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Performance-Based Evaluations of Special Education Teachers in a Special Education School Setting

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Performance-Based Evaluations of Special Education Teachers in a Special Education School Setting

by:

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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

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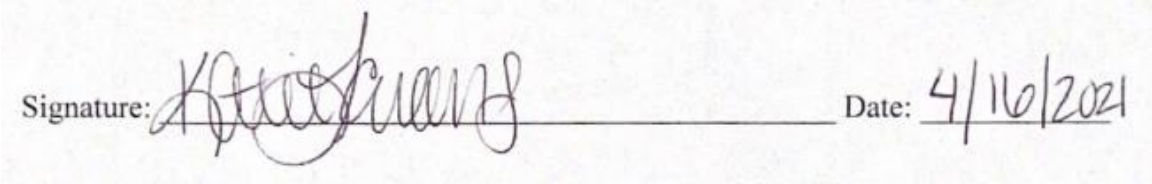

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Abstract

This study examined the evaluations of special education teachers in a Midwest Public Special Education District which consisted of five separate special education schools. Despite the vast research and literature on evaluations of general education teachers throughout the nation, there was little research on the evaluations of special education teachers within special education buildings. In this study, I asked a) How do teachers perceive the performance-based evaluation measure? b) How do administrators perceive the performance-based evaluation measure? c) How are the performance-based evaluation components determined to be most relevant for teachers in a self-contained special education setting? and d) How is the performance-based evaluation process implemented in a special education setting? I also investigated the relationship between performance-based evaluation scores of teachers and student scores on the MAP-A, EOC, STAR Math, STAR Early Literacy.

This mixed methods study examined data from Midwest Public Special Education School district teachers, administrators, and students, including surveys, interviews, and standardized test scores. The results showed a) administrators support the changes in teacher evaluations; b) teachers initially do not support the changes in the educator evaluations as related to the special education setting; c) teachers did not understand the new system as it was presented; d) some teachers liked aspects of the new evaluation system as related to special education; and e) in special education it was challenging to correlate educator effectiveness score to student assessment scores due to many outside, unknown variables. The findings from this study show whether there is a correlation between student performance and teacher evaluation scores. The study also shows that

there is a value to effective teacher evaluation in special education settings when staff are trained and prepared.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background of the Study

In 2013, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE) revised the Educator Evaluation System, following legislative changes established on central beliefs and processes. "Central to these beliefs is a theory of action which maintains that improving student performance is predicated on the improvement of educator practice" (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE], 2013, p. 4). However, at the writing of this dissertation, several years after the changes, districts within the state needed to implement the program entirely. The districts varied on the implementation procedures.

The research district was a special education entity which provided special education services to students in a variety of placements governed by the federal legislation in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Services are based entirely on a student's individualized education plan (IEP) and can range from teachers providing special education services to specialized therapy services. These services were implemented in the student's home school district or as a special education school or program. The district worked cooperatively with local districts to provide services for students who qualified in the county and technical education for area high school students. Approximately 21,000 students are serviced by the district and approximately 5,500 employees. The district provided year-round professional development to all staff in areas relevant to the classroom, technical issues, behavior support, and more.

The research district required teachers to assess students in many ways throughout the school year, including the use of teacher-made assessments, district assessments, and

state assessments. District assessments included checklists on skills in English Language Arts and Math, and state assessments included the standardized tests for the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) and Missouri Assessment Program- Alternate (MAP-A). The changes within the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) required districts to link specific assessments to educator evaluations. In the researcher's experience, the researched district deemed the student learning objective approach to be a measurement tool. Darling-Hammond et al. (2012) stated teacher effectiveness should be evaluated on factors other than standardized tests. The authors additionally noted students in the classroom with different characteristics, for which a single standardized test could not accommodate, resulting in an inaccurate measure of teacher performance. The district incorporated standardized tests and student learning objectives as the basis for student achievement data. Student learning objectives incorporated into educator evaluations assisted administrators in determining teacher ratings. Additionally, Benedict et al. (2013) noted the difficulty associated with evaluating teachers whose students with disabilities used standardized tests (p. 67), such as students with profound and severe disabilities or elective teachers. Educators and the district were required to adapt the measurements and evaluations. The district adapted their evaluations to best meet the needs of the special education population and structure of its schools. The framework for educator evaluations was adapted to account for small classroom sizes, students with multiple and profound disabilities, and alternative classroom structures to meet student needs. Teachers were given the responsibility to create goals and outcomes-based assessments appropriate to their students and classrooms.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate a possible relationship between special education performance-based evaluation ratings of special education teachers and student achievement. The study focused primarily on student achievement on the End of Course (EOC) and MAP-A tests and district assessments. The researched district utilized Standardized Test on the Assessment of Reading (STAR) Early Literacy and STAR Math in a Midwest self-contained special education school setting. The setting for the research was a self-contained special education school district enrolling students of varying diagnoses of learning disabilities.

The researcher collected data from the researched district's Educator Evaluation System modeled after the Missouri Educator Evaluation System (MODESE, 2013) from teachers who assessed students in grades three through 11. The researcher collected student assessment scores in grades three through 11, teacher interviews, teacher survey questions, and students' STAR Reading and STAR Math assessment scores (pre, mid, and post-tests) as secondary student data. Secondary data sources included EOC and MAP-A in grades three through 11. Standard assessment practices in the district involved STAR Reading, STAR Math, and MAP-A, thus deemed to be necessary, secondary data for the purpose of this study.

Rationale

Evaluations of special education teachers were part of the daily operations of a school building, and within the researched special education building, teachers participated in an evaluation using a new tool in which student assessment scores were a component of the teacher's evaluation. The researcher, at the time of the study, a special education teacher who participated in the new evaluation process, believed there could be

a possible relationship between teacher evaluation scores and student assessment scores. Access to high-quality evaluation tools, such as a performance-based evaluation measurements, provided school districts and teachers the ability to increase teacher performance within the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2014). The improved performance by teachers led to increased student achievement, since evaluations were "an opportunity to better inform our instructional practices and best meet the diverse needs of our students" (Benedict et al., 2013, p. 67). While many factors influenced student achievement, performance-based evaluations for teachers created schools where teachers performed at high levels and set high standards for students at the same time. "In addition to clear standards for student learning, accompanied by high-quality curriculum materials and assessments" (Darling-Hammond, 2014, p. 8), a sound evaluation system developed and understood by teachers and administrators was necessary.

Performance-based evaluations of teachers became a new tool utilized by school districts since the passage of the Recovery Act under President Obama (United States Department of Education [USDOE], 2014). The Recovery Act implemented guidelines for administrators to evaluate teachers, based on student performance and teacher evaluations. While there were many studies on general and special education teacher assessment practices (Adams et al., 2015; Benedict et al., 2013; Gill et al., 2014; Lacireno-Paquet et al., 2014; Shaneyfelt et al., 2006; Steinbrecher et al., 2014), the researcher discovered no previous studies on specific evaluation instruments, such as performance-based evaluation measures, used with special education teachers in a separate self-contained special education setting in the Midwest.

This study developed from the changes occurring inside the researcher's district with educator evaluations. The differences arose due to the 2013 changes in teacher evaluation legislation within Missouri. Legislation required districts to evaluate all teachers according to a new set of standards with specific requirements. The new teacher evaluation expectations included yearly action plans, evidence of action plan success as measured by the numerical rating on the growth guide, increased administrator observation, and improved feedback conferences (MODESE, 2020a). This research focused on the potential relationship between performance-based evaluation scores for special education teachers and student achievement within a self-contained school setting.

Research Context

This study took place at Midwest Public Special Education School District (MPSED). The district consisted of five separate day schools. These schools ranged from kindergarten to 12+ grades. According to Missouri state law, students have the right to a public education until age 21 (MODESE, 2015). Students who attend school beyond grade 12 or age 18 have their grade level noted as 12+. Buildings considered self-contained included all students with an Individual Education Plan. Primary data included responses from adult teacher study participants and secondary data collected included assessment scores from all MPSED schools in the MAP, MAP-A, and STAR.

Definition of Terms

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) - offers an innovative way for all students with significant cognitive disabilities to demonstrate their learning throughout the school year via the DLM Alternate Assessment System (Dynamic Learning Maps, 2015).

Key characteristics- For the purpose of this study, a distinguishing feature or quality of the performance of teachers, as determined by the evaluation tools used by administrators.

MAP-Alternate Assessment (MAP-A)- "A designed tool to promote enhanced capacities and integrated life opportunities and is administered only to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet grade level and eligibility criteria" (MODESE, 2015, para. 1).

Portfolio- Teachers self-select artifacts they believe best reflect an individual's accomplishments within a variety of different contexts (Benedict et al., 2013).

Public separate day school- For the purpose of this study, a school that educates only students with an Individual Education Program (IEP) determined by a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) team to require a full-time special education school setting.

Self-Contained Classroom- A classroom in which students with an IEP attend 100% of the time. When assigning students to this type of class, IEP teams should consider the following:

-severity of the disability of the students assigned to the classroom

-ages of students assigned to the classroom

-range of needs of the students as specifies by their IEPS

-unique needs of the students as determined by their IEPS

-other duties assigned to the classroom teacher (IEP case management, recess, lunch, etc.

-level of paraprofessional support provided in the classroom. (MODESE, 2015, p. 1)

Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading (STAR)- An assessment administered on the computer, using calibration and psychometric techniques to individually meet each student's testing responses and academic skill levels in Math and English (Renaissance Learning, 2015a).

STAR Early Literacy- The most widely used computer-based diagnostic assessment for determining early literacy and numeracy progress for emerging readers (Renaissance Learning, 2015b).

Value-Added Model (or Measure)- A statistical approach to estimate how a teacher can increase student achievement by controlling for observed student characteristics and students' prior achievement. The achievement measures in value-added models can be state standardized tests, end-of-course assessments, or widely used commercial tests (Gill et al., 2014).

Research Questions

Research Question 1: How do teachers perceive the performance-based evaluation measure? (Survey and interview)

Research Question 2: How do administrators perceive the performance-based evaluation measure? (Interview)

Research Question 3: How are the performance-based evaluation components determined to be most relevant for teachers in a self-contained special education setting? (Interview and survey)

Research Question 4: How is the performance-based evaluation process implemented in a special education setting? (Interview)

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between the performance-based evaluation (District Data) scores of teachers and student scores on the MAP-A, EOC, STAR Math, STAR Early Literacy.

Limitations

Limitations are included in research, particularly academic research (Fraenkel et al., 2015). These limitations include items outside of the researcher's control, such as sleep patterns, medication delivery, parent/caregiver dynamic, or living environment and could inadvertently have an impact on the outcome of the study. This study included data that resulted from a test, a testing environment, and testing results presented in a format not of the researcher's design, which presented intrinsic limitations of the study.

The design of the district and schools limited the study. The MPSED designed the schools to be self-contained for students diagnosed with a learning disability and given an IEP. The schools were not inclusive of all students' learning abilities. Students without disabilities or an IEP were not included in this study nor did they attend any of the schools. Therefore, this exclusivity presented a limitation of the study. The limitation, however, is the primary reason the researcher chose the district for the study. The setting is a model for special education districts and teaching. The district included separate schools and services within partner districts. For the purpose of this study, the researcher focused on the separate schools and the educators within those schools.

Additionally, a limitation included in this study is the transient nature of the students. Students are in the study district based on a variety of factors, and the students may be qualified to return to their home school at any time during the school year. Educators often see a revolving door of students within their classrooms. The growth or regression of every student inside each educators' classroom could impact their evaluations.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a correlation between educator performance evaluation scores and student achievement scores in a public special education setting in the Midwest. The researcher believed the characteristics of effective educator evaluations and valid student achievement measurements were worthy of investigation. In Chapter Two, a review of the current literature addressed these topics. This review will begin with the legislative history of educator evaluations and their relation to special education. Special education history dated back to President Dwight Eisenhower provided insight into the early legislation guiding school districts (Hunt, 2020). Chapter Three explains the methodology of the study. Also, found in Chapter Three are the data collection methods and usage of the data. Chapter Four summarizes the analysis of the collected data. Tables presented within Chapter Four represent the impact of each test and educator on student achievement. Alongside the tables, the researcher analyzed descriptive statistics for the data collected on each hypothesis. Chapter Four offers conclusions with statements regarding the characteristics of the findings. The researcher's interpretation of the data, conclusions, and recommendations for further study complete the dissertation within Chapter Five.

Chapter Two: The Literature Review

Introduction

Educator evaluations have changed and evolved as educational practices have changed and evolved. Most evaluation changes have been dictated by education legislation and availability of funds for program development. Early teacher evaluations were derived from polling students on traits of a good teacher (McNergney et al., 2015). As standardized testing dominated the education world, it shaped educated evaluations and increased expectations of student performance. This focused approach to evaluation created common standards to measure teachers, but it did not account for all aspects of classroom learning. Some of these aspects not accounted for include student experiences, socioeconomic status, and parental involvement (McNergney et al., 2015).

Special education educators have faced changes similar to legislation and evaluations. Although special educators encountered more and different challenges, as compared to general education educators, the evaluation systems were the same for both. Districts developed improved assessments for students with special needs to better evaluate student and teacher performance (USDOE, 2010).

Districts received funding for educator evaluations and assessments from various federal and state education funding programs or grants. The funding for districts progressed through the years as legislature and Presidents changed education laws (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2015). Educators have adapted to the changes in the evaluation process by becoming more qualified and they created interventions to assist students to succeed on assessments.

Organization of the Literature Review

The researcher focused on performance-based evaluations of special education teachers within the special education setting. The literature review includes the components of the history of educator evaluations, special education legislation, the performance-based evaluation method, budgetary concerns of changing the evaluation system within a school district, and interventions educators used to increase student achievement on district and state testing. The researcher also reviewed current literature on state testing; specifically, within school districts with performance-based evaluations of special education teachers and student achievement. The literature review centers on research published within the five years previous to this writing and selected pertinent studies and historical documents previously published. The literature review focused on educator evaluations centered on teacher success and merit within the classroom. However, the researcher discovered no literature on the evaluations of special education teachers within a self-contained classroom setting or research which suggested a possible relationship to special education students' success.

The researcher presented a summary of the literature on the history of teacher evaluations within the state of Missouri; including state and federal legislation related to the progress of educator evaluation, tests used within special education classrooms, budget development for changing evaluation systems, and studies of how teachers with successful evaluations increased achievement scores. The researcher considered a review of the literature on successful teacher interventions used with students, which were aligned with the evaluation process standards. The last topic focused on evaluation types, such as the value-added model and student achievement scores. More specifically, the

literature did not address the evaluation of special education teachers within the self-contained classroom or public separate school setting.

Legislative History of Educator Evaluations and Special Education.

Special education and educator evaluations transformed over the 50 years previous to this writing, due to legislation passed by Congress (Heise, 1994; Hunt, 2020; Martin et al., 1996; Social Welfare History Project, 2014; Wright, 2010). Congress specified and reauthorized multiple mandates to develop further the education system and student achievement (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015). In the opinion of the researcher, as a practicing special educator, these changes in the legislation influenced the evaluations of educators and the education of all students, including those with disabilities.

Early Special Education Legislation. The literature provided evidence of special education legislation throughout history. President Dwight Eisenhower signed two education acts during the 1950s; and, the most notable to special education was Public Law 85-926, the Education of Mentally Retarded Children Act, which provided financial support for training leadership personnel on teaching students with mental retardation at the colleges and universities (Martin et al., 1996). The legislation was one of the first to address special education improvement on a federal level within public education. It included provisions for training professionals who worked with children with disabilities and the first of many new legislative bills in special education (Martin et al., 1996), such as providing training for staff to educate teachers on special needs children with deafness or mental retardation.

The Social Welfare History Project (2014) described the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as "the most expansive federal education bill ever passed" (para. 1). The ESEA provided vital funding to the Title I program to meet the educational needs of educationally disadvantaged students, primarily through programs for the poor. Title I, Part A of the ESEA was amended by the ESSA-provided financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEA) and schools with high numbers or percentages of children from low-income families, to help ensure all students meet the state academic standards (USDOE, 2018). Federal funds were allocated through four formula-based census poverty estimates and the cost of education within each state. LEA's targeted the Title I fund they received to the school with the highest percentages of low-income families (USDOE, 2018). When a school operated a Title I targeted assistance program, the school provided Title I services to children who were at-risk of failing or were failing to meet State academic standards. Additionally, if the school was made up of at least 40% of low-income families, the Title I services were available school-wide to raise achievement of the lowest-achieving students (USDOE, 2018). Soon the logic behind the bill, better educational opportunities for the poor would help them out of poverty, would quickly be contested by the Coleman Report in 1966, which stated school improvements had only a moderate influence on student' success (Social Welfare History Project, 2014).

Title VII amended ESEA to address growing issues among politicians and leading education groups. Title VII aided schools with the education of children with limited English-speaking skills and those students in state schools (USDOE, 2013). The modification of the existing programs from the ESEA also supported dropout prevention

programs, technical assistance in rural areas, and distribution of information about education to professionals (USDOE, 2013). The ESEA had influences on future legislation and served as the starting point for upcoming assistance and legislation for students with disabilities and the teachers of special education (Paul, 2016). The ESEA had three critical outcomes for educational legislation; one of the most significant results was "the reliance on state departments of education to administer federal funds (promoted to avoid criticisms of federal control) resulted in an expansion of state bureaucracies and larger involvement of state governments in educational decision-making" (Social Welfare Project, 2014, para. 7). In the opinion of the researcher, the allowance of states to have increased control of educational decisions led to variances in education, based on the state in which the student resided.

To accommodate the needs of the students within the United States, the ESEA was modified and extended several times over the years. In 1970, Congress developed a law to support states in creating educational programs for students with disabilities (Wright, 2010, para. 17). The law was an extension of the original ESEA legislation from 1965 and 1968. The new reauthorization included grants focused on planning and evaluating agencies within the states and established the National Commission on School Finance (USDOE, 2013).

Evaluations of agencies led to the early evaluations of teachers, due to the increased availability of funding from the federal government. Soon the federal government developed additional policy, and in 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, or Public Law 94-142, addressed the growing need for programs and allowed for all students, no matter the disability, to receive an adequate education within

public schools (USDOE, 2013). "The legislation incorporated six major components or guarantees that have forever changed the landscape of education across the United States" (Project IDEAL, 2013, para. 2). The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) provided the first legislation to accommodate special education students, educators, and parents. Later, it became known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In the wake of this legislation came vital components for special education, including free appropriate education, least restrictive environment, an individualized education program, procedural due process, nondiscriminatory assessment, and parental participation (Project IDEAL, 2013). Initially, the law provided access to students with disabilities to an equal and fair education. According to Wright (2010), Congress added a system of legal checks and balances to safeguard the rights of children and parents (para. 22). Before EHA many children were denied access to school and other chances to learn. "In 1970, U.S. schools educated only one in five children with disabilities, and many states had laws excluding certain students, including children who were deaf, blind, emotional disturbed, or had an intellectual disability" (USDOE, 2020). During the 2018-2019 school year, nearly 7.5 million children with disabilities were being educated in public schools, compared to 1.8 million students (see Appendix H) that were being excluded in 1970 (USDOE, 2020).

As shown in Appendix H, the number of students with disabilities served throughout the United States increased from 1976 to 2019 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2020). The distinction between disabilities had also changed over those years. Students benefited from IDEA in the following ways: being educated in their neighborhood schools as opposed to separate schools or institutions, higher rates of

graduation from high school, post-secondary options, and employment opportunities for those with disabilities after school.

During reauthorization of EHA in 1986, Public Law 99-457 addressed early intervention for children aged birth to two years and mandated that states provide services to families of children with disabilities (USDOE, 2020). These services were not offered until the child reached age three, under the original law. In 1990, EHA was once again reauthorized to Public Law 110-476 and the name changed to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA (USDOE, 2020). Congress added two main changes in 1990: the disability categories of autism and traumatic brain injury and individual transition plans for students to transition to post-secondary life. One of the last changes to IDEA before it was aligned to No Child Left Behind requirements in 2004, came 1997 when the reauthorization created a new challenge to improve outcomes for children with disabilities and their families when it emphasized access to the general curriculum (USDOE, 2020). At that time, the definition of developmental delay was expanded to include children up to age nine. The final addition to the law required parents to be provided an opportunity to resolve disagreements with districts and LEAs through mediation and provided the process to do so. The 2004 reauthorization increased standards for educators who taught special education classes and required more accountability and enhanced educational outcomes. The most recent changes to IDEA were in 2017 when the Supreme Court defined the scope of free appropriate public education (FAPE) and stated “to meet substantive obligation under the IDEA, a school must offer an IEP reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in

light of the child's circumstances;" additionally, they stated "every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives" (USDOE, 2020, para. 39-40).

