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Missouri Public School Teachers' Perception of Tenure

by

Roberta Savone Roache

March 2015

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University in

partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

Missouri Public School Teachers' Perception of Tenure

by

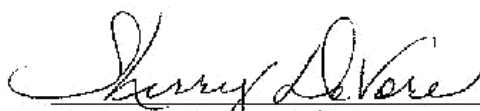
Roberta Savone Roache

This Dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment

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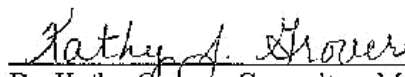
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Declaration of Originality

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

Full Legal Name: Roberta Savone Roache

Signature: Roberta Savone Roache Date: 3-3-2015

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This dissertation is dedicated in loving memory of my late husband, Brian Corwith Roache. I would like to acknowledge and thank my family for their love, patience, and support during my entire collegiate career and the writing of this dissertation. To my two lovely daughters, Cory and Shellye, I do not think you will ever know how proud I am of you both and how much I love you. Most of all, I look forward to just being a Lulu to my beautiful granddaughter, Pennye! I want to extend a sincere thank you to my dedicated doctoral committee members: Dr. DeVore, Dr. Grover, and in particular Dr. Lisa Christiansen for her continual guidance and support throughout this dissertation process. A big thank you to Dr. Samantha Henderson for reading my dissertation several times. May peace and love be with everyone who has contributed to the successful completion of my dissertation.

Abstract

In the state of Missouri, 550 public school superintendents were selected to have their district teachers participate in a study to provide information regarding the perception of teacher tenure. Approximately 64,000 PreK-12 public school teachers in Missouri were sent an 18 question online survey designed by the researcher to assess Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure. A sample of 497 Missouri teachers participated in this study. Sub-questions of the purpose of the research study were adapted from Kersten (2006): (1) When teachers achieve tenure, are they more effective and highly qualified? (2) If teacher tenure was eliminated, would student achievement increase? (3) Does the teacher tenure law in Missouri protect good teachers from arbitrary dismissal? and (4) Do teachers have knowledge of the proposed revised tenure law in Missouri? The respondents were prompted to identify gender, years in current position, education level, description of grade levels in school building, and school district's region. The research study findings produced several conclusions which included the following: (1) Teacher tenure in Missouri does not determine if teachers are effective and highly qualified; (2) Abolishing tenure or changing the current tenure law will not improve student achievement; (3) Tenure is perceived to protect competent teachers from arbitrary dismissal; however, incompetent or ineffective teachers are seldom dismissed; and (4) Many teachers have knowledge of the proposed revised teacher tenure law in Missouri, and they learned of the upcoming legislation from professional teaching organizations.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Free appropriate public education (FAPE) as a federal constitutional right has historically been, and still is today, determined by fads and trends (Board, 2012). The fads and trends are results of constant exploration of research on the subject of FAPE and the creation of legislations and initiatives made in the hopes of improving the public school educational system (Board, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Not since the enactment of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002, has this federal constitutional right caused such continual debate among business leaders, politicians, educational professionals, and the general public on how to improve the public educational system in the United States (Board, 2012).

The public educational system is in constant disarray due to these contentious debates and the resulting discord (Childress, 2014). Many problems have been identified that need improvement in the public educational system; however, the most attention has been placed on classroom teachers (Holmes & Chilcott, 2010). Stated by Gordon, Kane, and Staiger (2006), “Public education ultimately succeeds or fails based on the talents and skills of America’s 3.1 million teachers in elementary and secondary schools” (p. 1). Stronge (2007) was supportive that teachers were the strength behind student achievement:

In recent years, as the field of education has moved toward a stronger focus on accountability and on careful analysis of variables affecting educational outcomes, the teacher has proven time and again to be the most influential school-related force in student achievement. (p. viii)

Barber and Mourshed (2007) affirmed, “The quality of a school system rests on the quality of its teachers” (p. 2). Furthermore, “research has clearly shown that quality teaching matters to student learning” and student achievement (Hightower, et al., 2011, p. 2). Eight out of nine Houston Independent School District trustees were adamant teachers are responsible when students do not succeed (Mellon, 2010).

During President Barack Obama’s January 2012 State of the Union Address, the President spoke on the significance of quality teachers in the country’s public schools. He spoke on the subject of schools being offered financial support in forms of grants to “replace teachers who just aren’t helping kids learn” (Obama, 2012, p. 1). President Obama (2012) continued, “A great teacher can offer an escape from poverty to the child who dreams beyond their circumstance” (p. 1).

With increasing demands from federal and state governments, as well as local school districts to improve the quality of teachers in public education, an issue receiving attention is teacher tenure (McNeal, 2013). In spite of the purpose of teacher tenure to provide due process from unjust dismissal, tenure continues to be blamed for students receiving a below average education (McNeal, 2013). At the center of the controversy for improving public education in Missouri is the overhaul of public school teacher tenure (Birch, 2012).

The issue of public school teacher tenure has been a highly divisive and debated issue since the 19th century (Goldstein, 2014). In 1887, the National Education Association (NEA) held its first conference when 10,000 teachers gathered in Chicago, Illinois, to discuss the topic of teacher tenure (Stephey, 2008). At the NEA Convention, President William W. Eliot (1873) of Harvard University acknowledged, “Permanence

of tenure and security of income are essential to give dignity and independence to the teacher's position" (p. 111).

Teachers, administrators, other school employees, parents, politicians, and the general public all have different understandings of how teacher tenure began, what is required for teachers to obtain tenure, teacher evaluation procedures, and how or why teachers have been receiving tenure (Hart, 2010). Many misconceptions are a result of the quality and extent to which all of these stakeholders have been educated or informed with regard to teacher tenure, its origin, and why it is important to the overall educational realm in the United States (McGuinn, 2010). Teacher tenure is an important issue because, as with any other school laws, tenure is a complex process in the dynamic environment of public schools (McGuinn, 2010).

In the last two decades of the 20th century, new initiatives were written and put into practice in areas of the public schools' educational system with hopes of positive reform (Adams & Ginsberg, 2012). The new initiatives focused on student performance standards, modernizing the curriculum, standardized testing, professional development, technology, accountability standards, and teacher quality (Adams & Ginsberg, 2012). Fueled partly by these educational initiatives, the concept and actual benefits of teacher tenure have become an ardently debated and highly controversial issue in the United States (McGuinn, 2010). As the value of public school teacher tenure is discussed and debated in the United States, research about the effects of tenure on student achievement is slowly surfacing ("Earned, Not Given: Transforming Teacher Tenure," 2012).

Since the 1980s, politicians and the general public have sought and demanded an educational policy to improve the quality of public schools and teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010). As a result of this outcry, the Department of Education created the National Commission on Excellence in Education in 1981 to provide information on the quality of education in the United States (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The Commission released a report in 1983 entitled, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform*, describing the below average conditions of public education in the United States when compared to global standards (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The report, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform*, was criticized as an inaccurate overview of the United States' educational system at the time (Mulcahy & Mulcahy, 2014). The report nevertheless served as a catalyst for future federal and state initiatives that focused on the improvement of public education (Mulcahy & Mulcahy, 2014).

During President Bill Clinton's 1997 State of the Union Address, he issued a *Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century*. The *Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century* included, as a priority, the improvement in the quality of teachers in every classroom across the country. President Clinton's (1997) speech reflected growing concerns with regard to the condition of the public educational system and the need for "talented and dedicated teachers in every classroom" (p. 1).

On January 2, 2002, President George W. Bush signed the initiative NCLB (2002), a mandated educational reform. The NCLB (2002) initiative not only focused on student achievement as an effective way of measuring the success and progress of the United States' public schools, it also had the goal of having a "highly qualified

teacher” in every classroom (p. 12). This echoed and expanded upon President Bill Clinton’s (1997) outlined desire for “talented and dedicated teachers” in his *Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century* State of the Union five years earlier (p. 1). Furthermore, NCLB (2002) actually mandated that every teacher of a “core academic subject,” as defined by law, must be a “highly qualified teacher” (p. 12).

The United States Department of Education in 2006 released a grant entitled *Improving Teacher Quality State Grants, ESEA Title II, Part A* (“Improving Teacher Quality,” 2006). *Improving Teacher Quality State Grants, ESEA Title II, Part A* included an outline on how states could use funds to improve teacher quality (“Improving Teacher Quality,” 2006). The grant indicated a State Education Agency (SEA) and a Local Education Agency (LEA) may use *Title II, Part A* money to reform the public teacher tenure system (“Improving Teacher Quality,” 2006). Within the *Improving Teacher Quality State Grants, ESEA Title II, Part A* document, it was clear the United States Department of Education concluded overhauling teacher tenure as the solution to the problem of improving teacher quality, a key principle of the NCLB (2002) initiative and the *Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century* that preceded it (“Improving Teacher Quality,” 2006).

President Barack Obama’s Race to the Top (RTTT) educational reform initiative challenged states to compete for grants to support reform and innovations in schools (Hightower et al., 2011). The RTTT called for states to adopt procedures that take overall student achievement into account when considering teachers as candidates for tenure (Hightower et al., 2011). As a number of states began to evaluate and amend

their tenure-granting policies, it was mandated that teacher quality be aligned with student achievement (McGuinn, 2010).

In March of 2009, President Obama (2009a) presented the following assessment of teachers' ineffectiveness and how teachers contributed to the downfall of public schools in the United States:

Despite resources that are unmatched anywhere in the world, we've let our grades slip, our schools crumble, our teacher quality fall short, and other nations outpace us It's time to expect more from our students. It's time to start rewarding good teachers, stop making excuses for bad ones If a teacher is given a chance or two chances or three chances but still does not improve, there's no excuse for that person to continue teaching. I reject a system that rewards failure and protects a person from his consequences. The stakes are too high. We can afford nothing but the best when it comes to our children's teachers and the schools where they teach. (p. 1)

To commemorate President Barack Obama's 100th day in office, he attended a town meeting in Arnold, Missouri (2009b). During the town meeting, President Obama (2009b) reiterated that the public school system needed highly qualified teachers. President Obama (2009b) once again emphasized the "single most important factor in the classroom is the quality of the person standing at the front of the classroom" (p. 1).

Clearly, politicians and lawmakers are concerned about teacher quality and are interested in exploring alternatives to teacher tenure in public schools (McNeal, 2013). At the center of all past and current public educational reform efforts in the United States, including and especially those regarding tenure, is the importance of teacher

quality (McNeal, 2013). The Education Commission of the States, a nonprofit education research group, recently revealed tenure policies are being revamped in 35 states across the United States (Blankenship, 2013). Moreover, Florida, Idaho, and Mississippi have completely eliminated teacher tenure for all newly hired teachers and current teachers who have yet to attain tenure with the hopes of ratifying positive educational reform (Bonner, 2012).

Background of the Study

The United States' public education system is under a great deal of scrutiny (McNeal, 2013). Research is being conducted to examine an overabundance of educational issues intended to make public education more successful (Holmes & Chilcott, 2010). Many problems needing improvement in public education have been identified; however, the burden and factors given the most attention have ultimately been placed on the classroom teachers (Holmes & Chilcott, 2010). Federal and state governments and school districts are demanding the focus be on teacher tenure to improve public school teachers (McNeal, 2013).

From the time NEA held its first convention in 1887, teacher tenure for public school teachers has been an emotionally debated topic (Stephey, 2008). Public school teachers at the time needed protection against being arbitrarily, yet still legally, fired due to favoritism and ill-mannered parents (Chen, 2010). Furthermore, teachers at the time also suffered discrimination and even termination for reasons unrelated to teacher quality or competence, such as personal habits (e.g., the use of tobacco, drinking, gambling, and a host of other random reasons) (Chen, 2010). Any teachers, who had developed ideas and had viewpoints of their own, instead of accepting the community

views, placed their employment positions in jeopardy (Chen, 2010). Finally, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, all states had adopted some sort of tenure law to protect public school teachers from such discriminatory practices (Goldstein, 2014).

In Missouri, tenure laws took effect in 1970 to guarantee tenured teachers continued employment except when a reduction in force was necessary or when just cause existed to terminate a teacher (Buschmann, 2012). For a teacher to obtain tenure in Missouri, an educator must teach five consecutive years in the same school district (Buschmann, 2012). On the first day of the sixth year of employment, the teacher will actually earn tenure (Buschmann, 2012). Teachers who have not received tenure within a school district are defined as probationary teachers (Buschmann, 2012). Missouri's five-year probationary period for teachers is one of the longest probationary periods for teachers in the entire United States' public educational system (Buschmann, 2012).

Conceptual Framework

During the past two decades, there has been a great deal of discussion concerning educational reform, the improvement of schools, and quality of teachers in the United States. Educational reports and initiatives such as *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform*, *Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century*, NCLB, and, most recently, RTTT, have called for a highly qualified teacher in every United States' classroom as the solution to the woes of the public educational system. These initiatives direct attention to highly qualified teachers and what effect teachers have on student achievement. Furthermore, these initiatives appeal to the people of the United States by suggesting America's schools should not only improve, but they should be the best in the world (Bushaw & Lopez, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

Business leaders, politicians, and many people in the general population believe public schools have been failing America's students (Bushaw & Lopez, 2012). Much dissatisfaction with public schools has been placed on classroom teachers (Bushaw & Lopez, 2012). The goal of this research was to study Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure.

