, 2014). When teachers feel parents and students are invested in academic achievement and success, a partnership can be created between home and school.  If the connection is not there, teachers can feel as if they are working against the home, and the level of stress can be a contributing factor to teacher burnout.  "When teachers perceive students and their parents are highly involved in their education, these teachers may feel a greater internal locus of control resulting in greater teacher efficacy and decreased burnout" (Pas et al., 2012, p. 132).  Collaboration between the home and school environments can help to make the education of students a partnership.

**Additional Factors to Improve Teacher Morale**

Several researchers have suggested ideas or ways of improving teacher morale.  One of the suggestions is to develop a teacher community for teachers to collaborate through sharing ideas, improving instruction and learning.  While some teacher networks develop through organizations, it is the principal who is instrumental in developing Professional Learning Communities (Levine, 2011).  Professional Learning Communities and networks are organizations of teachers sharing lessons, strategies, and ideas in order to meet a common goal or objective.  Improving collaboration helps to reduce the isolated feeling teachers may experience.

Another way to help improve teacher morale is through providing opportunities for professional development or advancement (Olanike, 2009).  Teachers must communicate their

needs for professional development to the administration.

Olanike (2009) also provided evidence that communication between the school officials and teachers is important. Open communication between school officials and teachers allow teachers to feel like they have a voice. One of the ways to have open communication between school officials and teachers is to have a communication forum where teachers can address some of their concerns. In addition, a weekly or monthly newsletter from the district and school administrators will keep teachers informed of upcoming events or changes. When teachers are informed of changes and events, they feel like stakeholders in the running of the district and school.

Recognizing the good work the faculty and staff are doing can also build teacher morale. For example, recognition of student achievement or a well-planned lesson, or high scores on a test can help teachers feel more positive about their work. Recognition of a teacher's positive action can work to improve the relationship between administration and teachers, and teachers feel their work and contributions are valued (Handford, & Leithwood, 2013).

Giving clear expectations to teachers such as additional assignments, duties, and other expectations is a way of improving teacher morale (Noddings, 2014). Conversely, surprise meetings, evaluations, or other unexpected assignments are not good ways of increasing teacher morale (Norman, 2011). Providing flexibility when teachers are dealing with personal issues shows the administrator is willing to work with teachers and shows concern about their well-being (Simon, & Johnson, 2015). Social gathering with faculty and staff can be a strategy for improving morale. Administrators should not be seen as the bad guy who is out to get the teachers. Social interactions can allow the administrator to be seen in a different light and may increase understanding on the human side of administrators. With many budgets being cut, a lack of resources, and stress at an all-time level, listening to teachers' concerns, showing

recognition, and open communication can go a long way to improving teacher morale. While these ways can help to improve teacher morale, they will not be a total cure for the problems (Norman, 2010).

**Summary**

Byrd-Blake et al. (2010), Hyun-Jun, Ssang-cheol, and Sung-soo, (2012), and Rowland (2008) have all conducted studies on teacher morale from different aspects such as how the leadership of the building affects teacher morale or how the conditions of the building affect teacher morale. As economic times continue to decline, determining how the designation affects teacher morale is imperative in order to attracting and maintaining teachers and improving working conditions and the climate of the school or district. Due to the stress and the high accountability, many teachers are leaving their jobs and even the teaching field for other employment opportunities. Thus, conditions, climate, support of administrators, and student achievement can all affect teacher morale.

The methodology of the study will be described in the next chapter. In this chapter, the research design will be explained and the questions and hypothesis will be defined for this study. Participants and the setting for this study will be presented. An examination of the measurement instrumentation will take place. Procedures for the research will be outlined, and the ways for analyzing the data will be explained.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the study is detailed in this chapter. This chapter contains a detailed explanation of the design of the study, participants and settings, the instrumentation, procedures used during the study, and the data analysis from the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (PTO) used during the study. The problem studied was to determine if the Title I designation impacts middle school teacher morale, and if geographical location affects teacher morale in Title I designated middle schools.

### Design

A causal comparative convenience sampling design was chosen to determine whether geographical location or the designation of Title I school affected the morale of the teachers. This design is appropriate for this study because "causal-comparative research is a type of non-experimental investigation in which researchers seek to identify cause and effect relationships by forming groups of individuals in whom the independent variable is present or absent" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 306). Purposing sampling was chosen because specific teachers, English and math, middle school, and Title I and non-Title I, were important to the research. The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of the Title I designation on the morale of middle school teachers. The morale of middle school math and English teachers will be explored using the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire in the middle of the school year, 2016–2017.

A causal-comparative research was used to investigate if there is a significant difference between Title I and non-Title I middle school English and math teachers. Teacher morale is the dependent variable and school geographical location and Title I designation are the independent variables. Virginia Public Schools are categorized by geographical location and Title I designation. To determine if there was a difference between the morale of middle school English

and math teachers of Title I and non-Title I schools, a Mann-Whitney $U$ test will be used. In addition, the design was chosen to determine if geographical location impacts teacher morale in Title I middle school English and math teachers. A Kruskal-Wallis test will be used to determine if geographical location, rural, suburban, or urban, affected the morale in Title I middle school English and math teachers.

## Research Questions

**RQ1:** Does a statistically significant difference exist between the morale of middle school English and math teachers in Title I versus non-Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire using a Mann-Whitney $U$ test? This question is important to this study because it helps to determine where the Title I designation effects teacher morale in middle school English and math teachers.

 **RQ2:** Does a statistically significant difference exist among the morale of middle school English and math teachers in a) rural, b) suburban, and c) urban Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire using a Kruskal-Wallis test? This question is important to this study because it provides data to show if there is a difference between morale of middle school English and math teachers in Title I schools based on geographical location.

## Null Hypotheses

**H$_0$1**: There is no statistically significant difference between the morale of middle school English and math teachers in Title I versus non-Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire using a Mann-Whitney $U$ test.

**H$_0$2**: There is no statistically significant difference among morale of middle school English and math teachers in a) rural, b) suburban, and c) urban Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire using a Kruskal-Wallis test.

**Participants and Setting**

The participants for this study are identified using purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling means identifying participants based on criteria (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Participants are chosen based on multistage cluster sampling, "which involves first selecting clusters and then selecting individuals with the clusters" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). First, participants are put into clusters based on their geographical location: rural, urban, and suburban. Next, they are categorized as Title I and non-Title I school participants using information from the Virginia Department of Education's School Report Cards based on the data from 2015–2016 school year. Finally, the participants were chosen based on the content, English and math, and the grade level, sixth through eighth, in which they taught. For a power of 0.95 with a medium effect size of 0.74, a minimum sample size is 102. Sixty-two middle school math and English teachers responded from Title I schools, and 60 middle school math and English teachers responded from non-Title I schools to collect data for the first research question. For the second research question, 62 middle school math and English teachers responded from Title I schools. A minimum of 15 middle school math and English teachers from Title I schools responded from each geographical location to collect data for the second research question.

The formula from the Department of Defense (2012) is used to determine geographical information. The Department of Defense defines the rural classification is less than 1,000 people per square mile, suburban classification is between 1,000 and 3,000 people per square mile, and urban is greater than 3,000 people per square mile. Data are gathered from the 2010 U.S. Census to determine whether a school system was rural, urban, or suburban.

Further classification of Title I and non-Title I designation is based on information gathered from the Virginia Department of Education school report card from the previous school

year, 2015–2016. Teachers who participate in the study taught math and English in grades six through eight. In the state of Virginia, English and math scores are two components used to determine if a school has met (AMOs) and whether the school will be accredited through the federal mandates. On the state level of accreditation, math and English are also two components to determine if the school is accredited through state mandates.

Schools designated as Title I are required to meet both state and federal mandates. In the state of Virginia, Title I schools are identified as Title I Focus Schools or Title I Priority Schools. Schools are designated as a Title I Focus School by using the following criteria:

1. Excluding any schools identified as priority schools.

2. Automatically identify any school not meeting the participation rate of 95 percent in reading and/or mathematics.

3. For the remaining schools, calculate for each school the difference between the annual measurable objective (AMO) target and each gap group's performance in reading and mathematics to determine proficiency gap points.

4. Exclude from each school's calculation any gap group that meets or exceeds the AMO target.

5. Sum of the proficiency gap points in reading and mathematics and divide by the number of gap groups that did not meet the AMO target(s).

6. Rank schools in order of the total number of average proficiency gap points.

7. Identify from the list of schools ranked by proficiency gap points a number equal to 10 % of the state's total Title I schools (72 schools). (VDOE: School improvement, 2012)

Schools are designated as a Title I Priority School by using the following criteria:

1. Schools receiving School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds under Section 1003(g) of

ESEA in Federal Fiscal Year 2009 (Cohort I) or 2010 (Cohort II) and identified and

served as a Tier I or Tier II school

2. Title I high schools with a federal graduation indicator of 60% or less for two

or more of the most recent consecutive years

3. Title I schools based on the "all students" performance in reading and/or

mathematics performance on federal AMOs

4. Title I schools failing to meet the 95% participation rate in reading and/or

mathematics for three consecutive years. (VDOE: School improvement, 2012)

The designation of Title I Focus School or Title I Priority School is not considered when

choosing schools for this study.