Congress repeatedly refined the specifics and reauthorized the original ESEA and the special education law to increase the availability of educational resources, since 1965 (Heise, 1994; Hunt, 2020; Martin et al., 1996; Social Welfare History Project, 2014; Wright, 2010). Congress passed legislation that resulted in a large paradigm shift on the education of students and people with disabilities, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, which prohibited discrimination against people with a disability (USDOE, 2013). The ADA legislation sparked an increase in special education laws over the 25 years previous to this writing, and increased accommodations in and out of schools for persons with disabilities. "The ADA has a broad definition of who is disabled and includes some groups who have never been included under this heading before" (Legal Responsibilities of Special Education, n.d., para. 1). Specifically, the ADA included disabilities related to a person's ability to function in daily activities.

Recent Special Education Legislation. After implementing ADA, further legislation focused on a broader scope, increasing education opportunities for all children within the United States (Martin et al., 1996; Wright, 2010). Goals 2000, Educate America Act, passed on March 31, 1994, provided resources to states and guaranteed all students would reach their full potential (Paris, 1994). Goals 2000 ensured teachers taught students with high academic standards, implemented a way to track students' progress, enabled students to receive the necessary support to meet the criteria, and set a baseline for students in the core curriculum areas of Math, English Language Arts, and Science (Paris, 1994). The new Act "codified in law the six original education goals

concerning school readiness, school completion, student academic achievement, leadership in math and science, adult literacy, and safe and drug-free schools (Paris, 1994, para. 3).

Goals 2000 provided teachers with access to vital professional development opportunities to increase teachers' knowledge and skills required to educate students on the new standards and future skills. For the first time, each teacher met the criteria of "highly qualified" in the academic area to teach students, based on the new standards (USDOE, 2003, p. 3). The requirement of the government to have highly qualified teachers raised expectations for districts in the education of children. States and districts began to look at the evaluation system when Goals 2000 set the standard for educator evaluation processes (Portway & Lane, 1997). The Goals 2000 initiative provided the education system with critical features for student and teacher education, inclusive of orientating educator education, instructional materials, assessment methods, and parental participation, of developing cohesiveness in educational practices (Heise, 1994). President Clinton signed the law with high expectations for the future of students in United States' schools (Portway & Lane, 1997). The researcher concluded implementation and budgetary concerns for Goals 2000 led to revisions and reauthorization. The researcher included original citations from Paris (1994), Portway and Lane (1997), and Heise (1994) for written historical accuracy and clarity.

The initiatives in Goals 2000 were the major federal programs passed until 2002, followed by the reauthorization of IDEA, until 2004 (USDOE, 2013). No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was signed to law in 2002 by President George W. Bush (Klein, 2015a) and supplied an inclusive reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education

Act of 1965, including educational items, such as standardized testing, accountability, parental choice in schools, and early reading initiatives (USDOE, 2013). NCLB was a collaborative effort by politicians and outside groups intended to increase student achievement. According to Klein (2015a), the focus of the law was to "ensure that states and schools boost the performance of students, such as English-language learners, students in special education, and poor and minority children, whose achievement, on average, trails their peers" (para. 5). NCLB included an accountability system for special education programs and students while being tested and within the curriculum taught. The testing allowed for accommodations during standardized tests and alternative tests. Also, school districts were required to report out on several subgroups of students, including students with disabilities, and provide test results to the state and federal departments of education (GreatSchools Staff, 2010). During Barack Obama's presidency, the reauthorization of NCLB addressed concerns with the law, such as underfunding. The changes included waivers individual states applied for to allow ways for the failing schools to attempt to reach adequate yearly progress (AYP), as required by the law (Klein, 2015b). Many schools and states did not meet the evaluation criteria with the additional provisions of the waivers within the timeframe prescribed (Klein, 2015b).

President Obama's educational reform plan of the second term (2012-2016) consisted of changes to the previously enacted NCLB. The changes included altering the teacher preparation and evaluation systems by developing systems that improved teacher evaluation and preparation, developed more appropriate testing materials for all students, and increased funds for college and early childhood programs (The White House, 2015). Among the initiatives implemented were teacher preparation and professional

development programs for teachers and principals that provided more in-depth information on how to educate children with special needs and from varied backgrounds. The teachers used the programs to create opportunities to improve the quality of teaching. According to The White House (2015), Obama's education plan included:

Higher standards and better assessments that would prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace; ambitious efforts to recruit, prepare, develop, and advance effective teachers and principals, especially in the classrooms where they are most needed; smarter data systems to measure student growth and success and help educators improve teaching and learning; and new attention and a national effort to turn around the lowest-achieving schools. (para. 2)

The reauthorization of NCLB was also a goal for the Obama administration in the form of redesigning and reforming NCLB and providing a Blueprint for Reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The Blueprint for Reform addressed issues created by NCLB, while pursuing high standards and closing the achievement gap (The White House, 2015). The achievement gap at this time referred to significant or persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between different groups of students, such as students with disabilities and those without disabilities or groups of students from different races (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013a). The Blueprint and the objectives set forth from Obama's administration developed new evaluation systems for teachers, while creating new tests and educational standards for all students, including students with disabilities. The Blueprint and reforms signed into law as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) included historic legislation

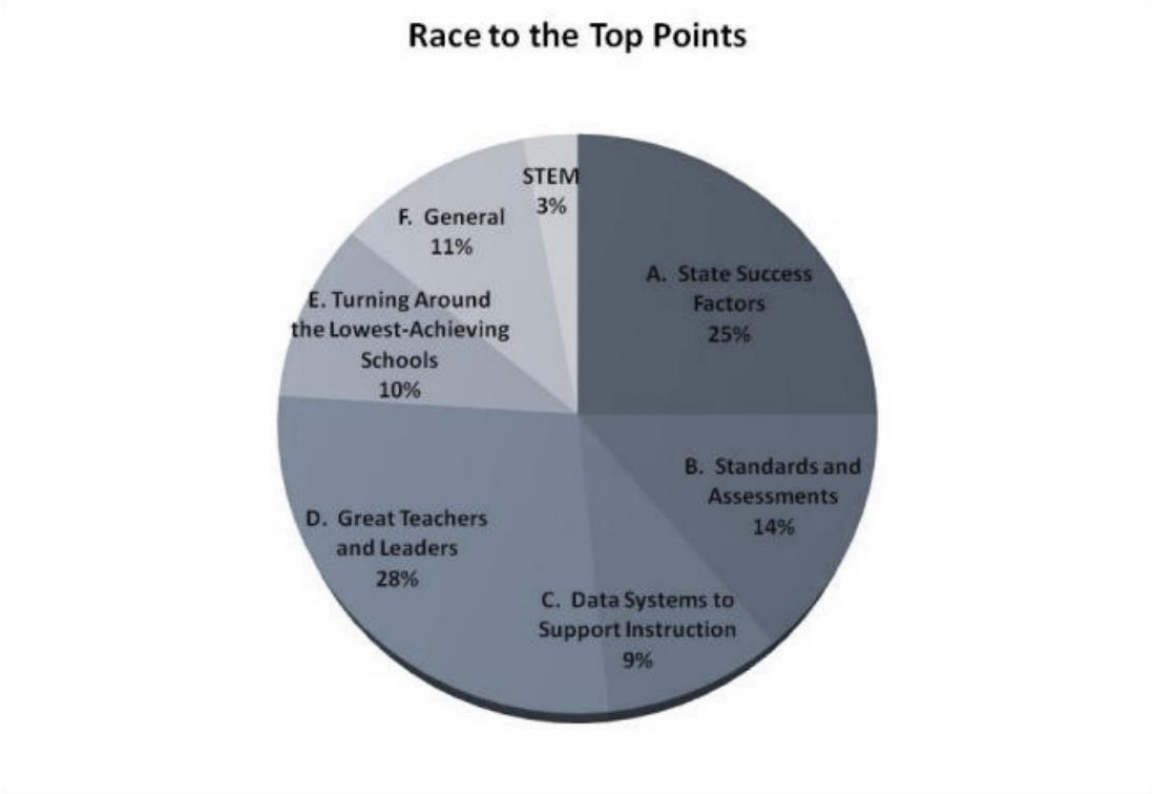
designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical areas, including education (USDOE, 2009).

To fund the ARRA, President Obama and the Education Department created a competitive grant program named the Race to the Top (RTT) Fund. The application detailed specific criteria for states (USDOE, 2009). The application criterion included educator evaluations. According to Hallgren et al. (2014), an increasing body of evidence also suggested that some of the teacher evaluation policies promoted by RTT, such as using multiple measures and multiple rating categories, could help produce more valid and reliable estimates of teacher quality (p. 1).

RTT was a competitive grant program designed to encourage and reward States that were creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making considerable gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, and ensuring student preparation for success in college and careers; and implementing ambitious plans in four core education reform areas (USDOE, 2009). These areas included: adopting criteria and assessments that successfully prepared students for college and careers and to be competitive in the global workplace; creating data systems that measured student growth and success while informing teachers and principals on how they could improve instruction; hiring, developing, compensating, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially in high need areas; and improving the lowest-achieving schools. States applied for the grant using an application process and then were given points for specific criteria within the application, such as standards and assessments and data systems to support instruction (see Figure 1 for breakdown of points).

Figure 1

Breakdown of RTT Points (USDOE, 2009)



States must also have met criteria in the priority category, which included a comprehensive approach to education reform and innovations for improved early learning outcomes. States selected were rewarded by RTT as states that demonstrated success in raising student achievement and having the best plans to accelerate those reforms in the future (USDOE, 2009). The states selected offered their models as examples for others to follow as a way to spread reform throughout their states and across the country.

The reforms to the educator evaluation system required teachers to be highly qualified within the area taught, while meeting higher standards yearly within the evaluation. Conversely, some states received waivers from the federal authorities, which did not require them to meet the higher standards until a later date. During

reauthorization of NCLB, the Obama administration lessened teacher evaluation requirements and standards (Klein, 2015b). Due to the number of states requiring more time to meet the requirements of the reforms, the federal government granted waiver extensions until the end of the 2016-2017 school year; however, the federal government allowed some states longer to comply.

Recent Special Education Legislation. The more-recent laws in education were not specific to the special-needs population. Changes enacted by the government were to the plans required to be submitted by each state, based on a given template developed by the USDOE. The USDOE structured the revision of the model to promote innovation, flexibility, transparency, and accountability to ease the load, while maintaining critical protections for all students (2017a). One item taken out of the template in 2017 was the requirement for excellent, or highly qualified, educators, due to the lack of data to support that specific need in low-income schools. Also, "the streamlined State plan template provides flexibility for State and local education leaders to do what is best for children, while also maintaining essential protections for subgroups of students, including economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English learners" (The USDOE, 2017b, para. 2). Other changes included processes for the submission of plans and funding sources for each district.

Educator Evaluation History

The educator evaluation process included monitoring the quality of instruction before laws existed to guide administrators. The earliest supervision and evaluation of teachers came from town clergy or leaders (Marzano et al., 2011). As the United States evolved and developed, the educator evaluation process transformed into a scientific

approach. The model used during the early colonial times evolved during the 1800's and the Industrial Revolution. The administrative model emerged and the evaluation of teachers shifted from community leaders to those within the school system. Educators during the 1800's began to receive college training to guarantee their preparation as educators who taught the desired curriculum. At this time, administrators and superintendents were introduced as leaders of the school community. As the legislation for education and special education emerged, the clinical supervision model spread throughout education. Goldhammer created a five-phase process of supervision intended to connect teachers and supervisors in a reflective dialogue on observations (Marzano et al., 2011). During the beginning of the 1900's, as business productivity changed, educator evaluations moved to objective criteria used to measure performance within the classroom. Administrators developed plans to work with teachers collaboratively to improve teachers' skills.

The next phase of teacher evaluations in the mid 1960's included support for teacher accountability within the classroom (McNergney et al., 2015). Prior to the passing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965, states were charged with education equity and educator evaluations. The ESEA provided the federal funding that many states required to better service teachers and students in public schools. In the 1970's came the type of educator evaluations that many teachers became familiar with, called clinical supervision. The clinical supervision model focused on "objective measurements combined with pre-observation, observation, and post-observation meetings where teachers and administrators worked together to improve overall teaching quality and classroom management" (Jewell, 2017, p. 76).

Teacher accountability included educator quality, as determined by preparation programs and educator performance on evaluations, as related to student performance. Two types of educator evaluation were outlined as teacher performance evaluation and instructional supervision. Hallinger et al. (2014) described teacher evaluation as "the formal assessment of a teacher by an administrator, conducted with the intention of drawing conclusions about his or her instructional performance for the purpose of making employment decisions" (p. 186). Conversely, he viewed instructional supervision as "growth-oriented coaching by administrators, supervisors, or peers" (Hallinger et al, 2014, p. 56). Educators were evaluated using formative and summative assessments. Formative evaluations included ways to form, develop, or improve the teachers' performance. Summative evaluations looked to develop or use data to inform summary outcomes of teachers (McNergney et al., 2015). Formative and summative assessments of teachers were two techniques leaders used to evaluate educators. However, according to McNergney et al. (2015):

> The link between teacher performance and student achievement is both so intuitively compelling as a major part of a teacher's performance evaluation and so very difficult to implement that it has never really been systematically achieved in the United States. (para. 24)

School districts across the United States used standardized testing results to determine student achievement. The early 21st Century included an emphasis on teacher quality and the influence on students. Hull (2013) reported, "Statistical methods for linking scores to teacher performance can vary considerably but can be generally described in two ways, Value-added models (VAM) and Student growth percentiles (SGP)" (p. 14).

The methods used to determine student growth aided administrators in educator evaluations.

Policymakers utilized the VAM method, due to the method's sophisticated statistical techniques and ability to provide estimates of teachers and schools, undistorted by the non-educational factors, such as family background (McCaffrey et al., 2003). VAM was a collection of student test scores over multiple years, used to determine the impact of individual teachers on students and the school using multifaceted statistical methods. VAM grew in popularity for two main reasons;

> separating the effects of teachers from the effects of non-educational factors, and early studies show differences in effectiveness among teachers. If these differences are possibly causally linked to the characteristics of teachers, the potential for improvement of education could be great. (McCaffrey et al., 2003, p. 3)

Teachers had a notable influence on student achievement and growth opportunities in their futures. VAM was a method created to assist teachers in closing the variability of growth among students. However, American Educational research Association (AERA) (2015) cautioned those using VAM as a source of educator evaluation measurement, due to the scientific and technical limitations of the measures. VAM necessitated multiple inferences of validity and highly specialized requirements for the efficiency of educator evaluations (AERA, 2000). The misunderstanding or misuse of the data compiled from a VAM could lead to negative consequences for teachers and students. "While VAM may be superior to some other models of measuring teacher impacts on student learning outcomes, it does not mean that they are ready for use in educator or program evaluation"

(AERA, 2015, para. 5). Teacher perceptions regarding VAM of educator evaluations were generally mixed, however, the majority did not consider this type of evaluation beneficial, due to the lack of recognition of factors which impacted student performance within the classroom (Muoio, 2019).

Darling-Hammond et al. (2012) emphasized the drastic changes from one year to the next in a teacher's rating that occurred in a particular teacher. The teacher received a score in the lowest category the year her classroom included English language learners, Hispanic students, and low-income students. The following year the teacher received a score in the highest category and her classroom included students in a higher socioeconomic status and educated parents. The variability in the rating of teachers in the evaluation system seemed to have influenced some teachers' desires to work with students with a high level of need or at high risk (Muoio, 2019). The variability within the VAMs in educator evaluations was challenging to overcome. VAM was one of many types of educator evaluations and student achievement measurement tools utilized in the United States. A different kind of educator evaluation and student achievement measurement was student growth percentiles (SGP) (Lash et al., 2016).

SGP was a measure of student achievement and teacher evaluation developed by Betebenner (Lash et al., 2016). Betebenner (2011) described SGP as a student's growth percentile, on how average a student's growth was by examining his/her current achievement relative to his/her academic peers (p. 3). Betebenner designed SGP to be a long-term observation of students' achievement on required tests. The observation and calculation utilized by administrators was a quantile regression to establish a functional relationship between the students' prior scores and the students' current scores

(Betebenner, 2011). Student growth percentiles utilized in teacher evaluations assisted in the measurement of teacher growth scores. "The stability of teacher-level growth scores is important to evaluation systems that use the scores to measure teacher effectiveness" (Lash et al., 2016, p. 1). Teacher evaluation scores determined the teacher's effectiveness according to the system's scale. According to Glazerman et al. (2011), at the core of such evaluation systems was the implied belief that a teacher's growth score represented one year of a teacher's value in future years. Teachers who scored lower than their peers were said to remain low if not given proper training, and teachers who scored higher than their peers should remain high in the future. However, according to McCaffrey et al. (2009), "intertemporal variability studies should be used in conjunction with other measures of teacher accountability over time to assess teacher performance and increase student test scores efficiently" (p. 602). The ability to assess educators with multiple methods provided a more comprehensive evaluation to administrators.

Unlike the VAMs, which focused primarily on student achievement, some states took the mixed approach to teacher evaluation. Student learning objectives (SLOs) incorporated multiple teacher observations and multiple student assessments. SLOs "reflect professional judgement, help evaluate the progress of individual students, and are applicable to all teachers," including special education teachers in all settings (Firestone, 2014, p. 5). SLOs may be based on state or national standards or based on teacher or district-related goals and assessed through classroom, district, or other measures (Lacireno-Paquet et al., 2014). The SLO process was

> a participatory method of setting measurable goals, or objectives, based on the specific assignment or class, such as the students taught, the subject matter taught,

> the baseline performance of the students, and the measurable gain in student performance during the course of instruction" (Race to the Top Technical Assistance, 2010, p. 1)

SLOs included student growth models, such as VAMs and SGPs. SLOs could be defined in teacher evaluations as student learning targets, student learning goals, or SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-specific). However, states and districts varied in the definitions and implementation of SLOs. See Figure 2 for an example of various states' definitions of student learning objectives.

Figure 2

Example of States' Various Definitions of Student Learning Objectives

Arizona. A student learning objective is a classroom-level standards-based measure relevant to the content area taught during the current school year that is specific and measurable, based on available prior student learning data, and based on growth or achievement.

Connecticut. Student learning objectives are broad statements about the knowledge and skills a teacher wants students to demonstrate as a result of instruction, address the central purpose of a teacher's assignment, take into account baseline data on student performance, pertain to a large proportion of a teacher's students, reflect content mastery or skill development, and reflect ambitious but attainable goals for student learning.

Washington. A student learning goal is a standards-based, rigorous, and relevant learning target that teachers set for groups or subgroups of students. It is specific and measurable, based on prior learning data, and aligned with state and content standards and school and district priorities.

Note. (Lacireno-Paquet et al., 2014, p. 2).

As shown in Figure 2, states varied on their viewpoints of names, definitions, and specifics for teacher evaluation components. As of 2016, 25 states included SLOs in their teacher evaluations (Muoio, 2019). SLOs could be utilized or created for all types and groups of teachers, such as individual teachers, teams or groups of teachers, or an entire

school community. However, individual teacher SLOs were the most common type of educator evaluation system.

Individual states also had the freedom to choose the type of assessments used to measure attainment of learning goals. Teachers generally chose the assessment from an approved list from the state. Some of the approved assessments included standardized state or national assessments, district-created assessments, school-developed assessments or teacher-created assessments (Lacireno-Paquet et al., 2014). Educators developed goals with their evaluators or peers before the SLOs were approved by a district employee, typically a principal or evaluator, before collecting evidence and data to track progress on goals. SLOs were not used exclusively in the nation and given that there were arguments to reject standardized testing in the future, SLOs may gain traction (Lacireno-Paquet et al., 2014).