United States' public school teachers earn tenure as a protection in addition to fair dismissal, which both are greatly misunderstood and criticized (Goldstein, 2014). Goldstein (2014) acknowledged critics believe tenure is viewed as a guarantee of lifetime employment. Once teachers earn tenure, it is assumed by many, teachers cannot be terminated from the school district (Goldstein, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this quantitative research study was to determine Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure. While there are research studies (Kersten, 2006; Shuls & Barnes, 2013; Webb, 2013) on the subject of teacher tenure from the perspective of school principals, district superintendents, and school board presidents, there is not any information or research available on how Missouri public school teachers perceive tenure. Ultimately, educational leaders and public policy makers were provided with a comprehensive look at Missouri public school teachers' perception of tenure for use in amending or eliminating teacher tenure laws in the state of Missouri.

Research questions.

The purpose in conducting this research study was to explore Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure. The following research question guided the study:

What is the perception of Missouri public school teachers on the issue of teacher tenure?

Sub-questions for the purpose of the research study were adapted from Kersten (2006):

1. When teachers achieve tenure, are they more effective and highly qualified?
2. If teacher tenure was eliminated, would student achievement increase?
3. Does the teacher tenure law in Missouri protect good teachers from arbitrary dismissal?
4. Do teachers have knowledge of the proposed revised tenure law in Missouri?

This research study was timely in light of recent educational reform initiatives and the concerns over the quality of the United States' public educational system and teachers.

Definitions of Key Terms

For the purposes of clarification, the following terms were defined for this research study:

Due process. Due process is a formal hearing held before a local school board of education at which time administration presents its argument for dismissing the tenured teacher or not renewing the teacher's contract (Ellis, 2012). The tenured teacher is allowed the opportunity to argue his or her side regarding continued employment (Ellis, 2012).

Just cause. Just cause includes proper grounds for tenured teacher termination by the school board of education for one or more of the following:

1. Physical or mental condition unfit to instruct or associate with children;
2. Immoral conduct;
3. Incompetency, inefficiency, or insubordination in line of duty;
4. Willful or persistent violation of, or failure to obey, the school laws of the state or published regulations of the board of education of the school district employing the teacher;
5. Excessive or unreasonable absence from performance of duties;
6. Conviction of a felony or a crime involving moral turpitude. (Ellis, 2012, p. 3; “Teacher Tenure Act Questions,” 2013, para. 6)

Perception. Perception is defined as a personally held opinion (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 2008).

Probationary teacher. A probationary teacher in the state of Missouri is one who has not worked in the same school district for five successive years (Ellis, 2012; “Teacher Tenure Act Questions,” 2013). The definition of probationary teacher also applies to teachers who have been employed in another school district as a teacher for two or more years with the local board of education waiving one year of the probationary period (Ellis, 2012; “Teacher Tenure Act Questions, 2013).

Teacher. A teacher is any employee of a school district in the state of Missouri “required to be certified under laws relating to the certification of teachers” (Ellis, 2012, p. 2).

Tenure. Tenure shall refer to teacher tenure. Teacher tenure is a law that prevents tenured teachers from being terminated without just cause, such as severe misconduct, insubordination, or ineffectiveness (Garrett, 2013). Teacher tenure is also a procedural process or due process of law that must be followed when dismissing a tenured teacher (Garrett, 2013). In addition, tenure refers to the property right of tenured teachers to their teaching positions (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 2008).

Limitations and Assumptions

The following limitations and assumptions were identified and essential to this study:

Limitations. The following limitations were identified in this study:

1. This research study was limited to the investigation of perception of public school teachers in the state of Missouri.
2. This research study was limited to the degree of accuracy from Missouri tenured and non-tenured public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure that could be measured by a Likert rating scale.
3. The research study was subject to the weaknesses inherent to an online survey, including the following: the online survey was not user-friendly, participants perceived the survey as junk mail, and abandonment of the survey.
4. Reliability of findings was based upon the number of participants in the survey and participants' interpretations of the survey questions (Sue & Ritter, 2012).

Assumptions. The following assumptions were accepted in this study:

1. The responses of the participants were without bias; however, offered honestly.

2. It was assumed participants based their responses upon their own experiences.

3. The researcher would remain unbiased throughout the data collection, analysis, and reporting of the results.

Summary

This research study was organized in a five-chapter format. Introduced in Chapter One was the background and conceptual framework of the study. The purpose of the study was driven not only by the pressures of NCLB to have highly qualified teachers in every classroom in the United States, but by other educational initiatives expressing the same need for having quality teachers in United States' schools. The single most important factor to determine whether students succeed in school is the quality of their teachers as President Barack Obama emphasized (Vallas, White, & Sheffield, 2010). Also included within Chapter One was an applicable list of definitions for the purpose of the research study, the key question of the research study, sub-questions, and a comprehensive list of limitations and assumptions.

Chapter Two includes a review of literature on the topic of teacher tenure. The first section in Chapter Two is comprised of the history of educational reform efforts in the United States, the origins of public school teacher tenure, the debate of teacher tenure in Missouri, the pros and cons of public school tenure as applied to teachers in the United States, Race to the Top Legislation, and revised teacher tenure state laws. Within Chapter Three, a comprehensive explanation of the research design, methodology of data-gathering techniques, participants, the survey instrument, and procedures adhered to throughout the study are described. Quantitative data analysis

results are presented in Chapter Four. Within Chapter Five is a summary of the findings of the research study, an analysis of the resulting data, educational implications, and recommendations for future research studies.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

To fully investigate the purpose and to achieve the goals of this research study, a thorough review of literature surrounding public school teacher tenure was necessary. The review of the literature is set in five sections. Within the first section of the chapter is an outline of the history of educational reform efforts in the United States. The second section in the chapter contains the origins of public school teacher tenure. The debate of teacher tenure in the state of Missouri is covered in the third section. In the fourth section are the pros and cons of tenure as applied to public school teachers in the United States, the fifth section reviews the Race to the Top Legislation, and revised teacher tenure state laws are explored in the final section.

Literature on the impact of tenure and on the effectiveness of schools, and more specifically teachers, is unfortunately scarce (McGuinn, 2010). The literature that does exist is also conflicting as it points to a number of inconsistent solutions and approaches to the problems currently facing the public educational system (Hanushek, 2011). For example, one of the most debated topics in the literature is the assumption the longer a teacher teaches, the more effective the teacher becomes (Hanushek, 2011). While many sources support this theory, an almost equal number disagree with this assumption, making it difficult for scholars, educators, and legislators to reach a clear consensus upon which to base future theories and literature (Hanushek, 2011). This study will dispel some lack of consistency by offering a definitive look at the facts surrounding the debate over teacher tenure.

History of Educational Reform Efforts

The American public education system has gone through many different educational reforms. In 1779, after the American Revolution, Thomas Jefferson proposed for only White males and females, a tax-supported, tuition-free public education for three years in Virginia (Carpenter, 2013). These students attended “primary or elementary schools” which were the foundations for the White males’ only “grammar schools” (Carpenter, 2013, p. 5). The males who attended these “grammar schools” had potential and could afford to pay their own tuition (Carpenter, 2013, p. 5). Jefferson sought to offer continued education to “twenty of the best geniuses [to] be raked from the rubbish annually,” paid by taxpayers to top-performing White males who could not afford tuition (Carpenter, 2013, p. 8). The purpose for the extended education for White male students was to build a strong nation (Carpenter, 2013).

Horace Mann was a leading educational reformer who wanted to make education available to all children in Massachusetts and the United States (Kauchak & Eggen, 2011). As a proponent of education paid through state taxes, he led a fight for federal government support for public schools (Kauchak & Eggen, 2011). Similar to Thomas Jefferson, Mann believed public education was the key to building a strong nation and improving the quality of life for people in the United States (Kauchak & Eggen, 2011). In 1837, Mann became the first Secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education (Peterson, 2011). His platform included providing a standardized curriculum used in all public schools and, most importantly, training teachers for the classroom by establishing the first “normal school” in Massachusetts (Peterson, 2011, p. 30). Normal schools prepared individuals who wanted to be teachers (Peterson, 2011).

In 1857, due to Mann's involvement in preparing teachers for the classroom, 100 teachers eager to professionalize the field of teaching created an organization called the NEA (2014).

By 1867, the United States Congress passed legislation to establish the Department of Education (Education Policy Timeline, 2010). The Department of Education was established to ensure education was available for all children regardless of race, gender, economic status, or disability (Education Policy Timeline, 2010). Henry Barnard, another leading reformer of education and a supporter of Mann, became the first United States Commissioner of Education (Bowles, 2014). Not only did Barnard focus on teacher salaries and improving teaching, he also worked on providing safe school buildings (Bowles, 2014).

During the Cold War and the launch of Sputnik by the Soviet Union on October 4, 1957, United States' policymakers became concerned over public education with the advancement of the Soviet Union (Urban, 2010). To remedy the situation, the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) became law in 1958 (Urban, 2010). The NDEA provided federal aid to states to improve science, mathematics, and foreign language in public schools (Urban, 2010). Fullan (2010) described educational reform during the 1950s as an age where external innovations inundated the educational system.

Every new educational initiative promised to revolutionize public education. President Lyndon Johnson, who began his career as a teacher, made education a top priority of the "Great Society" that he proposed to build during his presidential term (Miller Center, 2013, p. 1). Johnson called for across-the-board reform of public education (Miller Center, 2013). In 1965, President Johnson authorized the Elementary

and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), a comprehensive set of programs, including the Title I program of federal aid to help low-income students (Miller Center, 2013). The ESEA provided additional funding for states to assist in public education (Miller Center, 2013). The ESEA was a means for social equality and elimination of discrimination in education and the United States (Fullan, 2010).

Despite the momentum for school reform, public education in the United States was struggling. Another educational reform effort was set in motion when President Ronald Reagan created the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). The National Commission on Excellence in Education was to evaluate and provide solutions for what was lacking in public education (Mulcahy & Mulcahy, 2014). A report titled, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform*, was published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education and described the below average condition of public education in the United States when compared to global standards (Mulcahy & Mulcahy, 2014).

Within the *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform* (1983) report was the following:

Our nation is at risk The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and as a people We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral education disarmament. (p. 1)

Also, within the report was the suggestion for widespread reform in public education and teacher training (Mulcahy & Mulcahy, 2014).

A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform (1983) listed seven recommendations for improving teacher quality. To make teaching a more rewarding and respected profession, the recommendation was to have “salaries for teachers more professionally competitive, market-sensitive, and performance-based” (p. 1). An additional recommendation was that “tenure, and retention decisions should be tied to an effective evaluation system” (p. 1). *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform* served as a catalyst for future federal and state educational initiatives to improve public education (Mulcahy & Mulcahy, 2014).

In 1989, the United States Congress created the Goals 2000 educational initiative, which under the George H. W. Bush administration became known as America 2000 (Heise, 1994). In America 2000, President Bush called for a “decentralization of authority and decision-making responsibility to the school site, so that educators were empowered to determine the means for accomplishing the goals and are to be held accountable for accomplishing them” (Heise, 1994, p. 1). President Bush’s educational initiative was condemned due to deficient fundamental characteristics that could have led to success for United States’ public schools (Heise, 1994). The initiative’s focal point was not on student learning or classroom teachers (Heise, 1994). On March 31, 1994, President Clinton signed into law the Goals 2000 educational initiative, alias America 2000, which ended the five-year process (Mulcahy & Mulcahy, 2014).

In President Bill Clinton’s 1997 State of the Union Address, he requested a *Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century*. The *Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century* listed as a top priority the quality of teachers in the

United States public educational system (Kumar & Parveen, 2013). President Clinton's (1997) speech reflected growing concerns from the general public and lawmakers for the need of "talented and dedicated teachers in every classroom" (p. 1).

On January 2, 2002, President George W. Bush signed the initiative NCLB, a mandated educational reform and the seventh reauthorization of the 1965 ESEA (O'Brien & Roberson, 2012). NCLB is the most familiar educational reform in the modern era for current teachers (O'Brien & Roberson, 2012). The initiative connected federal law with the quality of education in the United States (O'Brien & Roberson, 2012). The NCLB (2002) initiative not only focused on student achievement as an effective way of measuring the success and progress of the United States' public schools, it also had the goal of having a "highly qualified teacher in every classroom" (p. 12). This goal of NCLB expanded upon President Clinton's (1997) State of the Union Address, *Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century*, for "talented and dedicated teachers in every classroom" (p. 1).

The United States Department of Education, in 2006, made available a grant identified as *Improving Teacher Quality State Grants, ESEA Title II, Part A* ("Improving Teacher Quality," 2006). *Improving Teacher Quality State Grants, ESEA Title II, Part A* described how states could use the funds to improve teacher quality and reform the teacher tenure system ("Improving Teacher Quality," 2006). Within the *Improving Teacher Quality State Grants, ESEA Title II, Part A*, it was clear the United States Department of Education concluded overhauling teacher tenure as the solution to the problem of improving teacher quality, a key principle of the NCLB initiative and the

Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century ("Improving Teacher Quality," 2006).

In March, President Barack Obama (2009a) presented the following assessment of teachers' ineffectiveness and how teachers contributed to the downfall of public schools in the United States:

Despite resources that are unmatched anywhere in the world, we've let our grades slip, our schools crumble, our teacher quality fall short, and other nations outpace us It's time to expect more from our students. It's time to reward good teachers, stop making excuses for bad ones If a teacher is given a chance or two or three but still does not improve, there's no excuse for that person to continue teaching. I reject a system that rewards failure and protects a person from his consequences. The stakes are too high. We can afford nothing but the best when it comes to our children's teachers and the schools where they teach. (p. 1)

President Obama's educational reform initiative, RTTT, prescribed for states to agree to firm procedures that take student achievement into account when considering teachers for tenure (Hightower et al., 2011).