In the state of Virginia, 102 school districts had middle schools with grades 6 through 8

in the same building.  Of the 302 middle schools, 43 schools (14.2%) are designated as Title I

and 259 schools (85.8%) are designated non-Title I.  Seventy-two districts (70.6%) are classified

as rural, seven districts (6.9%) are classified as urban, and 23 districts (22.5%) are classified as

suburban.

Schools in the state of Virginia will be chosen based on their geographical locations:

rural, suburban, and urban.  Classification of geographical location is based on information from

the 2010 U.S. Census.  Schools are also classified as Title I or non-Title designation.  The

Virginia classification of Title I Focus School or Title I Priority School is not a factor when

selecting schools to participate in the study.  Title I schools selected for this study are those with

at least 40% of the school population receiving free or reduced lunch.  The Virginia Department

of Education documents that there are 132 school systems in the state.  Ninety-five of the

divisions are classified as rural, 27 of the divisions are suburban, and eight of the divisions are

urban based on the people per square mile formula from the Department of Defense.  Two

divisions' geographical information could not be determined because the information was not available on the 2010 U.S. Census.

## Instrumentation

The Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (PTO) (Bentley & Rempel, 1968) is an instrument that has been used in numerous studies to assess teacher morale (Fisher, 2010; Franklin, 2015; Houchard, 2005; Hughes, 2013; Rowland, 2008; Rosenberg, 2013). PTO includes 100 questions that can be categorized into 10 factors. The following table depicts the 10 teacher morale factors.

Table 3

*10 Division of Teacher Morale Factors with Corresponding Question from PTO*

| Description | Questions |
|---|---|
| Teacher Rapport with Principal | 2, 3, 5, 7, 12, 33, 38, 41, 43, 44, 61, 62, 69, 70, 72, 73, 74, 92, 93, 95 |
| Satisfaction with Teaching | 19, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 46, 47, 50, 51, 56, 58, 60, 76, 78, 82, 83, 86, 89, 100 |
| Rapport Among Teachers | 18, 22, 23, 28, 48, 52, 53, 54, 55, 77, 80, 84, 87, 90 |
| Teacher Salary | 4, 9, 32, 36, 39, 65, 75 |
| Teacher Load | 1, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, 31, 34, 40, 42, 45 |
| Curriculum Issues | 17, 20, 25, 79, 88 |
| Teacher Status | 13, 15, 35, 37, 63, 64, 68, 71 |
| Community Support of Education | 66, 67, 94, 96, 97 |
| School Facilities and Services | 16, 21, 49, 57, 59 |
| Community Pressures | 81, 85, 91, 98, 99 |

The PTO utilized a four point Likert scale to rate the teachers' responses to the individual feelings about the statement. Some of the statements include "I am satisfied with the policies under which pay raises are given", "The number of hours a teacher must work is unreasonable",

and "There is a great deal of griping, arguing, taking sides, and feuding among our teachers" (Bentley & Rempel, 1968). The PTO, reported by Bentley and Rempel (1968), had a test-retest correlation for the total score of .87. The correlations for the 10 factors ranged from .62 to .88. Community Pressure had the weakest correlation of .62 while the other nine factors were greater than .75. The 10 factors are tied to the conditions in Title I and non-Title I schools and geographical locations: rural, urban, and suburban. Permission was not needed to use the PTO as the copyright has expired.

### Procedures

Once the researcher completed the IRB packet and gained approval for the research, the researcher began contacting school districts based on the specific criteria: Title I and non-Title I and geographical location. An email with the details of the study including the research questions, the type of participants needed, and a description of the instrument, the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire, (Appendix D) was sent to the superintendents of the school systems. If an email was not received within two weeks, a follow-up email or phone call to the superintendent took place.

Following approval from the superintendent, the individual schools' principals were contacted to seek approval for the teachers in their school to participate in the study. If an email was not received within two weeks, a follow-up email or phone call to the principal took place. Upon receiving approval from the principal, English and Math teachers in grades 6 through 8 received an email letter about participating in the study. The letter detailed the information about the study: research questions, the instrument, the PTO, and the timeline for the research. In the letter, teachers were assured their identities would remain anonymous, and they were classified by the type of school in which they work, their gender, and the range of years of experience in teaching. Once the teachers agreed to participate in the study, they received the

PTO-via email, at the beginning of February. In addition to the PTO, teachers were asked to identify their gender, race, and range of years of experience to help categorize the results. A paper copy of the PTO was available if teachers would rather have a paper copy. All email communication did come from the researcher's Liberty email account.

Teachers completed the PTO via online through a Google form. If a teacher requested a paper copy, the researcher did enter the data into the Google form as completed on the paper copy. As teachers completed and submitted the PTO online form, the data was immediately updated in the spreadsheet created by the submitted forms. In addition, the researcher did receive an email that a teacher had completed and submitted the forms.

## Data Analysis

The researcher did survey middle school teachers via an online PTO using Google forms to determine whether there is a difference in teacher morale based on Title I designation and geographical locations. The questions being researched are:

**RQ1:** Does a statistically significant difference exist between the morale of middle school English and math teachers differ in Title I versus non-Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire using a Mann-Whitney $U$ test?

**RQ2:** Does a statistically significant difference exist among the morale of middle school English and math teachers in a) rural, b) suburban, and c) urban Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire using a Kruskal-Wallis test?

To compile the data, the researcher created a spreadsheet to record the responses to the PTO. Teachers were given the option to take the survey online or have a paper copy mailed to them. If a paper copy was chosen, the researcher input the data into the spreadsheet; however, if done online, the survey was automatically put into the spreadsheet. The number of responses of Title I and non-Title I by geographical location was placed into a chart to show the sample size.

A Mann-Whitney *U* test was conducted to evaluate whether the medians of teacher morale statistically differs between the Title I and non-Title I teacher. The Mann-Whitney *U* test was used because the data was divided into groups, Title I and non-Title I. The grouping variable for the test is the type of school, Title I and non-Title I middle schools, and the test variable is the total score for the PTO survey with scores from 100 to 400. The PTO survey consists of 100 questions with answers 1, 2, 3, or 4 for each question. To determine if there was a statistically significant difference between teacher morale in rural, urban, and suburban Title I middle schools, a Kruskal- Wallis test was used. This test was chosen because there were three independent variables, rural, urban, suburban, and one dependent variable, teacher morale as determined by the PTO. All tests will be run using *SPSS* 24 software and the guidance of *Using SPSS for Windows and Macintosh: Analyzing and Understanding Data* (Green & Salkind, 2011).

# CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

## Overview

Chapter Four will present the data analysis for this study and restate the purpose, research questions, and hypotheses.  The purpose of this causal comparative study was to determine the impact of Title I designation on middle school English and math teacher morale.  In addition, this study was conducted to determine if geographical location rural, suburban, and urban had statistically significant difference in teacher morale in middle school English and math teachers in Title I schools.  Teacher morale was the dependent variable and school geographical location and Title I designation are the independent variables. The results of the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (PTO) are presented in this chapter.  Table 4 illustrates the breakdown of the number of surveys by the geographical location.  Then, the data are presented for each of the two research questions.

Survey results were compiled into a Google spreadsheet upon the completion of the surveys.  To conduct the statistical analysis, the data were entered into *SPSS* Statistics 24 software. The results from the Whitney Mann *U* test are displayed in Table 6, and the results from the Kruskal Wallis test are displayed in Table 7.   The chapter will conclude with a summary of the major findings of the study.

## Research Questions

The research questions and hypotheses for this study are:

**RQ1:** Does a statistically significant difference exist between the morale of middle school English and math teachers in Title I versus non-Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire using a Mann-Whitney *U* test?

 **RQ2:** Does a statistically significant difference exist among the morale of middle school English and math teachers in a) rural, b) suburban, and c) urban Title I designated schools as

measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire using a Kruskal-Wallis test?

## Null Hypotheses

**H₀1**: There is no statistically significant difference between the morale of middle school English and math teachers in Title I versus non-Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire using a Mann-Whitney *U* test.

**H₀2**: There is no statistically significant difference among morale of middle school English and math teachers in a) rural, b) suburban, and c) urban Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire using a Kruskal-Wallis test.