The methods of educator evaluations varied from state to state, and less than half required annual assessment of the teachers by the administration (Marzano et al., 2011). The federal government determined there were inefficiencies at the state level, which needed repair, due to these variations. Due to changes in the legislative history of education and the evaluation history of teachers, the educator evaluation system endured revisions during the reauthorization of NCLB and modifications outlined in the Blueprint for Reform, by President Obama (The White House, 2015). There were multiple elements to an evaluation system within the United States' educational field, and each component was determined for the school district by the governing state legislature. The elements included items, such as educator observations and administrator summative reviews. The state legislature faced criticisms for the evaluation practices, which led to

changes within the Obama administration plan for educators (Marzano et al., 2011). RTT and the Blueprint addressed the needed modifications in teacher evaluations. As stated by Hallgren et al. (2014), changes required in teacher evaluation criteria included items, such as:

> design and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers; differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take student achievement growth into account as a significant factor; conduct annual evaluations that include timely and constructive feedback and provide teachers with data." (p. 2)

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 outlined RTT as a multi-phased competitive grant system for states that demonstrated appropriate success in six categories. Great Teachers and Leaders was the category with the highest point value assigned to the criteria. However, due to variances in state initiation of RTT programs, it was unclear if improvements made by teachers and students directly attributed to the program. The differences in policies and practices were not able to be linked to the RTT program and the receipt of grants due to some states who previously implemented those practices promoted by RTT (Dragoset et al., 2016). These changes also influenced student outcomes or the interpreted results. RTT started the public-school competition for grants to implement Common Core standards and the tests tied to the standards.

As of August 1, 2016, No Child Left Behind and the waiver system were null and void. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced NCLB with accountability plans, goals, and systems (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2016). ESSA included provisions for improved student, school, and teacher success. The Obama

administration joined with families and educators to create a better law that focused on preparing all students for success in career and college (The USDOE, 2015). The ESSA included profound changes and improved teacher evaluation processes. “States no longer had to complete teacher evaluations through student outcomes and teachers classified as highly qualified was no longer needed” (Education Week, 2015). ESSA changed special education allowances by limiting the number of students taking alternative assessments to 1% of the overall student population (Education Week, 2015). While ESSA continued the mandate on standardized testing in schools, there were multiple differences between NCLB, ESSA, and RTT. NCLB and ESSA concentrated on school district accountability while RTT focused on individual teacher accountability (Stotsky, 2016). Additionally, under the Obama administration the Teacher Incentive Fund was expanded. The funding was dependent on districts showing principal and teacher effectiveness based on student growth. The changes led to “the number of states requiring objective measures of student achievement to be included in teacher evaluation nearly tripled from 2009 to 2015, from 15 to 43 states nationwide” (Marzano, 2012, p. 17). The ratings designed to measure effectiveness included multiple observations of teachers, feedback from observers, and student test scores. The funding also allotted for strong professional development systems where teachers continued to develop their expertise and have the working conditions to be able to work collaboratively with colleagues (Muoio, 2019).

Student Assessment Methods.

Educators were evaluated on student growth on a variety of assessments, state and district. Student assessment types could vary depending on their developmental and achievement levels. In the state of Missouri students are given standardized tests based on

their skill level. The students were placed in one of two assessment categories; MAP or MAP-A. MAP, as stated earlier, is the Missouri Assessment Program designed to measure how well students acquired skills and knowledge described in the Missouri Learning Standards (MLS) (MoDESE, 2020c). Grade level assessments were given in English Language Arts (ELA) and math in grades three through eight and science in grades five and eight. In addition, districts were required to administer end-of-course (EOC) assessments to students in Algebra I (or Algebra II if completed before high school), English II, Biology, and Government prior to high school graduation (MoDESE 2020c). EOC tests were available online or in a paper and pencil format. Missouri offered EOC assessments in the following areas: English I, English II, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, American History, Government, Biology, and Physical Science. MAP assessments dated back to the 1993 Outstanding Schools Act and the EOC exams began in the 2008-2009 school year (MoDESE, 2020d).

MAP-A was given to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who met grade level and eligibility criteria determined by the student IEP team using DESE-established eligibility criteria (MoDESE, 2020d). MAP-A utilized the Dynamic Learning Map (DLM) instructionally embedded assessment model. DLM alternate assessment project offered an innovative way for students with significant cognitive disabilities to demonstrate their learning throughout the school year via the DLM Alternate Assessment System (MoDESE, 2020d). Teachers integrated the assessment with instruction throughout the year and provided an end of year assessment. The DLM aligned learning with college and career readiness standards in ELA, math, and science. DLM was

accessible to all students with disabilities and was available for assistive technology devices so students could easily navigate the system.

STAR Early Literacy was a computer-adaptive assessment used to quickly measure students' early literacy and numeracy skills (Renaissance Learning, 2015b). Typically, STAR Early Literacy was used for students in grades Pre-Kindergarten to three. However, students with significant cognitive disabilities benefitted from programs like STAR, due to skills addressed within the assessments. STAR Early Literacy tracked development in the following: word facility and skills, comprehension strategies and constructing meaning, and numbers and operations (Renaissance Learning, 2015b). STAR Math was a math achievement assessment used to track progress in four main categories: numbers and operations; algebra; geometry and measurement; and data analysis, statistics, and probability (Renaissance Learning, 2015b). STAR Math was typically offered to students in grades one through 12. Students received a scaled score based on the difficulty of questions and the number of questions answered correctly. Scaled scores were most useful for tracking students' performance over time and across grade levels (Renaissance Learning, 2015b).

There were two main types of assessments teachers utilized with their students-formative and summative. Formative assessment was a general term used for methods teachers used to conduct in-process evaluations of student comprehension, learning requirements, and academic progress during a lesson, unit, or course (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2014). Formative assessments helped guide teachers in developing lesson plans and identifying concepts students that students have mastered, struggled with, or learning standards they have not yet achieved. Generally, formative assessments

were given while students were learning to better guide the remainder of the lesson, unit, or course. The following are examples of formative assessments: questions teachers pose to students during the learning process, constructive feedback provided by teachers on student work, self-assessments where students think about their own learning, and peer assessments that allow students to provide feedback on others' work. Formative assessments also allowed educators to refocus students during the learning process, encourage students to build on their strengths, and aid students in becoming more aware of their learning needs and interests (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2014). Summative assessments were given at a different time in the learning process than the formative assessments. Summative assessments were given at the conclusion of a defined instructional period, typically at the end of the unit, course, semester, or year (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013b). Summative assessments were used to determine if students learned what they were expected to learn within the given instructional time period. Summative assessments were often used as grades or scores. The most well-known summative assessments were standardized tests given by states and testing organizations (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013b). Other examples include: end-of-unit tests, end-of-term tests, and culminating projects (portfolios). Summative tests were at times used as standardized high-stakes tests to make important decisions about schools, teachers, and students (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013b).

Interventions Used by Teachers to Increase Student Achievement

Educators utilized a wide range of techniques to increase student achievement within their school districts. The techniques they used depended highly on the student population and the educator evaluation implemented within the district. Educator

evaluations played a role in interventions due to the teacher being rated based on student achievement.

Interventions used in evaluations which utilized SLOs for educator effectiveness and student achievement encompassed collaboration among educator peers and between teachers and evaluators. All educators and all students were able to demonstrate learning and growth with SLOs because they were not dependent on standardized scores (Lachlan-Haché et al., 2012). SLOs encouraged educators to work collaboratively with specialists and peers to develop goals and lessons uniquely tailored to each student and classroom. Educators had more freedom to choose strategies for lessons and which assessment measured student achievement. As stated earlier, states provided lists of assessments for teachers to pick from throughout the year (Lacireno-Paquet et al., 2014). This ensured the assessments were rigorous and of high-quality (Lachlan-Haché et al., 2012). SLOs allowed for teachers to individualize interventions to students or classrooms. The inherent autonomy of SLOs was appealing to educators and administrators to address all student populations and needs.

On the other hand, VAMs were more restrictive. They placed value on short-term test preparation as opposed to long-term knowledge acquisition. Educators within one district in North Carolina expressed concerns over the effects of this type of evaluation when they stated “educators increasingly game the system and teach to the test” (Muoio, 2019, p. 25). Value-added models did not allow for educator autonomy or student variability. Outside factors including home support, class size, summer learning loss, and instructional time were not accounted for within VAMs. Those factors often influenced educator interventions and assessments used with students. VAMs use of test scores

exclusively for evaluations was difficult and it assumed "student learning is measured by a given test, is influenced by the teacher alone, and is independent from the growth of classmates and other aspects of the classroom context" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012). Additionally, teachers and students felt more pressure and scrutiny from parents or administration to perform well on assessments, given their high-stakes nature. The high-stakes environment created by VAMs induced educator competitiveness and decreased collaboration (Muoio, 2019).

Educator Professional Development to Support Evaluation Changes

The changes to educator evaluation systems forced states and districts to re-evaluate their professional development programs for staff. Teachers and administrators had to learn the new way of evaluations either as an implementor or an evaluator. SLOs and VAMs were utilized by districts to determine the best avenue of training for staff (NASSP, 2019). Districts which allowed multiple measures to be collected within the educator evaluation saw a more complete and elaborate representation of a teacher's strengths and weaknesses and ensured better alignment with professional growth opportunities (Goe et al., 2012). Evaluation systems could assist leaders in the development of effective professional development programs, but they required dependable and valid evidence of teacher performance and student learning. Goe et al. (2012) described six components to include in the evaluation systems of educators to be used effectively for professional development (Figure 3):

> high-quality standards for instruction; multiple standards-based measures of teacher effectiveness; high-quality training on standards, tools, and measures; trained individuals to interpret results and make professional development

recommendations; high-quality professional growth opportunities for individuals and groups of teachers; and high-quality standards for professional learning. (p. 2)

Figure 3

Six Components in an Aligned Teacher Evaluation /Professional Development System.

Figure 3 shows how all six components are inter-connected and each necessary for a successful system. An effective system should encompass all aspects to see the highest success rates from educators and students. A key component to the system is the use of multiple standards-based measures of teacher effectiveness. “Multiple measures paint a more complete and elaborate picture of a teacher’s strengths and weaknesses, ensuring better alignment with professional growth opportunities” (Goe et al., 2012, p. 6). Some common measures included: student surveys, classroom observations, and classroom artifacts or work samples. Administrators, such as principals, played a critical role in the system to determine the areas in which educators’ growth was needed. Frequently, professional development choices were guided by district or school goals and priorities. Once evaluation results were interpreted and communicated to teachers, they

were specifically tied to district initiatives and goals (Goe et al., 2012). However, leaders required additional training themselves on how to best implement and advise teachers through the evaluation process. Principals and leaders strived for more collaborative conversations and conferences with teachers to develop tailored and respectful evaluations that guide trainings (Muoio, 2019). During these conversations, professional and student-oriented goals were set and ensured a professional development plan was designed. Muoio (2019) summarized, "This type of relationship between the evaluation, goal setting, and professional development is designed to ensure teachers' growth opportunities are not viewed a "one-size-fits-all" approach" (p. 29). As districts and schools developed these relationships and plans, it became clear they would need to allocate funds to enact the changes.

Budgets to Implement Teacher Evaluations

Encompassed within a district's budget for instruction and related expenses were educator evaluations. Federal grants and money received by districts totaled no more than 10% of the working total budget for a given year (Ellerson, n.d., p. 1). Local and state government entities, approximately 45% each, split budgetary contributions (Institute of Education Sciences, 2007). "School districts allotted the money in the budgets in various ways with fluctuated terms; for example, teacher salaries and evaluations were often funded through instruction or instruction-related category" (Ellerson, n.d., p. 9). Due to the variances, individual districts' specific budgetary allotment for educator evaluations were difficult to determine. In response to a severe recession in 2007, the U.S. Congress passed, and President Barack Obama signed into law, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Pub. Law 111-5) at an

estimated cost of $831 billion (Dragoset et al., 2016, p. 3). “Additionally, as part of the RTT initiative in the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009, the federal government gave states and districts grant money to implement new teacher evaluation policies” (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2015, para. 9). After the incentives, legislators looked to modify laws and regulations to streamline all policies governing teachers. Congress designated approximately $5.05 billion between 2009 and 2012 for the RTT grants (Hallgren et al., 2014, para. 1).

Private investors funded investments through foundations to assist in the policy changes for educator evaluations. The private investors included organizations, such as The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Carnegie Corp of New York (The Berkeley Research Development Office, 2021). The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation sponsored many programs throughout the United States. Information on specific funding for programs nation-wide had been sparse; however, information was gathered for case studies in some districts and programs. Three districts were identified in a particular case study conducted by RAND Education and American Institutes for Research; Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS), Memphis City Schools (MCS), and Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) (Chambers et al., 2013) on the budgets required to implement evaluations for educators. The case study and programs were funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The schools used the VAM for teacher evaluations with slight variations in two of the districts (MCS and PPS). In the case study, it was described how much funding was allocated for evaluations from November 2009 to June 2012 (see Table 1). Table 1 displays the breakdown of expenses for each school and funding sources.

Table 1

Overview of Expenditures on the Evaluation Systems in Case Study

	Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS)	Memphis City Schools	Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS)
Total evaluation system expenditures	$24.8 million	$8.5 million	$6.4 million
Percentage of evaluation system expenditure by component			
Teacher observations	87%	82%	46%
Value-added model (VAM)	13%	1%	45%
Student surveys	N/A	17%	8%
Funding sources			
Philanthropic funds	62%	94%	58%
Federal funding	19%	6%	27%
District funding	19%		8%
Mixed funding			7%

Note:(Chambers et al., 2013).

As shown in Table 1. HCPS spent the highest amount in expenditures for the total evaluation system. HCPS did not utilize student surveys in the evaluations of teachers, leaving the majority of the funds to be allocated to teacher observations (Chambers et al., 2013). While the remaining two schools did incorporate student surveys within the evaluation system, they allotted the funds differently. The case study found HCPS invested resources to hire full-time observers unlike the other two districts where principals and assistant principals typically conducted the observations. In addition, each district used a considerable amount of funds on software infrastructure to develop in-house observation solutions (Chambers et al., 2013). The case study stated the additional cost incurred by HCPS when compare to the other two study districts was the district size (Chambers et al., 2013). HCPS outnumbered the other two districts in students and

teachers by a large number. The case study provided one example of how districts received funds and utilized the funds in teacher evaluation programs. As stated previously, there was little research or documentation on district-specific application of resources for teacher evaluations.

Once ESSA replaced NCLB and the waiver system, states had more control of teacher evaluations and had access to various funding opportunities to implement the program. The funding formula for Title I would remain intact, but funding for Title II would change (Education Week, 2015). Title II funded teacher quality and development. Title II provided grants to State educational agencies, local educational agencies, State agencies for higher education, and eligible partnerships to increase student academic achievement through strategies, such as improved teacher and principal quality (USDOE, 2004). The grants provided an increased number of highly qualified teachers, highly qualified assistant principals, and highly qualified principals. Local educational agencies and schools were held accountable for improvements in student academic achievement. RTT and ESSA enabled states and districts to develop more in-depth teacher evaluation systems and teacher preparation programs. These reforms were driven in large part by research, which detailed that teachers had sizeable effects on student learning (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Rivkin et al., 2005; Rockoff, 2004). However, administrators, such as principals and assistant principals were the staff required to observe and evaluate the educators to fulfill the policies.

Districts more heavily relied on administrators as evaluators with the newly expanded evaluation system. Some districts incorporated more positions to fulfill the requirements, such as instructional coaches and lead teachers (Chambers et al., 2013).

States who applied for the RTT resources listed the positions responsible for the evaluation of educators. These included positions, such as administrators, principals, school leaders, and trained evaluators, in some cases. In a few states that applied, there were no evaluators listed and it was commonly accepted in these states that the responsibility would fall to principals, due to low funding (Kraft & Gilmour, 2015). The changes to the evaluation system induced thoughts of how evaluators perceived the purpose of evaluations and their role. Nearly every state and policymaker viewed teacher evaluations as a means to professional learning and at times high-stakes accountability (Kraft & Gilmour, 2015). Principals faced an increased workload with the reforms to evaluations, due to the increase in observations, increased written paperwork, and increased post-observation meetings with educators. The increased workload and responsibilities led to doubt in principals' ability and capacity to adequately complete teacher evaluations (Kraft & Gilmour, 2015). Administrator opinions of evaluation methods and training to complete the evaluations became a component within the implementation of the new evaluation standards districts and states had to address.

Administrator opinions of evaluations

Generally, principals were supportive of teacher evaluations when they were given the appropriate tools to complete the task. There were principals, though, that stated that the new evaluation processes had negatively impacted their work relationships and their ability to lead their schools effectively. Research suggested the recent changes to teacher evaluations may have had a greater impact on school principals (Barnum & Cramer, 2018). While principals spent more time in classrooms to observe teachers in action, the changes overwhelmed the principals with work, weakened their relationships

with teachers, and led to a decrease in the fulfillment of other duties in the building. Barnum and Cramer (2018) cited one principal who discussed the changes of the principal within the building as "you cannot be just a manager of a building . . . you have to be an instructional leader first" (para. 6). Principals have multiple responsibilities at once within the building, such as those of supervisors; building managers; employers; and professional development organizers. They also affected students learning in direct and indirect ways throughout the day. Principals indirectly affected students by supporting and assisting teachers' efforts (Kraft & Gilmour, 2015). Leaders were increasingly required to dedicate more time to observing, evaluating, and conferencing with educators during the school year. A study completed by Horng et al. (2010) determined the time spent on evaluations from 65 principals in the Miami-Dade area and discovered that principals spent approximately six percent of their time observing, coaching, and evaluating teachers and approximately seven percent developing or delivering instructional programming. In contrast, the implementation of the new standards-based evaluation system consumed as much as 25% of the principal's time and resulted in generic and brief feedback and observations when analyzed by Halverson et al. (2004). The most consistent concern from principals shared with researchers centered on the time it took to complete the evaluations. Teacher evaluations played a role in the relationship between the educator and the administrator and generally was not positive. Barnum and Cramer (2018) surmised the principals' relationships were damaged due to the new evaluations, because the teachers were not always convinced that the new approaches were fair for all. Additionally, other principals stated "the culture in the school had changed as teacher became more fearful of high-stakes evaluation, and thus

less open with their principal" (Barnum & Cramer, 2018, para. 23). The changes to the system required administrators to also change what they were doing and the time allotted to completed those tasks. The research completed by Kraft and Gilmour (2015) cited viewpoints from various principals with common themes that included how "principals [also] spoke positively about the way the current system changed teachers' role from passive recipients to active participants in the evaluation process by requiring them to set student learning and professional practice goals and assess their own progress" (p. 28). The focus on an objective feedback tool, such as a rubric, allowed principals to provide specific and observable data that teachers understood and could respond to appropriately.

As stated earlier in this report, the biggest concern for principals on the implementation of the new evaluation system was the time required throughout the school year. During conversations with principals, Kraft and Gilmour (2015) developed four broad solutions to the challenges with the evaluations: "strategically targeting evaluations to reduce the evaluation load; relieving principals of their operational management responsibilities; hiring dedicated instructional coaches; and providing principals with more support and guidance on how to provide high- quality feedback to teachers" (p. 29). Overall, administrators were supportive of the new system, but they would require additional time and training to best implement the evaluation system with teachers.

Teacher Opinions of Evaluations

Teacher perspectives changed and evolved as the evaluation systems changed and evolved over the years. In previous years, teachers had mixed opinions on their evaluations and the process. Most schools and districts had a system in place that

required minimal input from administration and did not link test scores to the educators' evaluation rating. As new systems emerged and some involved student performances to be tied to the teacher's rating, teachers' feelings towards the evaluation and the evaluator soured. After some years of the new system being in place, teachers developed less stringent feelings about the systems. In a study by Donaldson (2012), it was noted teachers' perspectives included: they were positive about the opportunity to set their own goals; evaluation reform was necessary; mixed views on whether the evaluation program was objective; and teachers with the highest rating had positive or neutral opinions about the program. Similar to administrators, teachers did not receive or participate in targeted feedback or more observations as necessitated by the evaluation system. "The most consistently reported impacts of the evaluation program were related to its goal-setting component and, in particular, the use of student performance data in the goals" (Donaldson, 2012, p. 17). Teachers were optimistic with most of the changes taking place with the evaluation system, as long as the outcomes were not tied to student assessment data.