Delaware and Tennessee received RTTT grants in March 2010 (Miller & Hanna, 2014). The District of Columbia, North Carolina, Florida, Rhode Island, Georgia, Ohio, Hawaii, Maryland, New York, and Massachusetts received RTTT funding later in 2010 (Miller & Hanna, 2014). In December 2011, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Arizona, New Jersey, Colorado, Louisiana, and Illinois were awarded grants (Miller & Hanna, 2014).

As a number of states began to evaluate and revamp their tenure-granting policies, the idea that student achievement must be a direct measure of teacher effectiveness took hold among lawmakers (McGuinn, 2010). Clearly, politicians and lawmakers are concerned about teacher quality and are interested in abolishing or exploring alternatives to teacher tenure in public schools (McNeal, 2013). At the center of most past and current public educational reform efforts in the United States are the importance of teacher quality and teacher tenure (McNeal, 2013).

By 2010 all 50 states had some structure of a teacher tenure law for public school teachers (Bonner, 2012). More recently, there has been a continued trend for changes in teacher tenure laws across the country (Bonner, 2012). The Education Commission of the States revealed between January 2008 and June 2012, a total of 24 states amended teacher tenure laws (Blankenship, 2013). As of June 30, 2012, an additional 11 states had proposed changes to teacher tenure laws (Blankenship, 2013). Florida, Idaho, and Mississippi have completely eliminated teacher tenure for all newly hired teachers and current teachers who have yet to attain tenure in the hopes of enacting positive educational reform (Bonner, 2012).

Origins of Public School Teacher Tenure

Teacher tenure originated in higher education (Altbach, Gumport, & Berdahl, 2011). Tenure provided protection for college or university professors from retribution for teaching or researching political, social, or religious issues (Altbach et al., 2011). The teacher tenure protection allowed college or university professors to explore controversial topics without fear of reprisal (Altbach et al., 2011). Compared to public

education, teacher tenure is earned rather than given at the college or university level (Altbach et al., 2011).

Teacher tenure policies have been part of the elementary and secondary American educational system for over 100 years (Goldstein, 2014). During the 1800s and 1900s, public school teachers faced difficult situations in and out of the school building (Goldstein, 2014). Teachers were terminated for reasons unrelated to teacher quality or teacher competence including personal habits such as the use of tobacco, drinking, gambling, among other characteristics that eliminated teachers from the profession (Chen, 2010). Pay was low, and teachers were not offered benefits or pensions (Goldstein, 2014). Early in history, three out of four teachers were women and many were deprived promotions to administrative levels (Sediak & Schlossman, 1987). Furthermore, public school teachers suffered undesirable working conditions; reform was needed to preserve the teaching profession (Goldstein, 2014).

According to Hassel, Kowal, Ableidinger, and Hassel (2011), on January 16, 1883, the first Civil Service Act was passed by the United States Congress following President Garfield's assassination. Senator George H. Pendleton, a Democrat from Ohio, sponsored the Civil Service Act (MacDonald, 1903). The Civil Service Act ensured the rights of citizens when hired or if fired from federal service positions with regard to discrimination based on politics, religion, race, or national origin (MacDonald, 1903). Although the Civil Service Act did not take into account public school teachers, it laid the underpinning and set a strong precedent for the creation of teacher tenure (Kersten, 2006).

In 1885, the NEA, one of the two teacher unions in the United States, sought to have an initiative similar to the Civil Service Act that would protect teachers in much the same way the Civil Service Act protected other civil employees (Kersten, 2006). During the late 1800s, the majority of public school teachers were women who had few protections against unjust firings (Sediak & Schlossman, 1987). Teachers were often terminated from their teaching positions for non-work related reasons such as pregnancy, race, political affiliation, marital status, or attending a movie theater (Chen, 2010; Sediak & Schlossman, 1987). Additionally, teachers were fired for “. . . speaking up, questioning educational practices, or merely because an administrator wished to give the job to someone else for political reasons or nepotism” (Baratz-Snowden, 2009, p. 1). Such reasons had little to no bearing on competence or quality; as a result effective teachers and their advocates proposed protection from such arbitrary firings (Sediak & Schlossman, 1987).

The following year, the NEA created the Committee on Salaries, Tenure, and Pensions to ensure protection for teachers against unjustified and arbitrary persecution or termination (Kersten, 2006). In 1887, the NEA held its first conference when 10,000 teachers gathered in Chicago, Illinois to discuss, among other things, the topic of teacher tenure (Stephey, 2008). Based on the need for stability in the teaching profession, the NEA initiated the creation of teacher tenure (Stephey, 2008).

In 1886, the first state to adopt and establish a teacher tenure law for those in the kindergarten through 12th grade public school teaching profession was Massachusetts (Goldstein, 2014). Another early adopter of a teacher tenure law was New Jersey, which in 1910 passed a law that granted all kindergarten through 12th grade public school

teachers fair dismissal protection (Sediak & Schlossman, 1987). Many states soon followed and established laws protecting teachers (Sediak & Schlossman, 1987).

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the NEA conducted several studies on teacher tenure (Goldstein, 2014). None of the research studies found any differences in abilities between tenured and non-tenured public school teachers (Goldstein, 2014). It was discovered by the NEA researchers that United States public school teachers faced issues with job security (Shuls & Barnes, 2013). Finally in 1946, the NEA's Committee on Salaries, Tenure, and Pensions launched "a formal purpose for tenure" procedures to protect public school teachers from arbitrary firing and to allow for termination of incompetent teachers (Shuls, & Barnes, 2013, p. 1).

During the 1940s, teacher tenure policies gained momentum (Shuls & Barnes, 2013). As a result, 21 states had some form of teacher tenure law to protect teachers' rights (Shuls & Barnes, 2013). Additionally, 20 states had regulations covering the duration and renewing of teachers' teaching contracts (Shuls & Barnes, 2013). Only seven states did not have any form of teacher tenure (Shuls & Barnes, 2013). Finally, by the late 1960s and early 1970s, all states had adopted some sort of tenure law for public school teachers to protect them from such discriminatory practices (Goldstein, 2014). Teacher tenure laws went into effect in Missouri on July 1, 1970 to guarantee tenured teachers continued employment except when a reduction in force was necessary or when just cause existed to terminate the teacher (Missouri Teacher Tenure Act, 1970).

For a teacher to receive tenure in Missouri, he or she must have taught five consecutive years in the same school district (Buschmann, 2012). On the first day of the sixth year of employment, Missouri Revised Statute 168.106 (2012) affirmed teachers'

contracts “shall be known as an indefinite contract and shall continue in effect for an indefinite period” (p. 1). Those teachers who have not yet received tenure within a school district are defined as probationary teachers (Buschmann, 2012). Missouri’s five-year probationary period for teachers is one of the longest probationary periods in the United States (Buschmann, 2012).

The Center for American Progress report, *Fixing Tenure*, defined the concept of tenure as meaning “that a teacher gains permanent employment status after successfully completing a probationary period—usually three years of teaching—and may not be fired or disciplined without just cause and due process” (Baratz-Snowden, 2009, p. 5). Each and every one of the 50 states mandate probationary periods before teachers are awarded tenure (Baratz-Snowden, 2009). Public school teachers may earn teacher tenure only after one year in the states of Hawaii and Mississippi (Baratz-Snowden, 2009). Thirty-four states require a mandated probationary period of three years (Baratz-Snowden, 2009). Indiana requires a five-year probationary period, with Ohio requiring the longest probationary period of seven years (Baratz-Snowden, 2009).

In 1970, the Missouri Teacher Tenure Act was introduced (Missouri Teacher Tenure Act, 1970). The Missouri public educational system expanded and extended the definition of probationary status to five years of teaching with tenure earned at the beginning of the sixth year (Missouri Teacher Tenure Act, 1970). A part-time contracted public school teacher gains credit toward tenure on a pro-rated basis (Ellis, 2012).

Debate of Teacher Tenure in Missouri

The debate to eradicate tenure for Missouri public school teachers is not a new one. Missouri state legislators have lobbied for various bills to amend or eliminate teacher tenure in recent years (Henningesen, 2013). One state bill attempted to require teachers to be routinely evaluated to determine if they are professionally competent enough to keep their teaching positions (Henningesen, 2013). Henningesen (2013) stated legislators wanted to include “unsatisfactory performance” on the list of grounds on why tenured teachers could be terminated (p. 38). Additionally, Missouri Senate Bill 806 proposed in February 2012 petitioned to extend the probationary period from five to 10 years for teachers (Henningesen, 2013).

One particular Missouri lawmaker who was determined to change teacher tenure was former Republican Senator Jane Cunningham of Chesterfield, Missouri (Griffin, 2012). An outspoken social conservative, Cunningham spent eight years in the Missouri House and four years in the Senate (Griffin, 2012). Former Senator Cunningham proposed Missouri Senate Bill 372 in the 2011 session (Turner, 2011c). Missouri Senate Bill 372 (2011) was identical to Missouri House Bill 628 (2011), sponsored by Representative Scott Dieckhaus in the Missouri House (Turner, 2011c). Representative Scott Dieckhaus’ Missouri House Bill 628 would have implemented the following changes to the current tenure structure (Turner, 2011a):

1. The complete abolition of tenure, with "continuing contracts" being offered instead. Such contracts would be two, three, or four years, with the term being dependent on student performance on standardized tests;

2. There would no longer be a minimum salary for veteran teachers or those teachers with master's degrees;
3. Performance pay being introduced and effective for the school year starting in 2013;
4. The complete barring of teachers being allowed to campaign for school board candidates within their district;
5. All teachers with tenure status would be demoted to probationary level teachers at the end of the school year in 2012. (p. 1)

This bill would have eliminated the current teacher tenure structure in Missouri and the salary schedules developed by the state's 522 school district (Fritchle, 2014).

While aspects of Cunningham's Senate Bill 372 focused on educational reform and benefits for students, many voters believed there was an alternative motive (Turner, 2011b). For example, Cunningham desired to prohibit public school teachers from endorsing school board candidates (Turner, 2011a). Cunningham had one term with the Ladue Board of Education, but she lost her second bid due to teachers campaigning for her opponent (Turner, 2011b). Her opponent argued prohibiting teachers from endorsing a school board candidate would take away from Missouri teachers' freedom of choice (Turner, 2011b). As a result, Mrs. Cunningham was extremely angry with Missouri public school teachers who campaigned against her (Turner, 2011b).

Just as Representative Scott Dieckhaus unsuccessfully petitioned during the 2011 legislative session, former Senator Cunningham tried to bring an end to teacher tenure (Turner, 2011b). Cunningham wanted to include student performance within teacher evaluations (Turner, 2011b). She continued to proclaim that Missouri's public

schools were filled with teachers who have no abilities and cannot be fired because of the teacher tenure law (Turner, 2011b).

In an interview with St. Louis Public Radio's Marshall Griffin (2012), Cunningham stated the following opinion that was then adopted by her supporters with regard to teacher tenure:

There's a teachers' strike right now in Chicago, and one of the issues is evaluations, and tenure and those kinds of things . . . the teachers there are making on average \$76,000 a year, and yet they don't want to be evaluated and held accountable for what the students actually learn in their classrooms . . . our nation is now facing security problems because of the mediocre education that we're providing . . . that has been documented recently by a report that was led by Joel Klein, the former chancellor at the New York (City) schools, and Condoleezza Rice, and about 28 other educators, academics, business people, that have found that in competing with the rest of the world, we are in dire straits to the point that it's a national security issue. (p. 1)

Mark VanZandt, General Counsel for the MODESE, expressed, "Tenured teachers can be held accountable under the current system" (as cited in Griffin, 2013, p. 1).

Opponents of Cunningham's views argued that her proposal failed because the basic assumption was inherently wrong (Turner, 2011b). These opponents argued teachers are not against evaluations (Turner, 2011b). In fact, teacher evaluation systems were recently overhauled and updated voluntarily by two of the largest teacher unions in the United States with the hopes of positive educational reform and beneficial revisions in the teacher tenure systems (Goldhaber, 2010).

Missouri House Bill 631 (2013), sponsored by Representative Kevin Elmer from District 139 in Missouri, was a modification of Jane Cunningham's sponsored Missouri Senate Bill 806 (Ruff, 2013). The changes proposed for the law were regarding teacher quality (Ruff, 2013). The following were the main provisions in the 2012 Missouri House Bill 631:

1. Changes the basis of tenure from five consecutive years of employment to at least four consecutive years with four consecutive ratings of effective or highly effective. A teacher will lose permanent status after a rating of ineffective or two consecutive ratings of minimally effective and will regain it with three consecutive ratings of effective, highly effective, or any combination of the two;
2. Defines "student growth" and "value-added model" as they relate to teacher evaluations;
3. Revises the "last-in, first-out" rule for placing teachers on leave of absence, so that decisions will be made primarily on the results of performance evaluations instead of length of service;
4. Changes the requirements for the evaluation of teachers and administrators by requiring each district and charter school to develop and implement an evaluation system consistent with the requirements of the substitute, that uses multiple measures based on growth in student achievement, either of its own development or the model developed by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE);

5. Requires MODESE to promulgate rules to determine the teacher of record, standards for rating levels, and value-added model processes and requirements; and to be responsible for the development and implementation of a student growth model and a value-added model, providing technical assistance, developing a model evaluation system, and establishing a process to approve assessments and monitor compliance;
6. Revises the St. Louis Public School District's tenure laws to reflect the changes made to the main tenure law; and
7. Repeals certain provisions that require school districts to develop their own teaching standards; the process for the remediation of the work of a probationary teacher who is deemed to be doing unsatisfactory work; and the evaluation standards for school administrators. (Elmer, 2013, p. 1)

The NEA opposed Missouri House Bill 631 (Missouri NEA, 2013). The NEA did not support the assault on teacher tenure, the elimination of local school board control, and teacher evaluation (Missouri NEA, 2013). On April 10, 2013, the Missouri House members struck down Missouri House Bill 631, with a vote of 102 to 55 (Blank, 2013).