## Descriptive Statistics

A total of 122 teachers completed the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (PTO) via the online Google form.  The sample consisted of 62 Title I middle school English and math teachers and 60 non-Title I middle school English and math teachers.  Sixty-six rural middle English and math teachers, 28 suburban middle English and math teachers, and 86 urban middle English and math teachers completed the survey.  In the state of Virginia, 72 districts (70.6%) are classified as rural, seven districts (6.9%) are classified as urban, and 23 districts, (22.5%) are classified as suburban.  For research question one, 62 Title I and 60 non-Title surveys were returned.  These statistics were used to determine if a statistically significant difference occurred between Title I and non-Title I middle school English and math teacher morale as measured by the PTO.  Table 4 illustrates the sample size for Title I schools by geographical locations of the surveys returned for hypothesis two: 29 rural, 15 suburban, and 18 urban. These statistics were used to analyze if there was a statistically significant difference in morale among geographical locations in Title I middle school English and math teachers measured using the PTO.

Table 4

*Returned Surveys by Geographical Location*

| Geographical Location | Title I | Non-Title I |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| Rural | 29 | 37 |
| Suburban | 15 | 13 |
| Urban | 18 | 10 |

A Mann Whitney *U* test was used to evaluate the null hypothesis for the first research question. A Kruskal Wallis test was used to evaluate the null hypothesis for the second research question.

## Results

The Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (PTO) was used in this study to determine a scale of teacher morale from English and math teachers in middle schools in the state of Virginia. The PTO utilized a Likert-type scale to rate the teachers' responses to their individual feelings about the statements on the opinionaire. The rating scale is a four point Likert scale. Some of the statements include "I am satisfied with the policies under which pay raises are given", "The number of hours a teacher must work is unreasonable", and "There is a great deal of griping, arguing, taking sides, and feuding among our teachers" (Bentley & Rempel, 1968). The PTO, reported by Bentley and Rempel (1968), had a test-retest correlation for the total score of .87. The correlations for the 10 factors ranged from .62 to .88. Table 5 depicts the 10 teacher morale factors. Community Pressure had the weakest correlation of .62 while the other nine factors were greater than .75. The 10 factors are tied to the conditions in Title I and non-Title I schools and geographical locations: rural, urban, and suburban.

*Table 5*

Descriptive Statistics 10 Divisions of Teacher Morale Factors from PTO

| Division of Teacher Morale | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher Rapport with Principal | 24 | 74 | 54.68 | 12.444 |
| Satisfaction with Teaching | 35 | 70 | 57.78 | 7.455 |
| Rapport Among Teachers | 19 | 56 | 41.68 | 5.639 |
| Teacher Salary | 7 | 28 | 15.63 | 4.421 |
| Teacher Load | 12 | 41 | 25.85 | 6.624 |
| Curriculum Issues | 7 | 18 | 12.58 | 1.754 |
| Teacher Status | 8 | 27 | 16.75 | 3.900 |
| Community Support of Education | 5 | 20 | 12.68 | 3.466 |
| School Facilities and Services | 6 | 20 | 13.86 | 3.017 |
| Community Pressures | 6 | 19 | 11.20 | 2.428 |

To compare the results of the PTO with Title I and non-Title I, the mean of the data was calculated for each of the 10 divisions. The mean score was different for each division (Table 5). If a mean score fell below the mean for that division, the morale was considered to be lower than the average of all the participants in this study; if a score fell above the mean, the morale was considered to be higher than the average of all the participants in this study. These statistics were used to compare Title I and non-Title I teacher morale in the 10 divisions from the PTO and show the difference in morale of the different school type using factors that affect teacher morale.

In the division of Teacher Rapport with Principal, 28 Title I teachers (45%) and 27 non-Title I teachers (45%) scored below the mean of 54.68. Both Title I and non-Title I teachers had the same percentage (45%) of teachers in respect to their rapport with principals. Some of the questions asked if they were appreciated by their principal, did they feel comfortable speaking out against policy in faculty meetings, and did the principal have a reasonable understanding of

their teaching assignment.

Twenty–six non-Title I (43%) and 22 Title I (35%) teachers scored below the mean of 57.78 in the Satisfaction with Teaching division. Participants were asked if teaching gives them personal satisfaction, if they love to teach, and if they think they are as competent as most teachers. Twenty-three non-Title I (38%) and 37 Title I (44%) teachers scored below the mean of 41.68 in the Rapport Among Teachers division. Statements included if teachers take advantage of one another, if there was a lot of griping, feuding, and arguing among teachers, and if colleagues are well prepared for their jobs. Twenty-three non-Title I (40%) and 22 Title I (35%) teachers scored below the mean of 15.63 in Teacher Salary. Thirty-two non-Title I (53%) and 23 Title I (37%) teachers scored below the mean of 25.85 in Teacher Load. Participants answered questions about pay raises, if their district has generous policy for fringe benefits, and teachers clearly understand the policies about salary increases. Twenty-three non-Title I (38%) and 27 Title I (44%)teachers scored below the mean of 12.58 in Curriculum Issues. Participants were asked if their school has a well-balanced curriculum, if the curriculum makes allowance for student individual differences, and if the school's curriculum needed major revision. Twenty-five non-Title I (42%) and 19 Title I (31%) teachers scored below the mean of 16.75 in the Teacher Status. Statements included does their position give them social status in the community, does the community make teachers feels as part of the community, and it is difficult to be accepted by people in the community.

Twenty-four non-Title I (40%) and 24 Title I (39%) teachers scored below the mean of 12.68 in the Community Support of Education. Questions included does the community understand and appreciate good education, does the community support ethical practice of appointments and reappointments, and is the community willing to support a good program of education. Twenty-one non-Title I (35%) and 25 Title I (40%) teachers scored below the mean

of 13.86 in the School Facilities and Services division.  Participants answered questions about adequate classroom supplies and materials, procedures for obtaining materials, and adequate clerical services.  Nineteen non-Title I (32%)and 21 Title I (34%) teachers scored below the mean of 11.20 in the Community Pressure division.  With Community Pressures, participants reviewed statements about nonprofessional activities being unduly restricted, if teachers feel free to discuss controversial issues in their classes, and if community pressures prevent teachers from doing their best.

**Hypotheses**

**Null Hypothesis One.** A Mann Whitney $U$ test was conducted with a sample ($N = 122$) of middle school English and math teachers in the state of Virginia to determine if a statistically significant difference between teacher morale of middle school English and math teachers in Title I schools and middle school English and math teachers in non-Title I schools.  When conducting the Whitney Mann $U$ test, the analysis showed a two-tailed significance of $p = 0.038$.

The null hypothesis states there is no statistically significant difference between the morale of middle school English and math teachers in Title I versus non-Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire.  The teacher morale was evaluated for both Title I and non-Title I (M = 261.69, SD = 36.325, n = 122).  The minimum score was 145, and the maximum score was 332 for the participants.  The PTO can have a score from 100 to 400.  The results from the Whitney Mann $U$ test (Table 6) showed a significance ($p = 0.038$) which is less than the $p$-value of 0.05; thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.  Therefore, there was a statistically significant difference with an $\eta^2$ of 0.035 between the teacher morale of middle school English and math teachers in Title I schools and middle school English and math teachers in non-Title I schools.

Table 6

*Results from Whitney Mann U Test*

|  | Scores |
|---|---|
| Whitney Mann *U* | 1454.000 |
| Wilcoxon W | 3284.00 |
| Z | -2.079 |

**Null Hypothesis Two.** A Kruskal Wallis test was conducted with sample ($N = 62$) of middle school English and math teachers in Title I schools in the state of Virginia. The Kruskal Wallis test was run to determine if a statistically significant difference existed in teacher morale in rural ($N = 29$), suburban ($N = 15$), and urban ($N = 18$) Title I middle school English and math teachers. This analysis showed no statistically significant difference with a $\chi^2$ effect size value of 0.039 within teacher morale of Title I middle school English and math teachers in the three geographical locations of rural, suburban, and urban.

The null hypothesis states that there is no statistically significant difference in the morale of middle school English and math teachers in rural, suburban, and urban Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire. The teacher morale was evaluated for the three geographical locations (M = 270.85, SD = 31.240, n = 62). Using the overall results from the Title I survey participants, the lowest score was 196 (rural) and the highest score was 332 (urban). The PTO can have a score from 100 to 400. The results from the Kruskal Wallis test (Table 7) showed a significance ($p = 0.308$) which is greater than the *p*-value of 0.05 which means there is weak evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there was no statistically significant difference in teacher morale of Title I middle school English and math teachers in the three geographical locations of rural, suburban, and urban.