The National Center for Teacher Effectiveness (NCTE) performed teacher interviews, as part of a study by Braslow (2017), in two large school districts in two different states that implemented the new evaluation system. According to Braslow's (2017) study,

> only half of the teachers [included in the study] mentioned receiving any kind of feedback that might have prompted reflection, and those prompts were often criticism that left teachers to their own devices to figure out *how* to improve their teaching. (pp.18-19)

Teachers had mixed motivational interests in the evaluation changes dependent on their scores. Teachers expressed that positive effects often were as prevalent as the negative effects (Braslow, 2017). Collaboration was notated as a positive aspect of the new evaluation system that was often outweighed by competition and low morale (Braslow, 2017). The variances in the ways teachers perceived the evaluation system and the procedures, suggested evaluators should individualize their approach to evaluating teachers. Teachers and administrators required more training and education on the evaluation system before they are deemed proficient in the process. Braslow (2017) recommended districts provide teachers and administrators with detailed guidance on professional development, offerings to address instructional standards and support areas of growth. In the end, teachers' perceptions were widely varied and few found the process ultimately helpful.

Summary

In order for teachers to become successful components of their school districts, they must have adequate and developed evaluation systems in place. One way to ensure teachers receive a high-quality evaluation is for states to produce a unified and cohesive system for districts to utilize as a guide when creating their system. It was clear from the research that those types of systems were created in all the states and then revamped as the legislation changed the requirements for educator evaluations. These changes were mandated from the federal and state level to districts. However, districts were left to decide how the system would look in their schools. Special education teachers were not exempt from these changes and had to find ways for the evaluations to work within their classrooms. SLOs, which included student growth models, such as VAMs and SGPs,

were a large portion of many systems (Lacireno-Paquet et al., 2014). Districts also had the challenging task of developing budgets and finding funding sources for the new evaluation systems. While teacher perceptions were mixed towards the new evaluation system, most administrators had positive viewpoints. This study aimed to investigate changes of the evaluation system at one special education district in Missouri. The next chapter outlines the methodology used for this study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate a possible relationship between special education performance-based evaluation ratings of special education teachers and student achievement, specifically achievement on the MAP, EOC, MAP-A, and STAR tests in a Midwest self-contained special education school setting. The researcher collected data from the MPSED Educator Evaluation System (EES), modeled after the Missouri Educator Evaluation System (MODESE, 2013), concerning teachers of testing grades three through 11, student assessment scores in grades three through 11, and administrator interviews, collected as secondary data, in addition to teacher interviews and teacher survey questions. Secondary data were generated from STAR, MAP, EOC, and MAP-A pre- and post-test scores for students in grades three through 11. EOC, MAP, MAP-A, and STAR assessments were standard practice at the school and given regardless of the research study, thus deemed secondary data for the purpose of this study.

Evaluations of special education teachers were a part of the daily operations of some school buildings. Within the researched special education building, teachers participated in an evaluation using a new tool, inclusive of student assessment scores, as one component of the teacher's evaluation. The researcher, a special education teacher at the time of this research, participating in the new evaluation process, believed there could be a possible relationship between teacher evaluation scores and student assessment scores. Having access to high-quality evaluation tools, such as a performance-based evaluation measurement provided school districts and teachers the ability to increase

teacher performance (Darling-Hammond, 2014). This improved performance by teachers could possibly lead to increased student achievement, since evaluations were "an opportunity to better inform our instructional practices and best meet the diverse needs of our students" (Benedict et al., 2013, p. 67). While many factors influenced student achievement, performance-based evaluations for teachers created schools where teachers were performing at high levels and setting high standards for their students at the same time. "In addition to clear standards for student learning, accompanied by high-quality curriculum materials and assessments," a sound evaluation system should be developed and understood by teachers and administrators (Darling-Hammond, 2014, p. 8).

Performance-based evaluations of teachers became a new tool utilized by school districts since the enactment of the Recovery Act under President Obama (USDOE, 2014). The Recovery Act created guidelines for administrators to evaluate teachers based on student performance. While there were many studies on general and special education teacher assessment practices (Adams et al., 2015; Benedict et al., 2013; Gill et al., 2014; Lacireno-Paquet et al., 2014; Shaneyfelt et al., 2006; Steinbrecher et al., 2014), the researcher discovered no previous studies on specific evaluation instruments, such as performance-based evaluation measures, used with special education teachers in a separate, self-contained special education setting in the Midwest.

This study was motivated by changes that occurred within the researcher's district with educator evaluations. The differences arose due to changes in legislation surrounding teacher evaluation within Missouri, which required districts to evaluate all teachers according to a new set of standards, including yearly action plans, evidence of action plan success, increased administrator observation, and improved feedback

conferences (MODESE, 2013). This research focused on the potential relationship between performance-based evaluation scores for special education teachers and student achievement within a self-contained school setting.

Surveys

Once the researcher received approval from the Institutional Review Board of the researcher's home university, as well as permission to use the school district as a study site (see Appendix G), district faculty and administrators were asked to answer a voluntary survey (see Appendix C) and interview questions (see Appendix A and B). The researcher developed the survey utilizing potential concerns of teachers. If teachers did complete the survey, an informed consent (see Appendix E) was completed and returned to the researcher with the survey. The researcher expected a minimum of 50 completed surveys from district teachers; however, approximately 44 were received. The survey was completed during the spring semester. The researcher also sent a survey with an informed consent (see Appendix C) to teachers and administrators to have them sign the consent and schedule a time to partake in a voluntary interview. The researcher maintained observational notes during teacher and administrator interviews. The notes included responses from the interviewee, anecdotal information discussed prior to the interview, and researcher observations.

Scores

School district faculty tested approximately 390 students in Math and ELA utilizing MAP, MAP-A, and EOC tests. Teachers were assigned a rating based on student scores on the tests. Teachers were given a rating of ineffective, minimally effective, effective, or highly effective, based on student scores. Teachers in elementary buildings

were scored on their classroom students. Teachers in middle and high school were scored on students enrolled in their homeroom class. Student scores were assigned an achievement level based on their EOC score and assigned an ordinal value (Below Basic- 1, Basic- 2, Proficient- 3, Advanced- 4). Likewise, students assessed with MAP and MAP-A tests were assigned an achievement level, based on their mastery level of a skill. Each achievement level was assigned an ordinal value (Emerging- 1, Approaching the Target- 2, Target- 3, Advanced- 4**).**

The Research Site and Participants

The researcher collected assessment data, sent teacher surveys, and conducted surveys with teachers and administrators. State tests were collected on all students participating in math and ELA assessments in grades three through 11. Teachers who worked within the five separate buildings of MPSED were recruited for the interview and survey portions of the study. The teachers were selected from all grade levels that administered the STAR, MAP, MAP-A, and EOC tests and were evaluated annually using the performance-based evaluation tool by administrators. After the researcher received an email list of teachers from the five building administrators, the researcher sent an email to the teachers throughout the researched district employed within the five separate buildings, to invite them to participate in the study. All teachers who willingly agreed to participate in the study followed a link within the email to anonymously participate in the survey.

Teachers had an opportunity to participate in the survey and interviews, while administrators participated in the interview. The interviews were conducted to gain additional in-depth insight into teacher and administrator perceptions and implementation

procedures of the Educator Evaluation System. Moreover, the information gained revealed teacher knowledge and understanding of the performance-based evaluations (PBE), as utilized by the district. This study took place at MPSED, at five separate day schools. These schools ranged from kindergarten to 12+ grades. The buildings were considered self-contained buildings, due to every student being qualified for an Individualized Education Program.

The study participants were adult teachers and no primary data were be collected on students with an individual education plan, only secondary, de-identified student data were used for the purposes of this study. For the purposes of this study, convenience sampling was utilized. In all forms of research, it would be ideal to test the entire population, but in most cases, the population is just too large and it is impossible to include every individual (Explorable.com, 2009). For the purpose of this study, five separate public day schools with self-contained classrooms that contain approximately 250 teachers and 550 students were included in the research population, with a convenience minimum sampling for analysis

Qualitative coding methods were used to analyze the interview and survey data. The Grounded Theory was utilized as a resource to uncover common themes and to code the data. The Grounded Theory is a qualitative research approach developed by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960's. The purpose of this approach was to develop themes about occurrences in the area(s) of interest (Trochim, 2006).

The Grounded Theory includes several types of analytical practices, such as, coding. For the purpose of this study, selective coding was utilized to determine how the core themes correlated with the survey completed by the teachers and administrators.

According to the Grounded Theory Institute (2014), memoing is used after the coding process to summarize or write-up the findings of the codes. The researcher sorted the codes to develop common themes specific to each research question one, two, three, and four.

Qualitative research methods, such as interviews, are believed to provide a deeper understanding of occurrences than would be obtained from solely quantitative methods, such as questionnaires (Silverman, 2000). Interviews are, therefore, most appropriate where little is known about the research occurrences or where detailed insights are required from individual participants. They are also appropriate for exploring sensitive topics, where participants may not want to discuss such issues in a group environment.

One type of interview questioning format is a semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews consist of several key questions that help to define the areas to be researched, but also allows the interviewer or interviewee to deviate in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail (Britten, 1999).

Methodology

Once the researcher received notice that the *Application to Conduct Research* (see Appendix G) was approved by the participating school district and Lindenwood University IRB approval was also completed, the researcher requested a list of teachers meeting the criteria for administering targeted state and district tests from each of the five building administrators and forwarded the list directly to the MPSED Evaluation and Research Department. Then, data were scrubbed of all identifying information. These data were collected from the summative assessments and teacher evaluations for the 2015-2016 school year.

The researcher contacted teachers via email letter (Appendix E) regarding the nature of the study and their participation was requested. The researcher emailed teacher participants a link to a *Qualtrics* survey. MPSED conducted teacher surveys based on the EES systems in place; however, this survey was independent and any additional information gained from MPSED's survey was included as additional secondary data. The teachers and administrators volunteered for the interviews via an email link sent by the researcher at the end of the survey and by providing their contact information.

The teacher participants administered state assessments, STAR, MAP, MAP-A and EOC tests, as aligned with student learning objectives, as part of their routine responsibilities. Administrators evaluated and provided feedback to teachers throughout the school year, as part of their routine responsibilities. The Evaluation and Research Department (ERD) administrator removed all identifiers from student and teacher data and assigned a code. The students' data were correlated to their homeroom/main teacher by the ERD. The researcher coordinated with teachers and administrators to conduct in person, recorded interviews. The researcher sent a formal follow-up, thank-you letter to each teacher and administrator participant via e-mail (see Appendix D).

The researcher collected and analyzed state test results and overall teacher evaluation ratings (assigning a metric score of 1-4 to each category: ineffective, minimally effective, effective, and highly effective prospectively) from the EES rating scale (see Table 2). Utilizing a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, with an alpha of .05, the researcher calculated the test value for each of the selected tests, using data generated by students who took the EOC, MAP, MAP-A, and STAR.

Table 2

Overall Teacher Rating scale from EES

Years in Position	Ineffective	Minimally Effective	Effective	Highly Effective
0-2	Multiple Areas of Concern or Indicator Rating 0	1 Area of Concern or Indicator Rating of 1	No Areas of Concern and Indicator Rating of 2-3	No Areas of Concern and Indicator Rating of 6-7
3-5	Multiple Areas of Concern or Indicator Rating 0-2	1 Area of Concern or Indicator Rating of 3	No Areas of Concern and Indicator Rating of 4-5	No Areas of Concern and Indicator Rating of 6-7
6-10	Multiple Areas of Concern or Indicator Rating 0-3	1 Area of Concern or Indicator Rating of 4	No Areas of Concern and Indicator Rating of 5-6	No Areas of Concern and Indicator Rating of 7
Over 10	Multiple Areas of Concern or Indicator Rating 0-4	1 Area of Concern or Indicator Rating of 5	No Areas of Concern and Indicator Rating of 6	No Areas of Concern and Indicator Rating of 7

Note: (MODESE, 2020b).

Teachers were given an overall rating score, divided by their years in their current position, as noted in Table 2. Student and teacher data were chosen by an on-line random sample selector. The researcher collected interview data from administrators and teachers to determine the outcome of research questions one, two, three, and four by transcribing and then coding.

The researcher maintained memos during the interview and survey processes to guide analysis of the data collected. The researcher summarized the memos into a

conceptual outline and write-up for qualitative data analysis, noting the specific emergent common themes for each research question. The researcher summarized and reported all findings from surveys, interviews, secondary data, student data, and teacher evaluation data regarding teacher evaluation effectiveness.

Null Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1: There is not a relationship between the performance-based evaluation (District Data) scores of teachers and student scores on the MAP, MAP-A, EOC, STAR math, STAR Early Literacy.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: How do teachers perceive the performance-based evaluation measure? (Survey and interview)

Research Question 2: How do administrators perceive the performance-based evaluation measure? (Interview)

Research Question 3: How are the performance-based evaluation (Interview and survey) components determined to be most relevant for teachers in a self-contained special education setting?

Research Question 4: How is the performance-based evaluation (Interview) process implemented in a special education setting?

Limitations

Limitations are included in academic research. These limitations include items outside of the researcher's control, such as student health, student sleep patterns, and living environments; and could inadvertently have an impact on the outcome of this study. This study included data from multiple sources, such as from a standardized test, a

testing environment, and testing results presented in a format not of the researcher's design, which presented intrinsic limitations for the study.

The design of the district and schools limited the scope of the study. The district within the study designed the schools to be self-contained for students diagnosed with a learning disability and given an IEP. The schools were not inclusive of students without disabilities. Therefore, this exclusivity presented a limitation of the study. This specific limitation, however, is the primary reason the researcher chose the district for the study. The setting is a model for special education districts and special education teaching. The district included separate schools and services within partner districts. For the purpose of this study, the researcher focused on the separate schools and the educators within those schools.

Additionally, a limitation included in this study was the transient nature of the students within the district. Students were placed in the study district based on a variety of factors, and the students could qualify to return to their home school at any time during the year. Educators often saw a number of students in an out of their classrooms throughout the school year. The growth or regression of every student inside each educators' classroom could impact the teachers' evaluations.

Summary

The researcher investigated a potential correlation between educator performance evaluation scores and student achievement scores in a public special education setting in the Midwest. The researcher used various data sources to investigate the effectiveness of teacher evaluations when correlated with student achievement and faculty opinions related to the evaluation tool. A mixed-methods approach was used to gather test scores,

as well as feedback from staff, concerning a potential relationship between results of the teachers' ratings on the evaluation system and student performance measures on the MAP, EOC, MAP-A, and STAR tests. This type of method of study allowed the evaluation tool to be inspected not only through student scores, but also by insight from administrators and teachers. Chapter Four describes the results obtained from this mixed-methods study.

Chapter Four: Results

Overview

The setting for the research was a self-contained special education school district enrolling students of varying diagnoses of learning disabilities. Educators in the studied school district completed an anonymous survey on the teacher evaluation system used within the district. There were 44 teachers who contributed to the survey, from a total research population of 150 teachers. After educators completed the survey, six teachers participated in an interview with the researcher. Administrators were sent a request to participate in an interview with the researcher at the same time teachers were invited to fill out the survey. Administrators did not participate in the evaluation survey. The researcher took observational notes during the interview sessions with teachers and administrators.

Before all the interviews were finalized, educators within the study district were required to have all assessments completed within the district's assessment window. Before the researcher received the assessment results, the results were cleared of all identifiers, so the researcher could analyze all the data while protecting all participants' anonymity.

Null Hypothesis 1

The researcher analyzed the student assessment scores and performance-based teacher evaluation scores at the end of the school year to investigate a relationship between the specific variables.

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between the performance-based evaluation scores of teachers and student scores on the MAP-A, EOC, STAR math, and STAR Reading.

The purpose of the ANOVA was to see if the students who rated high on their achievement tests were in the classroom(s) of a teacher who also rated high on their teacher evaluations. The outcomes could reveal if the teaching abilities and instructional interventions produced higher student achievement scores, or if the ratings on the teacher evaluations and student achievement ratings showed no relationship. For the 2015-2016 school year, teachers assessed students in Math and English Language Arts (ELA) utilizing several standardized tests from the district. In Math, students were assessed with the MAP, EOC, MAP-A, and STAR Math. In ELA, students were assessed using the MAP, EOC, MAP-A, and STAR Reading.

Table 3 displays the number of students who took the Math MAP test, as well as the average of the student achievement level and average teacher ratings.

Table 3

Teacher Rating v. Student Scores on the Math MAP Test

	Count	Sum	Mean	Variance
Students	256	690	2.695	1.036
Teachers	256	682	2.664	0.687

The results in Table 3 showed the number of students and teachers who participated in the Math MAP test (count), the total of the ratings (sum), the average of the ratings for each group (mean), and the amount of difference between the ratings of each group (variance). The same ANOVA test was run for each test the students participated in during the 2015-2016 school year. A discernable examination of these numbers revealed a difference; however, for more specific analysis the researcher applied

an ANOVA. Table 4 displays the results from the ratings of teachers and students in the Math MAP tests. “Groups” indicates students or teachers, so a difference in groups is a difference in ratings.

Table 4

Results of Ratings from Math MAP Test

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-value	F-crit
Between Groups	0.125	1	0.125	0.056	0.813	3.889
Within Groups	439.344	198	2.218			
Total	439.469	199				

Table 4 displays the ANOVA results from the Math MAP tests for students’ and teachers’ ratings. The *p*-value is used to test the strength of the evidence and works between a range of 1 and 0. A *p*-value greater than .05 indicates results are not statistically significant and indicates evidence for the null hypothesis, thus Null Hypothesis 1 must fail to be rejected.

Table 5 displays the difference of means between the students’ and teachers’ scores within the Math MAP test using the Scheffe test, a test used with ANOVA when different sample sizes are used.

Table 5

Scheffe Test: Teacher Rating v. Student Scores on the Math MAP Test

	F_s	F_{crit}	Significant Difference?
Students v. Teachers	0.056	3.889	No

By investigating the critical value (F_{crit}), the researcher determined the significance level as a limit between the ratings that either showed a significant difference or did not. If the calculated value from the test (F_s) is less than the critical value, the researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis. As shown in Table 5, there were

no differences between the means of the ratings of students and teachers on the Math MAP tests within the district. Therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis for Math MAP tests. A summary of the results of the Null Hypothesis on the Math MAP tests, along with recommendations, is stated in Chapter Five.

Table 6 shows the overall results from the ANOVA test, which displays the number of students who took the Math EOC test, as well as the average of the student achievement level and average teacher ratings.

Table 6

Teacher Rating v. Student Scores on the Math EOC Test

	Count	Sum	Mean	Variance
Students	24	54	2.25	0.196
Teachers	24	65	65	0.215

The results of Table 6 show the number of students and teachers who participated in the Math EOC test (count), the total of the ratings (sum), the average of the ratings for each group (mean), and the amount of difference between the ratings of each group (variance).

The same ANOVA test was run for each test the students participated in, Math EOCs, during the 2015-2016 school year. A discernable examination of these numbers exposed minimal difference; however, for more specific analysis an ANOVA test was completed. Table 7 displays the results from the ratings of teachers and students in the Math EOC tests. “Groups” indicates students or teachers, so a difference in groups is a difference in ratings.

Table 7

Results of Ratings from Math EOC Test

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-value	F-crit
Between Groups	2.521	1	2.521	12.26	0.001	4.052
Within Groups	9.458	46	0.206			
Total	11.979	47				

Table 7 lists the ANOVA results from the Math EOC tests for students' and teachers' ratings. The *p*-value is used to test the strength of the evidence and works between a range of 1 and 0. A *p*-value less than .05 is statistically significant and indicates evidence against the null hypothesis, thus Null Hypothesis 1 must be rejected.

Table 8 displays the difference of means between the students' and teachers' scores within the Math EOC test using the Scheffe test, a test used with ANOVA when different sample sizes are used.

