

THE IMPACT OF THE SUCCESS FOR ALL CLASSROOM MODEL ON SCHOOL  
CLIMATE AND TEACHER SATISFACTION

by

Amy Lynn Chesnut

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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## ABSTRACT

Providing quality education for students in disadvantaged communities has been at the forefront of educational research for decades. These schools struggle each year with budgets that fail to meet the needs of the school, low teacher and student morale, and low teacher retention. Success for All has been identified as an effective program to increase literacy skills and standardized test scores for disadvantaged children. The purpose of this quasi-experimental static-group comparison study was to investigate the impact of Success for All on teacher satisfaction and school climate in low performing schools. Teacher satisfaction and school climate have an instrumental, positive effect on a student's capability to learn and perform at school. This study sought to determine if Success for All has had an impact on these characteristics within a Kentucky school district. The researcher collected data through the use of a job satisfaction survey and the school district's climate survey. An independent samples *t* test was utilized to determine whether there were statistically significant differences. In the research question regarding teacher satisfaction, it was found that there were significant differences between a school that utilizes Success for All and one that does not in the areas of supervision, contingent rewards, operating conditions, coworkers, communication, and total satisfaction. In the research question regarding school climate, it was found that there were significant differences in the areas of time, facilities and resources, managing student conduct, teacher leadership, school leadership, and professional learning. It was concluded that the school that utilized Success for All had lower scores in all categories and the most negative impact. Future tests should be administered to determine what factors of the program caused the negative impacts.

*Keywords:* Success for All, literacy, teacher satisfaction, school climate, elementary teachers

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

Elementary schools in the United States are plagued with alarming rates of teacher turnover and increased job dissatisfaction. Consistent budget cuts, the constant bombardment of standardized testing, and consistently low wages are draining the morale of public school teachers across the globe. Job satisfaction and morale of teachers are critical when considering the value of education that is provided for students within classrooms (Moore, 2012). These issues are even more prevalent in disadvantaged communities. Schools in disadvantaged communities struggle each year with budgets that fail to meet the needs of the school, low teacher and student morale, and low teacher retention. These socioeconomic disadvantages are clearly seen in the failure of these schools to meet state testing standards and retain quality teachers year after year (Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014).

### **Background**

Providing a quality education for students in disadvantaged communities has been at the forefront of educational research for decades. These schools struggle each year with budgets that fail to meet the needs of the school, low teacher and student morale, and low teacher retention. These socioeconomic disadvantages are clearly pronounced in the failure of these schools to meet state testing standards year after year. These disadvantages also weigh heavily on overall school climate and teacher satisfaction (Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014).

The achievement gap in our society has been a focus for scholars and researchers for decades. Researchers have studied the potential causes of the achievement gap between various groups of students (Jeynes, 2015; Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014). There are striking statistics to show that there is a significant achievement gap between students of color and Caucasian students. “This scholastic gap exists in virtually every measure of educational progress,

including grade point average (GPA), standardized tests, the drop-out rate, and the extent to which students are left back a grade” (Jeynes, 2015, p. 17).

A meta-analysis completed by Jeynes (2015) examined whether the best solutions for reducing the achievement gap were held at the school level or individual level. The results indicated that family factors and curriculum change were the most effective at reducing the achievement gap. The study reported that governmental programs aimed at reducing the achievement gap in our society should look beyond factors within the school system such as curriculum and funding and focus on societal forces outside of the school system that affect the students’ performance.

Vygotsky’s (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theorizes that children begin to learn and develop from their first days of life. Social interaction with others and observations of the social environment surrounding them allow children to learn speech, language, and appropriate social behavior. According to ZPD, children have two distinct learning levels: (a) the actual development level and (b) the potential development level. The actual development level is described as the current development level that is reached through previously learned skills. The potential development level is described as the development level that can potentially be reached through instruction and collaboration. Vygotsky theorized that focusing on a child’s potential development can maximize and speed up their actual developmental level.

Bandura’s (1977) Social Learning Theory explains that a majority of human behavior is learned through modeled behavior. Teachers and school staff members become models of appropriate behavior. The concept of cooperative learning allows children to learn through interaction and collaboration with others. Both of these concepts, along with many of the tools utilized in modern Comprehensive School Reform (CSR), base their tools around these theories.

CSR models were created to provide a coordinated, systematic approach to school improvement. This coordinated effort is comprised of tools that address each and every aspect that affects school success: curriculum, instruction, governance, scheduling, professional development, assessment, and family and community involvement. CSR programs do not operate as tools that address each student's needs but seek to overhaul the school from top to bottom in order to provide an enriched learning environment for all students in the school (Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center, 2006).

The idea of CSR was brought about in the early 1990s by a report published by the RAND Corporation that suggested that the key to creating the biggest impact on school success would be spending funds on school wide reform (Barnes, Camburn, & Rowan, 2004). In 1997, CSR was given an enormous momentum boost when the federal Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program was passed. This program was instrumental to the success of CSR programs because it allowed congressional funding to support the adoption of CSR programs throughout the country. In 2001, The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program was changed from a demonstration program to a fully operational federal program known as the Comprehensive School Reform Program (Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center, 2006). Only a few years after the passing of the Comprehensive School Reform Program, "roughly 10% of all public schools in the United States had adopted a Comprehensive School Reform design" (University of Michigan, 2010, para. 4).

Success for All was developed in Baltimore in 1987 and has been used in over 1,000 schools across the United States. The program's development began in 1986 by a group at Johns Hopkins University. The goal of the program was to ensure success for every child in the educational system, even students who were viewed as "disadvantaged," and a variety of

different schools have used this program with proven success. In 1988-1989 five of the poorest schools in Philadelphia piloted the program. A majority of the participants who were included in the study were from Cambodia and spoke limited English (Slavin & Madden, 2012). Research funded by the U.S. Department of Education found that the “difference in only three years was enough to cut the black-white achievement gap in half” (Borman, Carter, Aladjem & LeFloch, 2004). Results in Kentucky indicated that schools which fully implemented Success for All had a four point gain in the area of reading while overall the state of Kentucky decreased by 0.4% (Success for All Foundation, 2015).

Around the world, many governmental departments are beginning to focus on school climate as a strong component of school reform. It has been discovered that when disadvantaged youth consider the climate of their school to be positive, academic ratings are more aligned with peers from higher income families. Specifically, this relationship was found in “standardized measures of achievement, rather than grades.” These distinctions were found in the following areas: mathematics, science, reading, and writing. A study completed by Reynolds, Lee, Turner, Bromhead, and Subasic (2017) found that school identification is an important aspect of a positive school climate. Higher ratings of school climate were found in schools where the students experienced an understanding relationship with school staff. “Educational reform programs and practices may benefit from an approach that serves to build the psychological connection between school members” (Reynolds et al., 2017, p. 82).

School climate goes beyond academic success. The National School Climate Council (2007) states,

A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributing and satisfying life in a democratic

society. This climate includes norms, values and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe. People are engaged and respected. Students, families and educators work together to develop, live and contribute to a shared school vision. Educators model and nurture attitudes that emphasizes the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning. Each person contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment (p. 5).

Rigorous, relevant, and engaging curriculum contributes to creating positive school climate. When students from all walks of life are not provided with a rigorous and enriching curriculum, the school climate suffers and opportunities are lost for students to be career or college ready. The impact for “at risk” students can be immense. Due to the impact that states put on standardized testing, many of these students are missing out on real-world skills and a narrower curriculum that is more product based than interesting. Because of this focus, schools are not meeting the needs of students through differentiated instruction and varied learning styles. Their primary focus is on low-level assessments to test core subjects (Alliance for Excellent in Education, 2013).

A study conducted by Master, Sun, and Webb (2016) shows that minority teachers report more teacher dissatisfaction than Caucasian teachers. This data aids in helping better understand the higher rate in which minority teachers leave the classroom compared to Caucasian teachers. Recruiting minority teachers from the immediate community allows students to have a connection to minority teachers that they may not have with Caucasian teachers.

There are many factors that influence a child’s success in education. Job satisfaction and school climate are two extremely important aspects that affect the success of a school district and

its students. CSR models like Success for All are adapting their programs more and more every day to increase and maximize teacher satisfaction and school climate. As children learn from observing the behaviors and atmosphere around them, their success depends on the ability of the school to keep its employees and atmosphere engaging and positive.

### **Problem Statement**

Many research studies have concluded that Success for All is very effective in increasing literacy skills and standardized testing scores for disadvantaged children. According to a study completed by the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center (2006), the average effect size of the results showing a positive impact in reading is +0.64, which corresponds to a moderately strong effect. The Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center study also analyzed the effects of Success for All on additional outcomes such as teacher satisfaction and school climate. Three independent studies were analyzed, and it was noted that the teacher satisfaction ratings between Success for All teachers and control group teachers were not statistically significant.

Two studies that examined levels of school climate in Success for All schools were analyzed by the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center (2006). The center's researchers found that the results were mixed, with one school reporting increases in positive school climate and others showing a decrease in positive school climate. The problem is that there exists a need for more recent research for Success for All which may provide a clearer understanding of the effects of the program on teacher satisfaction and overall school climate.

### **Purpose Statement**

The first purpose of this study was to determine the effect of Success for All on teachers' overall satisfaction. It is imperative that teachers be given resources (such as professional development), staff support, and materials that provide them with the ability to create a positive,

enriching classroom environment for their students (Bishop, Cardichon, & Roc, 2015). Although professional development can be a powerful tool in preventing retention, often times educators are disconnected from these learning opportunities because of the disconnect felt from their classroom. Effective professional development can be a powerful tool in improving school morale and promoting teachers' leadership skills (Cardichon, & Roc, 2013).

The second purpose was to study the impact of Success for All on overall school climate. Many research studies have concluded that positive school climate is a predictor of academic success and achievement (Bradshaw & O'Brennan, 2014; Reynolds, Lee, Turner, Bromhead & Subasic, 2017; Zullig, Huebner & Patton, 2010). Positive school climate has been deemed a "fundamental aspect of school reform and improvement" (Reynolds et al., 2017). According to Reynolds et al. (2017), disadvantaged students that reported a positive school climate had grades that more closely aligned with their higher income peers. Bradshaw and O'Brennan (2014) also pointed out that positive school climate increases job satisfaction among teachers and teacher retention.

The existing research on the effects of Success for All on job satisfaction and school climate are dated and do not provide useful, current information. This study provides current information and assists the reader in determining how the participating schools implemented the program and what the effects were based upon their implementation. The dependent variables in this study were teacher satisfaction and school climate and the independent variable was Success for All. The population of study included a static sample of kindergarten through fifth grade teachers from two elementary schools. Elementary school A contained a student population of 85% minority and over 95% qualify for free or reduced lunch. The population of elementary school B, which was the control group, contained 67% minority and 90.6% qualify for free or

reduced lunch. Both schools were located within the same school district. Within the school district, two fifths of the schools received a “distinguished” rating (Department of Education, 2018). Elementary schools A and B were placed in the “focus” school category, but comprehensive school reform measures were only adopted in elementary school A.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study sought to determine whether comprehensive school reform programs, such as Success for All, impacts teacher satisfaction in the school. According to a study published in 2013 by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), teachers valued the professional development received through Success for All more than their control group. When given a survey, teachers in Success for All schools responded with mixed praise for the professional development delivered by the program. They felt that it was more extensive and helpful than teachers in the control group but felt that it did not adequately prepare them for instruction after implementation (Quint et al, 2013).