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) introduced in 2010 a new model for a national teacher evaluation that would be used to qualify those teachers eligible for teacher tenure and to review their contracts (Strauss, 2013). One year later, in 2011, the NEA endorsed the concept of student performance as an integral part of a teacher evaluation (Sawchuk, 2011); this was echoed by much legislation including NCLB and the RTTT grant program (Domina, 2014). Furthermore, Strauss (2013) stated many teacher evaluation systems across the country are run and supported entirely by teachers

themselves. These evaluation systems have been credited as some of the “most effective teacher evaluation systems in the country” (Strauss, 2013, p. 1).

Billionaire Rex Sinquefield, a retired Missouri philanthropist, is financing teacher tenure reform in Missouri (Herndon, 2014). Sinquefield used the initiative petition process and sidestepped the customary legislative procedure (Jones, 2014). On May 4, 2014, signatures were presented to Missouri’s Secretary of State requesting the proposed initiative be on the November 2014 ballot (Singer, 2014). This petition garnered the largest number of signatures in the history of the Missouri’s initiative process (Jones, 2014).

The fair ballot language statement prepared pursuant to Missouri Statute 116.025 (2014), Amendment 3, relating to Teacher Performance Evaluation Systems was as follows:

1. Require teachers to be evaluated by a standards-based performance evaluation system for which each local school district must receive state approval to continue receiving state and local funding;
2. Require teachers to be dismissed, retained, demoted, promoted and paid primarily using quantifiable student performance data as part of the evaluation system;
3. Require teachers to enter into contracts of three years or fewer with public school districts;
4. Prohibit teachers from organizing or collectively bargaining regarding the design and implementation of the teacher evaluation system. (Singer, 2014, p. 1; as cited in Lassing, 2014, para. 2)

Teachers' unions oppose the proposed teacher evaluation system amendment due to the fact it would require too much reliance on student test score data (Singer, 2014).

Sinquefield announced he invested \$1.6 million of his personal money to support the Constitutional Amendment 3 (Stuckey, 2014). By September 2014, the billionaire reportedly ended his support for the Amendment, learning his "support for the measure was not polling as well as he had hoped" (Ebbs, 2014, p. 1). A move Dr. Squire, University of Missouri Political Science Department, expressed was uncommon (Denyer, 2014). However, the amendment remained on the ballot.

The ballot measure was put in front of the voters on November 4, 2014. With all the state's precincts votes in, more than 76% voters rejected Amendment 3 (Stuckey, 2014). This large of voter turnout, shows support for Missouri public school teachers (Stuckey, 2014). Nevertheless, teacher unions conclude reform surrounding the teacher tenure law will resurface (Stuckey, 2014).

Pros and Cons of Teacher Tenure

Presently, teacher tenure is under attack in the United States. Voiced by Murphy, "Tenure laws will be under assault for many years to come" (Bonner, 2012, p. 1). Although the purpose of teacher tenure is to protect teachers from unfair dismissal (Kersten, 2006; Spring, 2013), tenure has come under criticism from many adversaries. These critics blame teacher tenure for providing schools fair dismissal protection for ineffective teachers (AFT, 1999).

Support for protection from arbitrary hiring and firing practices has been mandated and agreed upon as a basic tenet of American citizenry (United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2009). At the federal level, Title VII of the

Civil Rights Act prohibits job discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, sex, or religion (United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2009). The Supreme Court of the United States held and interpreted the Civil Rights Act as making it illegal for employers in the United States to terminate an employee based on discriminatory implications, unless the employer could give a justification the termination was due to a reduction in force (United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2009). The Civil Rights Act sought to protect all American citizens, including teachers, from unfair employment practices (Perkins, 2012). Such protection ensures every American employee is treated fairly, with no tenure required (Perkins, 2012).

Tenure, it has been argued, complements and expands upon employment protection guaranteed every American worker to meet the individual and unique needs of the teaching profession (Zeppelin, 2014). Since inception, teacher tenure laws have elicited an ongoing debate between critics and supporters. In an era when educational reform continues to be an ongoing priority, supporters and critics of teacher tenure cannot be taken lightly.

Proponents. Allen (2009) stated, “Critics have long assailed tenure with little more than bogus arguments and specious evidence” (p. 99). So many have “vilified teachers and their unions that one gets the impression that tenure only serves to protect the bad teachers” (Greenwald, 2010, p. 1). Greenwald (2010) pointed out that teacher tenure “recognizes that teachers are professionals, as well as intellectuals” (p. 1). The original purpose of teacher tenure was “to insulate employees from undue political

forces and to increase the attractiveness of the job” (Hassel et al., 2011, p. 3). Public school teachers with tenure are entitled to certain privileges (Greenwald, 2010).

While tenure protects teachers from unjustified firing, tenure moreover guards teachers from administrators who treat them poorly and who assign teachers to intolerable teaching assignments (Tobias & Baffert, 2010). According to Tobias and Baffert (2010), tenure protects teachers against animosity and grudges held by school building administrators. Teachers with tenure are protected from unethical administrators seeking to terminate a teacher due to personal revenge (Hassel et al., 2011). If a teacher is performing satisfactorily and contributing to increasing student achievement, teachers should not be terminated due to a principal wanting to hire a family member or due to a disagreement (Hassel et al., 2011). Hassel et al. (2011) argued teacher tenure also protects teachers from over-enthusiastic parents who may wrongly assume a teacher is incompetent and intentionally failing their child.

The Education Commission of the States defined teacher tenure as “not a job guarantee but rather a job security device protecting against termination of employment in cases where there are not grounds for termination or where the teacher has no fair opportunity to present a defense” (Zinth, 2011). Van Roekel, President of the NEA, acknowledged tenured teachers are protected by due process from arbitrary, unsubstantiated firing (Gabriel & Dillon, 2011). Teacher tenure mandates due process be followed before a teacher can be fired (Spring, 2013).

Due process is a right detailed in the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution (Baker, Oluwole, & Green, 2013). One of the key clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States’ Constitution includes, “No person will

be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law” (Baker et al., 2013, p. 10). In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson reworded John Locke's “life, liberty, and property,” to read “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (Sutton, 2014, p. 5).

The due process clause is intended to guarantee state and federal governments are subject to the Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to the United States’ Constitution (Baker et al., 2013). The Bill of Rights protects basic freedoms for U.S. citizens (Sutton, 2014). The Fifth Amendment requires due process be part of any just cause proceedings that deny a teacher “life, liberty or property” (Sutton, 2014, p. 5). Due process applies to public school districts when terminating a teacher who has earned tenure (“Teachers' Rights: Tenure and Dismissal,” 2013).

In the leading case, *Cleveland Board of Education v. Loudermill* (1985), the question of what process is due under the United States’ Constitution was reached. The United States Supreme Court listed four procedures in teacher tenure due process (“Procedural Due Process Rights: What Individual Interests are Protected?” 2011):

1. Tenured teachers must be given, written or oral, notice of dismissal.
2. The reasons must be noted.
3. An explanation of the evidence must be provided by the employer.
4. A fair and meaningful hearing must be given the teacher if requested. (p. 1)

In short, due process predictably protects teachers whether tenured or non-tenured (“Procedural Due Process Rights: What Individual Interests are Protected?” 2011).

Shuls and Barnes (2013) created an illustration (see Figure 1) of the procedural requirements to terminate a public school teacher in Missouri. An administrator must

prove just cause and provide notice to the teacher, specify the charge against him or her, and provide the teacher with a hearing (Shuls & Barnes, 2013).

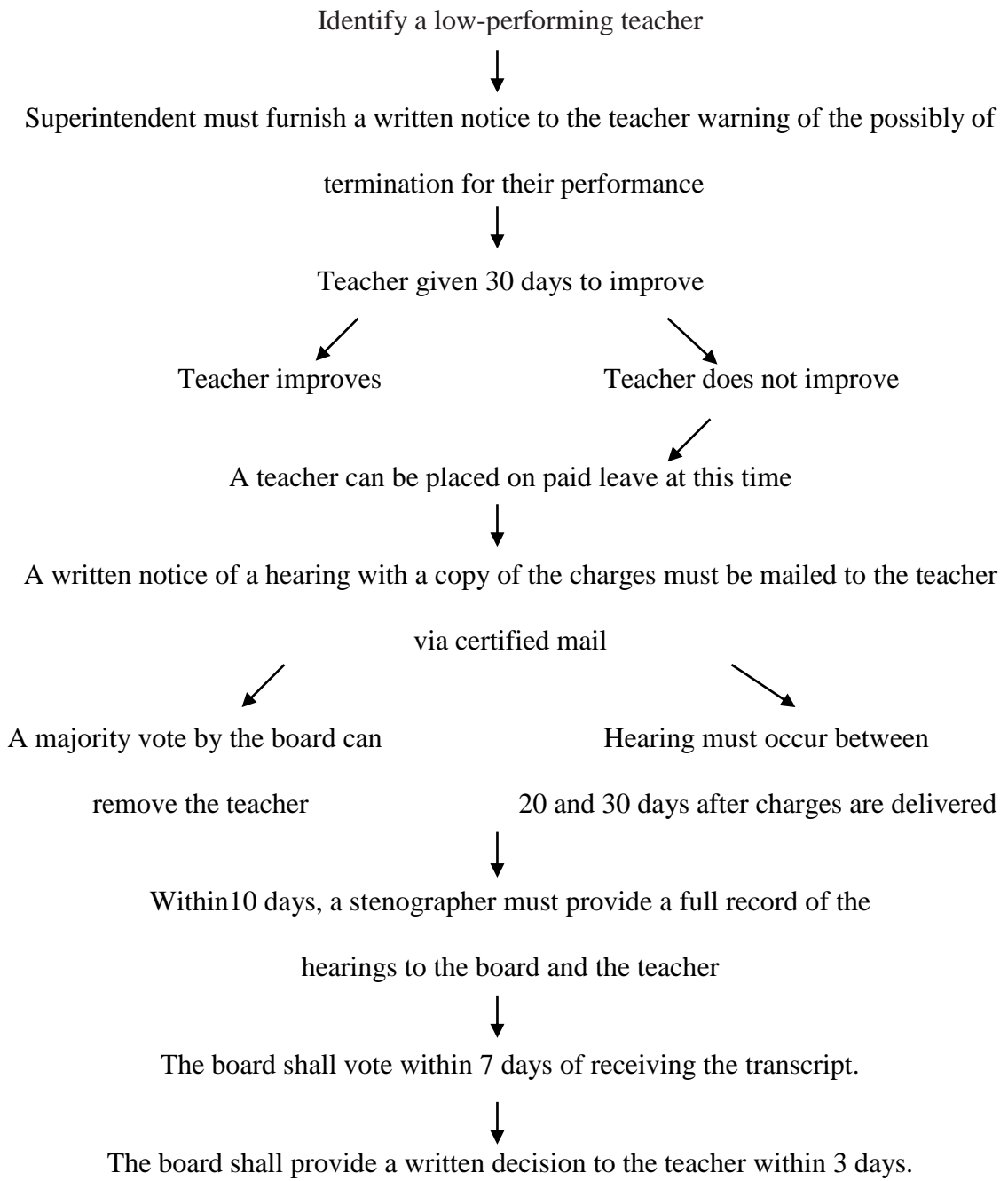


Figure 1. Procedural requirements to terminate a public school teacher in the state of Missouri (Shuls & Barnes, 2013, p. 2).

Lengthening teachers' probationary period before teacher tenure is earned will extend the time teachers do not receive protection from arbitrary dismissal (Goldstein, 2014). Also, by extending the probationary period, non-tenured teachers will not be offered due process (Goldstein, 2014). School board members can terminate or not reinstate a teacher's contract before tenure is earned for any reason except for "discriminatory reasons" (Jones, 2012, p. 2).

The NEA favors teacher tenure and argues that state tenure laws:

1. Do not protect teachers from dismissal but rather guarantee an impartial hearing that ensures teachers' due process rights;
2. Protect effective teachers from dismissal and replacement by less qualified, politically-connected new teachers;
3. Protect the academic freedom of teachers, which allows them to discuss a wide range of perspectives and encourages a free exchange of ideas;
4. Allow teachers to exercise their professional judgment rather than teach in lockstep;
5. Provide the security to take instructional risks that may lead to school improvement and ultimately increased student achievement;
6. Let teachers maintain high student performance expectations without fear of retribution;
7. Encourage administrators to develop faculty members rather than simply dismiss them;

8. Are not responsible for ineffective teachers; rather poor evaluation processes and inadequate administrator evaluation practices are the cause. (Kersten, 2006, p. 239)

The AFT opposed abolishing teacher tenure (Baratz-Snowden, 2009). The AFT has purported that eliminating teacher tenure will not change poor teaching, but raise teaching standards and assist administrators with developing a better evaluation system to improve the quality of teachers (Baratz-Snowden, 2009). As early as 1974, the AFT defended teacher tenure as outlined in the following statement:

There is a new strength in the attack against tenure today. It is an attack against tenure itself and not simply against a few teachers . . . tenure is marked, at one time or another, as the cause of most of what is wrong with education and, by implication, society. (as cited in Lanzarone, 1974, p. 528)

Furthermore, advocates of teacher tenure validate the stance of the NEA and AFT (Greenblatt, 2010).