Table 7

*Results from the Kruskal Wallis Test*

|  | Score |
| --- | --- |
| Chi-Square | 2.354 |
| Df | 2 |
| Asymp. Sig. | .308 |

**Summary**

Chapter Four provided the report of the statistical tests and the analyses of the test for this study. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 24 to perform a Whitney Mann *U* test (teacher morale in Title I versus non-Title I middle school English and math teachers) for hypothesis one, and a Kruskal Wallis test (teacher morale in geographical locations in Title I middle school English and math teachers) for hypothesis two. Hypothesis one stated there is no statistically significant difference between the morale of middle school English and math teachers in Title I versus non-Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire using a Mann-Whitney *U* test. The results from the Whitney Mann *U* test showed a significance ($p = 0.038$) which is less than the *p*-value of 0.05. Therefore, there is a statistically significant difference with an $\eta^2$ effect size of 0.035 between the teacher morale of middle school English and math teachers in Title I schools and middle school English and math teachers in non-Title I schools. The null hypothesis was rejected for hypothesis one. Hypothesis two stated there is no statistically significant difference among morale of middle school English and math teachers in a) rural, b) suburban, and c) urban Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire using a Kruskal-Wallis test. The results from the Kruskal Wallis test showed a significance ($p = 0.308$) which is greater than the *p*-value of 0.05. Therefore, there is no statistically significant difference with a $\chi^2$ effect value of 0.039 which means there is weak

evidence to reject the null hypothesis.  In hypothesis two, the null hypothesis was accepted.

# CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

## Overview

Chapter 5 reviews the conclusions from this study. This chapter provides a discussion, implications, limitations, and recommendations for further research. Finally, this chapter will examine whether the results of this study support or contradict other research studies or theories.

## Discussion

The purpose of this causal comparative study was to determine the impact of Title I designation on middle school English and math teacher morale. In addition, this study was conducted to determine if geographical location rural, suburban, and urban had statistically significant difference in teacher morale in middle school English and math teachers in Title I schools. Teacher morale was the dependent variable and school geographical location and Title I designation were the independent variables. A Whitney Mann *U* test was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between morale in Title I and non-Title I middle school English and math teachers. To determine if geographical location a) rural, b) suburban, and c) urban had statistically significant difference in morale in middle school English and math teachers in Title I schools, a Kruskal Wallis test was conducted.

Educational policies are continuously changing, and the pressure of high-stakes testing continues, the teachers remain the foundational of the educational system. The topic of teacher morale has been previously studied (Byrd-Blake et al. 2010; Hyun-Jun, Ssang-cheol, & Sung-soo, 2012, Rowland, 2008) from different aspects such as how the leadership of school or the conditions of the building affect teacher morale. Despite the numerous studies in the area of teacher morale, there is a gap in the literature to determine if the Title I designation impacts teacher morale or if geographical location rural, suburban, and urban impacts teacher morale in Title I schools.

Policies change from year to year in a given school. This, along with the pressures of high-stakes testing, impact teacher morale, there are other aspects linked to teacher morale. Administrative support has been linked to teacher morale (Naile & Selecho, 2014). "The role of the principal is to guide and direct the behavior of the teaching staff in the school environment" (Naile & Selecho, 2014, p. 179). Using the results of his case study looking at staff motivation and retention in low-paying and low-performing schools, Norman (2011), provided suggestions to improve motivation and retention through improving communication between faculty and administrators, recognizing hard work, dealing with concerns in a timely manner, and providing opportunities for advancement. Nicholas-Omoregbe (2009) also provided suggestions to improve morale through improving the relationship between administrators and teachers. His suggestions were to ensure an open-door policy for communication, to provide teachers with clear expectations, opportunities for social interactions, and to be aware of good examples of school community contributions. The relationship between administrators and teachers can help to improve teacher morale. One of the divisions of the PTO was Teacher Rapport with Principal. When comparing this division with Title I and non-Title I teachers, 45% of Title and 45% of non-Title I teachers' score fell below the mean of 54.68. Fifty-five of the 122 teachers who participated in this study had concerns about their relationship with their principals.

Conditions and climate have been linked to teacher morale. Thirty-five percent of non-Title I and 40% of Title I teachers scored below the mean of 13.86 in the School Facilities and Services division. Thirty-nine percent, 47, of teachers in this survey did not believe they had adequate facilities and services in their school. When funding falls short, teachers often dip into their own pockets to purchase supplies and materials (Bivona, 2002; Paterson, 2009). Earthman and Lamasters (2009) conducted a study which linked the physical environment, lack of materials, run-down buildings, and aging technology to the attitudes and productivity of teachers.

"In such conditions, where morale is low, anxiety is high, budgets are insufficient, and the life prospects for students in the community are grim, we need much more than individual teachers who are hopeful to change the course of our educational future" (Hytten, 2010, p. 2).

Stress can contribute to teacher morale. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009) determined teacher stress can come from excessive workloads, student behavior, turmoil with teacher-parent relationships, conflicts with colleagues, lack of support from administrators, and student achievement. According to NCLB, all students must be "proficient" by the end of 2013 – 2014. All students are required to take the same high-stakes assessment which does not account for the differences in learning and learning rate of individual students. "Teaching is a stressful occupation and high levels of occupational stress have a strong effect on teachers' performance, career decisions, physical and mental health, and overall job satisfaction" (Klassen, 2010, p. 342).

Stress comes in many forms including rapport among teachers, teacher load, and curriculum issues. Results from the PTO that involve stress for teachers are documented in the following sentences. Thirty-eight percent of non-Title I and 44% of Title I teachers scored below the mean of 41.68 in the Rapport Among Teachers division. Fifty of the 122 participants had issues with their colleagues such as seeing cliques form and arguing among colleagues. Fifty-three percent of non-Title I and 37% of Title I teachers scored below the mean of 25.85 in Teacher Load. Forty-five percent, 55, participants were concerned about the amount of paperwork, class size, and number of meetings. Thirty-eight percent of non-Title I and 44% of Title I teachers scored below the mean of 12.58 in Curriculum Issues. Fifty participants had concerns about curriculum issues in their schools. Forty-two percent of non-Title I, 25, and 31% of Title I, 19, teachers scored below the mean of 16.75 in the Teacher Status. Forty percent of non-Title I and 39% of Title I teachers scored below the mean of 12.68 in the Community

Support of Education. Forty-eight of the 122 teachers who completed the PTO were concerned that the local community did not support education. Nineteen non-Title I (32%) and 21 Title I (32%) teachers scored below the mean of 11.20 in the Community Pressure division.

When school officials and administrators take the factors of teacher morale into account, there are many areas that can be addressed without additional budget concerns. This study determined that the morale of Title I middle school English and math teachers has a statistically significant difference from that of the morale of non-Title middle school English and math teachers in the state of Virginia. However, this study was unable to provide a statistically significant difference in the morale of geographical location rural, suburban, and urban of English and math teachers in Title I middle schools in the state of Virginia.

**Theoretical Framework**

The study used two theories when discussing teacher morale. The first theory was Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory: Self-Efficacy. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs was the second theory used with this study.

**Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory: Self-Efficacy.** "Bandura has emphasized *self-efficacy* – people's perception of their competence in dealing with their environment and exercising influence over events that affect their lives" (Miller, 2011, p. 243). "Teacher self-efficacy, which is based on the social cognitive theory, and Bandura's self-efficacy concept, is defined as teachers' belief that they can influence learning of students, including that of students with low motivation learning difficulties" (Ozkilic, 2014, p. 257). Teachers play the role of one of the most influential people in the educational arena. Teachers serve as the public relations agents for the performance of the school and the events within the four walls of the school building – and the four walls of individual classrooms. Teacher morale is an example of self-efficacy. "The types of teachers' efficacy are the following: behavioral self-efficacy, cognitive

self-efficacy, emotional efficacy, and finally the culture of his/her self-efficacy" (Gkolia, Belias, Koustelios, 2014, p. 328). Behavioral self-efficacy can be defined as the teacher's belief in his or her ability to carry out a plan for a specific situation. Cognitive self-efficacy is explained through a teacher's thoughts about his or her capability to overthink. Emotional self-efficacy deals with a teacher's own emotions. Finally, cultural self-efficacy deals with a teacher's ability in a cultural situation (Gkolia et al., 2014). Working conditions such as lack of materials and establishing a good working environment affect the level or perception of teacher morale. Teacher morale can affect retaining and attracting teachers to the district or school. When morale is low, teachers will want to leave, and new teachers may not want to come. Teachers may seek other job opportunities with school or districts that can provide materials for adequate instruction, and new teachers may seek other employment opportunities where their needs may be met.

On the contrary, "teachers with a strong sense of personal efficacy are more open to new ideas and innovations, show commitment to certain teaching and improve student achievement" (Gkolia et al., 2014, 333). With the evolving world of education, new ideas are always being shared and tried; teachers must be open to trying and experimenting with those new ideas to be up to par in the educational arena. Improving student achievement and closing the achievement gap is the largest priority in the educational society and in the current times, a teacher's personal efficacy plays a huge role in this area. If teachers are closed off to new ideas, then the same results or levels of student achievement will continue to occur.

**Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.** Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs can be connected to teacher morale. "In a 1943 paper called A Theory of Human Motivation, Maslow presented the idea that human actions are directed toward goal attainment" (Maslow, 1943, 370). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs include five levels: self-actualization, esteem, belongingness, safety, and

physiological. "The reason that these are related to morale is that if the low-level physiological, safety, and social needs are not satisfied, then the individual is not likely to have a positive morale" (Whitaker, Whitaker, & Lumpa, 2013, p. 4). When an individual, or in this case a teacher, has the lower level of the hierarchy met, he or she can move onto working on getting the higher levels met. Esteem and self-actualization includes recognition, self-respect, and working to one's potential.

Beginning at the lower level, a teacher must feel safe and secure in his or her teaching environment. Safety and security can come in many levels in the teaching professions. In the wake of many horrific violent events, teachers should be able to come to work with a secure and safe building to have their needs met. In addition to the literal meaning of safe and secure, teachers need to have the opportunity to have a voice or opinion in their teaching environments. When teachers are empowered to speak their opinions, they are more likely to have their needs met, remain in their position, and have higher morale.

At the higher levels, esteem and self-actualization, teachers like to be recognized for their hard work. Teaching is no longer an 8-hour day; many teachers stay after school to grade papers, create lessons, and assist students (Klassen, 2010). The long hours can tend to lower morale; however, when a teacher is recognized, the teacher tends to have higher morale. Self-actualization incorporates what a teacher believes he or she can become. Feeling safe and secure, having physiological needs meet, developing a sense of belonging, and having high esteem, teachers can have high morale leading to high student achievement, low teacher turnover, low teacher burnout, and higher job satisfaction and motivation.

**Research Parallels.** The results of this study parallel the results of other studies concerning teacher morale. In a study by Naile and Selecho (2014), determine the relationship between principals and teachers affect teacher morale. Rowland (2008) determined the

relationship between leadership and teacher morale, he was able to establish that leadership does affect teacher morale. Norman (2011) suggests improving leadership will improve teacher morale. In this study, 45% of Title I and 45% of non-Title I teachers had concerns about their relationship with their principals. The teachers did not feel that they could speak out against administrative policy in a faculty. Another concern was teachers did not feel they could speak to the principal about their concerns.

When resources and materials are a shortfall, many teachers spend their own money to make up the difference in the funding from the school (Bivona, 2002; Paterson, 2009). Earthman and Lamasters (2009) conducted a study demonstrating the conditions of the working environment, such as the classroom, can lower teacher morale. Thirty-five percent of non-Title I and 40% of Title I teachers scored below the mean of 13.86 in the School Facilities and Services division. Forty-seven (39%) teachers in this survey did not believe they had adequate facilities and services in their school.

According to Klassen (2010), stress can come from school policies, issues with colleagues, lack of support from leadership, and high demands. In addition to teachers teaching, they are required to complete a significant amount of paperwork such as lesson plans, attend multiple meetings, and maintain documentation. The percentages of teachers falling below the mean (Table 8) that involve stress for teachers are documented in the following sentences. Thirty-eight percent of non-Title I and 44% of Title I teachers scored below the mean of 41.68 in the Rapport Among Teachers division. Fifty of the 122 participants had issues with their colleagues such as seeing cliques form and arguing among colleagues. Fifty-three percent of non-Title I and 37% of Title I teachers scored below the mean of 25.85 in Teacher Load. Forty-five percent, 55, participants were concerned about the amount of paperwork, class size, and number of meetings. Thirty-eight percent of non-Title I and 44% of Title I teachers scored

below the mean of 12.58 in Curriculum Issues. Fifty participants had concerns about curriculum issues in their schools. Forty-two percent of non-Title I, 25, and 31% of Title I, 19, teachers scored below the mean of 16.75 in the Teacher Status. Forty percent of non-Title I and 39% of Title I teachers scored below the mean of 12.68 in the Community Support of Education. Forty-eight of the 122 teachers who completed the PTO were concerned that the local community did not support education. Thirty-two percent of non-Title I, 19, and 34% of Title I, 21, teachers scored below the mean of 11.20 in the Community Pressure division.

Table 8

*Percentages of Teachers Below the Mean on the PTO*

| Description | Non-Title I | Title I |
|---|---|---|
| Teacher Rapport with Principal | 45% | 45% |
| Satisfaction with Teaching | 43% | 35% |
| Rapport Among Teachers | 38% | 44% |
| Teacher Salary | 40% | 35% |
| Teacher Load | 53% | 37% |
| Curriculum Issues | 38% | 44% |
| Teacher Status | 42% | 31% |
| Community Support of Education | 40% | 39% |
| School Facilities and Services | 35% | 40% |
| Community Pressures | 32% | 34% |

## Implications

There was statistically significant evidence $p = 0.038$, $n^2 = 0.035$ to support the claim that morale in Title I middle school English and math teachers differs from the morale in non-Title I middle school English and math teachers. Title I schools selected for this study are those with at least 40% of the school population receiving free or reduced lunch. Learning climate and

characteristics of the school building and teacher, student, and parent perceptions have continuously proven a link to academic performance (Berry, 2012; Marzano, 2003; Rutter et al., 1979; Wentzel & Watkins, 2002). Reardon (2013) conducted a study to determine the relationship between academic achievement and family income. One of his findings is that the income achievement gap has not closed in the past three decades. The reading achievement gap between high-income and low-income families, with children born during the 50s, 60s, and early 70s, was about 0.9 standard deviation (Reardon, 2013). The reading achievement gap increased by 40 percent, 1.25 standard deviations, in standardized test scores in the 90s and 2000s (Reardon, 2013). Another finding is that "the income achievement gap is already large when children enter kindergarten and it does not grow significantly as they progress through school" (Reardon, 2013, p. 12). A teacher's level of anxiety has been documented to be higher when a teacher must get students to pass a standardized test, and a teacher's level of anxiety can be negatively impact student achievement (Grissom, Crotty, & Harrington, 2014).

The results of the PTO when comparing the morale of Title I and non-Title I English and math middle school teachers illustrated that a higher percentage of Title I teachers, 40% versus non-Title I teachers, 35%, had scores that showed the teachers believed that their schools did not have adequate school facilities and services. In addition, a higher percentage of Title I teachers, 21%, versus non-Title I teachers, 19%, had scores that showed the teachers felt pressures from the community. Curriculum Issues questions illustrated a higher percentage of Title I teachers, 44%, versus non-Title I teachers, 38% thought their schools faced curriculum problems. Forty-four percent of Title I teachers compared to 38% of non-Title I had concerns about rapport among teachers. Teacher rapport with the principal was the same percentage, 45%, in both Title I and non-Title I schools.

These results would explain the higher turnover in Title I schools due to issues with the

curriculum, inadequate facilities and services, and community pressures.  When a school is underperforming or not meeting their Annual Measureable Objectives (AMO), the community has to step up to get involved writing the school improvement.  When community members help to write the school improvement, they often tend to blame teachers for not providing a good education for the students.  In addition, when the AMOs are met, some teachers tend to look at other teacher's teaching assignments as some teachers have higher level classes than others do.  Part of the school improvement plan is looking into any curriculum issues a school might have such as students not being on grade, not having teachers that are highly qualified, or not having adequate supplies or books to provide proper instruction.

Reardon (2013) was able to determine that students from low-income families come to school with achievement gap from students from higher-income families.  The students from lower income families are students who attend Title I schools.  If students already come to school with an achievement gap, teachers can struggle with getting them to pass the standardized test increasing the teacher's level anxiety.  Grissom, Crotty, and Harrington (2014) were able to determine a link between a teacher's level of anxiety and student achievement.  Both level of anxiety and student achievement have been linked to teacher morale.

 If students come to Title I schools with academic deficiencies and are expected to learn at the same rate as the other students, the Title I teachers would have a certain level of anxiety which affects their motivation, their wanting to remain in their current position, and their turning around to negatively impact student achievement.  The cycle can continue year to year as the students progress through schools.

The results to determine if geographical location impacts the morale of Title I middle school English and teachers were not statistically significant.  While the sample sizes for each of the geographical locations were lower than the overall sample size, Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007)

state the sample size to conduct a causal comparative study is 15 in the major categories. When looking at the data, the minimum score was from the rural geographical location, and the maximum score was from the urban geographical location. One could read into this further to think Title I morale of English and math teachers might be higher because urban schools tend to have more funding than rural schools due to communities and areas in which the schools are located.

The results of this study can help the educational world in many ways. For one, school officials and administrators can be aware that the morale differs between Title I and non-Title I English and math teachers. Administrators can identify areas in which the morale differs between Title I and non-Title I schools. Implementing programs such as a new teacher mentor program can help acclimate new teachers to the two environments. Professional development can occur for teachers to help reduce the achievement gaps and research-based strategies for helping students show academic success.