Success for All allows the school to customize the tools and techniques utilized in order to create a system that works to satisfy the specific needs of the students and teachers. In this proposed study, the researcher reviewed the professional development tools and techniques chosen and utilized by the Kentucky Success for All school district to determine what effect, if any, they had on teachers’ satisfaction levels and overall school climate. The researcher analyzed the results to determine whether the school utilized impactful techniques and which techniques were the most impactful.

According to Cohen et al. (2011), “School climate is based on patterns of people’s experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures” (p. 1). It is widely known that a positive

school climate intensifies child development and a productive learning environment. This study sought to analyze whether the programs, professional development, and cooperative learning strategies utilized in Success for All truly creates a positive school climate where “educators model and nurture an attitude that emphasizes the benefits of, and satisfaction from, learning” (National School Climate Council, 2007, p. 5).

This study can assist other school district administrators seeking to utilize Success for All as a school wide reform plan in understanding the impact the program will have on teacher satisfaction and overall school climate. This study can also assist the local public school system in determining whether Success for All would be a valuable tool for other schools within the district. Beyond just the school district, this study can assist teachers that will be working in Success for All schools to determine the impact that the program has had on the satisfaction of other teachers and the overall climate within their school. It can also be useful to district curriculum developers in determining the effects of this type of curriculum on teacher satisfaction and school climate.

In conclusion, research has shown that teacher satisfaction and overall school climate are two fundamental building blocks of students’ success. This study sought to analyze Success for All in a diverse school district in order to determine what impacts Success for All has on teacher satisfaction and overall school climate.

### **Research Questions**

**RQ1:** Does implementation of Success for All have an effect on teachers’ satisfaction?

**RQ2:** Does implementation of Success for All effect school climate?

### Definitions

1. *Assessments* – Tests and evaluations used to measure students’ skills and understanding and academic progress. (Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center, 2006)
2. *Curriculum* – The scope and sequence of learning objectives and indicators, as well as material provided for lessons to instruct such objectives. (Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center, 2006)
3. *Literacy* – The ability to use reading, writing and numeracy skills in order to achieve goals, develop knowledge and realize potential. (UNESCO, 2006)
4. *School Climate* – Norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe. (Cohen et al., 2011).
5. *School Culture* – A shared set of beliefs, visions and traditions that determine the aspects in which the school functions. (Policy Futures in Education, 2011)
6. *Teacher Satisfaction* – A positive emotional state resulting from a, affirmative appraisal of the teaching profession. (Locke, 1976)

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

This study sought to provide an updated analysis of the programs, professional development, and cooperative learning strategies utilized in Success for All to determine whether it may truly create a positive school climate where “educators model and nurture an attitude that emphasizes the benefits of, and satisfaction from, learning.” The aim of this study was to see if there is a relationship between academic success, teacher confidence levels, and school climate. The theoretical framework of this study was Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development and Bandura’s Social Learning Theory. Related literature pertaining to comprehensive school reform, achievement gap, professional development for educators, job satisfaction, school climate, school data, and Success for All has been thoroughly reviewed. Chapter two is organized as follows: (a) theoretical framework, (b) related literature, and (c) summary.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Zone of Proximal Development**

The theoretical basis of this proposed study was derived from Vygotsky’s (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the correlation between his theory and the introduction of cooperative learning in the classroom. Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a Soviet psychologist who specialized in the areas of psychology, defectology, and mental abnormality. Most of his research concentrated on the social development of children and youth. Vygotsky sought to discover the linkages among motor skills, speech, thought, and the development of language and logical thinking. His theory posited that human development has been intrinsically linked to human interactions with their outside environment and those around them.

Vygotsky's (1978) research into the relationship between learning and development began with analyzing the three theoretical positions that existed at the time of his work. The first position theorized that learning was an independent process from development. This theory conjectured that "learning is considered a purely external process that is not actively involved in development" (p. 79). The second theory posited that learning is synonymous with development. The theory summarized that development occurs through a set of conditioned reflexes or through the act of learning. The third position exhibited a blend of the two prior positions. This position viewed development and learning as two distinctly different processes; however, each process has a direct impact on the other. Vygotsky utilized the work of Koffka (1924) as an example of this position. Koffka's theory introduced maturation as a developmental process that depends on the development of the nervous system and learning, which is a process in and of itself.

After years of thorough research into these three positions on the relationship between learning and development, Vygotsky (1978) derived a new approach to this relationship known as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky theorized that the interrelationship of learning and development are present from a child's first days. Through social interactions with other children and adults, children are learning speech and the names of objects. They are learning how to act in their social environment through imitation of adult behaviors.

ZPD demonstrates that learning and development are apparent in school age children because learning specific subjects occurs in specified developmental stages and ages. ZPD continues by breaking the development process into two different levels: (a) actual developmental level and (b) potential development level. The actual developmental level is described as the current mental developmental level that the child has arrived at through previously learned skills. The potential developmental level is described as the level of

development that can be achieved through instruction and collaboration with others. Vygotsky (1978) theorized that other researchers speculated that development can only be measured by the actual developmental level and that “what children can do with the assistance of others might be in some sense even more indicative of their mental development than what they can do alone” (p. 85).

ZPD is described as the distance between the actual developmental level and the potential developmental level. ZPD describes the functions and skills that have yet to be learned and mastered and the child’s ability to learn those skills. By utilizing the ZPD, educators can create a course for each individual child that maximizes their learning potential. The critical theory associated with ZPD is that what is in the ZPD today will be part of the actual developmental level tomorrow (Vygotsky, 1978).

According to Vygotsky’s theory, if one focuses on the child’s potential development, one can enrich and speed up the child’s actual development. Current district testing measures examine a child’s aptitude solely based on the student’s independent actual development, disregarding the student’s potential collaborative development. “Teaching consists of presenting activities, stimulating the child within their zone of proximal development, and then providing the resources necessary for the child to succeed, achieve, and develop” (Doolittle, 1995, p. 12). Vygotsky (1978) argued that teaching toward a child’s previously completed developmental level is ineffective at best. It does not aim for a new stage of the developmental process but rather lags behind this process” (p. 89).

“From a Vygotskian perspective, the teacher’s role is mediating the child’s learning activity as they share knowledge through social interaction” (Dixon-Krauss, 1996, p. 18).

Teachers provide scaffolding by accessing previous knowledge, making connections to text and

life events, providing intermittent feedback, and providing cues and prompts to assist students. Furthermore, contemporary applications of Vygotsky's ZPD include both corporative learning and "reciprocal teaching." With the reciprocal teaching method, the teacher and students collaborate in the learning process, focusing efforts on summarizing, questioning, clarifying and predicting. Eventually, the teacher's role decreases, and students take ownership of their learning. (Dixon-Krauss, 1996).

Another modern-day example of Vygotsky's ZPD utilized in the classroom is cooperative learning. Cooperative learning plays off Vygotsky's theory of potential development in which the skills learned through interaction and collaboration with others can enrich and magnify the child's actual development. In cooperative learning, children are broken into small groups of their peers to create a much more personal learning environment. Students are given independent tasks that add to the final product that the team presents. The concept behind small group interaction with individual tasks is that the child learns the value of independent contribution to a team effort, learns how to approach effective face-to-face communication with other team members, and learns the importance of assessment and evaluation of other team members' contributions. Students in cooperative learning environments must be accountable for their own independent work while being open and able to learn from others. These are skills adamantly necessary to function and flourish in modern society (Doolittle, 1995).

Cooperative learning is broken down into two main types: (a) structured team learning and (b) informal group learning methods (Slavin, 1995). Structured team learning is described as learning techniques that emphasize teamwork and team responsibility. The teams are rewarded only when all members learn the subjects that are being instructed. Slavin explains that "three concepts are central to all student team learning methods: team rewards, individual

accountability, and equal opportunities for learning” (p. 10). Team rewards are given when the appropriate skills are learned and demonstrated by each member of the team. Individual accountability ensures that the members are responsible for their own learning along with being responsible to ensure that the skills are learned by the other members. The team only succeeds if all members have learned the skill. Equal opportunities for success are demonstrated through improvements over past performances. All members must strive to perform better than past performances.

Informal group learning methods give a bit more flexibility to the ways in which the teams are structured and operate. One good example of an informal group learning method is a classroom model known as Group Investigation which was developed by Shlomo and Yael Sharan (1992). In this model, students are given a unit to study and are given the opportunity to form their own groups and develop their own tasks and steps in order to thoroughly learn the subject at hand. At the end of the exercise, the groups make a presentation to the rest of the class about what steps they took and what they learned together.

The work of Vygotsky and research into the uses and effects of utilizing cooperative learning in the classroom both show that children’s capabilities of learning are significantly increased through collaboration and team interaction. According to Slavin (1995), “Outcomes are generally enhanced if students are taught specific ways of working in groups dealing with both metacognitive and social strategies for making best use of the group learning setting” (p. 21). Through group learning strategies, children also learn positive interdependence in which they learn the value of cooperation to reach individual and group goals (Doolittle, 1995).

## **Social Learning Theory**

The basis of Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory consists of two main concepts: (a) mediating processes occur between stimuli and responses and (b) behavior is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning. Children base observational learning from many different models in their life, including family members, teachers, and peer groups. In the social learning system, behaviors can be derived from direct experiences or imitation of observation.

According to Bandura (1977), most human behavior is learned through modeled behavior. Through modeled behavior, one can reduce trial and error and store information for future reference. This allows for one to access prior knowledge when trying a new skill and later perfect it through enactment. Bandura identifies four cognitive processes that govern observational learning: (a) attentional, (b) retentional, (c) production, and (d) motivational. Observational learning, which is initially learned through modeling, will later be refined through experiences. True learning occurs when one uses prior knowledge and experiences to skilled action.

Bandura (1971) stated, "Most of the behaviors that people display are learned, either deliberately or inadvertently, through the influence of example" (p. 5). Children are more likely to imitate those who relate most to them; therefore, most children imitate behavior modeled by those of the same gender. Societal norms strengthen the behavior through reinforcement or punishment. Bandura (1971) said, "Stimuli indicating that given actions will be punished or non-rewarded tend to inhibit their performance; whereas, those signifying that the actions are permissible or rewardable facilitate their occurrence (p. 17). Reinforcement stimuli can be

derived from intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Reinforcement of societal norms from peer groups or family members is an external reinforcement.

According to Bandura (1971), “If actions were determined solely by external rewards and punishments, people would behave like weathervanes, constantly shifting in radically different directions to conform to the whims of others” (p. 27). External reinforcements will have little impact on the child if it does not match the intrinsic needs of the individual. New patterns of behavior are created by organizing constituent responses into certain patterns and consequences. Children learn by observing the reactions to other behavior. According to Bandura’s Social Learning Theory, children learn a rough form of behavior before they perform the behavior. McLeod (2016) uses vicarious reinforcement, in which a person models behavior by observing the consequences of another person’s behavior, as an example of this.

While previous knowledge and skill do impact behavior, you can not necessarily predict behavior based on these factors.

An outcome expectancy is defined as a person’s estimate that a given behavior will lead to certain desired outcomes. An efficacy expectation is the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcomes. Outcome and efficacy expectations are differentiated, because individuals can believe that a particular course of action will produce certain outcomes, but if they entertain serious doubts about whether they can perform the necessary activities such as information does not influence their behavior (Bandura, 1977, p. 193).

According to Bandura (1971), “People learn to evaluate their behavior partly on the basis of how others have reacted to it” (p. 28). Cognitive evaluation plays an essential role in

Bandura's theory. Bandura believed that humans actively engage in information processes that evaluate the consequences from an action performed. He believed that "People not only prescribe self-evaluative standards for others, they also exemplify them in response to their own behavior" (p. 28).