Tenured teachers need to be protected from being fired for teaching political, social, or religious issues, or other controversial topics (Greenblatt, 2010). Strauss (2014) proclaimed, “Tenure is meant to shield the teacher from political fallout, to give the teacher the freedom to balance all these interests as he or she sees best” (p. 1).

Dennis Van Roekel, President of the NEA, said “Tenure laws were passed in state after state to protect good teachers from arbitrary actions” (as cited in Greenblatt, 2010, p. 1).

Schools districts are prohibited to terminate seasoned teachers to hire newly graduated ones for lower earnings (Tobias & Baffert, 2010). In 2010, teacher tenure laws prevented Marcia Rothman, a New York tenured teacher, from being terminated

(Galouchko, 2010). Rothman, a teacher for 14 years, expressed “They don’t want old experienced teachers who are too expensive. It’s a concerted effort to harass older teachers, so they can hire two young teachers” (as cited in Galouchko, 2010, p. 1). Essex (2012) further stated, “Tenure also is viewed as a means of proving a degree of permanency in the teaching force from which students ultimately benefit” (p. 249).

Teacher tenure attracts many college graduates to the teaching profession in spite of below average salaries (Tobias & Baffert, 2010). The Economic Policy Institute conducted a study in 2008 on starting salaries (Tobias & Baffert, 2010). The Economic Policy Institute’s research uncovered public school teachers, when compared to workers of equal education, earned 15% or less weekly (Tobias & Baffert, 2010). Additionally, in teaching there is no career advancement beyond the salary schedule that compensates teachers based on their length of service and advancements in education (Tobias & Baffert, 2010).

In 2007, Duffet, Faras, Rotherman, and Silver conducted a survey of approximately 1,000 public school teachers and discovered a majority of teachers were not willing to give up tenure for a pay increase (Tobias & Baffert, 2010). Supporters of teacher tenure maintain tenure is a method of “checks and balances between administrators and teachers,” which is more important than higher pay (Tobias & Baffert, 2010, p. 73). Teacher tenure provides teachers with due process before a termination can take place based on the grounds of school personnel, parents, or members of the general public who may have difficulty with a school teacher (Tobias & Baffert, 2010).

Opponents. On the other hand, teacher tenure should not be immune from constructive criticism (Allen, 2009). Critics consider tenure as permission for teachers to get complacent through job security for a lifetime (Garrett, 2013). Furthermore, tenure is considered to be a shield for bad teachers from being fired (Garrett, 2013). Marc Ellinger, an attorney on the St. Louis CBS affiliate KMOX said, “Once a teacher gets tenure, it’s nearly impossible to get rid of them for performance issues. They don’t have that incentive to do well because they’re going to get paid; they’re going to receive increases regardless of their performance” (“The Pros and Cons,” 2012). Currently, Ellinger is representing billionaire Rex Sinquefeld, who is financing the teacher tenure reform in Missouri (“Teacher Tenure Under Attack,” 2013).

Knowles (2010) wrote, “We will not produce excellent schools without eliminating laws and practices that guarantee teachers, regardless of their performance, jobs for life” (p. 1). Teacher tenure makes the process of terminating poorly performing teachers a costly one and also involves the teacher unions, the school board, administrators, and the legal system (Stephey, 2008). In New York, firing teachers has been tedious and lengthy, and a number of unsafe teachers have been assigned to rubber rooms (Medina, 2010). The state of New York spent \$30 million a year for teachers who sat and did nothing all day in these rubber rooms (Medina, 2010). Medina (2010) stated these teachers were still receiving full benefits and still on the payroll. The rubber rooms closed in 2010, but nothing changed about terminating ineffective teachers in New York (Medina, 2010). The New York City school district spent an average of \$200,000 and 476 days to terminate one tenured teacher (Medina, 2010).

Thomas, Wingert, Conant, and Register (2010) verified how a number of public school teachers were terminated:

In New York City in 2008, three out of 30,000 tenured teachers were dismissed for cause. The statistics are just as eye-popping in other cities. The percentage of teachers dismissed for poor performance in Chicago, Illinois, between 2005 and 2008 (the most recent figures available) was 0.1 percent. In Akron, Ohio, zero percent. In Toledo, Ohio, 0.01 percent. In Denver, Colorado, zero percent. (p. 25)

Approximately 99% of all United States' teachers are rated as "satisfactory" when evaluated; terminating a teacher is costly (Thomas et al., 2010, p. 25).

In the 2010 documentary *Waiting for 'Superman,'* moviemakers Chilcott and Guggenheim claimed, "One out of every 57 doctors loses his or her license to practice medicine" (as cited in "Protecting Bad Teachers," n.d., para. 1). Additionally, "One out of every 97 lawyers loses their license to practice law," while "only one out of 1,000 teachers is fired for performance-related reasons" (as cited in "Protecting Bad Teachers," n.d., para. 2). The central focus of *Waiting for 'Superman,'* was the "need to clean house, starting with the concept of tenure" (Amaral, 2010, para. 6).

Opponents deem tenure allows public school teachers to fail by doing the least amount at the expense of America's students (Leana, 2011). Opponents further believe inadequate teachers significantly harm students' future prospects (Leana, 2011). Research studies on teacher tenure exposed ineffective teachers inhibit student learning, potentially slowing learning by one grade level equivalent during a school year (Hanushek, 2011). Additionally, Chetty, Friedman, and Rockoff (2011) claimed:

Students assigned to . . . teachers (with high value-added scores) are more likely to attend college, attend higher-ranked colleges, earn higher salaries, live in higher (socioeconomic status) neighborhoods, and save more for retirement. They are also less likely to have children as teenagers. Teachers have large impacts in all grades from 4 to 8. On average, a one standard deviation improvement in teacher (value-added scores) in a single grade raises earnings by about 1% at age 28. (p. 2)

President Obama affirmed these facts during his State of the Union Address (2012), “We know a good teacher can increase the lifetime income of a classroom by over \$250,000. A great teacher can offer an escape from poverty to the child who dreams beyond his circumstance” (p. 1). Gordon et al. (2006) revealed in their study that removing 6% to 10% of lower performing teachers would take the United States from 29th to 7th in international rankings of math scores.

Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education, stated the following during an address at the NEA Convention in 2009:

We created tenure rules to make sure that a struggling teacher gets a fair opportunity to improve, and that’s a good goal. But when an ineffective teacher gets a chance to improve and doesn’t—and when the tenure system keeps that teacher in the classroom anyway—then the system is protecting jobs rather than children. That’s not a good thing. We need to work together to change that And I’m telling you as well that, when inflexible seniority and rigid tenure rules that we designed put adults ahead of children, then we are not only putting kids

at risk, we're also putting the entire education system at risk. We're inviting the attack of parents and the public, and that is not good for any of us. (p. 1)

Rivals of tenure are further convinced tenure makes teacher seniority a priority over the quality of the educator (Flores, 2012). Opponents feel that in an event of reduction in force, school districts ultimately have to keep teachers based upon seniority and are not allowed to release teachers from their contracts based on competence (Flores, 2012). The opponents of tenure put forth the idea that eliminating tenure would end "last in, first out" protection for teachers (Flores, 2012, p. 2).

Race to the Top Legislation

The current debate on teacher tenure reached the White House with President Barack Obama expressing his support for pay-for-performance and merit pay programs for teachers (Viteritti, 2012). The standards for these programs were outlined in his educational economic stimulus legislation grant program entitled RTTT (Viteritti, 2012). The Obama Administration's RTTT legislation, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), provided states with \$4.35 billion worth of grants to develop strategies for positive education innovations and reforms that would advance school improvement (United States Department of Education, 2009). Posey (2012) confirmed that for states to qualify for RTTT grants, states had to follow the following criteria:

1. Adopt internationally benchmarked standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace.
2. Recruit, develop, retain, and reward effective teachers and principals.

3. Build instructional data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices.
4. Turn around the lowest-performing schools. (p. 1)

Whereas many states did not apply for these grants, many states did (Posey, 2012).

Proponents of RTTT endorsed the grant program because by focusing on the creation and identification of effective teachers, a positive change can be effective on the public education system (Viteritti, 2011). Supporters further suggested such a change would have the ultimate benefit of not only reform to the system, but also improved student performance (Viteritti, 2011). Stronge and Tucker asserted, “Without high quality evaluation systems, we cannot know if we have high quality teachers and without capable, high quality teachers in America’s classrooms, no educational reform effort can possibly succeed” (as cited in Kaschub & Smith, 2014, p. 18). In Missouri a probationary teacher must minimally be evaluated once per year, whereas a tenured teacher is only evaluated once every five years (“District Policy: Springfield Public Schools, Missouri,” 2013).

On March 29, 2010, Delaware and Tennessee won grants from the RTTT competition during the first phase, beating out 16 other states (Hamilton, 2010). Duncan said, “We received many strong proposals from states all across America, but two applications stood out above all others: Delaware and Tennessee” (as cited in Hamilton, 2010, p. 1). Duncan continued:

Both states have statewide buy-in for comprehensive plans to reform their schools. They have written new laws to support their policies. They have demonstrated the courage, capacity, and commitment to turn their ideas into

practices that can improve outcomes for students. (as cited in Hamilton, 2010, p. 1)

Delaware was awarded \$100 million, and Tennessee was awarded \$500 million to implement comprehensive school reform plans over the next four years (Hamilton, 2010).

The United States Department of Education on August 24, 2010, awarded approximately \$3.4 billion for the second phase of the RTTT grants to nine states (Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, and Rhode Island) and the District of Columbia (Armario & Gormley, 2010). Secretary Duncan said, “These states show what is possible when adults come together to do the right thing for children” (as cited in Armario & Gormley, 2010, p. 1). Duncan articulated, “Every state that applied showed a tremendous amount of leadership and a bold commitment to education reform. The creativity and innovation in each of these applications is breathtaking. We set a high bar and these states met the challenge” (as cited in Armario & Gormley, 2010, p. 1).

Finally on December 22, 2011, Secretary Duncan announced RTTT phase three grants went to the following states: Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania (United States Department of Education, 2011). Duncan said:

These seven states are now among 22 Race to the Top winners spread out across the country that are investing in key education reforms to prepare more students for college and careers. The Race to the Top has been a pivotal program that has generated more progress in improving our nation’s education system over the

last three years than we've seen over the last decade. We look forward to partnering with these states to continue this important work. (as cited in United States Department of Education, 2011, p. 1)

The grant money has been distributed and it is time to put the money to good use for schools (United States of Education, 2011).

Revised Teacher Tenure State Laws

Though some politicians in Missouri have tried and failed to reform tenure laws, other states have approved such measures. Gaining much attention since the RTTT grant competition is the need to attach increased student achievement data and teachers' classroom performance to teacher evaluations. Simultaneously included within new teacher evaluation policies is whether a teacher is able to retain tenure or when a teacher will be eligible for tenure (Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010). In February 2012, Secretary Duncan unveiled the Recognizing Educational Success, Professional Excellence and Collaborative Teaching (R.E.S.P.E.C.T.) Project (Parker, 2012). The R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Project is a national discussion led by active teachers with the vision of reforming the teaching profession (Parker, 2012).

A key topic of the R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Project is looking at how to revise teacher tenure (Parker, 2012). In February 2012 Secretary of Education Duncan added: Instead of a lifetime guarantee, tenure needs to be a recognized honor that signifies professional accomplishment and success and we need a system of due process to fairly deal with those who are not up to the challenge. (as cited in Hechinger, 2012, p. 1) The main proposal is that the teacher tenure system in the United States needs to be restructured ("Earned, Not Given: Transforming Teacher Tenure," 2012).

A majority of states have amended their teacher tenure laws (McGuinn, 2010). The following are states that amended their tenure laws: Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Nevada, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Washington (“Earned, Not Given: Transforming Teacher Tenure,” 2012). Idaho and Florida no longer award tenure for new and probationary teachers (“Earned, Not Given: Transforming Teacher Tenure,” 2012). Since 1985, the state of Arkansas eliminated teacher tenure; however, the remaining states grant teacher tenure automatically (“Earned, No Given: Transforming Teacher Tenure,” 2012).

In May 2010, Colorado passed Senate Bill 191 to become one of the first states to connect teacher tenure with positive evaluations (McNeal, 2013). Under the new law, teacher evaluation ratings are based on at least 50% of academic growth of the teacher’s students within the year (McNeal, 2013). A teacher must obtain three consecutive teaching evaluations of improving student achievement to be rewarded with tenure (McNeal, 2013). If a tenured teacher earns two consecutive ratings of not improving student performance, the teacher loses tenure (McNeal, 2013).

Illinois passed legislation that made earning teacher tenure more painstaking (Chicago Teacher Union, 2012). Signed into law on May 13, 2011, Senate Bill 7 makes teacher performance a primary criterion for receiving tenure (Chicago Teacher Union, 2012). Under the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA), passed in 2010, the following four rating system was established: excellent, proficient, needs improvement, and unsatisfactory (Chicago Teacher Union, 2012). This rating system requires student performance be a significant factor in teacher evaluations (Chicago Teacher Union, 2012). A teacher who has two ratings of proficient or excellent during the last three of

the four probationary years earns teacher tenure (Chicago Teacher Union, 2012). If a teacher earns excellent on three consecutive evaluations, the public school teacher will earn teacher tenure (Chicago Teacher Union, 2012).