While the sample sizes for the geographical locations rural, suburban, and urban were lower than the sample size for the first research question, Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) state that a sample size of 15 is adequate for major groups in a causal comparative study. The results from the Kruskal Wallis test were not clear enough to show statistically significant difference; however, the lowest and highest scores can be shown from results. The lowest score came from a rural Title I teacher, and the highest score came from an urban Title I teacher. Using this information, one might be able to make the statement teacher morale can be linked to money. Rural Title I schools most likely have a lower budget than urban Title I schools. Using this information, administrators can work to recognize hard work without monetary gain for teachers. Administrators can work with the community business and parent organization to provide teachers with supplies that might not be in the budget, and they can make teachers aware of

grants to be able to purchase needed materials.

School officials and administrators can use the results of this study to be proactive in helping to improve teacher morale. Making sure the lines of communication are open between administrations and teachers will help to improve morale and keep administrators aware of how their teachers are feeling. Developing schools into communities with support from administrators, parents, and the communities can help to improve the school environment.

## Limitations

Type of sampling, convenience, used in this study, the survey was voluntary, and the number of schools and districts agreeing to the study are the limitations in this study. The participants came only from the state of Virginia because the researcher teaches in the state and is familiar with the standardized test and levels of school improvement in the state. Other states' Title I schools may follow different policies and procedures for allocating funding; other states may have a different student to teacher ratio creating larger or smaller class size. Due to this, the researcher determined using schools in the state of Virginia would be convenient. Another limitation was that the completing the PTO was voluntary. An entire school or district was not required to complete the PTO because participation was voluntary, so participants came from all over the state of Virginia. This may have created bias as some groups of teachers who have lower morale could have individual participants who skewed the data, or groups of teachers with higher morale could have participants skewing that data as well. Finally, the participants are limited to the schools and districts that permitted the study to be conducted. In the state of Virginia, there are 102 districts. Some of the districts do not have a middle school containing 6th through 8th, so those schools were eliminated. Superintendents were contacted about allowing the researcher to conduct the study; however, some superintendents did not respond despite numerous attempts to contact them. Some superintendents declined to allow the researcher to

conduct the study in the district. In Northern Virginia, several districts required a large fee to process the application to conduct the research in the schools. This limited the number of urban teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools that were participants. Despite the limitations, the study does have an adequate number of participants to conduct the statistical analyses tests.

**Threats to Validity**

Some of the threats to validity include the Likert scale, self-reporting of perceptions, and population validity. The Likert scale is a threat to internal validity because the participants had to answer with the four answer choices. Teachers could have articulated or expanded on their responses given the opportunity; however, they were not able with the Likert scale. Self-reporting of perception of the participants' teacher morale caused a threat to validity. Teachers were able to identify their own level of agreement or disagreement for each statement. Participants were speaking to their morale rather than comparing their morale to other teachers in similar situations. Participants from the same school or district could have spoken to one another about the survey creating an internal threat. The discussion about the survey could have caused one person to influence another person's answers. This would have created a skew in the data between Title I and non-Title I teacher morale or a skew in geographical locations if the participants were from Title I schools.

A third threat to the validity is population validity. "Population validity concerns the extent to which the results of an experiment can be generalized from the sample that was studied to a specific, larger group" (Gall et al., 2007, p. 389). Using a small sample of Virginia public educators makes it hard to generalize to all teachers in the United States or even the entire state of Virginia. When using a small population sample, this can cause a threat to the external validity which may compromise confidence in stating whether the study's results are applicable to other groups such as teachers in Maryland or in the entire United States.

Finally, another threat to the validity of this study is the length of the PTO. The PTO contains 100 questions and can be time consuming. If a participant becomes tired, they stop answering the questions and the results would not be included in the study. In addition, a participant may become tired and just begin random answering the questions creating invalid results. Despite the threats to validity, the researcher attempted to reduce the threats to the validity by presenting the number of questions and approximate time to complete the PTO in the recruitment letter.

## Recommendations for Future Research

Three major recommendations are suggested for future research in the area of teacher morale and Title I designation. These recommendations are meant to expand on the knowledge of Title I designation and teacher morale and the relationship between Title I morale and geographical location. The recommendations are to aid in improving teacher morale in every school climate.

The first recommendation is to expand the research to include all middle school teachers. This study included only English and math teachers because in grades 6th through 8th all students are required to take a standardized test in English and math. Teachers in every content area help to make the school climate, so expanding the participants to include all teachers might help to strength the statistically significant difference between morale in Title I and non-Title I teachers.

Another recommendation is to change the time of the year when the study is conducted. The study was conducted during the month of February because teachers have had enough time to become familiar with each other, the school environment, and policies and procedures. Teacher morale can fluctuate throughout the course of the year. Conducting the study at the end of the year after the results of standardized tests have come back could strengthen the results of this study.

The final recommendation is to alter the environment of the study. In the state of Virginia, there are many more elementary schools. The number of Title I and non-Title I elementary schools is far greater than the number of Title I and non-Title I middle schools. Using elementary schools could strengthen the statistical power of the difference between morale in Title I and non-Title I schools as elementary teachers sometimes remain with the same students for all contents. In addition, using elementary schools may determine there is a statistically significant difference in morale in geographical locations in Title I schools as there will probably be more participants in the study.

## Conclusion

Being a teacher in the current educational climate comes with many challenges. Decline in student achievement, reduction in effectiveness, and reduction in motivation for one's job can contribute to low teacher morale (Dipaola & Wagner, 2011; Ghazanfar, Chuanmin, Khan, & Bashir, 2011; Klassen, 2010; Muller & Hanfstingl, 2010). In many states, teachers' evaluations are being tied to state standardized test results. High-stakes testing was brought into the educational arena with NCLB. Byrd-Blake et al. (2010), concluded that NCLB has had a negative impact on teacher morale with teachers having more than five years teaching experience. In addition, Byrd-Blake et al. (2010) concluded that NCLB had a negative impact on student achievement in middle and high school students.

To determine if the Title I designation impacted teacher morale, this study compared the morale between middle school English and math teachers in Title I versus non-Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire. This study determined there was a statistically significant difference $p = 0.038$, $n^2 = 0.035$ of moral between middle school English and math teachers in Title I versus non-Title I designated schools. This study determined teacher morale to be different when comparing morale between middle school

English and math teachers in Title I versus non-Title I designated schools as measured through the PTO.  These results are supported by factors such as administrative supportive, colleague support, curriculum issues, and school facilities and services.  In addition, this study sought to determine if geographical locations rural, suburban, and urban had a statistically significant difference in morale in Title I middle school English and math teachers.  There was no statistically significant difference $p = 0.308$, $\chi^2 = 0.039$ among morale in geographical locations rural, suburban, and urban of Title I English and math middle school teachers.   Therefore, geographical location did not have an impact on teacher morale.

The overall results speak to conditions of the current educational society.  Teachers feel stress from high-stakes testing, relationship with their principal and colleagues, trying to improve student achievement, and lack of materials and resources.  However, most teachers love teaching and enjoy educating students.  Although the educational system in Virginia is ranked number 7th in the nation, there are still adjustments that need to be made in order to support teacher morale and retain highly qualified teachers (Klein, 2014).  Even though most teachers love their profession, when dealing with these elements that decrease morale, low student achievement, job satisfaction, and salary concerns, many are opting to leave the profession.  It is up to the community, administrators, and parents to help increase teacher morale to ensure our teachers are remaining happy with their profession and jobs

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Letter to Superintendent

RE: Permission to Conduct Research

Dear _____,

I am writing to request permission to conduct a study at the middle school(s) within your district. I am currently enrolled in the Educational Leadership program at Liberty University and am in the process of writing my Doctoral Dissertation. The purpose of the study is to determine the impact of Title I designation on teacher morale in middle schools.

I would like to survey $6^{th}$ through $8^{th}$ grade math and English teachers in February of 2017 using the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (PTO), a 100 question survey. Teachers will not be identified by their specific names, rather they will be identified based on the grade level they teach, content, English and Math, gender, the school's geographic location (rural, urban, or suburban), and the school's Title designation (Title I or non-Title I). Interested participants will be provided consent information, but, because participation is anonymous, they will not need to sign the forms. There is no cost to the school district, the school, or the individuals in order to participate in the study. The PTO should take no more than 35 minutes of the teachers' time.

The results of the PTO will be pooled for the dissertation report and individual's opinions of the study will remain absolutely confidential and anonymous. Should the study be published as a manuscript, only the pooled results will be published.

Your approval to conduct this research will be greatly appreciated. I will follow up with a telephone call next week, and I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have. You may contact me at my email jlyons12@liberty.edu.

If you grant permission to conduct the research, please sign and return this form via email.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Lyons
Liberty University Doctoral Candidate

Approved by:


_____          _____
Print your name and title                                                                        Date


_____
Signature

**Appendix B: Letter to Principal**

RE: Permission to Conduct Research

Dear _____,

I am writing to request permission to conduct a study at your middle school. I am currently enrolled in the Educational Leadership program at Liberty University and am in the process of writing my Doctoral Dissertation. The purpose of the study is to determine the impact of Title I designation on teacher morale in middle schools.