Bandura's Social Learning Theory addresses observational learning and explains complex behavior observed in children; however, the Social Learning Theory falls short in addressing a wide range of behaviors including action, thoughts, and feelings. "This is particularly the case when there is no apparent role model in the person's life to imitate for a given behavior" (McLeod, 2016, p. 4). Additionally, it is widely accepted now that heredity and environment do not work independently.

### **Related Literature**

#### **Comprehensive School Reform**

Past research points to Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) as a widely successful tool for reducing the educational achievement gap in public schools. A meta-analysis completed by Jeynes (2015) sought to determine whether the best solutions for reducing the achievement gap were held at the school level or individual level. The results indicated that family factors and changing the curriculum were the most effective at reducing the achievement gap in the schools utilized for the study. Children from economically disadvantaged areas often have low expectations thrust upon them and rarely have access to challenging and enriching curriculum, therefore keeping them from reaching their true potential. A challenging curriculum is necessary to develop the capabilities of high-potential, economically disadvantaged students (Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014). One particular school with a majority student population of low-income, minority students chose a curriculum and instruction pattern that was very structured, placing focus on

drill and routine. The results of the study completed by Tomlinson and Jarvis (2014) found that students who had access to challenging curriculum “were able to maintain high expectations for their own achievement, surround themselves with peers and adults who held similar high expectations, and feel supported as they accessed challenging curriculum” (p. 196).

Academic success is accomplished by overhauling not only the students’ access to challenging and enriching curriculum, but also the support center for the student both at school and at home. Hatch (2013) points to the critical importance of building a school’s capacity as a critical element in support student success. School capacity refers to the school’s infrastructure and resources that are available to meet the students’ needs. Ensuring that the school’s infrastructure is designed to meet the students’ needs is critical in student development. The school’s capacity not only applies to money and resources but also to school personnel’s skills, knowledge, and disposition (Hatch, 2013).

The final step in ensuring a successful CSR integration is putting forth a successful implementation and tracking policy (Cheung & Slavin, 2016). A school can have the best intentions to implement a chosen CSR plan but can fail at implementing this plan due to lack of many integral resources such as readiness and resources, or failure to implement whole-school improvements, instead focusing on a single factor of improvement. These resources that determine a school’s readiness for implementing a CSR plan include things such as teacher buy-in, adequate teacher support, educational and technological material availability, and adequate staff, among many others. Not only do CSR plans incur large costs for the programs themselves, but they also require many resources above what the school has budgeted and purchased (Cheung & Slavin, 2016).

An effective way to prevent failure in academic performance is to intentionally set students up for success. The incorporation of successful characteristics into the foundation of a CSR can transform a low-achieving school into a model-like school. This comprehensive approach is built from successful components, such as materials, methods, and instructional delivery methods. Providing students with an environment that is rich in learning and cognitive development will facilitate a successful academic environment. CSR attempts to reorganize entire schools to achieve desired academic outcomes (Cheung & Slavin, 2016).

CSR implementation should lead to two outcomes: (a) Schools are systematically redesigned to meet the specific components of the CSR adopted, (b) Changes resulting from the implementation, such as educational productivity and student growth, should begin to improve slowly over the next two to three years (Cheung & Slavin, 2016).

CSR implementation is most likely to achieve success when the program provides the necessary professional development and staff support to ensure a meaningful implementation (Cheung & Slavin, 2016). One of the most widely used and extensively evaluated programs is the Success for All program. Success for All combines three basic elements: (a) a highly specified curriculum with an emphasis on cooperative learning, (b) a whole-school improvement plan that addresses non-instructional issues that affect student success, and (c) strategies that ensure staff buy-in and proper training and professional development (Quint et al., 2013).

### **Achievement Gap**

The Civil Rights Movement and the War on Poverty brought equality to the forefront of discussion. In the 1970s, educational opportunities that African American students received were not comparable to Caucasian students. According to standardized testing, the achievement gap in reading and math has been reduced by up to 50% compared to what it was 40 years ago.

Although there have been improvements in the educational system, the achievement gap between affluent Caucasian American and poor African American students is larger than ever. Today, more than the color of your skin, the biggest threat to the American dream is social and economic class. To many, a college education is the only way to escape poverty, and only five percent of Americans whose parents did not finish high school have a college diploma (Porter, n.d.).

According to Woessmann (2015), United States students from two-parent families achieve a grade level higher than peers from single-parent families. The United States has one of the highest percentages of single-parent families among developed countries and, thus, experiences many educational achievement gaps. Inequality can be directly linked to changes in family structure. Households in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for annual income have the ability to explore enrichment activities for their children. Additionally, children that are born into the lower 10<sup>th</sup> percentile were less likely to rise out of the bottom third as compared to those with married parents (DeParle, 2012). According to Ansell (2011) with the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, current statistics show that

82.7 percent of Asian students and 78.4 percent of white students in the class of 2008 graduated on time; That was the case for only 57.6 percent of Hispanic, 57 percent of black and 53.9 percent of American Indian students. Likewise, only 68 percent of male students graduated on time in 2008, compared with 75 percent of female students. Over the long term, only about one half of male students from minority backgrounds graduate on time (para. 5).

The achievement gap is apparent when looking at facets of educational progress including GPA, standardized test scores, drop-out rates, and retention rates (Jeynes, 2015). A

study conducted by the Annie E. Casey Foundation determined that minority students and children from impoverished backgrounds that are not reading on grade level by the third grade are three times more likely not to graduate from high school as compared to their Caucasian peers (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2011). According to Resmovits (2018), only 13% of African American students were reading at or above grade level compared to 51% of their Caucasian classmates. This percentage decreased as the students reached eighth grade, with only 10% of African American students and 15% of Latino students reading at or above grade level, compared to 44% of their Caucasian peers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).

African American students are underrepresented in gifted education classes. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (2016), African American students made up only 9% of the gifted and talented student population. Spencer and Dowden (2014) pose the theory that the absence of black students in gifted education classes is due to the poor image these students have of themselves as learners. The authors theorize that many African American students are afraid of being involved in gifted programs due to a fear of not being accepted by their African American peers. Spencer and Dowden suggest that standardized testing could also be a cause for the low number of African American students in gifted studies. It is their opinion that standardized tests are “culturally biased in content language and format” (p. 3).

Children in families with incomes less than one half of the poverty line were found to score between 6 and 13 points lower on standardized tests. Additionally, socioeconomic status appears to have the greatest effect on early and middle childhood. These findings specifically impact students getting into many gifted programs since admittance takes place in middle grade levels and is based on standardized testing (Lam, 2014). Academically tracking low income

students in early grade levels further separates them from their affluent peers. Students are identified by their intellectual capabilities and are separated into a hierarchical system of groups for core instruction. Teachers work with students on their perceived academic ability levels, which keeps the higher performing students in higher achieving groups and the lower performing students achieving below standard. Many times, higher income Caucasian or Asian children are placed in elite classrooms, while lower income students are given a watered curriculum. Recent research, conducted by the Brookings Institution, suggests that if students are not tracked beginning in eighth grade, the United States will not produce enough students, of all ethnicities, that are proficient in the area of mathematics. Additionally, this study found that tracking high achieving African American and Hispanic students can help close the achievement gap with high performing Caucasian students (Barshay, 2016).

Tavernise (2012) suggests that one reason for the achievement gap is that wealthy parents are spending more time and money on extracurricular activities for their children and are more involved in their child's education than ever, while low-income families are more stretched for time and resources due to an increase in single family homes. The achievement gap begins when better educated people marry others with the same level of education. This is the root cause of social forces such as an achievement gap. Nationally, the median income for Caucasian families is approximately 70% higher than that of minority families, giving these students the academic advantage through access to a range of extracurricular activities. Researchers continue to try and pinpoint why race and class are such determining factors in students' academic success. Some researchers believe that these advantages are "opportunity gaps," where a plethora of resources are available to higher income students.

Politically progressive university towns such as Berkeley, California; Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and Ann Arbor, Michigan have some of the widest achievement gaps between black and white students in the United States, even though these are the towns of prestigious universities with academic programs that support equality for students. Gleibermann (2017) found that the academic culture of nearby universities motivated high school students and parents and encouraged parents to enroll students in academic enrichment outside of the classroom.

Could the key to closing the achievement gap be in quality teacher development? According to Sims (2011), researchers have consistently found that improving teacher effectiveness directly affects student achievement; however, the question is, “how do we make sure that they are effective?” The Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) identified four key elements for establishing effective teachers: (a) common language to define teacher practice, (b) aligned rigorous and common student assessment system, (c) systematized “Signature Strategies” for instruction and (d) individualized, active teacher coaching (Sims, 2011). According to the AUSL, these four elements support sustained teacher improvement and greatly impact student achievement. “Last June AUSL surveyed 324 of its teachers. The overwhelming majority said that the teacher development process was effective in: (a) improving the achievement of their students (88%), (b) their own teaching effectiveness (89%) and (c) their job satisfaction (75%)” (Sims, 2011, para. 12).

Evans and Leonard (2013) theorize that minority teachers are especially adept at instructing minority students. They theorize that because minority teachers bring to the classroom knowledge of the minority students’ background, cultural nuances, and vernacular,

they are more likely to build a positive relationship with, be a successful role model for, and provide more motivation for minority students.

CSR programs are slowly beginning to align their programs with the same understanding that for minority and low income students inclusion and high expectations are keys for academic success. According to Borman et al. (2004), “for CSR models to be truly effective in improving education for all students, developers and school staffs implementing CSR must (a) be cognizant of the varied cultural backgrounds and values of racial and ethnic minorities and (b) work to change prejudicial beliefs about and low academic expectations for minority students” (p. 130). Kirp (2010) explains that students’ understanding and belief about intelligence are critical components in how they assess their own learning capacity. He explains that when students understand that intelligence is within their control, they are more likely to work up to their potential.

Educators are always looking for a “cure” to the achievement gap. Educators are constantly seeking the ideal CSR program for their institutions that fits their specific needs. Success for All has shown promise as a strategy to use. Kirp (2010) suggests that Success for All is successful in closing the achievement gap because the program is designed around meeting the individual needs of each student.

### **Professional Development for Educators**

According to Darling-Hammond, Hyler, Gardner, and Espinoza (2017), professional development (PD) is a structured learning environment that impacts change in teaching practices and student outcomes. PD focuses on specific strategies and best practices. These elements focus on discipline, specific curriculum development, and pedagogies in areas such as mathematics, science, or literacy. Research conducted by the Learning Policy Institute suggests

that effective PD implements the following strategies: (a) incorporation of active learning, (b) support for collaboration among educators, (c) using models of best practices, and (d) providing coaching and expert support.

PD that engages teachers directly and allows educators to be active participants in their own learning is one of the strategies of effective professional development. Making the shift from traditional lecture based PD has allowed teachers to make personal connections with both the curriculum being taught and direct connection to their classroom and students. The use of authentic artifacts and interactive strategies provide authentic learning opportunities for educators (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, Gardner, & Espinorz, 2017).

One of the key components of PD that the Learning Policy Institute suggests is using models of best practices and peer coaching. The use of curricular models provides educators with a clear vision of what best practices look like. Coaching provides expert support and sharing of evidence based practices and focused information based on the teachers immediate needs. Bandura (1977) suggests the formation of individual knowledge through observation. Research suggests that observational learning has been found to be an effective mechanism in teacher development (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, Garner, & Espinoza, 2017). Teachers reconstruct behaviors as modeled by master teachers to implement into their classroom. According to Bandura (1977, 1997), many of these behaviors become routine and do not require additional modeling or planning.