Table 8

Scheffe Test: Teacher Rating v. Student Scores on the Math EOC test

	F_s	F_{crit}	Significant Difference?
Students v. Teachers	12.26	4.052	Yes

By investigating the critical value (F_{crit}) the researcher determined the significance level as a limit between the ratings that either showed a significant difference or did not. If the calculated value from the test (F_s) is greater than the critical value, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis. As shown in Table 8, there were significant differences between the means of the ratings of students and teachers on the Math EOC tests within the district. Therefore, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis for Math EOC tests. A summary of the results of the Null Hypothesis on the Math EOC tests, along with recommendations, is stated in Chapter Five.

Table 9 shows the overall results from the ANOVA test, which displays the number of students who took the Math MAP-A test, as well as the average of the student achievement level and average teacher ratings.

Table 9

Teacher Rating v. Student Scores on the Math MAP-A test

	Count	Sum	Mean	Variance
Students	14	50	3.571	1.187
Teachers	14	43	3.071	0.379

The results of Table 9 show the number of students and teachers who participated in the Math MAP-A test (count), the total of the ratings (sum), the average of the ratings for each group (mean), and the amount of difference between the ratings of each group (variance). The same ANOVA test was run for each test the students participated in during the 2015-2016 school year. A discernable examination of the numbers revealed a difference; however, for more specific analysis an ANOVA test was completed. Table 10 displays the results from the ratings of teachers and students in the Math MAP-A tests. "Groups" indicates students or teachers, so a difference in groups is a difference in ratings.

Table 10

Results of Ratings from Math MAP-A Test

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-value	F-crit
Between Groups	1.75	1	1.75	2.235	0.14	4.225
Within Groups	20.357	26	0.783			
Total	22.107	27				

Table 10 lists the ANOVA results from the Math MAP-A tests for students' and teachers' ratings. The *p*-value is used to test the strength of the evidence and works between a range of 1 and 0. A *p*-value greater than .05 is not statistically significant and indicates evidence for the null hypothesis, thus Null Hypothesis 1 must fail to be rejected.

Table 11 displays the difference of means between the students' and teachers' scores within the Math MAP-A test using the Scheffe test, a test used with ANOVA when different sample sizes are used.

Table 11

Scheffe Test: Teacher Rating v. Student Scores on the Math MAP-A Test

	F_s	F_{crit}	Significant Difference?
Students v. Teachers	2.235	4.225	No

By investigating the critical value (F_{crit}) the researcher determined the significance level as a limit between the ratings that either showed a significant difference or did not. If the calculated value from the test (F_s) is less than the critical value, the researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis. As shown in Table 11, there were no differences between the means of the ratings of students and teachers on the Math MAP-A tests within the district. Therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis for Math MAP-A tests. A summary of the results of the Null Hypothesis on the Math MAP-A tests, along with recommendations, is stated in Chapter Five.

Table 12 shows the overall results from the ANOVA test, which displays the number of students who took the STAR Math test, as well as the average of the student achievement level and average teacher ratings.

Table 12

Teacher Rating v. Student Scores on the STAR Math Test

	Count	Sum	Mean	Variance
Students	140	10182	72.729	9092.271
Teachers	140	376	2.686	0.606

The results of Table 12 show the number of students and teachers who participated in the STAR Math test (count), the total of the ratings (sum), the average of

the ratings for each group (mean), and the amount of difference between the ratings of each group (variance). The same ANOVA test was run for each test the students participated in during the 2015-2016 school year. An examination of these numbers revealed a noticeable difference; however, for more specific analysis a *z*-test was completed due to the high sample size and the numbers being collected differently. Tables 13 and 14 display the results from the ratings of teachers and students in the STAR Math tests.

Table 13

Descriptive Scores on the STAR Math Test

	Count	SD	Mean
Students	140	95.353	72.729
Teachers	140	0.778	2.686

Table 14

Z-Test Scores on the STAR Math Test

	Right	Left	Two (+/-)	z
Critical Values (t)	1.645	-1.645	1.96	8.691
p-values	1	0	0	

Tables 13 and 14 listed the *z*-test results from the STAR Math tests for students' and teachers' ratings. The *p*-value is used to test the strength of the evidence and works between a range of 1 and 0. A *p*-value less than .05 is statistically significant and indicates evidence for rejecting the null hypothesis, thus Null Hypothesis 1 should be rejected. As shown in Table 13, large differences existed between the means of the ratings of students and teachers on the STAR Math tests within the district. Therefore, the researcher should reject the null hypothesis for STAR Math tests. However, the tests are challenging to interpret given the data from the district. The data had a different format that did not give the student or teacher raw test or evaluation scores. Instead, the data

listed the teacher rating and the students' change in scores on the assessment from fall to spring. The researcher cannot state for certain if the hypothesis should be rejected or fail to be rejected. A summary of the results of the Null Hypothesis on the STAR Math tests, along with recommendations, is stated in Chapter Five.

The researcher next investigated the results of the ELA student achievement scores and teacher rating scores. Table 15 shows the overall results from the ANOVA test, which displays the number of students who took the ELA MAP test, as well as the average of the student achievement level and average teacher ratings.

Table 15

Teacher Rating v. Student Scores on the ELA MAP Test

	Count	Sum	Mean	Variance
Students	93	260	2.796	1.012
Teachers	93	243	2.613	0.739

The results of Table 15 show the number of students and teachers who participated in the ELA MAP test (count), the total of the ratings (sum), the average of the ratings for each group (mean), and the amount of difference between the ratings of each group (variance). The same ANOVA test was run for each test the students participated in during the 2015-2016 school year. A discernable examination of these numbers revealed a difference; however, for more specific analysis an ANOVA test was completed. Table 16 displays the results from the ratings of teachers and students in the ELA MAP tests. "Groups" indicates students or teachers, so a difference in groups is a difference in ratings.

Table 16

Results of Ratings from ELA MAP Test

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-value	F-crit
Between Groups	1.554	1	1.554	1.774	0.185	3.892
Within Groups	161.183	184	0.876			
Total	162.737	185				

Table 16 lists the ANOVA results from the ELA MAP tests for students' and teachers' ratings. The *p*-value is used to test the strength of the evidence and works between a range of 1 and 0. A *p*-value greater than .05 is not statistically significant and indicates evidence for the null hypothesis, thus Null Hypothesis 1 must fail to be rejected. Table 17 displays the difference of means between the students' and teachers' scores within the ELA MAP test using the Scheffe test, a test used with ANOVA when different sample sizes are used.

Table 17

Scheffe Test: Teacher Rating v. Student Scores on the ELA MAP Test

	F_s	F_{crit}	Significant Difference?
Students v. Teachers	1.773	3.892	No

By investigating the critical value (F_{crit}) the researcher determined the significance level as a limit between the ratings that either showed a significant difference or did not. If the calculated value from the test (F_s) is less than the critical value, the researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis. As shown in Table 17, there were no differences between the means of the ratings of students and teachers on the ELA MAP tests within the district. Therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis for ELA MAP tests. A summary of the results of the Null Hypothesis on the ELA MAP tests, along with recommendations, is stated in Chapter Five.

Table 18 shows the overall results from the ANOVA test, which displays the number of students who took the ELA EOC test, as well as the average of the student achievement level and average teacher ratings.

Table 18

Teacher Rating v. Student Scores on the ELA EOC Test

	Count	Sum	Mean	Variance
Students	11	33	3	0.6
Teachers	11	33	3	0

The results of Table 18 show the number of students and teachers who participated in the ELA EOC test (count), the total of the ratings (sum), the average of the ratings for each group (mean), and the amount of difference between the ratings of each group (variance). The same ANOVA test was run for each test the students participated in during the 2015-2016 school year. A discernable examination of these numbers revealed a difference; however, for more specific analysis a *t*-test was completed due to the low sample size and the numbers being mostly non-variable. Tables 19 and 20 display the results from the ratings of teachers and students in the ELA EOC tests.

Table 19

Descriptive Scores on the ELA EOC Test

	Count	SD	Mean
Students	11	0.775	3
Teachers	11	0	3

Table 20

T-Test Scores on the ELA EOC Test

	Right	Left	Two (+/-)	df
Critical Values (t)	1.812	-1.812	2.228	10
p-values	0.5	0.5	1	

Tables 19 and 20 listed the *t*-test results from the ELA EOC tests for students' and teachers' ratings. The *p*-value is used to test the strength of the evidence and works between a range of 1 and 0. A *p*-value greater than .05 is not statistically significant and indicates evidence for the null hypothesis, thus Null Hypothesis 1 must fail to be rejected. As shown in Tables 19 and 20, there were no differences between the means of the ratings of students and teachers on the ELA EOC tests within the district. Therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis for ELA EOC tests. A summary of the results of the Null Hypothesis on the ELA EOC tests, along with recommendations, is stated in Chapter Five.

Table 21 shows the overall results from the ANOVA test, which displays the number of students who took the ELA MAP-A test, as well as the average of the student achievement level and average teacher ratings.

Table 21

Teacher Rating v. Student Scores on the ELA MAP-A Test

	Count	Sum	Mean	Variance
Students	9	41	4.556	0.278
Teachers	9	26	2.889	0.361

The results of Table 21 show the number of students and teachers who participated in the ELA MAP-A test (count), the total of the ratings (sum), the average of the ratings for each group (mean), and the amount of difference between the ratings of each group (variance). The same ANOVA test was run for each test the students participated in during the 2015-2016 school year. A discernable examination of these numbers revealed a difference; however, for more specific analysis an ANOVA test was completed. Table 22 displays the results from the ratings of teachers and students in the

ELA MAP-A tests. “Groups” indicates students or teachers, so a difference in groups is a difference in ratings.

Table 22

Results of Ratings from ELA MAP-A Test

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-value	F-crit
Between Groups	12.5	1	12.5	39.13	0	4.494
Within Groups	5.111	16	0.319			
Total	17.611	17				

Table 22 lists the ANOVA results from the ELA MAP-A tests for students’ and teachers’ ratings. The *p*-value is used to test the strength of the evidence and works between a range of 1 and 0. A *p*-value less than .05 is statistically significant and indicates evidence against the null hypothesis, thus Null Hypothesis 1 must be rejected. Table 23 displays the difference of means between the students’ and teachers’ scores within the ELA MAP-A test using the Scheffe test, a test used with ANOVA when different sample sizes are used.

Table 23

Scheffe Test: Teacher Rating v. Student Scores on the ELA MAP-A Test

	F_s	F_{crit}	Significant Difference?
Students v. Teachers	39.13	4.494	Yes

By investigating the critical value (F_{crit}) the researcher determined the significance level as a limit between the ratings that either showed a significant difference or did not. If the calculated value from the test (F_s) is greater than the critical value, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis. As shown in Table 23, there were significant differences between the means of the ratings of students and teachers on the ELA MAP-A tests within the district. Therefore, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis for ELA MAP-A

tests. A summary of the results of the Null Hypothesis on the ELA MAP-A tests, along with recommendations, is stated in Chapter Five.

Table 24 shows the overall results from the ANOVA test, which displays the number of students who took the STAR Reading test, as well as the average of the student achievement level and average teacher ratings.

Table 24

Teacher Rating v. Student Scores on the STAR Reading Test

	Count	Sum	Mean	Variance
Students	128	10996	85.906	23716.73
Teachers	128	342	2.672	0.632

The results of Table 24 show the number of students and teachers who participated in the STAR Reading test (count), the total of the ratings (sum), the average of the ratings for each group (mean), and the amount of difference between the ratings of each group (variance). The same ANOVA test was run for each test the students participated in during the 2015-2016 school year. An examination of these numbers revealed a noticeable difference; however, for more specific analysis a t-test was completed due to the high sample size and the numbers being collected differently. Tables 25 and 26 display the results from the ratings of teachers and students in the STAR Reading tests.

Table 25

Descriptive Scores on the STAR Reading Test

	Count	SD	Mean
Students	128	154.002	85.906
Teachers	128	0.795	2.672

Table 26

Z-Test Scores on the STAR Reading Test

	Right	Left	Two (+/-)	z
Critical Values (t)	1.645	-1.645	1.96	6.115
p-values	1	4.84	0	

Tables 25 and 26 list the *z*-test results from the STAR Reading tests for students' and teachers' ratings. The *p*-value is used to test the strength of the evidence and works between a range of 1 and 0. A *p*-value less than .05 is statistically significant and indicates evidence for rejecting the null hypothesis, thus Null Hypothesis 1 should be rejected. As shown in Tables 25 and 26, there were substantial differences between the means of the ratings of students and teachers on the STAR Reading tests within the district. Therefore, the researcher should reject the null hypothesis for STAR Reading tests. However, these tests were difficult to interpret given the data from the district. The data had a different format that did not give the student or teacher raw test or evaluation scores. Instead, the data listed the teacher rating and the students' change in scores on the assessment from fall to spring. The researcher cannot state for certain if the hypothesis should be rejected or failed to be rejected. A summary of the results of the Null Hypothesis on the STAR Reading tests, along with recommendations, is stated in Chapter Five.

Research Question 1

How do teachers perceive the performance-based evaluation measure?

Overall, educators had mixed opinions regarding the new evaluation system implemented within the district. Teachers had varied experiences and opinions, which were dependent on the new evaluation system that was introduced, implemented, and

supported, specifically within their building. However, there were still variations of teachers' reactions, merely based on their personal experiences and tenure.

Some of the common themes that arose from teacher interviews and surveys regarding their perceptions of the evaluation system included how educators thought it was frustrating and just busy work, while others thought it was structured and more differentiated for each teacher making it equitable. One teacher stated, 'I think it's a little cumbersome' and 'it's a lot of clerical, busy work for little effect,' while another teacher stated, 'with this system, she's (the principal) also been very clear - this is what the district expects, and we will make it work for us, so we don't freak out.' Many new teachers thought the process that was in place to train and provide guidance to them during their first three years aided their understanding of the new evaluation system. Plus, new teachers did not partake in the previous evaluation system, which led them to have no opinion or understanding about it. Their experiences and opinions were shaped by the way the new evaluation system was introduced and implemented in their school. One teacher stated, 'least offensive way to implement requirements for Jefferson City but still in early implementation stages.' According to survey results, most teachers (47.7%) understood the evaluation system; but, most stated (38.6%) they believed it is not easier to understand than the previous system.

When asked what the purpose of the new evaluation system was for educators, teachers had varied responses. Educators typically believed the changes were positive in nature: improving educator practice and student learning, making teachers more accountable, and having a more uniform way of evaluating staff. Some teachers also expressed that the changes were to meet legislative regulations or mandates and to meet

district expectations for evaluations. There were still others that were a little unsure of why there were changes to the system, stating, 'I'm a little unsure what the purpose is except it's probably state or federally mandated.' A new teacher mentioned, 'the purpose is to help teachers be accountable of the standards they are required to implement in their classroom and also align it with other school-wide expectations like or school improvement plan.' Additionally, a teacher recalled how 'the district has managed to make it non-threatening' and 'it's an accountability measure from legislators.' Educators within the district had a multitude of opinions as to why the evaluation changes were taking place and where their responsibilities fell within the new system. Fifty-three point five percent of educators understood their responsibilities within the new system; but, the individual ways the teachers implemented those responsibilities within their classrooms were vast. Most teachers 'incorporated into my classroom learning systems I already do' and merely 'put it in writing.' Again, new teachers had a different perspective of their responsibilities and how they achieved those tasks. 'Every quarter it gives me certain standards I need to discuss and I need to talk about what I am doing to meet those standards, what I can do to improve it,' a second-year teacher stated.

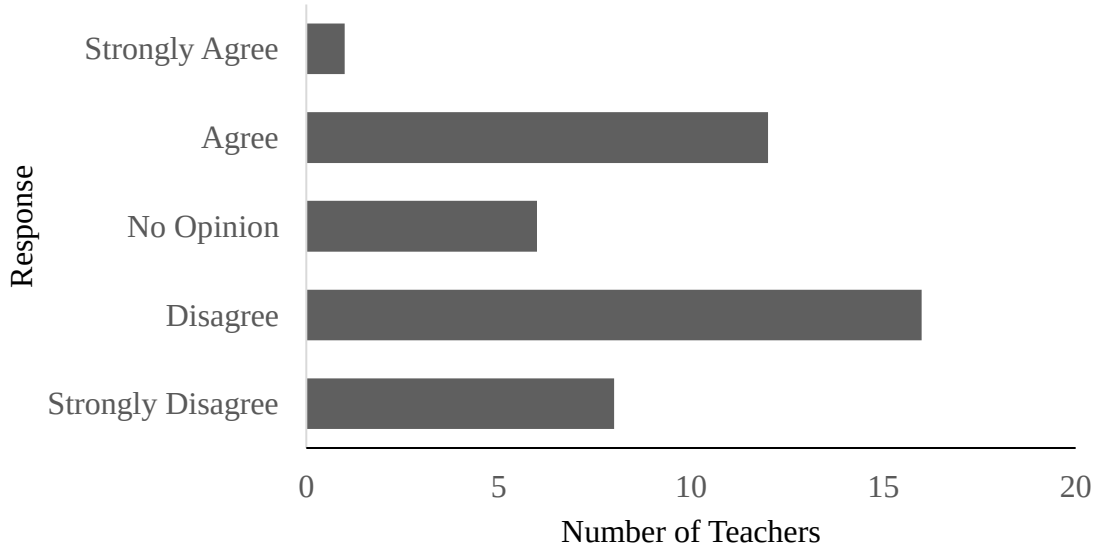
The teachers were more split on whether the system accurately evaluated their abilities as a teacher. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of the teachers' responses to survey question nine, which stated 'I believed the EES accurately evaluates my abilities as a teacher.'

Teachers seemed divided on whether the system effectively evaluated their abilities as a teacher, as shown in Figure 4 with a slight majority believing that the evaluation did not adequately measure the teachers' abilities in the classroom. One

teacher stated, ‘The student achievement component of the EES is an inappropriate indicator of my instruction and instruction ability.’ A teacher added in her interview, ‘I just don’t see it being an effective measurement tool of what we’re trying to evaluate ourselves on.’ It was evident teachers felt unsure how the new evaluation tool would be effective for showing growth for them and their students.

Figure 4

Teacher Responses to Survey Question Number Nine



The concern over students’ disabilities and how to appropriately measure their growth with a new tool made for all the educators in the district was evident. The teachers expressed their differences of evaluation outcomes, based on their years of teaching in some cases. One teacher commented, ‘I find it ridiculous we are all working on the same goal. As an experienced teacher I have different needs than a first-year teacher. This is ridiculous and demeaning.’ Another remarked as a new teacher, ‘As a new teacher, it has allowed me to reflect back on what I am doing in the classroom. However; I [am] not sure what is expected once I am no longer of the “new hire” status.’

The frustration of several of the teachers interviewed was clear when asked about their experiences with the new system. A teacher emphasized the impact of the evaluation as ‘it’s a lot to have to do and it takes a lot out of your day whether it’s a school day or your time at home or your teaching to put information in there.’ A few commented on how goals and objectives could be modified over time as students or classroom needs changed, which was new. They were unsure if that was a positive or a negative of the evaluation system. One teacher noted the ability to change her goals as, ‘if I write the goal correctly then I can basically improve’ and ‘if I don’t write the goal correctly then I have the possibility of being ineffective.’ ‘So, I talked to admin and we were able to do it where I rephrased the goal to include or maintain students on grade-level.’

The past evaluation system did not include SLOs or goals for the teachers to address throughout the year. When teacher interviews were conducted, it was the end of the second year for the district’s implementation of the new evaluation system. SLOs or student goals were included with educator goals. The district prescribed what goals the teachers would address for the educator portion. A teacher stated uneasiness, ‘I feel that some of the things that they are requesting of us are not as important as other things could be that aren’t being evaluated or looked at.’ Overall, the majority of teachers interviewed were optimistic that the new evaluation system could be an improvement and could be better than the previous system; however, it was not at the time of the interviews. Teachers seemed to want to have an effective way to measure their progress and the students.’ As one teacher detailed her opinion of the purpose of the evaluations, ‘[the evaluation is for] teachers to continue to grow, so that they don’t just stagnate where

they're at and so they learn new things and improve in different areas because a change over the years is what you work on'; others echoed her opinion.