I would like to survey 6th through 8th grade math and English teachers in February of 2017 using the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (PTO), a 100 question survey. Teachers will not be identified by their specific names, rather they will be identified based on the grade level they teach, content, English and math, gender, the school's geographic location (rural, urban, or suburban), and the school's Title designation (Title I or non-Title I). Interested participants will be provided consent information, but, because participation is anonymous, they will not need to sign the forms. There is no cost to the school district, the school, or the individuals in order to participate in the study. The PTO should take no more than 35 minutes of the teachers' time.

The results of the PTO will be pooled for the dissertation report and individual's opinions of the study will remain absolutely confidential and anonymous. Should the study be published as a manuscript, only the pooled results will be published.

Your approval to conduct this research will be greatly appreciated. I will follow up with a telephone call next week, and I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have. You may contact me at my email jlyons12@liberty.edu.

If you grant permission to conduct the research, please sign and return this form via email.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Lyons
Liberty University Doctoral Candidate

Approved by:


_____          _____
Print your name and title                                                    Date

_____
Signature

**Appendix C:  Recruitment Letter**

Dear Middle School Math and English Teachers,

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to determine if the Title I designation impacts teacher morale in middle school English and math teachers, and I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are 18 years of age or older, teach English and/or math in grades 6 through 8 in the state of Virginia, and are willing to participate, you will be asked to complete the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire. It should take approximately 35 minutes for you to complete the procedure listed. Your participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be required.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research, but you do not need to sign or return the form.

If you would like to participant in this study, please click on the following link and complete the survey.  The survey must be completed in one sitting.

Survey Link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSecaDlMaV-Dq5Q7nIokp5652Oa_8Pe8rDI1j-8RWAt8FIvaPg/viewform

Sincerely,

Jennifer Lyons Ed.S
Liberty Doctoral Student

**Appendix D: Consent Letter**

**CONSENT FORM**
The Impact of Title I Designation on Teacher Morale in Middle School
Jennifer Lyons
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study to determine if the Title I designation or geographical location (rural, suburban, and urban) affect teacher morale in middle schools. You were selected as a possible participant because you teach English and math in a middle school in the state of Virginia. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Jennifer Lyons, a student in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

**Background Information**: The purpose of this study is to determine if the Title I designation or geographical locations (rural, suburban, and urban) affect the morale of middle school English and math teachers. The research questions are included below:

RQ1: Does a statistically significant difference exist between the morale of middle school English and math teachers in Title I versus non-Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire using a Mann-Whitney U Test?

RQ2: Does a statistical significant difference exist among the morale of middle school English and math teachers in a) rural, b) suburban, and c) urban Title I designated schools as measured through the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire using a Kruskal-Wallis Test?

**Procedures**: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:
1. Answer the questions in the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire, which should take about 35 minutes. The data will be collected anonymously.

**Risks and Benefits of being in the Study**: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include enabling administrators to see if the Title I designation and geographical location (rural, suburban, urban) affect teacher morale in middle school English and math.

**Compensation**: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**Confidentiality**: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Data will be collected through a Google form protected by a password, and data will be stored on a password protected computer. Data must be retained for three years upon completion of the study per federal regulations.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study**: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and Questions**: The researcher conducting this study is Jennifer Lyons You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at jlyons12@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty advisor, Dr. Judy Shoemaker, at jshoemaker@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

**Appendix E: Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (PTO)**

This instrument is designed to provide you the opportunity to express your opinions about your work as a teacher and various school problems in your school situation. There are no right or wrong responses, so do not hesitate to mark the statements frankly. Please do not record your name on this document.

What content area do you currently teach?

_____ English
_____ Mathematics

Which grade level do you primarily teach?

_____ 6
_____ 7
_____ 8

Are you male or female?

_____ Male
_____ Female

How many years of experience do you have?

_____ 0 - 10
_____ 11 - 20
_____ 21 - 30
_____ 31 +

Is your middle school designated Title I?

_____ Yes
_____ No

**Appendix F: The Purdue Teacher Opinionaire**

**Prepared by Ralph R. Bentley and Averno M. Rempel**

**Read each statement carefully. Then indicate whether you (4) agree, (3) probably agree, (2) probably disagree, (1) disagree with each statement.**

1.  Details, "red tape," and required reports absorb too much of my time………...1   2   3   4

2. The work of individual faculty members is appreciated and

commended by our principal. ...............................................................1   2   3   4

3. Teachers feel free to criticize administrative policy at faculty

meetings called by our principal...........................................................1   2   3   4

4. The faculty feels that their suggestions pertaining to salaries are

adequately transmitted by the administration to the board of education. ............ 1   2   3   4

5. Our principal shows favoritism in his relations with the teachers in

our school. ................................................................. .....1   2   3   4

6. Teachers in this school are expected to do an unreasonable amount of

record keeping and clerical work. ....................................................1   2   3   4

7. My principal makes a real effort to maintain close contact with the

faculty. ................................................................ .............1   2   3   4

8. Community demands upon the teacher's time are unreasonable. ..................1   2   3   4

9. I am satisfied with the policies under which pay raises are granted. ..............1   2   3   4

10. My teaching load is greater than that of most of the other teachers in

our school. ................................................................. ......1   2   3   4

11. The extra-curricular load of the teachers in our school is

unreasonable. .............................................................. ............1   2   3   4

12. Our principal's leadership in faculty meetings challenges and

stimulates our professional growth.......................................... ...............1   2   3   4

13. My teaching position gives me the social status in the community that

I desire. ....................................................................................1   2   3   4

14. The number of hours a teacher must work is unreasonable. ........................1   2   3   4

15. Teaching enables me to enjoy many of the material and cultural

things I like. ..............................................................................1   2   3   4

16. My school provides me with adequate classroom supplies and

equipment. ................................................................................1   2   3   4

17. Our school has a well-balanced curriculum. ..................................1   2   3   4

18. There is a great deal of griping, arguing, taking sides, and feuding

among our teachers.......................................................................1   2   3   4

19. Teaching gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction. ................................1   2   3   4

20. The curriculum of our school makes reasonable provision for student

individual differences. .......................................................................1   2   3   4

21. The procedures for obtaining materials and services are well defined

and efficient. .......................................................................................1   2   3   4

22. Generally, teachers in our school do not take advantage of one

another. ...............................................................................................1   2   3   4

23. The teachers in our school cooperate with each other to achieve

common, personal, and professional objectives. .............................................1   2   3   4

24. Teaching enables me to make my greatest contribution to society. .............1   2   3   4

25. The curriculum of our school is in need of major revisions. ........................1   2   3   4

26. I love to teach. .............................................................................1   2   3   4

27. If I could plan my career again, I would choose teaching. ...........................1   2   3   4

28. Experienced faculty members accept new and younger members

as colleagues.......................................................................................... 1   2   3   4

29. I would recommend teaching as an occupation to students of

high scholastic ability. .........................................................................1   2   3   4

30. If I could earn as much money in another occupation,

I would stop teaching............................................................. ...........1   2   3   4

31. The school schedule places my classes at a disadvantage........................... 1   2   3   4

32. Within the limits of financial resources, the school tries to follow a generous policy

regarding fringe benefits, professional travel, professional study, etc. .............................

1   2   3   4

33. My principal makes my work easier and more pleasant. ............................ 1   2   3   4

34. Keeping up professionally is too much of a burden. ................................... 1   2   3   4

35. Our community makes its teachers feel as though they are a

real part of the community. .................................................................. 1   2   3   4

36. Salary policies are administered with fairness and justice. ......................... 1   2   3   4

37. Teaching affords me the security I want in an occupation. .......................... 1   2   3   4

38. My school principal understands and recognizes good

teaching procedures. ........................................................................... 1   2   3   4

39. Teachers clearly understand the policies governing salary increases........... 1   2   3   4

40. My classes are used as "dumping grounds" for problem students. .............. 1   2   3   4

41. The lines and methods of communication between teachers

and the principal in our school are well developed and maintained................... 1   2   3   4

42. My teaching load at this school is unreasonable. ........................................ 1   2   3   4

43. My principal shows a real interest in my department.................................. 1   2   3   4

44. Our principal promotes a sense of belonging among the

teachers in our school. ........................................................................ 1   2   3   4

45. My teaching load unduly restricts my nonprofessional activities. ............... 1   2   3   4

46. I find my contacts with students, for the most part, highly

satisfying and rewarding........................................................................ 1   2   3   4

47. I feel that I am an important part of this school system. ............................. 1   2   3   4

48. The competency of the teachers in our school compares favorably

with that of teachers in other schools with which I am familiar......................... 1   2   3   4

49. My school provides the teachers with adequate audio-visual aids

and projection equipment. ...................................................................... 1   2   3   4