PD research has made the shift from delivery styles to focusing on authentic teaching practices. When educators are encouraged to work collaboratively and create PD communities within their learning discipline and grade, they can create a culture of positivity and change within their learning community. Gast, Schildkamp, and van der Veen (2017) stated that

working together creates opportunities to discuss issues, skills, and concepts. Creating PD communities also creates an atmosphere where teachers can share needs and common materials with other peers in their own grade level. Finally, PD communities allow for sustained progress and changes as teachers leave the profession and are replaced with new teachers. A study conducted by Gast et al. (2017) found that through team-based PD, teachers gained hands on examples of new teaching strategies and methods, a better understanding of the students and their needs, and greater clarity of the teaching and learning goals within their school. The study also found that the teachers involved in the team-based PD became more aware of the role that they play within the school and gained a higher level of confidence in their teaching skills.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Individuals with high job satisfaction have been shown to be more productive in their profession. Employees who cite high job satisfaction have decreased absences, volunteer more often, produce work more effectively, and have improved communication skills. Additionally, it has been proven that educators with high levels of job satisfaction directly impact the academic and psychological development of their students (OECD Library, 2014). According to *The Washington Post* (2013), “Teacher satisfaction has declined 23 percentage points since 2008, from 62% to 39% very satisfied, including five percentage points since last year, to the lowest level in 25 years” (para. 21). If job satisfaction is directly linked to student performance, it is essential that teacher satisfaction be a priority for school districts.

Researchers have found that people who feel their work is being directed from a higher calling have higher job satisfaction. For example, when someone feels that they are doing something that they were born to do, they are more passionate about their job and report much higher job satisfaction. This personal connection to their career makes trivial tasks seem more

meaningful and gives them purpose. Employees can shape their work to bring more meaning to their craft. For example, focusing energy on tasks that one finds particularly gratifying leads to more job satisfaction (Weir, 2013).

Psychologist Higgins (1987) introduced the discrepancy theory to explain the relationship between aspects of the self and affect. The discrepancy theory suggests that job satisfaction is derived from what one feels is important. When a person receives less than what is desired, dissatisfaction occurs. Diriwaechter and Shvartsman (2018) from the University of Basel's Faculty of Business and Economics carried out an in-depth investigation on the relationship between job satisfaction and wage changes. The results of the investigation showed that job satisfaction was positively influenced by wages increases, even more so when the wage increase was higher than their peers over the same period. These results are not surprising to many. The investigation also found that job satisfaction increased with the mere expectation of a wage increase, even up to a year in advance. Although higher salaries do improve job satisfaction, it is also shown that improved work environments also lead to higher job satisfaction. Organizational commitment refers to the tie that an individual has to a specific organization. Satisfied employees tend to produce higher quality work and are healthier. This organizational commitment also refers to the societal norms that a person is tied to in order to support their family.

According to Richmond (2013), factors that contribute to dissatisfaction among teachers include: (a) budget cuts, (b) opportunities for professional development, and (c) decreased collaboration time with colleagues. Additionally, this article reports that the higher teachers rate their job satisfaction, the higher they review the principal and their fellow staff members. The role and relationship with the school principal both directly and indirectly affect teacher

satisfaction. Additionally, policy makers at the government level have served as direct links to teacher satisfaction (Bogler, 2001).

One of the core challenges that the education system faces is teacher retention. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2018), 7% of teachers in public schools who left the profession had 1-3 years of experience. Additionally, 51% of teachers who left the field of education cited that the work load in their new line of employment was more manageable in the field in which they were currently working. Turnover rates among teachers rank significantly higher than those of other professions. It is time we start asking why this is the case. Instead of asking, “How can we recruit new teachers?” we should be asking, “How do we keep good teachers in the profession?”

Half of America’s public school teachers say they feel stressed several days a week and that their job satisfaction has dropped 23 percentage points since 2008 (Strauss, 2013). A loss of confidence and modern school reform implemented by the Obama administration has left teachers and administrators feeling less confident in meeting the needs of their students. According to a MetLife Survey of the American Teacher (2013), educators blame modern school reform, which emphasizes getting rid of ineffective educators, assessing teachers by student test scores, collective bargaining laws, and rewriting tenure for increases in stress and lower confidence. The job of the principal continues to become more complex and stressful. Job satisfaction among administration has decreased from 68% to 59% since 2008.

A study conducted by Agai-Demjaha, Minov, Stoleski, and Zafirova (2015) sought to find which demographic factors among six categories (job demands, control, relationships, role, changes, and support) had the highest effect on teacher satisfaction. It was found that, while all categories had an impact on job satisfaction, control and support had the highest effect on the

mean scores. This study also found that lower-grade school teachers, female teachers, teachers for whom this is their first job, and teachers with only a bachelor's degree perceive higher stress than do their counterparts that teach higher grades, male teachers, teachers that were previously employed, and teachers with higher education. Additionally, over half of teachers report feeling great stress several days per week due to a combination of decreasing budgets, meeting the needs of the diverse student body population, and decline in professional development (Strauss, 2013).

The state of Tennessee implemented a comprehensive statewide educator evaluation system. Findings from the study by the state of Tennessee included teacher satisfaction statistics. The study concluded that teachers were more satisfied when they were perceived to be effective in the classroom setting. Additionally, this study directly linked teacher satisfaction to teacher retention. When teachers were negatively evaluated, they were more likely to leave the field of education. As the state of Tennessee puts more emphasis on formal teacher evaluations, the unintended consequences of teachers leaving the field after poor evaluations may occur (Auletto, 2017).

Zinsler and Curby (2014) also point to the importance of job satisfaction among school administrators. The quality of interaction that a teacher has with their students can be influenced by the quality of interaction and relationship within the school organization. They theorize that an administrator who is not satisfied in their current position may provide less feedback and development for teachers and may be less motivated to ensure that sufficient resources are being provided for educational enrichment and teacher development. Administrators also value the importance of instructional techniques, curriculum, and PD, which can influence the quality of instruction provided by teachers.

Sun (2016) reports that while all teachers in urban, high minority schools are reporting higher satisfaction with pay and work, African American and Hispanic teachers are still more likely to report lower job satisfaction than their Caucasian peers. This statistic has been consistent over time. This data aids in explaining the higher rate in which teachers of color leave the classroom at significantly higher rates than white teachers. Recruiting minority teachers from the area in which they live allows students to have a connection to teachers of color that they may not have with white teachers (Barnum, 2016). Evans and Leonard (2013) express the critical need for teacher education programs that are aimed at recruiting and preparing African American teachers to teach in urban school districts.

### **School Climate**

School climate focuses on shared perceptions and how members of an organization perceive the organizational climate. Culture refers to shared beliefs, values, assumptions, and meanings within that community. Changing a school's climate is an ongoing process in which continual efforts are made by all members of the community working together. School climate can be changed through intentional efforts. Zakrzewski (2013) explains that a positive school climate can “decrease absenteeism, suspensions, substance abuse, and bullying, and increases students' academic achievement, motivation to learn, and psychological well-being” (para. 2).

Around the world, many governmental departments are beginning to focus on school climate as a strong component of school reform. It has also been found that when disadvantaged youth consider the climate of their school to be positive, school grades were more aligned with peers from higher income families. Positive school climate impacts many standardized measurements of achievement, such as success in mathematics, science, reading, and writing (Reynolds et al., 2017).

Successful CSR programs place great emphasis on building the psychological connection between teachers and their students (Reynolds et al., 2017). The mutual trust and respect between teachers and their students can directly affect the atmosphere within the school. According to Cardichon and Roc (2015), students' academic performance, attendance, and positive behavior all increase when the students feel supported and encouraged by their teachers.

School climate goes beyond academic success. School climate can positively affect the psychological well-being and motivation of students (Bradshaw & O'Brennan, 2013). Students are more prepared to deal with depression, anxiety and bullying when the school curriculum is designed to develop and foster the students' social and emotional development (Tuoti, 2017). Many schools are beginning to incorporate Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) into their daily instructional curriculum. Incorporating SEL into the classroom teaches students competency in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. SEL can make a major impact on positive school climate if the approach involves the students' parents and community and is coordinated with the academic plan (Elias, 2016).

Additionally, rigorous and relevant, engaging curriculum contributes to creating positive school climate. Rigorous curriculum provides the learning strategies and skills necessary to be successful in a college and career setting. An engaging curriculum provides opportunities for the students to demonstrate knowledge learning and keeps the students understanding the relevance of the curriculum. The curriculum provided to wealthy, Caucasian students tends to provide a more rigorous, college-ready approach than the curriculum provided in poorer school districts. Current research shows that a rigorous and engaging curriculum is not available for low-income, minority, and disabled students, therefore denying them opportunities to gain the knowledge necessary to be successful in college and their careers. The current curriculum offered to these

students tends to be rote and low-level and absent of material that teaches problem solving, collaboration, and communication skills. This curriculum fails to teach learning strategies that will benefit these students over time, therefore fostering feelings of inadequacy and limited potential (Cardichon & Roc, 2013). The impact for “at risk” students can be immense. Due to the emphasis that states put on standardized testing, many of these students are missing out on real-world skills and a narrower curriculum that is more product based than interesting. Because of this focus, schools are not meeting the needs of students through differentiated instruction and varied learning styles. Their primary focus is on low-level assessments to test core subjects (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2013).

The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (2018) defines a positive school climate as “the product of a school’s attention to fostering safety; promoting a supportive academic, disciplinary, and physical environment; and encouraging and maintaining respectful, trusting, and caring relationships throughout the school community no matter the setting” (para. 1). They define three areas of focus for a healthy school climate: (a) engagement, (b) safety, and (c) environment. Engagement refers to relationships within the school organization and between teachers and students and respect for diversity within the school. Safety refers to both emotional and physical safety of students within the school. Environment refers to the physical, academic, and disciplinary environment in the school. They theorize that a positive school climate can improve attendance and retention and graduation rates. Additionally, school climate has been linked with higher academic achievement (National Education Association, 2017).

One of the most important, if not the most important, aspect of a positive school climate is effective teaching and the bond created between teacher and student. Effective teachers utilize

a diverse set of strategies that engages and supports a student's willingness to learn and supports high achievement in the classroom. Low-income students and students of color have limited or decreased access to quality, experienced, and effective teachers. A positive relationship between the student and teacher can foster a positive school climate and aid in meeting the needs of the student, both academically and emotionally. Schools that serve large populations of low-income students tend to have very poor work and learning environments, which result in decreased interest from teachers with higher levels of experience. These schools tend to employ a large population of new teachers that have just begun their career in education. The less supportive environment coupled with the lack of experience tends to overwhelm an unseasoned teacher and drastically affects the teacher retention rates in these struggling schools. Academic performance, attendance, and positive behavior all drastically increased when the students felt supported and encouraged by his or her teacher (Cardichon & Roc, 2015).

The final step in creating and retaining a positive school climate is designing a tool to successfully test and monitor school climate and making changes based upon the results of those tests and results. According to Bradshaw and O'Brennan (2014), school surveys should focus on the emotional, physical, and behavioral aspects of school climate. These surveys should also be utilized annually and involve students, families, teachers, administrators, and education support professionals. In addition, the results should be shared among the entire school community. School climate should be assessed focusing on the following key factors: "choose a reliable and valid assessment, assess annually, survey across perspectives, communicate findings, take action, repeat" (Bradshaw & O'Brennan, p. 2).