The teachers' perceptions of the new evaluation system were mixed but had a slight leaning towards negative. However, most of the teachers interviewed had a positive outlook for the future of educator evaluations. Teachers wanted an effective way to measure their growth throughout the year. They also wanted an effective way to measure students' growth throughout the school year. The new system did not seem to meet those standards during the interview process. Teachers felt if there was a way to make the goals and standards objective and modifiable for the various types of students serviced within the district, the system would be more successful. The teachers who did not share the optimistic viewpoint also did not have thoughts on ways to improve or seemed to have the desire to improve. There was a noticeable difference in opinions from teachers depending on what building they worked in during the school year. As noted, 'I've been teaching since 1980 so they can bring in whatever evaluation system they want. That's not going to change much what I do in my classroom.' Conversely, 'I sat down with the assistant principal [and] we looked at where I was at on the scale and then what I could do in my classroom. This year, I'll just get really specific.'

Research Question 2

How do administrators perceive the performance-based evaluation measure?

Building administrators were asked their perceptions on the educator evaluation systems, new and old, in an interview format. There were administrators from each of the five buildings from the district. One building had two administrators that chose to participate as they had piloted the program the previous year. Overall, administrators

were supportive of the change in evaluations. However, most stated that it was more time consuming for them throughout the school year, and there are some issues that needed to be worked out as the system continued to be utilized. One administrator noted the benefits of the new evaluation system,

> I think that it helps student achievement. It makes the teachers accountable for their academic and behavioral progress in the classroom. They [teachers] are really seeing that it aligns with things that we've already been doing in the district. I think previously teachers were very concerned that it was going to be very punitive and as they've gone through the process, they've realized they have a lot of control in their goals and their progress. Throughout the years, they've become quite comfortable; because, they feel like they have a lot of control.

Furthermore, administrators felt 'it's a tool that focuses our conversation on student achievement.' The administrators concurred that the evaluations gave teachers more ownership of their own evaluations. One principal stated, 'I think it important that teachers are able to select the group they want to measure performance with and what area they are measuring, it provides more ownership and value.' Another principal agreed,

> With any of these evaluations, you get out what you put in. Do they have a direct impact on student achievement? I think it depends on how they're utilized. If they are utilized correctly and followed through and the administration follows through, I think they are great tools.

All the administrators agreed that, while it required more of their time to be dedicated to components of the educator evaluation, the changes were positive in creating

relationships with teachers. They were required to do more observations to comply with limits inside the system. As noted, ‘The good thing is that you get to meet with the teachers. It forces you to go see them on a more regular basis because you have certain deadlines setup within the system that you have to have.’

However, administrators found similar faults with the program as teachers. An administrator stated, ‘I’m not sure if the student learning objective or that tool fully captures what goes into what a teacher goes through on a daily basis.’ ‘I think the intention is always that they correlate’ one administrator noted about the evaluation system and student achievement. An administrator included an example of how the evaluation system does not encapsulate the teachers’ fully capabilities:

> I have classrooms of students who have non-measurable IQ's. And I have teachers who are held to the same standards as teachers in our partner districts who are teaching students AP courses. My teachers write the flow because they have to, but their scores were so different because the student population is significantly different and I think that is the hardest part about a one size fits all teacher evaluation is that those who design and legislate the design of these tools don't understand that it doesn't work that way. Education isn't a one size fits all. Although teachers are held accountable and there is science behind what we do and there's still a craft and children still come to us. Students still come to us [as] individuals. I think that all things aligning, everything being equal, there is a correlation. I increase instructional practices, I increase student engagement, I do all kinds of right things, we will see increased student achievement and we will

> see our outcomes increase. However, there are many variables I can't account for and my teachers can't control those.

Administrators struggled with helping teachers find the ways to increase student achievement and teacher rating scores with the vast array of special needs within the buildings. However, several stated that even as administrators they receive ongoing professional development in the evaluation system to become better raters and evaluators. It was noted by one, 'We were all trained as administrators, a three-day training, on how to implement it' and 'administrators also receive on-going professional learning in this area.'

Administrators were split on their opinions of how teachers perceived and received the new evaluation system. Some thought the teachers were receptive and liked the evaluation changes and others thought, 'They hate it. It's difficult to take on change.' The administrators, which had a favorable opinion of the evaluation system and implemented the system with fidelity, had teachers that shared their opinion and were more open to the changes. One principal shared their thoughts, 'This school piloted the program last year. So, this year, the teachers were pretty used to it. They for the most part like it as much as they would like any evaluation system.' Later they continued to elaborate on teachers' positive reactions,

> Initially, they were really concerned, like I said. In the past two years, I've had a lot of people come to me and say how much they like it. They're getting a lot of face-to-face conversations with their administrators about how they're doing. The observations are very unique to them based on the checklist and observation

> forms we use. I think at the end of the second year, I feel that most of the employees find that the experience is very positive.

Another principal echoed these sentiments regarding teachers, stating, 'I believe most teachers were engaged in the process, and thought the new evaluation was thorough. I think most teachers would say that the content is good, but the electronic system is cumbersome to navigate.' Another reflected, 'Teachers' reactions have been fine. I think they are supportive of it. They are kind of controlling the conversation because they are the ones that bring the evidence and the data that supports movement within channels and also data that supports student growth.' Administrators appreciated different factors of the new evaluation system including the increase in teacher observations, student performance aspect, and teachers having more ownership within the system. As stated,

> I like that we have a student growth section of performance, it states in the evaluation that teachers cannot be rated as proficient or distinguished unless they show student growth in the students they target. I think it is important that teachers are able to select the group they want to measure performance with and what are they are measuring; it provides more ownership and value.

Additionally, an administrator expressed,

> I think that it (teacher evaluations) helps student achievement. It makes teachers accountable for their academic and behavioral progress in the classroom. They are really seeing that it aligns with things that we've already been doing in the district. I think previously, teachers were very concerned that it was going to be very punitive and as they've gone through the process, they've realized they have

a lot of control in their goals and their progress. Throughout the years, they've become quite comfortable because they feel like they have a lot of control. Some administrators were more ambiguous than others regarding evaluation details or perceptions. While still knowledgeable as to the process and implementation, they were not as forthcoming with information. They stated succinctly, 'It's to promote high levels of student and staff achievement' and 'the purpose is for performance.' Also, when describing characteristics of the new evaluation system, it was mentioned it included, 'positive environment, data, communication with colleagues, and being part of a team' and 'it contains everything you need; observations forms, improvement growth plans, and student learning objectives.' The new system had many aspects and characteristics included in the computerized system. It also took place throughout the year with various items due at different times.

Conversely, teachers expressed their thoughts that administrators should be held accountable in some aspect as well within the system. A teacher said, 'Feedback from administration throughout the year should increase, and they should be held accountable for this component.' A teacher also mentioned how the new system, at times, allowed for less face-to-face conversations and feedback sessions to take place, 'You kind of miss that interaction with your administrator.'

In the end, administrators appeared to have a positive opinion of the new evaluations of teachers. Each administrator had their own approach to describing their perspective and what they believed teachers' perspectives were on the new evaluation system. There were specific pieces that principals found more appealing than others and all of them seemed to have similar factors they did not like. They all had negative

comments related to the time needed for the new computerized approval process and the increased number observations.

Research Question 3 and Research Question 4

How are the performance-based evaluation components determined to be most relevant for teachers in a self-contained special education setting?

How is the performance-based evaluation process implemented in a special education setting?

Since many administrators primarily focused on how the new evaluation system was implemented instead of commenting on how the components were determined to be relevant, Research Question 3 was combined with Research Question 4. Therefore, this addressed the implementation and components in the special education setting overall.

Administrators and teachers were asked about the various components of the new evaluation system and the previous evaluation system. They were asked about how those components were utilized in their settings and how they were determined to be a part of the evaluation. Teachers were less aware of why or how some aspects of evaluations were determined to be relevant. Administrators and teachers were made aware, but were not a part of the process to determine what aspects should be included; because, they are relevant to the special education setting. As one administrator noted, ‘The current evaluation system sets clear expectations, administrators observe both formally and informally, there are differentiated levels of performance, there is a measure for student growth, and regular feedback to teachers through the system.’ Another added,

> The components include the development of an educator growth plan, the development of student learning outcomes. We have observations and then we

> give feedback on the educator growth plan feedback on our observations, and we give feedback again on our student learning outcomes. Then, there is a final piece of it where we give the employee performance review. Then, we have the component embedded in our system where we actually do the scheduling.

Another administrator agreed, 'It contains everything you needed.' Additionally, the principals explained why they use the new forms, 'The observation forms and checklists that we're required to do are research based' and the evaluations 'provide educators with research-based targets associated with the improvement of student performance.' One administrator stated the relevance of evaluations in the special education building in 'to make sure teacher are setting high expectations, that they are meeting goals, [and] that students are progressing within each class.' Others added, 'It's to promote high levels of student and staff achievement' and 'we're looking for depth of knowledge and important educational researcher philosophies and what they're doing in the classroom that supports learning.'

However, teachers generally shared their opinions on how the system was working in their schools or why they were participating in the new system. Of the teachers surveyed, 45.5% believed the reason for the changes was to create a more comprehensive evaluation system for teachers as opposed to new regulations or increasing student achievement. They noted, 'The purpose would be to improve my practice and be reflective' and 'to increase student learning and student success.' Implementation of the new teacher evaluation system seemed varied for most teachers and administrators. It was also noted in the feedback from both educators and evaluators that there are components or aspects of the evaluation that are usable in the classroom

every day. Figure 5 shows survey results on question number three, which asked the teachers, ‘Please rate the following items within the EES as it has been implemented thus far within your building on the scale provided.

Figure 5

Teacher Responses to Survey Question Number Three.

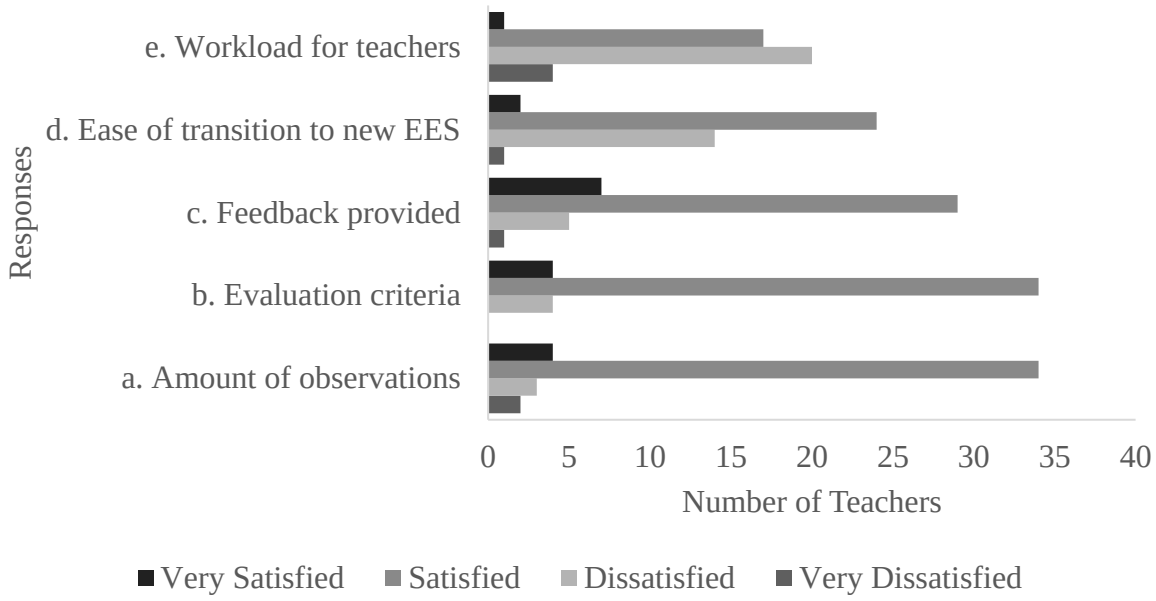


Figure 5 shows that the majority of teachers were ‘satisfied’ with most of the aspects of how the items were implemented with their buildings. The one items that teachers did not feel ‘satisfied’ with was the workload for teachers within the new evaluation system. Forty-seven point six percent of the spectrum felt ‘very satisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied,’ but the numbers were minimal compared to the ‘satisfied’ category. Most people rated were satisfied with the evaluation criteria. Eighty-one percent of those surveyed were satisfied with the criteria within the evaluation. The overall perception of the implementation of the new evaluation system was positive amongst teachers.

Teachers were positive about most items related to the evaluation system. They agreed that they understood and utilized the feedback given in the evaluation. Figure 6 showed the responses to survey question number six, which stated "I understand how the EES is supposed to be implemented within my school." It showed half (50%) of those surveyed 'agreed' with the statement.

Figure 6

Teacher Responses to Question Number Six.

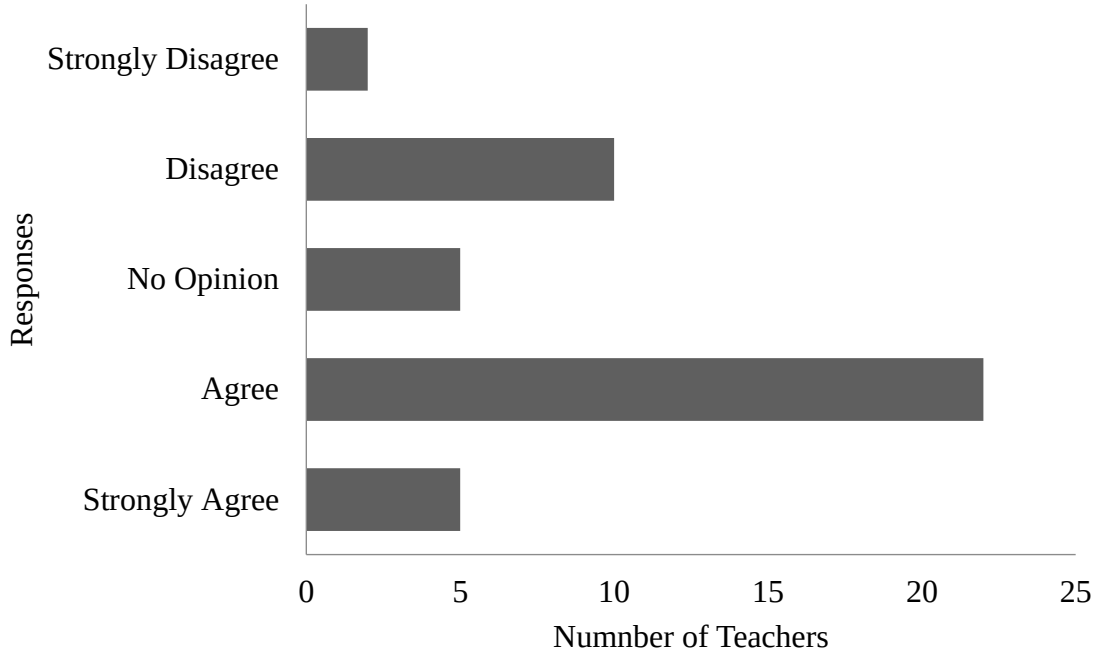


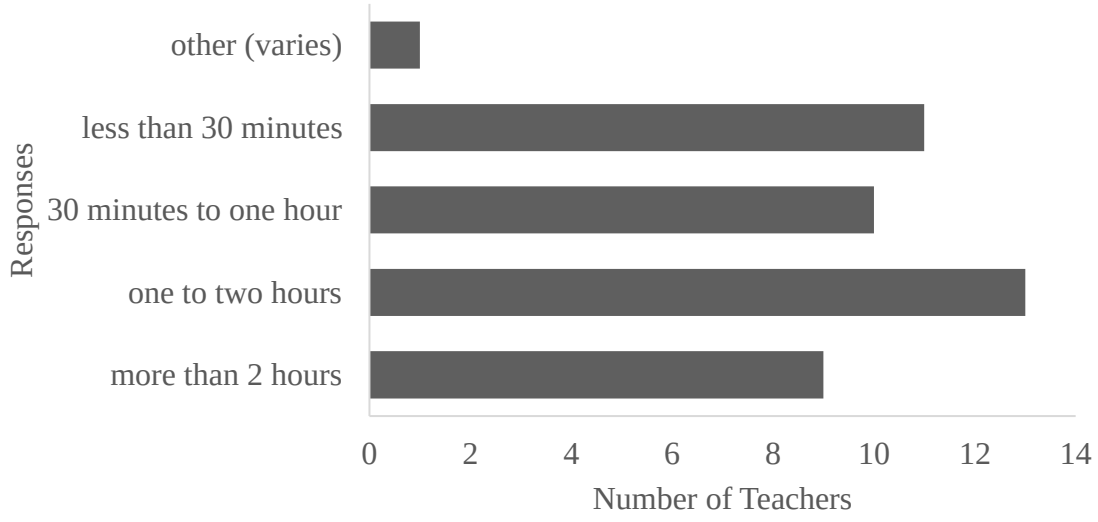
Figure 6 shows the that teachers overall understood how the EES was supposed to be implemented within their building. The question and answers were not specific on whether the teachers thought the implementation was actually being implemented appropriately, or not. The question was asked to determine if teachers had an understanding of the EES and how it should be implemented; not if it actually was being implemented in those specific ways. However, there was still approximately 23% of

teachers that did not understand how it was supposed to be implemented within their building. There were some correlations from the surveys to the interviews conducted on this topic. Some teachers had a different view of how it was implemented and presented at their building, compared to others. There was no uniformity amongst schools or administrators on the implementation of the evaluation system. This lack of uniformity could account for the disparity in teachers' understanding.

The implementation of the EES within the buildings and individual classrooms varied. Teachers shared the amount of time required to implement components of the system in their classroom each day. The amount of time ranged from less than 30 minutes to more than two hours. One teacher commented that it 'varies' depending on the day and other factors. Figure 7 illustrates the time differences teachers had on the implementation of the EES components daily within their classroom (survey question number two).

Figure 7

Teacher Responses to Survey Question Number Two



The amount of time teachers spent on implementing various components of the EES varied greatly. There was no clear explanation as to why the discrepancies existed. Some teachers utilized more complex ways of incorporating the system in their classroom than others, while some merely stated they 'just took what I already do and put it in writing.' Another teacher added,

> I incorporated that into what I was already doing in the classroom so I designed assessments for that. I designed different assessments to [give] throughout the year and that was my evidence. Then, it was actually really easy for me to pick that because I just incorporated it into my classroom learning systems I already do.

The teachers who participated in the interview element did not mention the amount of time spent on the implementation piece other than being able to incorporate it more easily in their plans. Some of the parts of the EES required more research and planning by the teachers and administrators. One administrator shared how they worked with teachers on implementing the EES at different times and noted, 'We start the calibrating conversations in August when staff members arrive' and continued, 'We ended up pulling it all together [in May] and the person received a final score.'

Administrators had varying viewpoints of the implementation process within their own buildings, like the teachers had shared their viewpoints from different schools. Administrators shared how the implementation of the EES looked like in their special education setting,

> You're looking at academics and meeting the student where they are and making sure you can have an obtainable goal by then end of the year. We still like that

> [goal] to be aligned to state standards and grade level expectations. But teachers have a lot of control to make sure they're challenging yet obtainable for the students.

Another administrator added, 'We just kind of trained our staff and worked through training throughout the year and then did some troubleshooting with issues that arose.' There was one building within the district that piloted the program for one year before the district implemented it with the remaining buildings. The administrators in that particular building remarked on the initial processes,

> First, we're going to meet with each teacher individually and create a professional growth plan. We're also going to look at their students and what kind of objective or goals they would like to achieve with their students. They are going to create a student growth plan based on the students' individual needs. Then we're going do some direct observations where I first meet with the teacher. Typically, after we develop their educator and student growth plans, we would meet with the teacher to talk about what we're looking for in the classroom. Some key things we might be expecting, classroom learning strategies. Then we would schedule them a direct observation and after that observation, we would do a review and talk about what we've seen. The good, the bad, and the uglies. Then, we're going to review their educator growth plan and review how the students are doing with their growth plans. We'll do a couple more observations, two or three total, and then at the end of the year, we'll schedule a review of their educator growth plan and the student growth plan. You're meeting to talk about their annual performance review where they get their final evaluation for the year.

The second administrator added,

> We got to hear conversations about troubleshooting, what worked [and] what didn't work. I think that first year was really tough simply because I'm not sure the district had the process set in stone so it was constantly moving and constantly changing which kind of caused us to react a little bit. That kind of frustrated the teachers a little bit.