50. I feel successful and competent in my present position. ............................. 1   2   3   4

51. I enjoy working with student organizations, clubs, and societies. ............... 1   2   3   4

52. Our teaching staff is congenial to work with................................................ 1   2   3   4

53. My teaching associates are well prepared for their jobs............................... 1   2   3   4

54. Our school faculty has a tendency to form into cliques. ............................. 1   2   3   4

55. The teachers in our school work well together............................................. 1   2   3   4

56. I am at a disadvantage professionally because other teachers

are better prepared to teach than I am. ............................................... 1   2   3   4

57. Our school provides adequate clerical services for the teachers. . ............... 1   2   3   4

58. As far as I know, the other teachers think I am a good teacher..................... 1   2   3   4

59. Library facilities and resources are adequate for the grade or

subject area which I teach.................................................................... 1   2   3   4


60. The "stress and strain" resulting from teaching makes

teaching undesirable for me...................................................................... 1  2  3  4

61. My principal is concerned with the problems of the faculty

and handles these problems sympathetically....................................... 1  2  3  4

62. I do not hesitate to discuss any school problem with my principal. ............. 1  2  3  4

63. Teaching gives me the prestige I desire. ....................................... 1  2  3  4

64. My teaching job enables me to provide a satisfactory standard

of living for my family. ...................................................... 1  2  3  4

65. The salary schedule in our school adequately recognizes

teacher competency. ......................................................... 1  2  3  4

66. Most of the people in this community understand and

appreciate good education. .................................................. 1  2  3  4

67. In my judgment, this community is a good place to raise a family. ............. 1  2  3  4

68. This community respects its teachers and treats them like

professional persons. ........................................................ 1  2  3  4

69. My principal acts interested in me and my problems. ................................ 1  2  3  4

70. My school principal supervises rather than "snoopervises"

the teachers in our school. .................................................. 1  2  3  4

71. It is difficult for teachers to gain acceptance by the people

in this community. ........................................................... 1  2  3  4

72. Teachers' meetings as now conducted by our principal

waste the time and energy of the staff. ...................................... 1  2  3  4

73. My principal has a reasonable understanding of the problems

connected with my teaching assignment. ........................................ 1  2  3  4

74. I feel that my work is judged fairly by my principal. ................................ 1  2  3  4

75. Salaries paid in this school system compare favorably with

salaries in other systems with which I am familiar. .......................................... 1  2  3  4

76. Most of the actions of students irritate me. ................................................. 1  2  3  4

77. The cooperativeness of teachers in our school helps

make our work more enjoyable. ........................................................................ 1  2  3  4

78. My students regard me with respect and seem to have

confidence in my professional ability.................................................................. 1  2  3  4

79. The purposes and objectives of the school cannot be

achieved by the present curriculum. .................................................................. 1  2  3  4

80. The teachers in our school have a desirable influence on the

values and attitudes of their students.................................................................. 1  2  3  4

81. This community expects its teachers to meet unreasonable

personal standards. ........................................................................................... 1  2  3  4

82. My students appreciate the help I give them with their schoolwork. ........... 1  2  3  4

83. To me there is no more challenging work than teaching............................... 1  2  3  4

84. Other teachers in our school are appreciative of my work. .......................... 1  2  3  4

85. As a teacher in this community, my nonprofessional activities

outside of school are unduly restricted............................................................... 1  2  3  4

86. As a teacher, I think I am as competent as most other teachers. .................. 1  2  3  4

87. The teachers with whom I work have high professional ethics.................... 1  2  3  4

88. Our school curriculum does a good job of preparing students

to become enlightened and competent citizens. ................................................ 1  2  3  4

89. I really enjoy working with my students. ..................................................... 1  2  3  4

90. The teachers in our school show a great deal of initiative and

creativity in their teaching assignments. ............................................... 1   2   3   4

91. Teachers in our community feel free to discuss controversial

issues in their classes. ...................................................................... 1   2   3   4

92. My principal tries to make me feel comfortable when visiting

my classes. ...................................................................................... 1   2   3   4

93. My principal makes effective use of the individual teacher's

capacity and talent. .......................................................................... 1   2   3   4

94. The people in this community, generally, have a sincere and

wholehearted interest in the school system. ...................................... 1   2   3   4

95. Teachers feel free to go to the principal about problems of

personal and group welfare. .............................................................. 1   2   3   4

96. This community supports ethical procedures regarding the

appointment and reappointment of members of the teaching staff. ................... 1   2   3   4

97. This community is willing to support a good program of education............ 1   2   3   4

98. Our community expects the teachers to participate in too

many social activities. ...................................................................... 1   2   3   4

99. Community pressures prevent me from doing my best as a teacher. ........... 1   2   3   4

100. I am well satisfied with my present teaching position............................... 1   2   3   4

This is a link to the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire online survey.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1BlRkSfvCXl3svyzJljqOEBoNGUmdh-j3gTrqNYNKs-

s/viewform?usp=send_form

**Appendix G: School Districts and Number of Title I and**

**non-Title I Middle Schools in Virginia**

| County | Geographical Location | Number of Middle Schools | Title I | Non-Title |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Accomack County Public Schools | Rural | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Albermarle County Public Schools | Rural | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| Alexandria Public Schools | Urban | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Alleghany County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Amelia County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Amherst County Public Schools | Rural | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Appomattox County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Arlington County Public Schools | Urban | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Augusta County Public Schools | Rural | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Bedford County Public Schools | Rural | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Botetourt County Public Schools | Rural | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Bristol Public Schools | Suburban | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Brunswick County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Buchanan County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Buckingham County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Campbell County Public Schools | Rural | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Caroline County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Carroll County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Charlotte County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chesapeake Public Schools | Rural | 10 | 1 | 9 |
| Chesterfield County Public Schools | Suburban | 12 | 0 | 12 |
| Clarke County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Colonial Heights Public Schools | Urban | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Craig County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Culpeper County Public Schools | Rural | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Cumberland County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Danville Public Schools | Suburban | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Dickerson County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Dinwiddie County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Essex County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Fairfax County Public Schools | Suburban | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Falls Church Public Schools | Urban | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Fauquier County Public Schools | Rural | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Franklin Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Franklin County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Frederick County Public Schools | Rural | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Fredericksburg City Public Schools | Suburban | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Gloucester County Public Schools | Rural | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Goochland County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Greene County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Greensville County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Halifax County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Hampton Public Schools | Suburban | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| Hanover County Public Schools | Rural | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Harrisonburg Public Schools | Suburban | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Henrico County Public Schools | Suburban | 12 | 1 | 11 |
| Henry County Public Schools | Rural | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Highland County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Hopewell Public Schools | Suburban | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Isle of Wight County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Lancaster County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Lee County Public Schools | Rural | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Lexington Public Schools | Suburban | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Loudoun County Public Schools | Rural | 15 | 0 | 15 |
| Louisa County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Lunenburg County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Lynchburg Public Schools | Suburban | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Madison County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Manassas Park Public Schools | Urban | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Martinsville Public Schools | Suburban | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Mathews County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Mecklenburg County Public Schools | Rural | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Middlesex County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Montgomery County Public Schools | Rural | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Nelson County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| New Kent County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Newport News Public Schools | Suburban | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| Norfolk Public Schools | Urban | 9 | 4 | 5 |
| Northumberland County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Orange County Public Schools | Rural | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Page County Public Schools | Rural | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Pittsylvania County Public Schools | Rural | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| Poquoson Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Prince Edward County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Prince William County Public Schools | Rural | 19 | 3 | 16 |
| Pulaski County Public Schools | Rural | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Richmond Public Schools | Urban | 8 | 8 | 0 |
| Roanoke Public Schools | Rural | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Roanoke County Public Schools | Suburban | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Rockbridge County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Rockingham County Public Schools | Rural | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Salem Public Schools | Suburban | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Shenandoah County Public Schools | Rural | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Smyth County Public Schools | Rural | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Southampton County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spotsylvania County Public Schools | Suburban | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| Stafford County Public Schools | Suburban | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| Staunton Public Schools | Suburban | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Suffolk Public Schools | Rural | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Surry County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Sussex County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Tazewell County Public Schools | Rural | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Virginia Beach Public Schools | Suburban | 13 | 0 | 13 |
| Washington County Public Schools | Rural | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Waynesboro Public Schools | Suburban | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| West Point Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Westmoreland County Public Schools | Rural | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools | Suburban | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Winchester Public Schools | Suburban | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Wise County Public Schools | Rural | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| Wythe County Public Schools | Rural | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| York County Public Schools | Suburban | 4 | 0 | 4 |

** Some schools were combined schools; however, in order to be considered, schools must

contain 6th through 8th grades

**Appendix H: IRB Approval**

# LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

January 6, 2017

Jennifer Lyons
IRB Exemption 2733.010617: The Impact of Title I Designation on Teacher Morale in Middle School

Dear Jennifer Lyons,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

> (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

# LIBERTY
## UNIVERSITY.
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