Indiana's Senate Bill 1 and Senate Bill 575 were implemented in 2011 (Dick, 2011). These bills state that teachers in Indiana must be evaluated one time per year by in-classroom evaluations and increased student achievement data (Dick, 2011). Indiana teachers are rated on an evaluation system of highly effective, effective, improvement necessary, or ineffective (Dick, 2011). If a teacher earns an ineffective or improvement necessary rating during a performance evaluation, the teacher will not receive a pay increase (Dick, 2011). Pay increases also are based on degrees held, years of experience, and leadership skills (Dick, 2011).

During the NCLB reauthorization in the United States Congress, New York mandated statewide minimum standards for teacher tenure (Tobias & Baffert, 2010). These new standards would not only have applied to new teachers, but all teachers, including tenured teachers (Tobias & Baffert, 2010). Furthermore, the New York state mandate would have used student test scores to determine teacher eligibility for tenure and termination of tenured teachers (Tobias & Baffert, 2010). In 2008, however, the New York Legislature changed the provisions and voted to ban the use of students' test scores in teacher tenure decisions (Tobias & Baffert, 2010).

Louisiana's House Bill 974 (HB 974) signed into law on April 18, 2012, restructured teacher tenure making it harder to obtain (Barrow, 2012). Teachers hired after July 1, 2012, need to earn highly effective ratings on performance evaluations for five out of six years in order to earn tenure (Barrow, 2012). Teachers who have tenure

will lose it upon receiving an ineffective rating (Barrow, 2012). An ineffective rating gives district superintendents the power to fire tenured teachers immediately and without just cause (Barrow, 2012). In this situation, a teacher's principal and students conduct the performance evaluations (Barrow, 2012). Louisiana requires in part 50% or more of the evaluation to be based on students' academic growth (Green, Baker, & Oluwole, 2012).

The state of Idaho's Students Come First teacher tenure bill will eliminate tenure (McNeal, 2013). Teachers will be offered "one- to two-year contracts" subsequent to a "three-year probationary period" (McNeal, 2013, p. 12). Under the Students Come First teacher tenure bill, parents will have an opportunity to provide input during the teacher evaluation process (McNeal, 2013). Another component of the Students Come First is student academic progress (McNeal, 2013). The new teacher evaluation program is designed by the stakeholders to augment involvement by the students' parents of Idaho (McNeal, 2013).

While teacher unions struggle to preserve good benefits and competitive salaries for public school teachers in the United States, policymakers covet additional teacher evaluations for the purpose of continuing to have a high-performing teacher pool ("K-12 Teacher Tenure: Understanding the Debate," 2014). School districts that have currently included students' test scores as part of the teacher's evaluation measurement have made obtaining tenure more difficult ("K-12 Teacher Tenure: Understanding the Debate," 2014). Some consider test scores as an indication of a teacher's performance while other asserted test scores "do not take into account such factors as poverty, class

size or feeling about having to teach to the test” (“K-12 Teacher Tenure: Understanding the Debate,” 2014, p. 1).

In other states, education reformers have begun demanding public school administrators collaborate with teachers and provide them with recommendations on how to improve their teaching routine (Goldstein, 2014). Such outcry has had the political result of legislation being implemented due to President Obama’s RTTT (Goldstein, 2014). Some of these laws have eschewed the New York approach of separating student and teacher performance (Goldstein, 2014).

The National Council on Teacher Quality (2012) published a report entitled, *State of the States 2012: Teacher Effectiveness Policies in 2012*. The National Council on Teacher Quality (2012) reported 32 states made changes to their teacher evaluation systems since 2009. These states created a teacher evaluation system that included both student performance and administrator classroom observations (Rolland, 2011). For example, in the state of Ohio, schools receiving RTTT grant money must rate teachers using the recently developed four-category evaluation system, which replaces the single salary schedule (Anderson, 2011). Within the four-category evaluation system, increased student achievement must account for 50% of the teacher’s evaluation (Anderson, 2011).

Thomas Kane, a Harvard professor and an advocate for teacher evaluation reform, defined such changes to the teacher tenure system as a necessary evolution to ensuring quality public education in the United States (as cited in Tobias & Baffert, 2010). Kane explained, “We’re not talking about doing away with tenure. What we’re

talking about is making tenure a serious hurdle” (as cited in Tobias & Baffert, 2010, p. 73).

While many teachers and teacher unions support changes to the evaluation process, there are still many who have concerns with regard to reform to the overall tenure system (Hightower et al., 2011). Such teachers’ concerns often go beyond simple job security, although this cannot be ignored (Hightower et al., 2011). Another dilemma involves the efforts to tie tenure with students’ performance, as the legislation in Ohio does (Anderson, 2011).

Teachers argue that by putting a focus on student achievement, the right to self-regulation is lost (Tobias & Baffert, 2010). This can explain why teachers and teacher unions are defensive, and they want the continuation of teacher tenure (Tobias & Baffert, 2010). This is not to indicate teachers want incompetent teachers in public schools since ineffective colleagues make teaching “harder for the good teachers while also diminishing the stature of the profession” (as cited in Tobias & Baffert, 2010, p. 73). Ultimately, many teachers disagree with the idea that tenure protects ineffective and incompetent teachers (Chait, 2010). Teachers agree that district school boards and administrators fail in their duties to properly observe, evaluate, and when appropriate, terminate ineffective teachers who under-perform (Chait, 2010).

Summary

The origins of tenure in the United States arguably stretch back to the guarantee of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” found in the United States’ Declaration of Independence (“Teachers' Rights: Tenure and Dismissal,” 2013, p. 1). This guarantee was expanded upon throughout American history with the 1883 passing of the Civil

Service Act and the 1964 passage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Such doctrines, while separate and distinct from tenure, focus on the ideas of fairness and equality in the workplace (J. Hernandez, personal communication, June 8, 2014). While they may seem antiquated in today's politically correct climate, their protections against unjust business practices cannot be discounted (J. Hernandez, personal communication, June 8, 2014). These protections arguably still serve a valuable purpose in their protection of the American worker, and in turn, the American economy and way of life (J. Hernandez, personal communication, June 8, 2014).

The concept of teacher tenure began to take root firmly in America shortly after the passing of the Civil Service Act in the 1880s and has since slowly expanded across the United States (Kersten, 2006). While some states were slower to adopt a system of tenure than others, it has nevertheless become a standard component of the teaching profession with regard to the public education system (Kersten, 2006). Furthermore, while tenure was undoubtedly necessary at the time of its creation, many argue that it has become an antiquated system that does more harm than good in the modern era, and it should ultimately be abolished ("Teachers' Rights: Tenure and Dismissal," 2013).

Proponents of the tenure system argue that instead of abolishing tenure, it can evolve so that the system works as it was originally intended, to achieve tenure's main goal of ensuring the teaching profession is staffed with qualified, experienced, and professional individuals (Greenwald, 2010). Recent programs and legislation such as former President George W. Bush's NCLB (2002) and President Barack Obama's RTTT grant program focus on positive reform to the public education system and, in

doing so, call for competent and qualified teachers (United States Department of Education, 2009).

Barack Obama's RTTT grant program seeks to create and identify ideal teachers through new evaluation systems that emphasize the relation between teacher and student performance (Viteritti, 2012). This relationship is at the center of many tenure debates across the country. Opponents of tenure argue many veteran, tenured teachers are no longer effective in reaching and educating students, yet such teachers still cannot be removed from their positions (Knowles, 2010). Supporters of a tenure system counter that even the first tenure laws had provisions to guard against such ineffective teachers and that current laws simply need to be evaluated and updated to take into account the unique problems facing teachers, students, and the public education system in the modern era (Greenwald, 2010).

The Missouri public school system, for example, provides for termination of under-performing and ineffective teachers ("Teacher Tenure: The Great Debate," 2014). While some argue the process is too tedious to be effective in removing incompetent teachers, it nevertheless exists as a method to ensure Missouri's schools are staffed with the best possible educators ("Teacher Tenure: The Great Debate," 2014). Furthermore, the process can always be revised through proposed legislation to make it more effective in achieving its ultimate goal of staffing Missouri's public education system with the best possible educators, thus ensuring the best possible education for the state's students ("Teacher Tenure: The Great Debate," 2014).

Chapter Two included review of literature related to teacher tenure. In Chapter Three, the methodology and design of the study are addressed. Analysis of the data is

presented in Chapter Four. A summary of the findings related to literature, conclusions, and recommendations for further research are discussed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The American public school system has been under constant disarray due to contentious debates and resulting discord (Childress, 2014). Within public education, many problems have been identified that need improvement. The classroom teacher has been seen as needing the most attention and bearing the burden for improving the United States school system (Holmes & Chilcott, 2010). The success or failure of the public educational system is based on public school teachers (Gordon, et al., 2006; Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Stronge, 2007; Winter, 2012).

Of the increased demands from all levels of government and school districts for improving the quality of teachers in public schools, teacher tenure received most of the interest (Spring, 2013). In spite of the purpose of teacher tenure to provide due process from unjust dismissal, tenure continues to be blamed for students receiving a below average education (Spring, 2013). Furthermore, at the center of controversy over improving public education in the state of Missouri is the overhaul of teacher tenure laws (Birch, 2012).

The main focus of this quantitative research study was to gauge Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure. Quantitative data were gathered and analyzed from an 18-question online survey generated through SurveyMonkey. Survey questions were designed based on the literature review in Chapter Two. Also within Chapter Three is a description of the problem and purpose of the research study, an overview of the study, the research question and four sub-questions, the research design, participants, instrument, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

Problem and Purpose Overview

Business leaders, politicians, and many people in the general population believe public schools have been failing America's students (Bushaw & Lopez, 2012). Much of this dissatisfaction with United States' public schools has been placed on classroom teachers (Bushaw & Lopez, 2012). Receiving the most attention is teacher tenure (McNeal, 2013). The purpose of this research was to study Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure.

The United States' public school teachers have been granted the protections of tenure and fair dismissal, both of which are greatly misunderstood and criticized (Goldstein, 2014). Goldstein (2014) acknowledged critics against teacher tenure. These critics assume tenure provides teachers with a lifetime of employment (Goldstein, 2014). Specifically, these critics accept as true that once a teacher earns tenure, that teacher cannot be terminated (Goldstein, 2014).

The primary purpose of this quantitative research study was to determine Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure. This research study contributes to the limited amount of research available in the evaluation of public school teacher tenure from the viewpoint of public school tenured and non-tenured teachers in the state of Missouri. While there are research studies (Kersten, 2006; Shuls & Barnes, 2013, Webb, 2013) about teacher tenure from the perspectives of school principals, district superintendents, and school board presidents, there is little information available about how public school teachers perceive tenure. Finally, educational leaders and public policy makers are provided with a comprehensive look at public school teachers'

perception of tenure for use in amending or eliminating teacher tenure laws in the state of Missouri.

Research questions.

The researcher shaped the following question to guide this study: What is the perception of Missouri public school teachers on the issue of teacher tenure?

Sub-questions for the purpose of the research study were adapted from Kersten (2006):

1. When teachers achieve tenure, are they more effective and highly qualified?
2. If teacher tenure was eliminated, would student achievement increase?
3. Does the teacher tenure law in Missouri protect good teachers from arbitrary dismissal?
4. Do teachers have knowledge of the proposed revised tenure law in Missouri?

Research Design

Throughout the investigation phase of this study, common characteristics of teacher tenure were examined. The research design was quantitative in the collection and analysis of specific data gathered from an online survey. Quantitative research is defined as “the collection and analysis of numerical data to describe, explain, predict, or control phenomena of interest,” reported Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2011, p. 7). Gay et al. (2011) also reported, “Survey research involves collecting data . . . to answer questions about people’s opinions on some topic or issue” (p. 175). Creswell (2013) explained quantitative research involves collecting quantifiable data and analyzing the results using statistical measures. The research study was appropriate due to recent

educational reform initiatives and concerns over the quality of the United States' public educational system and the quality of public school teachers.

Population and Sample

Research participants were selected from Missouri public schools districts. The population for this research study included all tenured and non-tenured public school teachers in the state of Missouri. According to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE) (2014), there are approximately 64,000 public school teachers in the state. The population of the research study was intended to be all PreK-12 Missouri tenured and non-tenured public school teachers; however, the researcher's expectation was a sample of approximately 200-500 of all teachers contacted via electronic mail would actually participate. The researcher used simple random sampling which is, "one in which each and every member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected" (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyuu, 2012, p. 126). Quantitative data, from an online survey, were collected from 497 Missouri public school teachers.

The MODESE (2013) provided the names and electronic mail addresses of Missouri public school superintendents. Using the list provided, 550 Missouri public school superintendents were contacted via electronic mail to be granted permission to conduct the research study in their respective school districts. Superintendents were to send an online survey to their tenured and non-tenured school teachers through district electronic mail.

Instrumentation

Because the population of the study had a potential of 64,000 teachers, it was most reasonable to conduct a survey to collect the desired data. As such, the researcher selected a survey tool as the main instrument for gathering data. Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012) stated, “In educational research, the most common descriptive methodology is the survey, as when researchers summarize the characteristics, abilities, preferences, behaviors, and so on of individuals” (p. 14). This style of self-administered, online survey was chosen for its ease of administration and as an effective way in eliciting the necessary data of teachers’ perception of teacher tenure. Additionally, the researcher utilized online resources to make the survey easily accessible, cost-effective, efficient, and convenient.