The building that piloted the new system had slightly different perspectives than the other buildings and staff. They seemed more familiar and comfortable with the system overall. The administrators spoke in an informed way of the system and the teachers were more at ease. The teachers in that building spoke more fluidly about the system and were candid about their successes. One teacher stated, 'It really helped me diversify and accommodate for the different learners too.'

An administrator commented specifically on what they are implementing that is different with the evaluations, 'I think the biggest piece is that we're looking at the SLO a little bit differently.' They noted how the system can be implemented with the special education population,

> So, the implementation of that student learning outcome with that population of students, I mean it says to increase the time that the students are awake. I don't know if I can hold her [the teacher] accountable for that. Those are things that aren't necessarily in our control or in her control as a teacher. So, we just have to be creative in how we look at things and what we measure and what our impact is for that student.

They continued later in the interview, ‘We’re just really trying to help her have a SLO that has meaning for those kids and still be respectful and understand the dignity in their lives as well.’ The challenge appeared in the special education setting for administrators and teachers to develop goals for students in all the buildings that were attainable for students and teachers. However, given the challenge of creating goals for teachers and students in the special education setting, their opinions were still favorable overall of the implementation of the system.

Feedback from administrators was a large part of the teachers’ favorability of the new evaluation system. Most teachers liked the increased feedback and observations from administrators. They believed the feedback would assist in their teaching practice and, in turn, increase student performance. As Figure 8 shows, the teachers used the feedback they received from the EES in their classrooms to help students.

Figure 8

Teacher Responses to Survey Question Number Eight

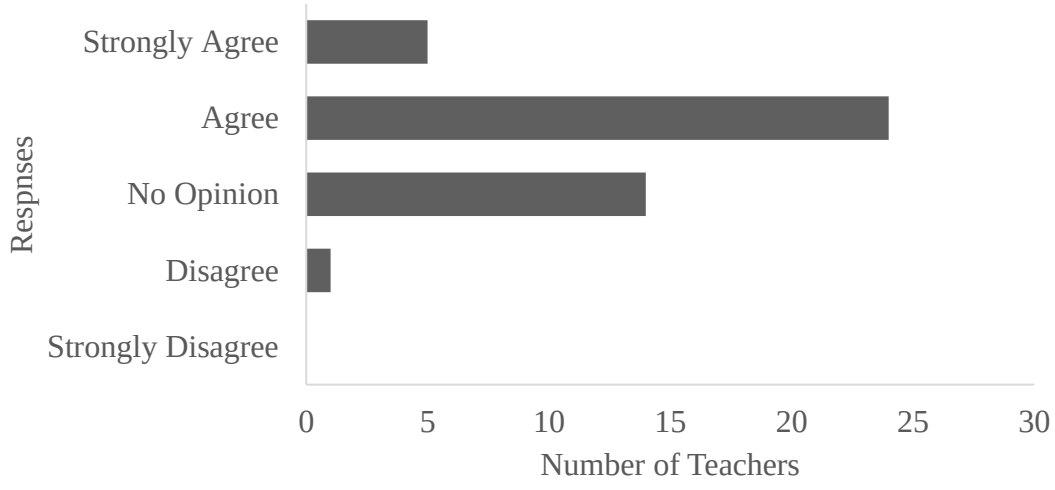
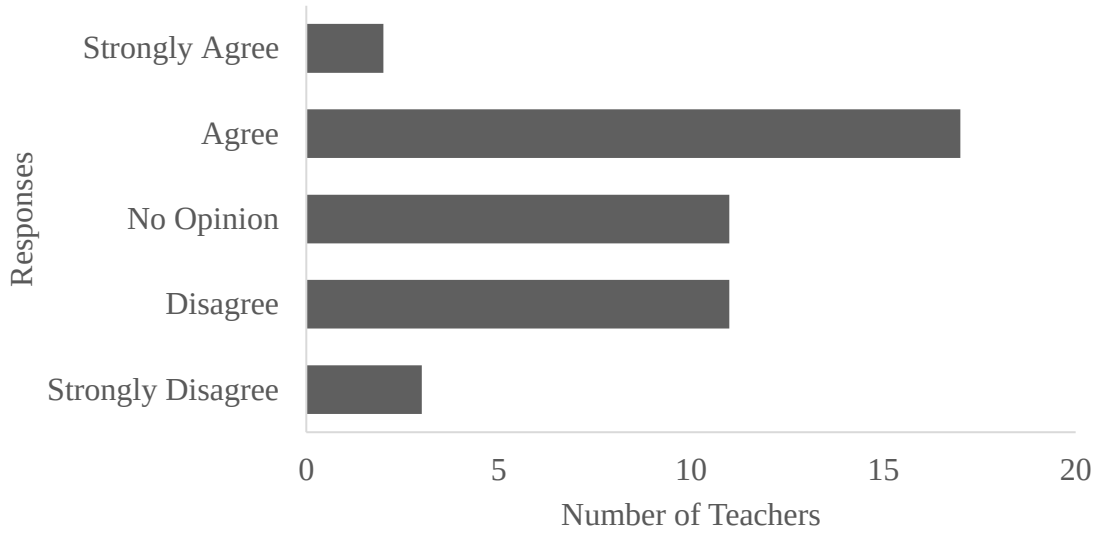


Figure 8 shows the results of survey question eight which stated, “I use the feedback from the EES in my classroom to improve student achievement. Figure 8 shows that teachers utilized feedback to improve student achievement within their classrooms most often. There were teachers that stated, ‘no opinion,’ but it is unclear as to why.

Likewise, teachers responded overall favorably to survey question number 10. Question number 10 stated, “I believe the EES incorporates useful tools within my classroom.” Figure 9 shows teachers’ responses to survey question number 10.

Figure 9.

Teacher Responses to Survey Question Number 10



The responses of teachers to survey question number 10 were more evenly distributed. More teachers ‘agreed’ than any other response; however, they were even on ‘no opinion’ and ‘disagree’. Similar to survey question number eight, numerous teachers stated they had ‘no opinion.’ It is unclear why teachers answered the two questions in that way, unless there was no appropriate answer for how they wanted to respond to the statements. There were no comments left or explanations. Question 8 and question 10

were the only two survey questions where a significant number of teachers responded in that manner. The researcher had no clear understanding of the diverse responses. To reiterate, most teachers agreed the tools within the EES system were useful to their classrooms.

Lastly, administrators reflected on implementation of the evaluation system in a general education building compared to the special education building. All the administrators expressed they would implement the evaluation system the same way in the general education setting. One stated, ‘probably the same way, then, I would use other administrators to do the evaluations.’ Another shared, ‘I don’t think I would do it any different. To me, the setting isn’t specific to special education, it’s a system that could be implemented in any setting.’ One administrator noted, ‘You would have the same process and effects as in the special education setting’ and ‘I believe depending on the school, you would need to set aside more time, as it is an intensive process to evaluate a large high school staff.’ An administrator simply stated, ‘I think it would be pretty much the same.’ One administrator expanded more,

> I would implement the same way in terms of process we implement it here. Implement it in terms of linking it to standards when we look at. It's the same thing we do here with our kids that are cognitively thinking. In a regular school, when we look at SLO's and educator growth plans, we're writing those goals aligned with our expectations. We do the same things here, with the exception of those classrooms where we're looking at those kids who are so medically fragile and are so cognitively impaired and physically impaired. When every domain of their life is impacted. We're doing those same things, we just aren't doing it on

> grade level expectations, it may be on developmental expectations. We're still using the same standard and aligning it. Then with our older students, we may be aligning it with a secondary outcome. It's just depending on what you're picking.

Similarly, ‘you’re looking at academics and meeting students where they are and making sure you can have an obtainable goal by the end of the year. We still like that to be as aligned to state and grade level expectations as we can.’ The evaluations could be utilized in multiple school settings if implemented correctly, according to district administrators, since the system required the goals to be aligned to state standards and grade level expectations. The uniformity of expectations across settings, general education and special education, allowed for the new evaluation system to be useful throughout the district and beyond.

Summary

This mixed-methods study showed changes were needed in the implementation process of the teacher evaluation system and the time required to utilize the system. The feedback from teachers and administrators offered many insights and suggestions on the details of the new system. The surveys from teachers provided insightful information on how teachers perceived specific pieces of the EES. Correlation testing showed some student assessments scores correlated to teacher evaluations, while some showed no correlation. Furthermore, there were two tests the researcher was unable to determine a correlation or impact on evaluations. The qualitative data showed overall administrator support of the new system, while teacher support was mixed. Both groups agreed the system could work in the special education setting with some modifications. Chapter Five

will provide suggestions for the district, as well as other entities looking to utilize the performance-based educator evaluation system in the future.

Chapter Five: Discussion, Reflection, and Recommendations

Overview

In order to evaluate the educator evaluation system at the district-level within the state of Missouri, the researcher investigated the evaluation system at Mid-western public special education school district. Through evaluating the evaluation system, the researcher aimed to investigate a possible relationship between special education performance-based evaluation ratings of special education teachers and student achievement. In order to assess the evaluation system, the researcher analyzed feedback from teachers and administrators (surveys and interviews) in the spring of 2016. Furthermore, the study investigated the relationship between student assessment scores and overall teacher ratings in the fall of 2015 and the spring of 2016. The researcher examined the scores for the following comparisons: overall educator rating score on the summative evaluation form with students' achievement level code in English Language Arts and Math. By completing quantitative analyses of the comparisons, the researcher hoped to achieve the following: examine the assessments where teachers and students excelled, and assessments where teachers and students struggled; analyze the correlation between low-scoring teachers to low-scoring students and high-scoring teachers to high-scoring students; and provide feedback regarding the effectiveness of the current evaluation system versus the previous evaluation system. Through the examination of the educator evaluation system, the researcher expected to possibly discover specific modifications to the study district's implementation of the educator evaluation system and the correlation of student scores to teacher evaluation ratings.

Discussion

Null Hypothesis 1. Through examining the results of the student achievement test scores on district tests, the STAR assessments were the most difficult to correlate to teacher evaluation scores. The results of the ANOVA hypothesis test could possibly assist district leaders and teachers in developing appropriate goals and targets for students and teachers. Teachers were evaluated utilizing the new system which, as according to McNergney et al. (2015):

> The link between teacher performance and student achievement is both so intuitively compelling as a major part of a teacher's performance evaluation and so very difficult to implement**.** (para. 24)

Teachers were evaluated using a numerical scale, which was given based on student achievement on district tests. The numerical score was associated with a rating that was incorporated into the teachers' evaluation. The rating determined the level of effectiveness of the teacher and what areas they needed to address within the classroom or with students. Due to the statistical analysis involved in data collection and the manner of which the data were presented, the researcher concluded that the STAR tests were not able to be correlated to teacher evaluations. However, the other tests included in the study, MAP, MAP-A, and EOC, had mixed results as to which tests could be correlated to educator evaluations. Furthermore, the district could analyze the test results from the STAR tests more effectively if they analyze the raw score at a given time, fall or spring testing timeframes. It is important to note the differences in the tests and the format of the results when analyzing teacher effectiveness. Additionally, it is important to know that the different tests are given to different developmental levels of students. So, some tests

could be more challenging to determine student progress given their disability or circumstance.

Through examination of the results of the student achievement test scores on district tests, the MAP assessments exhibited a smaller correlation to teacher evaluation scores than other factors. The results of the ANOVA test could possibly assist district leaders and teachers in developing appropriate goals and targets for students and teachers. MAP assessments showed no correlation to teacher evaluation ratings. MAP, as stated earlier, is the Missouri Assessment Program designed to measure how well students acquired skills and knowledge described in the Missouri Learning Standards (MLS; MoDESE, 2020c). Students are given the exams in the spring during an assessment window. The students' scores were such that teachers' evaluations were not noticeably impacted, and vice versa. Teachers' evaluations did not appear impacted by student scores on achievement tests. For example, when a student scored high the teacher also scored high, or when the student scored low the teacher scored low on the evaluation. Noting these results, educator evaluations do not show how student achievement scores impact the teacher ratings; it could be determined that evaluations should not be impacted by student achievement scores. If the district allowed multiple measures to be collected within the educator evaluation, there could be a more complete and elaborate representation of a teacher's strengths and weaknesses and ensured better alignment with professional growth opportunities (Goe et al., 2012).

Through examining the results of the student achievement test scores on district tests, the MAP-A assessments were mixed on their correlation to teacher evaluation scores. The results of the ANOVA test could possibly assist district leaders and teachers

in developing appropriate goals and targets for students and teachers. As stated in Chapter Two, MAP-A was given to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who met grade level and eligibility criteria determined by the student IEP team using MoDESE-established eligibility criteria (MoDESE, 2020d). The Math MAP-A test results showed that there was no correlation of the scores to teachers' evaluation ratings, while the ELA MAP-A showed a correlation between the student achievement scores and the teacher evaluation ratings. It is unclear as to why one subject area had a correlation, while the other did not have a correlation. The students who were given the Math test were the same students who took the ELA test. The teachers typically remained the same, as well. However, there were varied results on the correlation of student achievement to teacher evaluations. Noting these results, there is continued evidence to not rate teachers based on student achievement scores, due to the variation in the correlation testing results. Furthermore, it is important to note that there was a small number of students recorded in the data taking the MAP-A. The numbers seemed low to the researcher, given the student population within the district.

Through examining the results of the student achievement test scores on district tests, the EOC assessments were mixed on their correlation to teacher evaluation scores. The results of the ANOVA test and *t*-Test could possibly assist district leaders and teachers in developing appropriate goals and targets for students and teachers. As stated earlier in Chapter Two, grade level assessments were given in English Language Arts (ELA) and math in grades three through eight and science in grades five and eight. In addition, districts were required to administer end-of-course (EOC) assessments to students in Algebra I (or Algebra II if completed before high school), English II, Biology,

and Government prior to high school graduation (MoDESE 2020c). The EOC test results were more challenging to determine if there was a correlation or there was no correlation between student achievement scores and teacher evaluations. Due to the low number of students' scores included in the data set, the researcher had to perform a *t*-Test as opposed to the Scheffe test and additional ANOVA tests. The researcher analyzed the *t*-Test results and determined the results were mixed similarly to the MAP-A results. However, the difference was a correlation between student achievement scores in Math, and there was not a correlation in the scores in the ELA tests. Noting the EOC results, there was continued evidence to not rate teachers based on student achievement scores, due to the variation in the correlation testing results. Furthermore, it is important to note that there was a small number of students recorded in the data taking the EOC tests. The numbers seemed low to the researcher when investigating all the data given in the study.

The study district implemented a system of SLOs for teacher evaluations as opposed to only utilizing standardized tests. Teachers were able to choose what assessment will be correlated to their assessment and they could determine which students would also be included in the correlation. As stated in Chapter Two, the district was able to implement the new educator evaluations; all educators and all students were able to demonstrate learning and growth with SLOs because they were not dependent on standardized scores (Lachlan-Haché et al., 2012).

Teacher perceptions of the evaluation system. Overall, teachers' perceptions were mixed, but had a slight leaning towards negative. However, most of the teachers interviewed had a positive outlook for the future of educator evaluations. Teachers wanted an effective way to measure their growth throughout the year. They also wanted

an effective way to measure students' growth throughout the school year. The new system did not seem to meet those standards during the interview process. Teachers felt if there was a way to make the goals and standards objective and modifiable for the various types of students serviced within the district, the system would be more successful. As one teacher noted, '[The evaluation is for] teachers to continue to grow so that they don't just stagnate where they're at and so they learn new things and improve in different areas because a change over the years is what you work on.' Research also showed teachers expressed that positive effects often were as prevalent as the negative effects (Braslow, 2017). Based on teachers' feedback, the system could be successful with some changes. The teachers also seemed differentiated on their perceptions, based on how long they had been teaching. New teachers had a more positive outlook, while teachers who had been teaching for a period of time were more negative. All the teachers agreed that the evaluation system was more time consuming for them throughout the day and school year. One teacher stated, 'I think it's a little cumbersome,' which many teachers echoed. The survey revealed that 47.6% of teachers rated the teacher workload area as 'dissatisfied.' Teachers found aspects of the evaluation system useful for increasing student achievement. The most commonly stated aspect that teachers utilized was the feedback from administrators throughout the year. They liked having more observations and meetings with the leaders, because it gave the teachers meaningful information on how they could improve and what they were doing well. Educators typically believed the changes were positive in nature: improving educator practice and student learning, making teachers more accountable, and having a more uniform way of evaluating staff. Teachers seemed divided on whether the system effectively evaluated their abilities as a

teacher with a slight majority believing that the evaluation does not adequately measure the teachers' abilities in the classroom. One teacher stated, 'The student achievement component of the EES is an inappropriate indicator of my instruction and instruction ability.' The researcher also noted differences of opinion from the survey to those of the teachers that took part in the interview process. The teachers that participated in the interview process were more decisive on their thoughts and overall more optimistic. The survey results seemed to have a number of 'no opinion' responses with the most honest feedback coming at the end in the comment section.

Administrator perceptions of the evaluation system. Administrators expressed an overall favorable opinion of the evaluation system. They also seemed to have a better understanding of the system and training on the system. One administrator stated the relevance of evaluations in the special education building 'to make sure teachers are setting high expectations, that they are meeting goals, [and] that students are progressing within each class.' Others added, 'It's to promote high levels of student and staff achievement'. The principals had a clearer understanding of the relevance and purpose of the changes to the evaluation system. Administrators had varying viewpoints of the implementation process within their own buildings, much like the teachers had shared opposing viewpoints from different schools. The administrators shared how they implemented the evaluation system within their buildings. Some were more detailed on their processes while some were quite brief. One administrator commented specifically on what they are implementing that is different with the evaluations, 'I think the biggest piece is that we're looking at the SLO a little bit differently.' The administrators that participated in a pilot program of the new evaluation system the year before district

implementation, had a very positive perception and they were more knowledgeable about the process. One of those administrators commented on specifically what they are doing in the evaluation, 'Typically, after we develop their educator and student growth plans, we would meet with the teacher to talk about what we're looking for in the classroom. Some key things we might be expecting, classroom learning strategies.' Administrators liked the system and its ability to be utilized in the special education setting or the general education setting. One administrator commented on the implementation within the special education setting,

> You're looking at academics and meeting the student where they are and making sure you can have an obtainable goal by then end of the year. We still like that [goal] to be aligned to state standards and grade level expectations. But teachers have a lot of control to make sure they're challenging yet obtainable for the students.

Additionally, they reflected on the ways they would implement the same system in a general education system. One administrator shared, 'I don't think I would do it any different. To me, the setting isn't specific to special education, it's a system that could be implemented in any setting.' Another administrator noted, 'You would have the same process and effects as in the special education setting.' The consistency of expectations across settings, general education and special education, allowed for the new evaluation system to be useful throughout the district. District administrators believed that the system could be successfully implemented in various settings when the correct implementation procedures are put in place.

Reflection on the Evaluation System

The study of the new evaluation system in the study district began in the winter of 2015 and concluded in May of 2016. It involved approximately 250 students, approximately 50 teachers, and approximately 10 administrators that participated in the study at the researched district. Overall, it was a success. The researcher was able to learn valuable insights into teacher perceptions and administrator opinions. There was limited participation in the teacher survey; however, the researcher was prepared for minimal participation. Roughly 30% of teachers responded. This amount does seem like the normal response for surveys within the district. The district does elicit feedback often from multiple stakeholders, including teachers. At the time the study survey was sent out to the district teacher-level staff, there was an additional district survey sent to staff. The researcher believed this may have led to a low number of responses, as teachers may have had too many emails regarding feedback sent at the same time. However, the researcher did receive feedback from a variety of teachers and from each of the five buildings within the district. The teachers were forthcoming on most of the survey; but, the researcher felt that there was still some information that was not being shared fully. There were some questions that many teachers answered ‘no opinion’ to, as opposed to agreeing or disagreeing. The researcher believed this may be due to teachers not wanting to share their actual opinion on the statement, or they believed it was not truly anonymous. The researcher was amazed with the honesty of teachers during the interview process. At least one teacher from each building voluntarily agreed to an interview with the researcher. This was the same for the administrators. Teachers seemed at ease and comfortable talking with a peer about the system. Some of the teachers were comfortable and shared

blunt opinions regarding the evaluation system and even how administrators impacted their evaluations.