## School Data

On December 10, 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed by former President Obama. This new law builds upon key areas of progress made in recent years and focuses on preparing students to be college or career ready (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Today, high school graduation rates are at an all-time time high, dropout rates are at historic lows, and more students than ever are going to college. The goals of ESSA are to: (a) advance opportunities for America's disadvantaged and high need students, (b) require that all students in America be taught high academic standards that prepare them for career or college, (c) ensure vital information is provided to students, educators, and families through annual statewide testing assessments, (d) invest in high quality preschool, and (e) maintain the expectation that there will be accountability and change in our lowest-performing schools. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) exposed achievement gaps for traditionally underserved students. The focus that it placed on accountability became an essential aspect on its effectiveness in strengthening underperforming schools. These changes to our educational system have provided students with positive changes and are preparing our students for life after high school. For example, in 2013, a study conducted by Child Trends showed that 58% of students entering Kindergarten could write their name, compared to 50% in 1997 (Redd et al., 2012).

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, only 26% of students are prepared for collegiate level math while 38% are prepared in the area of reading. If you break down the math scores, "32% of white students and 47% of Asian students scored at proficient or above in math, only 7% of black students and 12% of Hispanic students did" (Camera, 2016, para. 9). These scores reflect a decline in college readiness over the past ten years; however, there are currently more students than ever taking advanced placement classes, which could

explain the significant achievement gap in minority students and Caucasian students.

Additionally, scores could be affected because the high school dropout rate is the lowest in history. Traditionally, students in the bottom 10% may not have attended school in recent history, affecting the achievement gap between minorities and Caucasians.

According to the United States Census Bureau, 88% of adults in the United States hold a high school diploma, while 33% of adults hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Women are only slightly more likely to obtain higher education at 33% compared to 32% of men. Additionally, Caucasians and Asians are more likely to hold advanced degrees compared to African Americans and Hispanics (Ryan & Bauman, 2016).

According to a study conducted by WalletHub titled "2017's Most and Least Educated States," Kentucky was ranked 46<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states. Results derived from Quality of Education and Attainment show 72.2% of Kentuckians 25 and older have a high school diploma, while only 14.7% of Kentuckians have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. However, WalletHub released a study in 2016, titled, "States with the Best and Worst School Systems" and Kentucky ranked 17<sup>th</sup> in the nation. Preparing students to be lifelong learners begins in preschool. The Kentucky Department of Education Kindergarten Readiness 2016-2017 study found that 58.4% of students are prepared to enter elementary school compared to 20% of recent high school graduates who are considered college ready (Perkins, 2017).

The Kentucky Department of Education (2016) school report card is comprised of a scoring pattern of Distinguished, Proficient, and Needs Improvement. Scores of 72.8 or higher correlate to a "Distinguished" school; 67.2 to 72.7 correlate to a "Proficient" school; and any scores lower than 67.2 correlate to a "Needs Improvement" school. Schools that are consistently rated as "Needing Improvement" can be categorized as a focus school. According to the

Kentucky Department of Education, elementary schools that fall into the “focus school” category must meet one or more of the following categories:

*Non-Duplicated Gap Group Category:*

Schools that have a non-duplicated student gap group score in the bottom ten percent of non-duplicated gap group scores for all elementary, middle, and high schools.

*Bottom Five Percent Category:*

Schools with an individual student subgroup by level that falls in the bottom five percent for individual subjects.

Title I directs funds to public schools where a high percentage of students are children from low-income homes. Funding must be directed toward students who are currently failing or at risk of failing core academic standards. However, if at least 40% of students are from at-risk environments, funds may be used to improve schoolwide funding. In 2014, more than \$14 billion was allocated to Title I funding (Dynarki & Kainz, 2015). Funding is mandated to scientifically proven programs that affect both academics within the classroom and parental involvement (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

### **Success for All**

A key component to CSR is using scientifically based research to identify best practices in education. Success for All was one such CSR model developed in 1987 by a team from Johns Hopkins University and was designed to “break the cycle of failure with thoroughly researched, proven-to-work literacy programs” (Success for All Foundation, 2015, para. 2). The program specifically focuses on children who are economically disadvantaged and live in poverty stricken areas. Its goal was to ensure the success of every child in the educational system, not just those with advantaged backgrounds. Success for All was created to ensure that minority students

received the same chance for success as their Caucasian peers. Research funded by the Department of Education found that the achievement gap between Caucasian and African American students was cut in half in only three years (Success for All Foundation, 2015).

The framework of Success for All is comprised of strategies that promote cooperative learning, professional development for educators and schools, and community and family involvement. These strategies all combine to form a program that promotes a collaborative whole-school framework to support student success.

In Kentucky alone, Success for All was responsible for a 4% increase in the number of students who scored proficient or above on the reading section of the K-PREP standardized test in 2014 and 2015 (Success for All Foundation, 2015). In Louisville, Kentucky, Success for All schools made twice the gains as other schools and boasted greater gains in attendance, reduced out-of-school suspensions, higher teacher ratings of perceptions of educational quality and job satisfaction, and higher student ratings of school climate and educational quality (Slavin & Madden, 2012).

A key component of Success for All is the focus on cooperative learning. Success for All promotes cooperative learning and engages and motivates students through “using quarterly assessments to monitor student progress, stopping students from falling behind with one-on-one tutoring, and engaging student families through the learning process” (Success for All Foundation, 2015, para. 3). Spann (2016) states that they will utilize Success for All to reach their academic goals by setting high expectations for students, help each student reach their all-time best, use data and relationships with students to meet them where they are academically and socially, and provide specific feedback to students.

According to the Success for All Foundation website (2015), a child must be able to read on grade level by the third grade and continue their reading growth through secondary school in order to succeed in school. Success for All is scripted, with technology embedded into every lesson. The program boasts that it focuses on the whole child. The child's social and emotional learning and development are treated as important as the child's academic development. Additionally, research conducted by Quint et al. (2013) states that Success for All is designed to reach three specific outcomes: (a) achievement, (b) grade-level progression, and (c) special education placements. Their study found that kindergartners attending Success for All schools scored significantly higher on standardized reading assessments. These students represented a range of demographic and socioeconomic categories. Additionally, Quint et al. (2013) found that while teachers initially expressed concerns about implementing this new, complex, and demanding initiative, by the end of the year, many teachers were beginning to feel more comfortable with the program. Results in Kentucky indicate that schools that fully implemented Success for All had a +4 gain in the area of reading, while overall the state of Kentucky decreased by 0.4%.

According to the Success for All website (2015), a decade of research has shown that by fifth grade, students that attended Success for All schools were a full grade level ahead of students in control schools. This academic progression continued through secondary school even though the program was not instituted at the middle school level. This program has a strong link to academic success. The aim of this study was to see if there is a relationship between academic success, teacher confidence levels, and school climate.

One key requirement of Success for All is that 80% of certified teachers in the building must agree to use this program. Students are grouped into 90-minute reading periods where they

receive comprehensive and scripted reading instruction. Students are ability-grouped by level, not by age, and are assessed every eight to nine weeks to monitor their progress. These students are able to move fluidly through groupings where they will receive differentiated instruction through individual tutoring (Smith, 2017).

Teachers assess students' progress through a series of four quarterly assessments. The assessments not only monitor students' progress but also identify opportunities for acceleration and students who need additional assistance. Students who need additional assistance work with reading tutors who work one-on-one with students for 20-minute sessions (Success for All Foundation, 2015). Tutoring to enhance reading skills is an essential aspect of the Success for All Program. In this model certified teachers work in small groups with students to meet their specific educational needs. Although this method is effective, it is costly and, therefore, is rarely implemented (Madden & Slavin, 2015).

Budget challenges make it cost prohibitive to have additional certified teachers meet with small groups. Alphie, a computer-based program, provides paraprofessionals with assessments that allow teachers to effectively meet the needs of large groups of students. This program addresses students' understanding in phonemic awareness, word skills, fluency, and comprehension. The program allows school staff to group students according to similar needs, then guides the students with a structured program of rotating reader and coach roles as they complete interactive activities, games, and assignments. As the student models the coaching role, they are given correct responses so that they can guide and give positive, corrective feedback to their partner (Madden & Slavin, 2015).

In kindergarten, students use KinderCorner, which is a full-day, themed-based program that focuses on developing oral vocabulary and literacy, with emphasis on developing

the student's social and emotional development (Slavin & Madden, 2012). Additionally, letter sounds are introduced in active and engaging lessons where students watch videos and perform puppet skits. As students' progress, they begin to use different programs, such as *Reading Wings* in second grade. Students work on key skills and focus on mastery of content and vocabulary. *Reading Wings* has a program through sixth grade, with progressive ability levels.

Family support is also crucial for the success of this program. For example, many support teams are made up of a parent liaison, vice principal, counselor, facilitator, and other appropriate staff members. Additionally, program facilitators work with the staff to organize informational sessions, work with individual students, and offer solutions to problems that may arise in the classroom (Success for All Foundation, 2015).

### **Summary**

Most studies that focus on CSR programs study the effects of the programs on students' scores. Few studies look for the effects of these programs on the underlying qualities of a school that have been shown to directly affect student achievement, such as job satisfaction and school climate and the ones that do are dated and do not provide recent data. The literature reviewed for this proposed study shows the overwhelming importance of job satisfaction among teachers and positive school climate in furthering academic achievement in students of all socio-economic backgrounds. The aim of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between academic success, teacher confidence levels, and school climate. Additionally, this study built on the existing library of research on CSR programs and Success for All - in particular. Instead of focusing on the overwhelming research of the effects of CSR programs on academic scoring and grades, this proposed study addressed the gap in research and focused on the effects a CSR program and Success for All have on teacher satisfaction and overall school climate. This

proposed study looked at how Success for All was administered in its initial years and provide a research base that can assist the school in determining what steps should be taken in the future to achieve the results that the district expected from the program, if needed. Other school districts may be able to utilize the results of this proposed study to determine whether Success for All is a good fit for their district.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODS

### Overview

This quantitative study sought to determine whether the tools used within Success for All have an impact on teacher satisfaction and school climate. The researcher collected data through surveys and then analyzed the data through the quasi-experimental research methods described in this chapter.

### Design

The researcher utilized a quasi-experimental static-group comparison design in an attempt to determine the overall effect that Success for All has on teacher satisfaction. A quasi-experimental study is used to estimate the casual impact of an intervention (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). In this study, the intervention was Success for All. The impacts studied were teacher satisfaction and school climate.

Quasi-experimental research, “if carefully designed, yields useful knowledge” (Gall et al., 2007, p. 416). According to Gall et al. (2007), a static-group comparison design has “two characteristics: research participants are not randomly assigned to the two treatment groups; and a posttest, but no pretest, is administered to both groups” (p. 416). This type of design is necessary since Success for All has already been implemented with the experimental group, and a pretest can no longer be administered. Participants were not randomly assigned to the experimental group and control group since the teachers in the experimental group had taught under Success for All and teachers in the control group had not.

### Research Questions

**RQ1:** Does implementation of Success for All have an effect on teachers’ satisfaction?

**RQ2:** Does implementation of Success for All effect school climate?

## Participants and Settings

The participants for the experimental group were drawn from a static sample of kindergarten through fifth grade teachers at elementary school A during the 2017-2018 school year. Elementary school A contained a student population where 85% of students are considered minority and over 95% qualify for free and reduced lunch (Public School Review, 2018). During the 2015 – 2016 school year, elementary school A was named a “focus school”. Elementary school A is located in the local public school system where two-fifths of the schools received a distinguished rating (Kentucky Department of Education, 2018). Community partnerships include the United Way’s Reading PALS program and the Boys and Girls Club. The teacher turnover rate at elementary school A has been very high, losing approximately two teachers per year. This turnover rate may echo the strain that teachers can be under when working at a low performing school with little parental support.