The researcher was solely responsible for the creation of the survey. The survey questions needed to be clear and objective (Driscoll & Brizee, 2010). The survey design used a descriptive Likert rating scale of *strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree* to collect quantitative data from Missouri public school tenured and non-tenured teachers. The Likert rating scale “is an attitude scale named after the man who designed it” (Fraenkel et al., 2012, p. 127).

An online survey was developed from the Likert rating scale design and subsequently field-tested. The field test was conducted in early March 2014, to ensure the online survey was valid, to determine readability, and to test that the questions measured public school teachers’ perception of teacher tenure. The online survey questions were piloted through distribution to a sample of teachers. The research survey

was field-tested by 11 teachers from a southwest Missouri school district. Survey questions were revised based on statements and comments made by the 11 teachers.

Survey questions were designed based on a literature review of teacher tenure. An 18-question, self-administered online survey (see Appendix A) was developed and electronically sent via SurveyMonkey by the researcher for the sole purpose of collecting data related to the research question and sub-questions that were embedded in this research study. The online survey was comprised of two parts. The first section of five questions pertained to demographic information (e.g., gender, education level, years in current position, description of grade levels in school building, and the school district's region). The second section of 13 questions addressed teachers' perception of teacher tenure. The survey instrument was submitted to the Institutional Review Board at Lindenwood University, and it was approved on April 22, 2014 (see Appendix G). This research study was limited by the reliability and validity of the survey instrument.

Data Collection

Once permission to conduct the research project was obtained from Lindenwood University in April 2014, the survey information was distributed electronically to 550 Missouri public school superintendents. Missouri public school superintendents were contacted via electronic mail to grant permission for the researcher to conduct the research study in their respective school districts. Approval from superintendents was required in order to gather information from teachers in their districts.

An assortment of attachments was sent electronically to the superintendent of each public school district in Missouri for participation. The collection of attachments included a letter explaining the purpose of the research study with a hyperlink to the

online survey (see Appendix B), the recruitment letter (see Appendix C) to principals, a teacher consent letter (see Appendix D), and an informed consent form (see Appendix E). The researcher provided an electronic mail address and cell phone number if additional information was needed from any of Missouri's superintendents or survey participants.

Following superintendents' approval, principals were forwarded via electronic mail a recruitment letter, a teacher consent letter, and an informed consent with the hyperlink to the survey with instructions to forward to teachers in their individual buildings. Once the principal agreed to have building teachers participate in the study, teachers were provided the purpose of the research as well as information concerning confidentiality and anonymity. Directions were given to complete the online survey. Principals were asked to encourage teacher participation in the research study.

Precautions were taken to ensure teacher anonymity when completing the online survey. Teachers were not asked to identify their districts or school locations, nor were teachers asked to identify themselves other than through demographic questions of gender, years of experience, level of education, description of grade levels in school building, and the character of school district's region. The survey instrument was posted on SurveyMonkey, an online resource. The online survey was made available anytime during the survey window so as not to intrude on instructional time. There were no consequences to the teachers who chose not to participate in this research study. The completed surveys were sent electronically to the researcher via SurveyMonkey.

The research study was conducted during two separate two-week windows. The research study began in late April 2014 when an electronic communication clarifying

the study was sent to superintendents across the state. After two weeks, the return rate was 30% (150/500). Since the targeted return of 500 surveys was not met, superintendents were sent an email again requesting permission to conduct the research study in their respective school districts to ensure optimal results (see Appendix F). This second request to participate in the research study was completed in an attempt to achieve a higher percentage of returns, thus making the results more indicative and valid of Missouri public school teachers.

After the survey closed, a total of 497 surveys were anonymously completed online and submitted. Although the researcher's desire was to gather input from every Missouri public teacher (approximately 64,000), the actual number of participants was 497, with a response rate of an average of 97% for each question asked. The researcher had no relationship with the survey participants, and all data collected were secured in the researcher's locked cabinet.

Data Analysis

The researcher was the only individual responsible for collecting and analyzing the data. In addition, the researcher was the only individual who prepared all results related to this research study. A Likert rating scale of *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *neither agree nor disagree*, *agree*, and *strongly agree* was used to determine the extent of Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure. Responses from the Likert rating scale were placed on a numerical scale for analysis: *strongly disagree (1)*; *disagree (2)*; *neither agree nor disagree (3)*; *agree (4)*; and *strongly agree (5)*. After collecting the numerical data, the researcher used descriptive statistics to present the results.

All quantitative survey data was entered into spreadsheet software for analysis. Percentages and frequencies were used to organize and present the online survey responses. Spreadsheet software was used to create charts and tables to depict the data through descriptive statistics. Fraenkel et al. (2012) stated, “The major advantage of descriptive statistics is that they permit researchers to describe the information contained in many, many scores with just a few indices” (p. 187). The data were clarified visually and written. Through data reduction and creation, specific trends and conclusions were identified on the subject of Missouri public school teachers’ perception of teacher tenure.

Ethical Considerations

In order to adhere to all guidelines and ethical considerations for conducting this research, an application seeking approval to proceed with this research study was completed. Additionally, with the application and all necessary documents with reference to the purpose of the research study, was submitted to the Institutional Review Board at Lindenwood University. The research project was approved on April 22, 2014 (see Appendix G).

Summary

The focus of this quantitative research study was to determine Missouri public school teachers’ perception of teacher tenure. Within Chapter Three were the methodology and design. Also presented in Chapter Three were the research problem and purpose, the research questions, and instrumentation used. The population and sample were discussed. Finally, the data collection procedures were included.

A quantitative research design was used in this study. All data for this research study were collected from an 18-question online survey generated through SurveyMonkey. Descriptive frequencies and percentages were selected to present visually the data of Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure.

In Chapter Four the process of analyzing the data is presented. Additionally, the online survey responses are described. Summaries of the findings of the research study, an analysis of the resulting data, and recommendations for future research and educational implications are included in Chapter Five.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

The primary purpose of this quantitative research study was to determine Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure. All data were collected from Missouri public school teachers. In Chapter Four a critical analysis of the criteria, standards, and procedures is offered. Gender, years in current position, education level (Bachelors, Masters, Specialist, or Doctorate), description of grade levels in school building, region (rural, suburban, or urban), and perception of teacher tenure of the survey participants are analyzed. In this chapter, the researcher presents the results of the research, beginning with an overview of the survey results followed by an analysis of the data that relate to each research question.

Presented within Chapter Four is a summary of collected data regarding Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure. Quantitative data, in the form of an online survey, were collected from 497 Missouri public school teachers. There were 18 questions on the survey. This chapter begins with five survey questions that clarify the demographic characteristics of those teachers who participated in the survey. A descriptive analysis of the data related to teachers' perception of teacher tenure follows. The framing of Chapter Four in this manner allows the readers to understand fully how the data collected were used to analyze and address the research questions.

Demographic Findings

The first five questions of the electronic survey were designed to collect demographic information from each of the participating Missouri public school teachers. The teachers were prompted to identify their gender, years in current position,

education level (Bachelors, Masters, Specialist, or Doctorate), description of grade levels in school building, and school district's region (rural, suburban, or urban).

Survey question 1: Identify gender. The participants in the research study were from Missouri public schools of all sizes and in all regions of the state. Of the 497 surveys completed, 133 ($n = 133$, 27%) were male teachers and 364 ($n = 364$, 73%) were female teachers (see Figure 2).

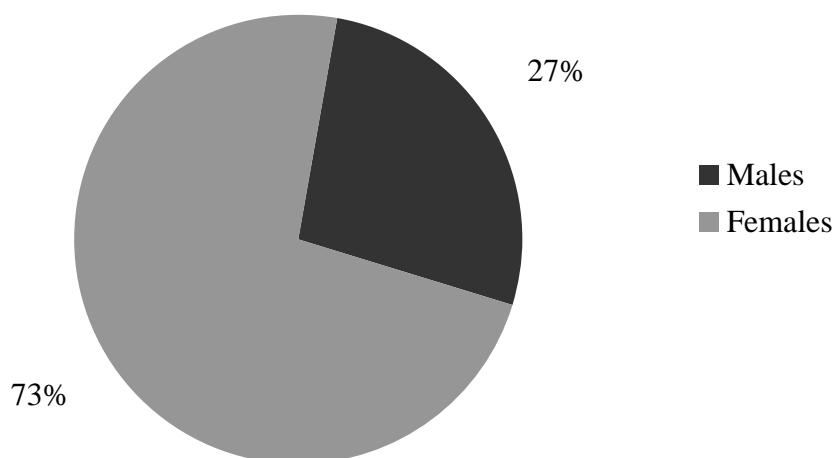


Figure 2. Gender.

Survey question 2: How many years of experience do you have in your current position? The majority of the participating public school teachers ($n = 174$, 35%) had 11 years or more experience. The smallest group ($n = 35$, 7%) represented in the survey were teachers who had less than one year of experience (see Table 1).

Table 1

Years of Experience

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentages
Less than one year	35	7
1-3 years	108	22
4-6 years	99	20
7-10 years	81	16
11 years or more	174	35
Total	497	

Survey question 3: Level of education. Missouri public schools teachers who earned a Master's degree comprised the largest group ($n = 309$) participating in the research study. Sixty-two percent held a Master's degree, while the smallest percentage had a Doctorate degree. The Doctorate level consisted of 1% (see Table 2).

Table 2

Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentages
Bachelors	150	30
Masters	309	62
Specialist	35	7
Doctorate	3	1
Total	497	

Survey question 4: Describe the students in your building. Survey participants identified the grade levels of students in their school buildings. The categories consisted of 69 early elementary schools (PreK-2), 100 intermediate schools (grades 3-5), 160 middle schools (grades 6-8), 165 secondary schools (grades 9-12), and three survey participants made a choice of *other* with no further information about the building (see Figure 3).

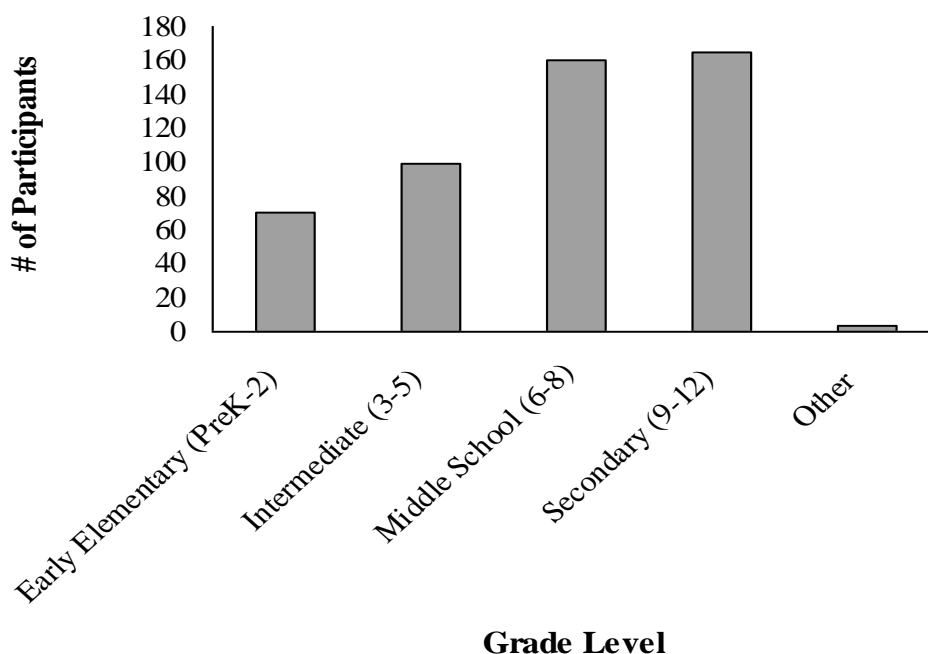


Figure 3. Grade level.

Survey question 5: How would you characterize your school district's region? The survey participants were prompted to characterize their school districts' regions. Three choices were available for selection on the survey: rural, suburban, or urban. The majority of the 494 participants ($n = 371$) were located in a rural area. The rural area represented 75% of the participants. Those teaching in a suburban area included 102 teachers ($n = 102$ or 21%). The remaining 21 participants, or 4% of district locations, were in an urban area. Three survey participants chose not to answer question 5 (see Table 3).

Table 3

School District's Region

School District's Region	Frequency	Percentage
Rural	371	75
Suburban	102	21
Urban	21	4
Total	494	

Perception of Teacher Tenure Findings

Survey question 6: Are you tenured? A vast majority of the respondents were Missouri public school teachers who have earned tenure, as shown in Figure 4. Sixty-two percent ($n = 326$) were tenured, while 38% ($n = 171$) of teachers were probationary or non-tenured.

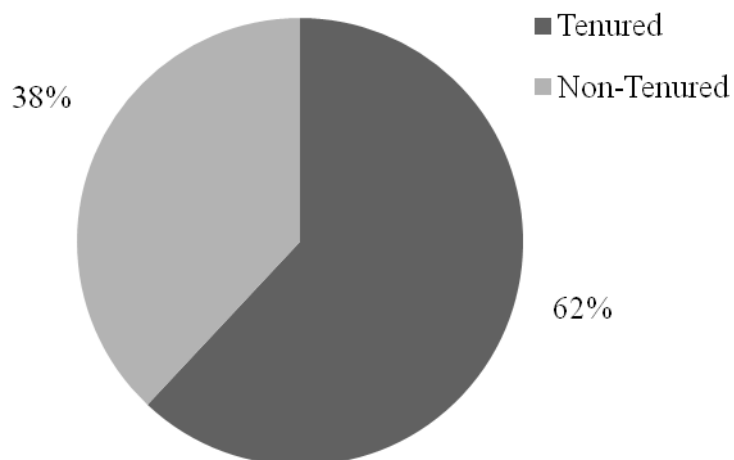


Figure 4. Are you tenured?