The researcher thought the administrators generally had the same information about the system with a few exceptions. Two administrators were more direct with how they implemented the process and the challenges special education settings posed to evaluating teachers. Generally, administrators were willing to be interviewed, but not as forthcoming with their personal opinions.

The researcher determined the evaluation system was implemented in different ways at different buildings by different teachers. All administrators were given the same information on the system; but, implemented the system differently in different buildings, which led to varied opinions among teachers and implementations of the evaluation system. Teachers were more positive when their administrator took a more direct and informative route to implementation. Teachers were more negative about the system when the administrator was vague and provided little support or information on the new system. However, that is not to say that the evaluation system is not effective in evaluating teachers. The researcher believed the new system is a more comprehensive and complete way to evaluate all educators. It is challenging to start a new evaluation system when the old system had been in place for a long time. During the year of the study, the educators had begun the new evaluation system so their opinions were fresh and raw in some cases. The evaluation system was still going through changes in the district while staff worked through issues and ways to improve the system.

A final consideration is looking back at the data received from the study district. While most of the data were comprehensive and informative, some were not. The

researcher had little input on what data were shared or how. The study district was quite clear on the parameters of the what they would allow or what the researcher would have access to while investigating. The approval process was extensive and allowed the district to dictate what the researcher would receive in the form of data. The data were handled very confidentially, but was not all inclusive of the students in the district, given the number of total students in the data set. The researcher believed this process and the district's caution on studies or research being conducted should be re-evaluated. The researcher believed that there are valid studies and information that can be gleaned from the district. There remains recommendations and implementations that should be considered to increase efficacy of the evaluation system.

Recommendations for the Evaluation System

The researcher has recommendations for the state, district, and for other districts to implement. The state should improve upon their requirements and implementation for teachers' evaluations. The requirements for special education teachers may not be beneficial in determining the impact of educators on student achievement scores. The state can be more specific in what the process for implementation of a new evaluation system would look like in a school or district. There could be specific guidelines and rollout procedures. There could be less autonomy to district on certain parts of the evaluation process and it could be more specific for different specialties, such as special education teachers or speech pathologists. The state could also specify more specific trainings or guidelines on observations and ratings by administrators. These items should be taken into consideration by the state regulators.

Districts can also attempt to aid in the trainings of administrators and educators on the evaluations system. Administrators should receive training on how to complete the forms and observations objectively. Administrators did not explicitly say they received training on these aspects. They did share they had an initial training on the new system and its components. Districts can provide a more structured training to teachers and staff on the new or any new process. This ensures all staff receive the same information in the same way, as opposed to having administrators relaying the information. This could decrease the inconsistences across the district. Districts should also determine the best way to evaluate teachers when utilizing student achievement scores. As stated in the literature review, when teachers are given more choices on the assessments used within their evaluation, they are more successful. Teachers want their students to be successful and they want to improve their own practice. Districts should give teachers the appropriate tools to do this. The study district does allow some flexibility on the assessments teachers utilized, but not all districts allow this flexibility. Teachers assess their students routinely; districts could have any of those assessments be incorporated in their evaluations as opposed to the standardized test. The researcher recommends districts develop specific guidelines for allowable assessments. Furthermore, the researcher recommends the district create a process for informing teachers of what is in the evaluation system and what is expected of teachers. This process should include the steps in the evaluation teachers are required to complete and specific ways to advance in the rating scale.

Finally, the researcher recommends more support at the district and building level for teachers and staff, as stated in earlier paragraphs, by offering trainings and specific

guidelines for all to follow. However, teachers should have access to ongoing building-level and district-level support when it is needed. Some teachers require additional information or support to achieve success. Ongoing communication between administrators and teacher should also include teachers and coaches or facilitators on the evaluation system. This support should not stop after the initial training, but should be available whenever teachers need it. However, this support should be teacher specific and not necessarily to all staff at one time. Ultimately, it is up to the teacher to have a successful evaluation; however, this can be aided by specific and thoughtful trainings, interventions, and implementations.

All of these recommendations are not possible without committed, sincere, and well-trained administrators. It is essential for this district, and others to hire and train effective administrators that are willing and able to ensure the success of teachers and students. It was discouraging at times to hear how some teachers did not see a positive side to the evaluations or ways to improve the process. Some assumed this process would go away and would not last, as it was too different and not a valuable measure of teachers' impact. Although this type of frustration and dismissal is understandable in the ever-changing world of education policies; nevertheless, teachers should be open to ways to improve student achievement and not dismissive of new policies or procedures. Furthermore, these dedicated teachers are necessary to the success of every classroom. Often times it is challenging for educators to not be so impulsive and be reactionary in their thoughts and actions. This researcher has, at times, thought something may not last and spoke out against it. However, a more cautionary approach may be best for educators when faced with drastic changes that are mandatory. It seems contradictory when

teachers are unaccepting of change, but teach their students to be flexible and open to new experiences. Without embracing change in all facets, we are not truly educating students to be successful.

Recommendations for Future Research

For the future, similar studies should continue through full implementation of the evaluation system and after it has been implemented for a period of time. Teacher and administrator perceptions, implementation of evaluation systems in special education, how components are determined in special educator evaluations, studying the results, analyzing implications, and investigating recommendations should all continue to be collected qualitatively; while further research on how teachers' evaluations rating correlate to student performance scores is conducted quantitatively. Other districts should complete similar investigations to determine where improvements could be made and where they are succeeding.

A further recommendation for future study is to determine how the evaluation process is working once the evaluation has been in place for several years and correlation of teacher evaluations to special education settings. Possible questions to ask could be focused on teachers' perceptions, whether teachers had a choice in the assessment the students were given within their evaluations, whether teachers taught specific items in their classroom to address the assessment, and whether teachers had received ongoing training or support during the school year in evaluations. A part of an examination could also be beneficial to look at beginning teachers' evaluations, training, support, and student achievement scores, as compared to experienced teachers' evaluations, training,

support, and student achievement scores. The future research could also look in to the changes made by districts and states after implementation of the evaluation system.

Conclusion

As we continue to experience changes in the education world, it is imperative that educators and administrators embrace those changes to help students become successful members of their school community and society. Through incorporating more effective evaluations and thoughtful feedback, thorough trainings, and employment of dedicated educators, we may have students in classrooms all over the country who will be prepared, well-rounded, and successful individuals. The country needs the kind of educator who creates productive schools and motivate other teachers.

Schools should not rely on someone else to do the work for them; change will take all the teachers and all the staff to implement productive assessments and evaluations. Change can result from utilizing research-based practices and valid data from the classroom efficiently. Administrators can be the force behind effective evaluations and changes by supporting quality systems and implementing those systems with efficacy, to create consistency and successful classrooms.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions for Administrators

1. Describe the purpose of the educator evaluation system for teachers.
2. How do you utilize the new educator evaluation system with teachers in your building?
3. Describe the previous evaluation process:
4. Describe your perceptions of the new educator evaluation system as it pertains to student achievement.
5. Describe the characteristics of the current educator evaluation system.
6. Describe teachers' reaction(s) to the new educator evaluation system.
7. Describe the implementation process of the educator evaluation system in the special education setting.
8. Describe how you would implement the educator evaluation system in a general education system.
9. Please explain any differences in the previously used and new educator evaluation processes as it pertains to your staff.
10. Do you have anything else to add?

Appendix B: Interview Questions for Teachers

1. Describe your experience(s) with the educator evaluation system.
2. How were you informed of the new educator evaluation system?
3. Describe the previous evaluation system.
4. Describe the purpose of the new educator evaluation system
5. Describe the educator evaluation system and how it relates to your instructional design, daily class activities and student achievement?
6. Do you have anything else to add?

Appendix C: Teacher and Administrator Interview Consent

Lindenwood University
School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, MO 63301

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

A mixed method investigation of performance-based evaluations of special education teachers in a Midwest special education self-contained school setting

Principal Investigator __Katie Evans_____
Telephone: 636-439-1710 E-mail: klp191@lindenwood.edu

Participant _____Contact info_____

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1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Katie Evans under the guidance of Dr. Lynda Leavitt. The purpose of this research is to determine if there is a correlation between special educators' performance-based evaluations and student achievement on required state and district tests. In addition, teacher and administration perceptions, teacher knowledge, and implementation of the Performance Based Evaluations within the special education setting will be investigated.

2. a) Your participation will involve one interview with Katie Evans. The interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes, and will be held at a mutually agreed upon time and location. The interview will be audio recorded to ensure accuracy of responses.

b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be approximately 30-60 minutes.

Approximately 5-10 teacher participants per SSD building (5 total) and xx administrators will be involved in this research.

3. There are minimal risks associated with this research. Due to the small number of participants in this study your personal characteristics may inadvertently be identifiable. The researcher will take precautions to keep all identifying data confidential.

4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about special education performance-based evaluations and how they correlate with special education students' achievement on required tests and may help society.

5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Katie Evans (636-439-1710) or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Lynda Leavitt (636-439-9236). You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Marilyn Abbott, Provost at mabbott@lindenwood.edu or 636-949-4912.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

_____	_____
Participant's Signature Date	Participant's Printed Name
_____	Katie Evans
Signature of Principal Investigator Date	Investigator Printed Name

Appendix D: Thank You Note to Teachers/Administrators

Dear Teacher/Administrator,

Thank you for meeting with me yesterday. I appreciate your willingness to be interviewed as part of my research project to investigate special education teachers' performance-based evaluations and student achievement. Your participation will contribute to the body of knowledge about special education teachers' evaluations and special education students' achievement. If you are interested in the results of my study, I would be happy to share my completed project with you.

I wish you continued success on your endeavors in education.

Sincerely,

Katie Evans

Doctoral Candidate

Lindenwood University

Appendix E: Email to Teacher Participants

You are invited to participate in a Teacher Survey within a doctoral research study at Lindenwood University investigating the possible correlation with special education teacher performance-based evaluations and student achievement on required state and district tests. The purpose of this survey is to gain your perceptions on the performance-based evaluation and how it relates to your classroom and student achievement. Please do not respond with your name and any identifying information. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate, and by completing this survey you are giving consent to participate in this study. The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete and there will be no compensation given for completion of the survey. Total number of survey participants will be 20-30 teachers per building.

There are no anticipated risks associated with this research. Due to the small number of participants in this study your personal characteristics may inadvertently be identifiable. The researcher will take precautions to keep all identifying data confidential. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about special education performance-based evaluations and how they correlate with special education students' achievement on required tests and may help society. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Katie Evans (636-439-1710) or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Lynda Leavitt (636-439-9236). You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Marilyn Abbott, Provost at mabbott@lindenwood.edu or 636-949-4912.

Please use the following link to access the survey.

Participation in this survey serves as your consent to participate in the study.

By completing this survey you are giving your implicit consent to have your answers used in the research analysis.

1. What do you think is the main reason for educator evaluation system (EES) within SSD.
    a. New regulations regarding teacher evaluations within the state.
    b. To increase student achievement.
    c. To create a more comprehensive evaluation system for teachers.
    d. Don't know.

2. How much time do you spend each day on implementing components of the EES system within your classroom?
   a. More than 2 hours
   b. One to two hours
   c. Thirty minutes to one hour
   d. Less than 30 minutes
   e. Other (specify) _____

Please rate the following items within the EES as it has been implemented thus far within your building on the scale provided.

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
	1	2	3	4
a. Amount of observations	1	2	3	4
b. Evaluation criteria	1	2	3	4
c. Feedback provided	1	2	3	4
d. Ease of transition to new EES	1	2	3	4
e. Workload for teachers	1	2	3	4

Please respond to the following statements as openly and honestly as possible.

3. The educator evaluation system is easier to understand than the previously used evaluation system.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. No Opinion
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

4. I understand the EES.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. No Opinion
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

5. I understand how the EES is supposed to be implemented within my school.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. No Opinion
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

6. I understand my responsibilities as a teacher within the EES.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. No Opinion
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

7. I use the feedback from the EES in my classroom to improve student achievement.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. No Opinion
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

8. I believe the EES accurately evaluates my abilities as a teacher.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. No Opinion
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

9. I believe the EES incorporates useful tools within my classroom.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. No Opinion
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

10. Please add any additional comments regarding PBE here:

_____

_____

If you wish participate in the interview process, please provide your contact information at the end of the survey to be contacted for an interview by the researcher.

Appendix F: NIH Certificate

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Katie Evans** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 08/21/2015

Certification Number: 1816359

Appendix G: Permission to Use Study Site for Research

January 20, 2017

Ms. Katie Evans
309 Kent Drive
Wentzville, MO 63385

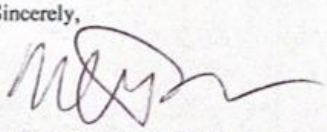
Dear Ms. Evans,

I am pleased to notify you that your application for conducting research with SSD titled: *A mixed method investigation of performance based evaluations of special education teachers in a Midwest special education school setting* has been accepted. This acceptance indicates that we have examined your application and granted permission to conduct research with SSD staff and also using de-identified, archival student and staff data.

This approval is valid for one year. If you anticipate that data collection will extend beyond that timeline, please contact us. We would appreciate notification of any significant changes to your research design. We also ask that you forward us the findings of your study when complete.

If I can further clarify or answer questions related to the permissions granted, please do not hesitate to contact me. Please work with our office to finalize procedures for recruitment and data collection, along with the compilation of archival datasets. Thank you and good luck with your research.

Sincerely,



Matthew Traughber, Ph.D.
Evaluation and Research Administrator
(314) 989-8520
mctraughber@ssdmo.org

Appendix H: Screenshot of table displaying children served under 21 years old by IDEA

Figure 1H

Screenshot of Table Displaying Children Served Under 21 Years Old by IDEA

Type of disability	1976-77	1980-81	1990-91	2000-01	2008-09[1]	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17[2,3]	2017-18[2,4]	2018-19[2]
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	Number of children served (in thousands)														
All disabilities	**3,694**	**4,144**	**4,710**	**6,296**	**6,483**	**6,481**	**6,436**	**6,401**	**6,429**	**6,464**	**6,555**	**6,677**	**6,802**	**6,964**	**7,134**
Autism	---	---	---	93	336	378	417	455	498	538	576	617	661	710	762
Deaf-blindness	---	3	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Developmental delay	---	---	---	213	354	368	382	393	402	410	419	434	446	461	479
Emotional disturbance	283	347	389	480	420	407	390	373	362	354	349	347	348	353	358
Hearing impairment	88	79	58	77	78	79	78	78	77	77	76	75	75	75	74
Intellectual disability	961	830	534	624	478	463	448	435	430	425	423	425	431	436	439
Multiple disabilities	---	68	96	131	130	131	130	132	133	132	132	131	132	132	133
Orthopedic impairment	87	58	49	82	70	65	63	61	59	56	52	47	42	41	39
Other health impairment[5]	141	98	55	303	659	689	716	743	779	817	862	909	955	1,002	1,049
Preschool disabled[6]	†	†	390	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
Specific learning disability	796	1,462	2,129	2,860	2,476	2,431	2,361	2,303	2,277	2,264	2,278	2,298	2,318	2,342	2,368
Speech or language impairment	1,302	1,168	985	1,388	1,426	1,416	1,396	1,373	1,356	1,334	1,332	1,337	1,337	1,357	1,378
Traumatic brain injury	---	---	---	16	26	25	26	26	26	26	26	27	27	27	27
Visual impairment	38	31	23	29	29	29	28	28	28	28	28	27	27	27	27
	Percentage distribution of children served														
All disabilities	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Autism	---	---	---	1.5	5.2	5.8	6.5	7.1	7.8	8.3	8.8	9.2	9.7	10.2	10.7
Deaf-blindness	---	0.1	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
Developmental delay	---	---	---	3.4	5.5	5.7	5.9	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.6	6.6	6.7
Emotional disturbance	7.7	8.4	8.3	7.6	6.5	6.3	6.1	5.8	5.6	5.5	5.3	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.0
Hearing impairment	2.4	1.9	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0
Intellectual disability	26.0	20.0	11.3	9.9	7.4	7.1	7.0	6.8	6.7	6.6	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.3	6.2
Multiple disabilities	---	1.6	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.9
Orthopedic impairment	2.4	1.4	1.0	1.3	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5
Other health impairment[5]	3.8	2.4	1.2	4.8	10.2	10.6	11.1	11.6	12.1	12.6	13.2	13.6	14.0	14.4	14.7
Preschool disabled[6]	†	†	8.3	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
Specific learning disability	21.5	35.3	45.2	45.4	38.2	37.5	36.7	36.0	35.4	35.0	34.8	34.4	34.1	33.6	33.2
Speech or language impairment	35.2	28.2	20.9	22.0	22.0	21.8	21.7	21.4	21.1	20.6	20.3	20.0	19.7	19.5	19.3
Traumatic brain injury	---	---	---	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Visual impairment	1.0	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
	Number of children served as a percent of total enrollment[7]														
All disabilities	**8.3**	**10.1**	**11.4**	**13.3**	**13.2**	**13.1**	**13.0**	**12.9**	**12.9**	**12.9**	**13.0**	**13.2**	**13.4**	**13.7**	**14.1**
Autism	---	---	---	0.2	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5
Deaf-blindness	---	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
Developmental delay	---	---	---	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
Emotional disturbance	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Hearing impairment	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Intellectual disability	2.2	2.0	1.3	1.3	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9
Multiple disabilities	---	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Orthopedic impairment	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Other health impairment[5]	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.6	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1
Preschool disabled[6]	†	†	0.9	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
Specific learning disability	1.8	3.6	5.2	6.1	5.0	4.9	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.7
Speech or language impairment	2.9	2.9	2.4	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.7
Traumatic brain injury	---	---	---	#	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Visual impairment	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

---Not available.

†Not applicable.

#Rounds to zero.

[1] Data do not include Vermont, for which 2007-08 and 2008-09 data were not available. In 2006-07, the total number of 3- to 21-year-olds served in Vermont was 14,010.

[2] Data in the 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19 columns include 2015-16 data for 3- to 21-year-olds in Wisconsin because 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19 data were not available for children served in Wisconsin.

[3] Data in the 2016-17 column include 2015-16 data for 3- to 5-year-olds in Nebraska because 2016-17 data were not available for children in that age group served in Nebraska.

[4] Data in the 2017-18 column include 2016-17 data for 3- to 5-year-olds in Minnesota and 6- to 21-year-olds in Maine and Vermont because 2017-18 data were not available for children in those age groups served in those states.

[5] Other health impairments include having limited strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems such as a heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, or diabetes.

[6] For 1990-91, preschool children are not included in the counts by disability condition but are separately reported. For other years, preschool children are included in the counts by disability condition.

[7] Based on total public school enrollment in prekindergarten through grade 12. For total public school enrollment, see table 203.20.

NOTE: Prior to October 1994, children and youth with disabilities were served under Chapter 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as well as under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B. Data reported in this table for years prior to 1994-95 include children ages 0-21 served under Chapter 1 of ESEA. Data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia only. Increases since 1987-88 are due in part to new legislation enacted in fall 1986, which added a mandate for public school special education services for 3- to 5-year-old children with disabilities. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, selected years, 1979 through 2006; and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) database, retrieved February 20, 2020, from https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/state-level-data-files/index.html#bcc. National Center for Education Statistics, Statistics of Public Elementary and Secondary School Systems, 1977-78 and 1980-81; Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 1990-91 through 2018-19; and National Elementary and Secondary Enrollment Projection Model, 1972 through 2029. (This table was prepared February 2020.)

Note. (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2020).

Vitae

Colleges and Universities

2005-2008: Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education for Lindenwood University; 2008-2010: Master of Arts in Education with an emphasis in Special Education from Lindenwood University; 2013-2014: Specialist in Education in School Administration from Lindenwood University; 2015-present: pursuing Doctorate of Education in Instructional Leadership (expected graduation date in May of 2021) from Lindenwood University

Teaching Employment History

2012- present: Autism Instructor at Neuwoehner High School, Special School District of St. Louis County

2011-2012: Kindergarten and First Grade Special Education Co-Teaching Instructor at Daniel Boone Elementary, Warrenton School District

2010-2011: Special Education Early Childhood Instructor at United Services, United Services of Warren County