For each school, the number of participants sampled were 25 which exceeds the minimum of 22 needed for medium effect size (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The participants for the control group were drawn from a static sample of kindergarten through fifth grade teachers at elementary school B during the 2017 – 2018 school year. The population of elementary school B is made up of 62% minority and 90.6% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. During the 2015 – 2016 school year, elementary school B was classified as a school that “needs improvement” and continues to be a “focus school” (Kentucky Department of Education, 2018).

Although the student population of elementary school B contained a lower percentage of minority students, the populations of both schools reside in a low income area. Low testing scores have led both schools to become “focus schools”. Improvement initiatives, such as Success for All, have been implemented in elementary school A.

### **Instrumentation**

The researcher utilized the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) to analyze the respondents' feelings toward job satisfaction. The JSS was developed specifically for the human service fields of employment. The nine aspects of the survey are: salary, promotion, supervision, benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. These aspects were chosen by a thorough review of literature about the many dimensions of job satisfaction (American Journal of Community Psychology, 1985). The JSS consists of 36 questions with Likert scale responses. The ranges are as follows: Disagree very much = 1, Disagree moderately = 2, Disagree slightly = 3, Agree slightly = 4, Agree moderately = 5, and Agree very much = 6. The questions were grouped into categories based upon the topic of the question. The categories and responding questions are as follows: *Pay* (questions 1, 10, 19, and 28), *Promotion* (questions 2, 11, 20, and 33), *Supervision* (questions 3, 12, 21, and 30), *Fringe Benefits* (questions 4, 13, 22, and 29), *Contingent rewards* (questions 5, 14, 23, and 32), *Operating conditions* (questions 6, 15, 24, and 31), *Coworkers* (questions 7, 16, 25, and 34), *Nature of Work* (questions 8, 17, 27, and 35), *Communication* (questions 9, 18, 26, and 36), and *Total satisfaction* (mean of all 36 questions). Questions 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26, 29, 31, 32, 34, and 36, were negatively worded questions, therefore, they were reverse scored when calculating the means of each category. During reverse scoring responses such as 6 were given a variable of 1, responses of 5 were given a variable of 2, etc. A study was completed by Van Saane, Sluiter, Verbeek and Frings-Dresen (2003) that tested the reliability and validity of 29 job satisfaction surveys commonly used in the research community. Of the 29 surveys tested, seven, including the JSS, were found to meet the quality criteria for reliability and

validity. According to the test, the Cronbach's Alpha measure of internal consistency was found to be 0.91.

The researcher gathered data relating to overall school climate through the Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Kentucky survey. The TELL survey was created through the AdvancED eProve system. The eProve surveys are created for school systems as a tool to collect and analyze data that can be used for continuous improvement. eProve surveys address a wide range of subjects such as parent, student and staff perceptions, school climate, student engagement, and many more. The survey utilized by the public school system assesses parent perceptions in order to determine the overall school climate. The school system is then able to take that data and focus future improvements on true areas of weakness. Past year entries are captured and saved so that improvement efforts can be monitored. The survey is made up of 93 questions. Each question was scored out of 100 possible points and all questions were worded positively. Questions were grouped into eight categories with one question for overall climate and one question for satisfaction with the TELL survey. The eight categories were as follows: (a) *Time*, (b) *Facilities and resources*, (c) *Community support and involvement*, (d) *Managing student conduct*, (e) *Teacher leadership*, (f) *Professional learning*, and (g) *Instructional practices and support*. The Cronbach's Alpha measurement of eProve's tools was found to be 0.94, which represents a very strong level of reliability.

### **Procedures**

The researcher obtained permission from the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent to conduct the study (See Appendix A). Once permission was granted, the researcher obtained permission from Liberty University IRB to conduct this study (See Appendix B). Once IRB approval was obtained, the researcher contacted the Superintendent of the school

district and the principals of each school and inform them of the approval. The researcher then notified the appropriate personnel that the data collection will take place in two weeks.

Once the data collection process began, the researcher obtained data from the school district's assessment on school climate. The researcher then visited each school and placed the packet of information in all teacher's mailboxes. The packet included a participant letter (See Appendix C), the teacher consent form (see Appendix D), the JSS instrument (see Appendix E), and a white, letter-sized envelope. The teacher met with the school secretary in order to review data collection procedures and the importance maintaining the security of the data. The researcher ensured that the school has a safe or other locked location for the data. The researcher provided a data collection box and raffle ticket box for the secretary. A set of raffle tickets were also provided (See Appendix F). Teachers that wish to participate in the raffle filled out the raffle ticket and had the chance to win a \$50 or \$25 gift card to either Books-A-Million® or Learning Railroad®. 6 gift cards will be available, (1) \$50 gift card and (2) \$25 cards to each location. When the participant returned their completed anonymous survey to the school secretary in the sealed envelope, they were given the raffle ticket. The completed raffle ticket was placed in the raffle ticket box.

The surveys and raffle tickets were collected one week from the date that the packets were delivered. The raffle tickets were combined and shuffled. The drawing took place at a neutral site with neutral parties present. Six drawings occurred, and the winners were contacted by the researcher in order to set up delivery of the prizes. Information gathered during the collection process were entered in SPSS® for analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

It was assumed that the scores tabulated from the JSS and the assessment of school climate would form an interval scale of measurement and were normally distributed. It was also assumed that score variance among the populations was equal. Based on these assumptions, a *t* test was appropriate for statistical analysis. Being that the research question was tested by comparing means from two different groups, an independent samples *t* test was the most appropriate tool for statistical analysis. The researcher analyzed the data using SPSS software.

The researcher entered data received from the JSS and the assessment of school climate into a spreadsheet and coded it by number to ensure anonymity and to remove any identifying factors. The researcher calculated the mean scores and standard deviations. A *t* score was calculated by utilizing an independent samples *t* test to determine statistical significance. The *t*-value was generated by conducting static-group comparison design statistical analysis. Assuming that the type 1 error value ( $\alpha$ ) = .05, statistical significance was determined by a *t*-value greater than 1.96.

### **Summary**

This chapter detailed the purpose of utilizing a quantitative study for analyzing the effect of Success for All on teacher satisfaction and school climate. It included the details of the schools and participants that were utilized in the study. The instrumentation that was utilized in the study was described and proof of reliability and validity were demonstrated. Finally, the procedures for data gathering and analysis were described, along with the steps that were taken to ensure participant confidentiality.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this quasi-experimental static-group comparison study was to investigate the impact of Success for All on teacher satisfaction and school climate in low performing schools. Another purpose of this study was to determine if Success for All has had an impact on these characteristics within a Kentucky school district. Data was collected through the use of the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) and the school district's climate survey, known as the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) survey. The dependent variables in this study were teacher satisfaction and school climate while the independent variable was Success for All.

### **Research Questions**

**RQ1:** Does implementation of Success for All have an effect on teachers' satisfaction?

**RQ2:** Does implementation of Success for All affect school climate?

### **Descriptive Statistics**

This study surveyed kindergarten through fifth grade teachers at two schools in a Kentucky school district. Elementary school A contained a student population where 85% of students were considered minority and over 95% qualify for free and reduced lunch (Public School Review, 2018). During the 2015 – 2016 school year, elementary school A was named a “focus school.” Elementary school B contained a student population where 62% minority and 90.6% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch. During the 2015 – 2016 school year, elementary school B was classified as a school that “needs improvement” and continues to be a “focus school” (Kentucky Department of Education, 2019).

The dependent variable of teacher satisfaction came from the JSS. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the descriptive statistics gathered from the JSS. Table 1 shows the results for elementary school A, and Table 2 shows the results for elementary school B.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics from JSS – School A*

Variables	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>S.D.</i>
Pay	24	2.89	1.75
Promotion	24	2.55	1.31
Supervision	24	5.26	1.19
Fringe Benefits	24	4.22	1.47
Contingent Rewards	24	3.14	1.40
Operating Condition	24	2.53	1.60
Coworkers	24	4.88	1.36
Nature of Work	24	5.03	1.39
Communication	24	4.08	1.70
Total Satisfaction	24	3.84	1.79

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics from JSS – School B*

Variables	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>S.D.</i>
Pay	23	3.20	1.74
Promotion	23	3.21	1.54
Supervision	23	5.60	0.91
Fringe Benefits	23	4.13	1.51
Contingent Rewards	23	4.01	1.49
Operating Condition	23	3.18	1.45
Coworkers	23	5.28	1.08
Nature of Work	23	5.16	1.26
Communication	23	4.96	1.03
Total Satisfaction	23	4.30	1.64

The dependent variable of school climate came from the Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Kentucky survey. The TELL survey was created through the AdvancED eProve system in order to assess overall school climate. The survey was made up of 93 questions. Each question was scored out of 100 possible points and all questions were worded positively. Questions were grouped into eight categories, with one question for overall climate and one question for satisfaction with the TELL survey. Tables 3 and 4 summarize the descriptive statistics gathered from the TELL Survey. Table 3 summarizes the results from school A, and Table 4 summarizes the results from school B.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics from TELL Survey – School A*

Variables	Mean	<i>S.D.</i>
Time	57.9%	14.8%
Facilities and Resources	75.6%	11.0%
Community Support and Involvement	71.2%	20.7%
Managing Student Conduct	67.4%	15%
Teacher Leadership	74.4%	12.1%
School Leadership	75.9%	12.5%
Professional Learning	70.5%	17%
Instructional Practices and Support	82.6%	15.2%
Overall Climate	84.6%	
TELL Survey Satisfaction	76.2%	

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics from TELL Survey – School B*

Variables	Mean	S.D.
Time	92.1%	8%
Facilities and Resources	95.8%	5%
Community Support and Involvement	74.6%	21.3%
Managing Student Conduct	86.1%	8.2%
Teacher Leadership	87.4%	7.1%
School Leadership	86.5%	7.6%
Professional Learning	87.1%	10.3%
Instructional Practices and Support	90.6%	8%
Overall Climate	84.6%	
TELL Survey Satisfaction	76.2%	

## Results

### Data Screening

All participants answered all questions on the JSS; therefore, no participant's information was deleted. Box plots were used to analyze for any outliers or inconsistencies (Warner, 2013, p. 153-157) (see Figures 1 and 2 for box plots).

Figure 1

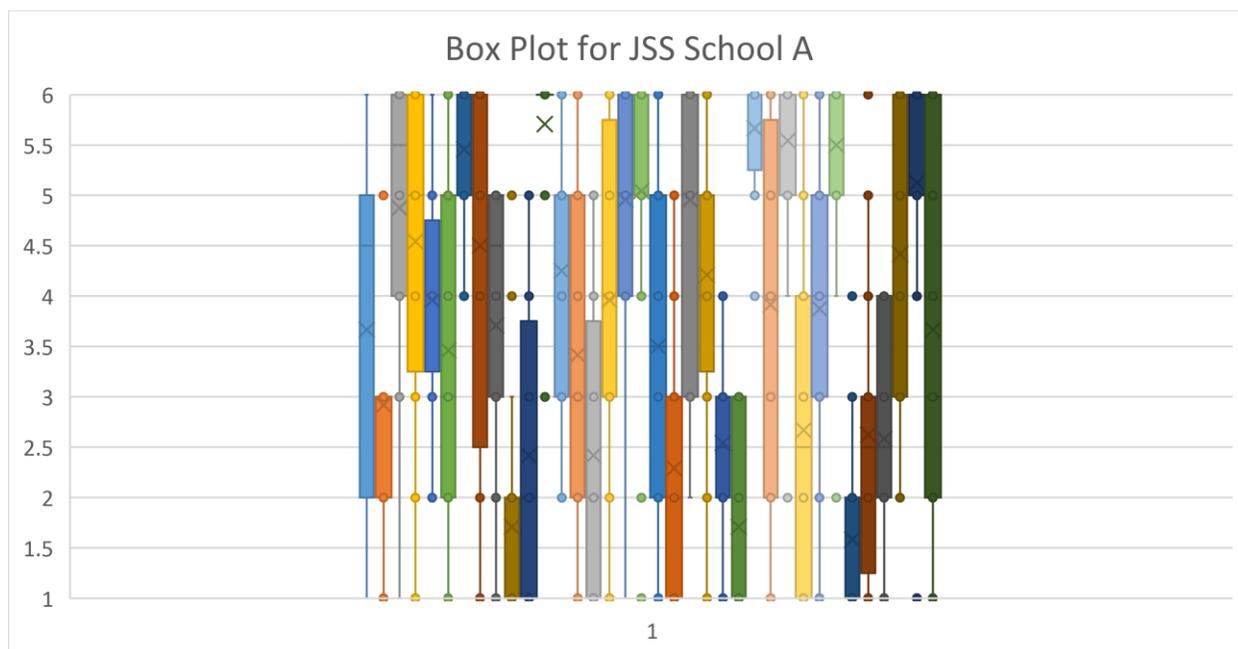
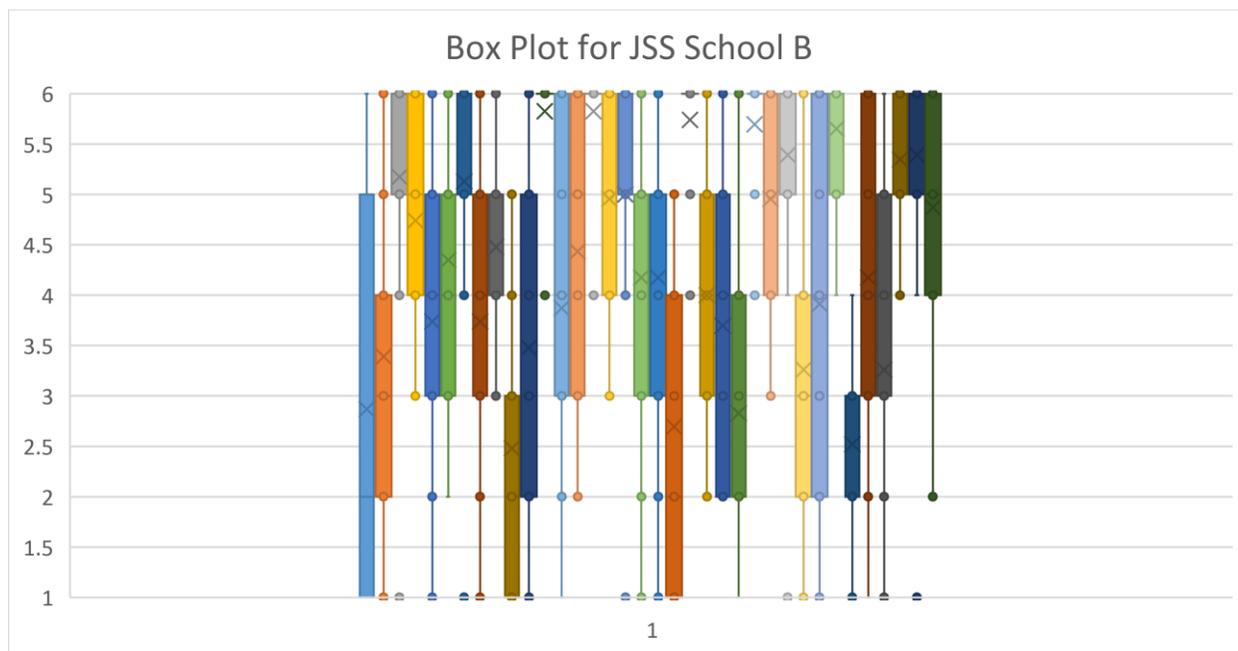


Figure 2



All data appeared consistent and no outliers were found to be severe enough to be deleted from the data set. Histograms were created for each question to analyze for normality. The researcher determined to begin analysis after visual inspection of histograms were found normal.

### Assumption Tests

The research used an independent samples  $t$  test to test the two research questions, which required three assumptions to be met, normal distribution, equal variance across groups, and independent observations between and within groups. Box plots were used to test for normal distribution. Examination of box plots (Figures 1 and 2) determined that a few outliers existed, but at the low end of the scale, and were not judged severe enough to require removal of the outliers (Warner, 2013, p. 154). A Levene's test was used to determine the critical F value for each category of question. According to the Critical Values of F table with  $\alpha = 0.05$ ,  $df = 24$  and 23, the critical value of F for the Levene's test = 2.00 for the JSS (Warner, 2013, p. 1059). Table 5 shows the results of the Levene's Test for the JSS.

Table 5

*JSS Levene's Test Results*

Variables	F value	P value
Pay	0.340	0.560
Promotion	2.544	0.112
Supervision	10.284	0.002
Fringe Benefits	0.013	0.908
Contingent Rewards	0.466	0.496
Operating Conditions	2.484	0.117
Coworkers	6.413	0.012
Nature of Work	0.092	0.762
Communication	36.195	0.000
Total Satisfaction	16.642	0.000

According to table 5, the categories of promotion, supervision, operating conditions, coworkers, communication, and total satisfaction had F values higher than the critical value of 2.00. The assumption of equal variances was violated. According to the Critical Values of F table with  $\alpha = 0.05$ ,  $df = 1$  and 1, the critical value of F for the researcher's Levene's test = 161.40 for the TELL school climate survey (Warner, 2013, p. 1059). Table 6 shows the results of the Levene's Test for the TELL survey.

Table 6

*TELL Climate Survey Levene's Test Results*

Variables	F value	<i>P value</i>
Time	0.737	0.408
Facilities and Resources	5.315	0.032
Community Support and involvement	0.022	0.884
Managing Student Conduct	1.235	0.288
Teacher Leadership	2.023	0.177
School Leadership	11.733	0.001
Professional Learning	4.705	0.039
Instructional Practices and Support	5.375	0.032

All values of F were calculated below the critical value of 161.40, therefore indicating no significant violation of the equal variances assumption. The data was also kept independent of one another, satisfying the requirement for independent observations both between and within groups.

### **Research Question One**

The first question that was tested was: Does implementation of Success for All have an effect on teachers' satisfaction? An independent sample *t* test was utilized to calculate statistical significance. For this question, an alpha level of .05 was utilized. Participants sampled were 24 for elementary school A and 23 for elementary school B, which was greater than 22 and corresponded to a medium effect size. Statistical significance was determined by a *t*-value greater than 1.96. Table 7 shows the results of the independent samples *t* test:

Table 7

*JSS Independent Samples t Test Results*

Variables	T value	P value
Pay	-1.214	0.226
Promotion	-3.135	0.112
Supervision	-2.173	0.002
Fringe Benefits	0.407	0.684
Contingent Rewards	-4.143	0.000
Operating Conditions	-2.926	0.004
Coworkers	-2.264	0.025
Nature of Work	-0.681	0.497
Communication	-4.248	0.000
Total Satisfaction	-5.526	0.001

Table 7 shows that the  $p$  values associated with pay, promotion, fringe benefits, and nature of work were greater than the level of significance value of 0.05. The table also shows that the  $p$  values associated with supervision, contingent rewards, operating conditions, coworkers, communication, and total satisfaction were less than the level of significance value of 0.05, so these were significant findings.

**Research Question Two**

The second question tested was: Does implementation of Success for All affect school climate? An independent sample  $t$  test was utilized to calculate statistical significance. For this question, an alpha level of .05 was utilized. The number of participants sampled from elementary school A was 24 which corresponded to a medium effect size. The number of participants

sampled from elementary school B was 23, which also corresponded to a medium effect size. Statistical significance was determined by a  $t$ -value greater than 1.96. Table 8 shows the results of the independent samples  $t$  test:

Table 8

*TELL Climate Survey Independent Samples  $t$  Test Results*

Variables	T value	<i>P</i> value
Time	-5.381	0.000
Facilities and Resources	-5.513	0.000
Community Support and Involvement	-0.320	0.754
Managing Student Conduct	-2.896	0.013
Teacher Leadership	-2.619	0.020
School Leadership	-3.629	0.001
Professional Learning	-3.253	0.003
Instructional Practices and Support	-1.470	0.159

Table 8 shows that the  $p$  values associated with community support and involvement and instructional practices and support were greater than the level of significance value of 0.05. The table also shows that the  $p$  values associated with time, facilities and resources, managing student conduct, teacher leadership, school leadership, and professional learning were less than the level of significance value of 0.05, indicating significant differences.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this quasi-experimental static-group comparison study was to investigate the impact of Success for All on teacher satisfaction and school climate in low performing schools. The purpose of this study was to determine if Success for All has an impact on these characteristics within a Kentucky school district. Chapter Five includes a discussion of the results found in Chapter Four, the findings chapter. The results for each research question, implications of the study, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research are discussed here.

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this quasi-experimental static-group comparison study was to determine if Success for All had an impact on teacher satisfaction and school climate in low performing schools within a Kentucky school district. This investigation will contribute to the understanding of Success for All and other Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) models in context to their effects on teacher satisfaction and school climate.

Employees who cite high job satisfaction have decreased absences, volunteer more often, produce work more effectively, and have improved communication skills. Additionally, it has been proven that educators with high levels of job satisfaction directly impact the academic and psychological development of their students (OECD Library, 2014). According to Richmond (2013), factors that contribute to dissatisfaction among teachers include: (a) budget cuts, (b) lack of opportunities for quality professional development, and (c) decreased collaboration time with colleagues. According to a MetLife Survey of the American Teacher (2013), educators blame modern school reform, which emphasizes getting rid of ineffective educators, assessing teachers

by student test scores, collective bargaining laws, and rewriting tenure for increases in stress and lower confidence.

Zakrzewski (2013) explains that a positive school climate can provide a myriad of benefits such as decreased absenteeism and bullying and increased motivation and academic achievement. Positive school climate impacts many standardized measurements of achievement, such as success in mathematics, science, reading, and writing (Reynolds et al., 2017). The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (2019) defines a positive school climate as “the product of a school’s attention to fostering safety; promoting a supportive academic, disciplinary, and physical environment; and encouraging and maintaining respectful, trusting, and caring relationships throughout the school community no matter the setting” (p. 1). They theorize that a positive school climate can improve attendance and retention and graduation rates. Additionally, school climate has been linked with higher academic achievement (National Education Association, 2019). Research also points to the importance of testing and monitoring school climate. According to Bradshaw and O’Brennan (2014), school surveys should focus on the emotional, physical, and behavioral aspects of school climate. These surveys should also be utilized annually and involve students, families, teachers, administrators, and education support professionals. In addition, the results should be shared among the entire school community. School climate should be assessed while focusing on the reliability and validity of the assessment and whether the survey is valid across varied perspectives. Assessment should be completed annually, results should be shared among the staff, and measures should be taken based on the results (Bradshaw & O’Brennan, 2014).

### **Research Question One**

The first research question that was posed was whether Success for All has an effect on teachers' satisfaction. According to the results of the JSS, there were no significant statistical differences between elementary school A and elementary school B in the categories of pay, promotion, fringe benefits, and nature of work. There were significant differences in the categories of supervision, contingent rewards, operating conditions, coworkers, communication, and total satisfaction. In all the categories in which significant differences were noted, elementary school B had higher marks than elementary school A.

### **Research Question Two**

The second research question that was posed was whether Success for All has an effect on school climate. According to the results of the TELL survey, there were no significant statistical differences between elementary school A and elementary school B in the categories of community support and involvement and instructional practices and support. There were significant statistical differences in the categories of time, facilities and resources, managing student conduct, teacher leadership, school leadership, and professional learning. In all the categories in which significant differences were noted, elementary school B had substantially higher marks than elementary school A which did utilize Success for All.

### **Conclusions**

These results show that Success for All had negative impacts on many categories related to job satisfaction and school climate. These results directly negate a 2012 study that found that Success for All boasted higher teacher ratings of perceptions of educational quality and job satisfaction and higher student ratings of school climate and educational quality (Slavin & Madden, 2012). This study did not evaluate the educational impacts of Success for All but

showed that teachers who taught in a Success for All school are less satisfied than those teachers who do not teach in a Success for All school. This study also shows that the overall school climate in a Success for All school is lower than the school climate in a non-Success for All school.

### **Implications**

The findings presented in this study add to the existing literature and research into the effects of CSR programs, such as Success for All, on teacher job satisfaction and school climate. The results of this study show that teachers are overall more dissatisfied when teaching under the Success for All program. They were less satisfied with supervision, contingent rewards, operating conditions, coworkers, communication, and total satisfaction within the school. Pay, promotion, fringe benefits, and nature of work showed no statistically significant differences. It would be beneficial to know whether the teachers had any choice before utilizing a comprehensive school plan or which program to utilize. Not having choice or buy-in from the faculty could have led to higher values of dissatisfaction. Cheung and Slavin (2016) explain that the resources required to ensure a successful implementation of any CSR program include teacher buy-in, adequate teacher support, educational and technological material availability, and adequate staff.

The results of this study also reveal that the school climate within a Success for All school is rated lower than that of a non-Success for All school. More accurately, the school climate ratings for time, facilities and resources, managing student conduct, teacher leadership, school leadership, and professional learning all rated more negatively in the Success for All school. CSR programs are established to provide detailed instructions on management of time, facilities, resources, and professional learning opportunities in an effort to establish efficiency

and consistency. The loss of control over these aspects of the teaching profession may be met with negative feedback.

According to Cheung and Slavin (2016), one issue with successful CSR implementation is that these programs require many resources above which the school has budgeted and purchased. It is imperative that teachers be given resources such as professional development, staff support, and materials that provide them with the ability to create a positive, enriching classroom environment for their students (Bishop, Cardichon, & Roc, 2015). Effective professional development can be a powerful tool in improving school morale and promoting teachers' leadership skills (Cardichon & Roc, 2013). It would be beneficial to analyze which, if not all, of the professional development opportunities were utilized by the school upon implementation and which opportunities were not given that were recommended.

This study can provide theoretical implications for any school or administrative staff member looking to implement Success for All or any CSR program. This study shows that steps need to be taken to ensure teacher buy-in prior to implementation. This study also shows that teachers' needs and wants should be taken into consideration prior to implementation so that the staff has all the resources required to make the CSR program a success.

### **Limitations**

There were obvious limitations to the study that should be taken into consideration when discussing the outcomes of the analysis. One such limitation would be to take into consideration the variation in demographics of the teachers from both schools, such as age, race, sex, and time in profession. This study combined all teachers into one group in order to achieve a high-level study of Success for All and its effects on school climate and teacher satisfaction.

Another limitation to the study is the recent fallout of the Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System of Kentucky (TRS). The governor of Kentucky has recently proposed drastic changes to TRS in order to battle a multi-billion-dollar debt resulting from years of inadequate funding. The plan, which includes changing teachers' retirement from a guaranteed pension plan to a traditional 401K style plan, is very unpopular among Kentucky teachers and has led to very low values when rating school climate and teacher job satisfaction. This current climate regarding the pension crisis makes it very complicated to analyze whether the low values with respect to climate and satisfaction are from the Success for All program or reactions from the pension crisis.

Another limitation to this study is the lack of research into which aspects of Success for All were changed and or omitted from the original recommendations of the company. Changing and/or omitting program-specific recommended practices can directly impact or influence the overall success of the program. Due to time constraints, a detailed analysis into which of these important practices may or may not have been altered was not completed.

The final limitation to this study is the lack of program specific questions on both the JSS and the TELL surveys. These surveys provide a large range of questions on many important topics within the school, but the questions are not written specifically for program-related analysis.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The findings of this study show that there are fundamental differences between the two schools in many of the surveyed areas; however, more analysis is needed in order to determine the details of these differences. One recommendation for future research would be to provide between-group analysis of the teachers surveyed from each school. This would allow the

researcher to understand the differences in job satisfaction and school climate among different demographic groups.

Another recommendation for future research is an exhaustive analysis into the school's use of Success for All. Analyzing which program-specific details and procedures were and were not used would allow the researcher to understand if any critical components were left out of the school's reform effort and if any of these details and procedures could have changed the outcomes of either survey.

A final recommendation for future research would be the development of an instrument that provides an in-depth analysis of program-specific information. Tailoring questions directly related to program-specific details would allow the researcher to fully understand the teachers' views and opinions regarding their satisfaction toward the program. It is also recommended to develop a student-specific instrument that could be utilized to analyze the students' perspectives toward the program and its outcomes.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**ADMINISTRATION CONSENT FORM**

10/26/2017

Mr. Donald Shively  
Paducah Public Schools Superintendent  
800 Caldwell St  
Paducah, KY 42003

Dear Mr. Shively:

As a graduate student in the Department of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for an Education Doctorate degree. The title of my research project is *The Impact of the Success for All Classroom Model on School Climate and Teacher Satisfaction in Kentucky Elementary Schools*, and the purpose is determine the effects of the Success for All classroom model on teacher satisfaction and school climate.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research in McNabb and Morgan Elementary Schools and to access and utilize staff data and records. Participation will be kept completely confidential and no personal, identifying information will be collected. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Participants will be asked to complete the attached survey. I will also utilize the results of the district's school climate survey in my research. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or my Dissertation Chair at the contact provided.

Sincerely,

Amy Chesnut  
Doctoral Student  
Liberty University

Amy Chesnut  
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**APPENDIX B**  
**IRB APPROVAL LETTER**

**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY**  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

October 22, 2018

Amy Chesnut

IRB Exemption 3504.102218: The Impact of the Success for All Classroom Model on School Climate and Teacher Satisfaction

Dear Amy Chesnut,

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](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,

**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**

*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*

**The Graduate School**

**LIBERTY**  
UNIVERSITY.

*Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971*

## APPENDIX C PARTICIPANT LETTER

Dear Elementary Educator,

You are invited to anonymously participate in a research study entitled *The Impact of the Success for All Classroom Model on School Climate and Teacher Satisfaction*. The survey that you will complete is entitled *Job Satisfaction Survey* and should take approximately 10 – 15 minutes to complete. The deadline to complete the enclosed forms and return to the school secretary is one week from today. All teachers that complete the attached survey will have the opportunity to enter a raffle for a chance to win one of six gift cards. The gift cards will include: (1) \$50 and (2) \$25 gift cards to Books-A-Million® and (1) \$50 and (2) \$25 gift cards to Learning Railroad®. The questions on the survey pertain to your general satisfaction and enjoyment in your current position. The study's results will be beneficial for and utilized by educators, school administrators and curriculum developers in order to assess whether comprehensive school reform programs such as Success for All have an effect on teacher satisfaction and overall school climate.

Directions for completion:

1. Complete the enclosed Job Satisfaction Survey. Please **do not** write your name on the survey.
2. Complete the enclosed Teacher Consent Form.
3. Place both sheets in the enclosed envelope. Please **do not** write your name on the envelope.
4. Deliver the envelope with your completed survey to your school to your school secretary.
5. Obtain a raffle ticket from the secretary and fill out the required information. The winner of the raffle will be contacted via the provided contact information on the raffle ticket, so please provide the best number to reach you.
6. Place your completed raffle ticket in the box labeled "Raffle Tickets".

A consent form that provides additional information about the study is included in this packet. Your willingness to participate is greatly appreciated! The researcher will establish a mutually agreeable time with the winners for delivery of the gift card.

**APPENDIX D**  
**TEACHER CONSENT FORM**

The Impact of the Success for All Classroom Model on School Climate and Teacher Satisfaction  
in Kentucky Elementary Schools  
Amy Chesnut  
Liberty University School of Education

You are invited to participate in a research study concerning the Success for All program. You were selected as a possible participant because the study concerns the effect of the program with respect to teacher satisfaction and school climate. I ask that you read this form in its entirety and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

This study is being conducted by Amy Chesnut, Education Department – Liberty University

The purpose of this study is to discover the effect that the Success for All program has on teacher satisfaction and school climate. The methods utilized within the program will be evaluated in order to determine the effectiveness of the program.

**Procedures:**

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be given a job satisfaction survey consisting of 36 questions with each question rated on a scale of 1 to 5. The questionnaire should take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. You will be given ample time to complete the questionnaire at your convenience and will impact regular classroom instruction time.

**Risk and Benefits of participation:**

There is minimal risk with participation in the research study.

Upon completion of the survey, you may choose to enter your name into a raffle for a chance to win one of the following prizes:

- \$50 gift card to Books-A-Million® (1 Drawn)
- \$25 gift card to Books-A-Million® (2 Drawn)
- \$50 gift card to Learning Railroad® (1 Drawn)
- \$25 gift card to Learning Railroad® (2 Drawn)

**Confidentiality:**

The records of this study will be kept private. In any type of report that may be published from this study, we will not include any type of information that will make it possible to identify any staff member. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the information.

All collected data will be collected anonymously. Information and documentation will be stored in a locked file cabinet and stored on a personal laptop computer that will be password protected. Questionnaires will be destroyed via shredding once the study is complete.

### 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 employment with your school. If you should decide to participate, you can choose not to answer any or all of questions provided on the questionnaire and you may withdraw from the research study at any time.

### Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Amy Chesnut. I can be reached at any time at 270-564-7235 or [achesnut@liberty.edu](mailto:achesnut@liberty.edu). Please feel free to contact me at any time with any questions that you may have. My advisor is Amy Jones, [ajones17@liberty.edu](mailto:ajones17@liberty.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to speak 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](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:** I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

---

Signature of Participant

Date

---

Signature of Investigator

Date

**APPENDIX E**  
**JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY**

Survey can be accessed at <https://www.statisticssolutions.com/job-satisfaction-survey-jss/>.

**APPENDIX F  
SAMPLE RAFFLE TICKET**

**Thank you so much for your participation**

**Please complete the information below**

**For your chance to win one of the following prizes!**

**\$50 gift card to Books-A-Million® (1 Drawn)**

**\$25 gift card to Books-A-Million® (2 Drawn)**

**\$50 gift card to Learning Railroad® (1 Drawn)**

**\$25 gift card to Learning Railroad® (2 Drawn)**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The drawing will take place on \_\_\_\_\_**

**You will be contacted if your name is drawn**

**Thank you, again!**

**APPENDIX G**  
**SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY**

Survey can be accessed at <http://eprovesurveys.advanc-ed.org/surveys/#/action/36887/29565>.