Survey question 7: If so, at what year of employment did you receive tenure? Surveys were completed by 497 individuals, and of those, seven participants skipped this survey question. Ninety-eight percent of participants who provided information of what year of employment they received tenure were somewhat equal between 4-5 years and 6-7 years. No survey participant indicated 0-1 year or 2-3 years. Under Missouri law, a teacher becomes tenured once employed as a teacher in the same school district for five successive years and who thereafter remains employed in the same district (Buschmann, 2012; “Teacher Tenure Act Questions,” 2013). Therefore, a teacher obtains tenure status on the first day of employment of his or her sixth consecutive year in the same district (Buschmann, 2012) (see Table 4).

Table 4

What Year of Employment Did You Receive Tenure?

What year of employment did you receive tenure?	Frequency	Percentages
0-1 year	0	0
2-3 years	0	0
4-5 years	163	51
6-7 years	150	47
8+ years	6	2
Total	319	

Survey question 8: Teachers who have achieved tenure are more effective and are considered highly qualified. Survey question 8 shed some light on whether or not teachers perceived tenured teachers to be more effective and considered highly qualified. It was interesting to note that of Missouri public school teachers surveyed, 225 *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* ($n = 225$), 118 participants had *neither agreed nor disagreed* ($n = 118$), and 154 *agreed* or *strongly agreed* ($n = 154$) (see Figure 5). Overall, teachers did not believe that having tenure makes teachers more effective and highly qualified.

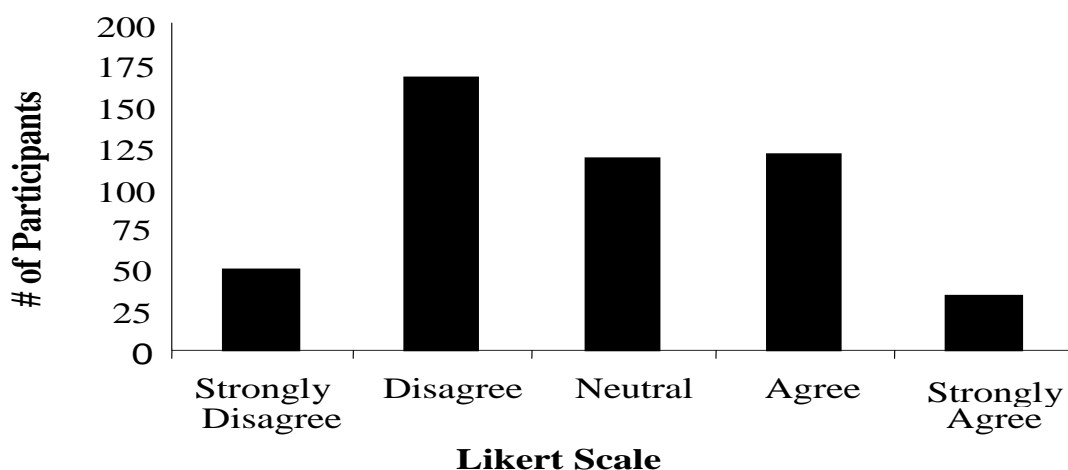


Figure 5. Teachers who have achieved tenure are more effective and highly qualified.

Survey question 9: The teacher tenure law protects good teachers from arbitrary dismissals. As shown in Figure 6, the majority of survey participants were confident the teacher tenure laws protect teachers from arbitrary dismissals. Of those surveyed, 374 ($n = 374$, 77%), *agreed or strongly agreed* that teacher tenure protects good teachers from arbitrary dismissals. Only 57 participants ($n = 57$, 12%) *disagreed or strongly disagreed* that teacher tenure laws protect good teachers from arbitrary dismissals.

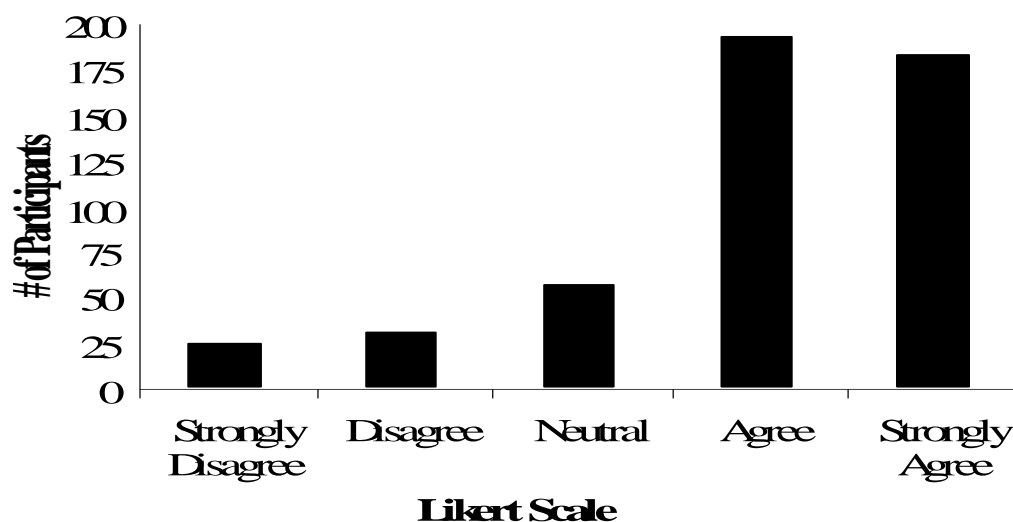


Figure 6. Teacher tenure law protects good teachers from arbitrary dismissals.

Survey question 10: Tenure is a barrier to terminating ineffective teachers.

Most teachers (60%) perceived teacher tenure does not prevent terminating ineffective teachers (see Figure 7). Opponents of teacher tenure believe dismissing a tenured teacher who performs below average is difficult, time-consuming, and expensive (Shuls & Barnes, 2013). If a school district wants to terminate a tenured teacher, a number of procedural steps (due process) must be taken by the district's administration (Shuls & Barnes, 2013).

First, the tenured teacher may not be terminated until the teacher is provided with written charges specifying the alleged grounds to termination (Shuls & Barnes, 2013). Tenured teachers are entitled to a school board hearing before they can be terminated (Shuls & Barnes, 2013). If the board of education's decision to terminate a tenured teacher's employment is appealed and the decision is reversed, the teacher must

be paid his/her full salary that was lost during the period pending the appeal (Shuls & Barnes, 2013; “Teacher Tenure Act Questions,” 2013).

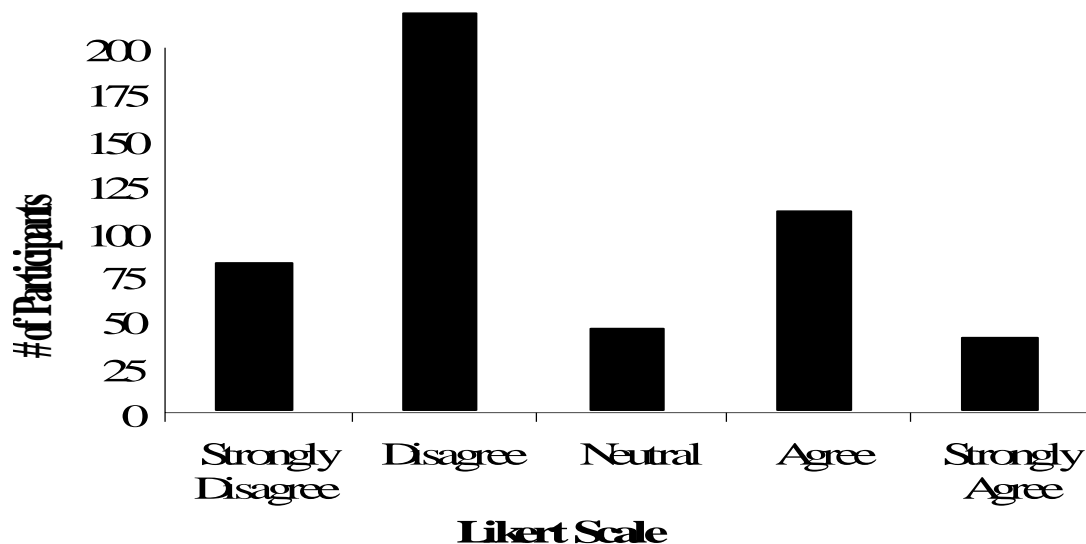


Figure 7. Tenure is a barrier to terminating ineffective teachers.

Survey question 11: The teacher tenure law is a roadblock to educational reform. When survey participants were asked if tenure is a roadblock to educational reform, a majority of participants ($n = 349$) *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* suggesting tenure does not prevent educational reform (see Figure 8). Opponents of teacher tenure maintain it is a roadblock to educational reform (Kersten, 2006). In a survey completed in 2006 by Illinois school board presidents, 66% agreed teacher tenure was an obstacle to educational reform because teachers who obtain tenure resist change (Kersten, 2006).

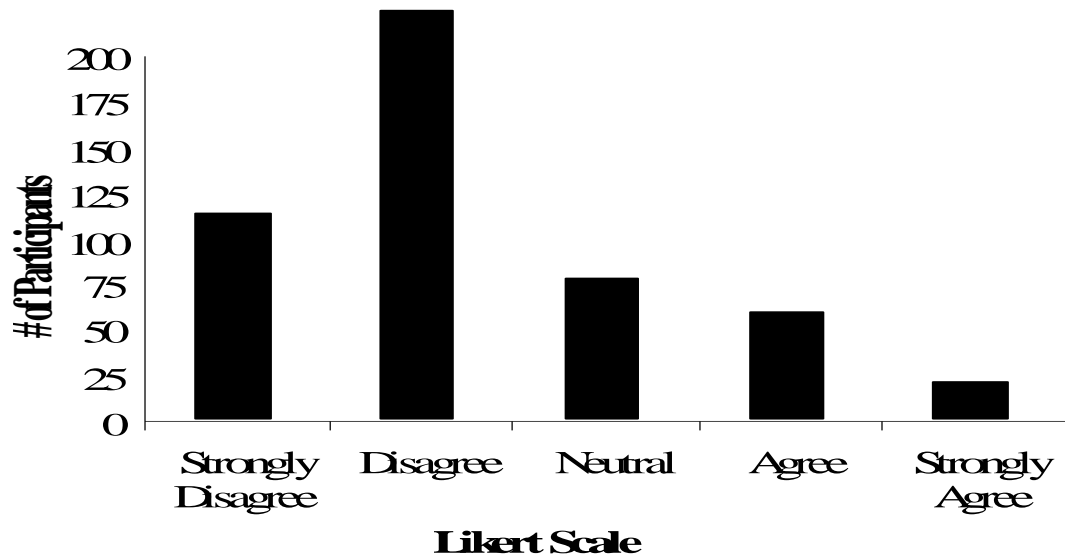


Figure 8. Teacher tenure law is a roadblock to educational reform.

Survey question 12: The teacher tenure law promotes teacher responsiveness to stakeholders. A substantial number of participants ($n = 189$) had no basis for judgment, while another 188 participants reported tenure does not promote responsiveness to stakeholders (see Figure 9).

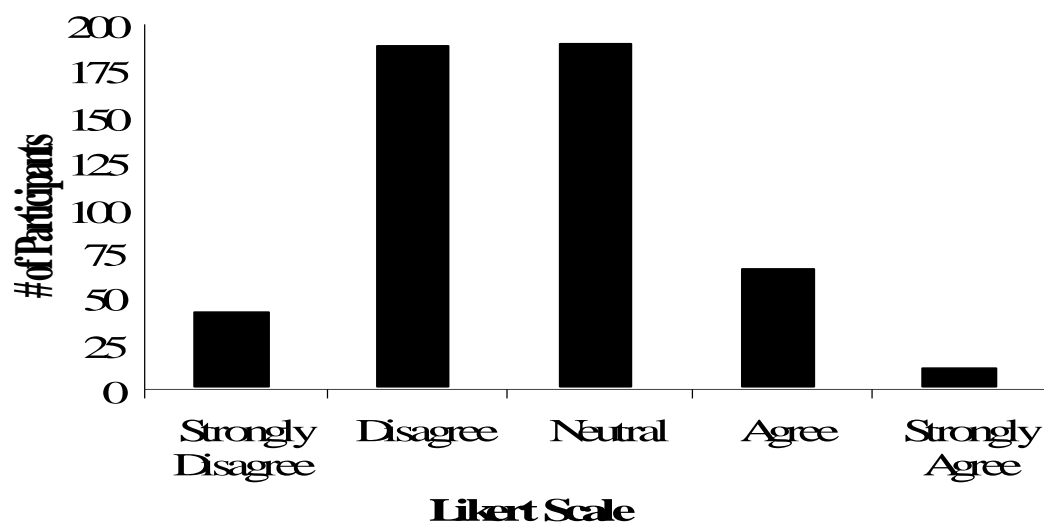


Figure 9. Teacher tenure law promotes teacher responsiveness to stakeholders.

Survey question 13: The elimination of the teacher tenure law would lead to increased student achievement. Nearly three out of four respondents (74%) reported the elimination of teacher tenure would not lead to increased student achievement. Approximately 15% of participants selected *neutral* (see Figure 10). Proponents of tenure attributed other factors for low student achievement including lack of parental involvement, student motivation, and poverty (Kersten, 2006).

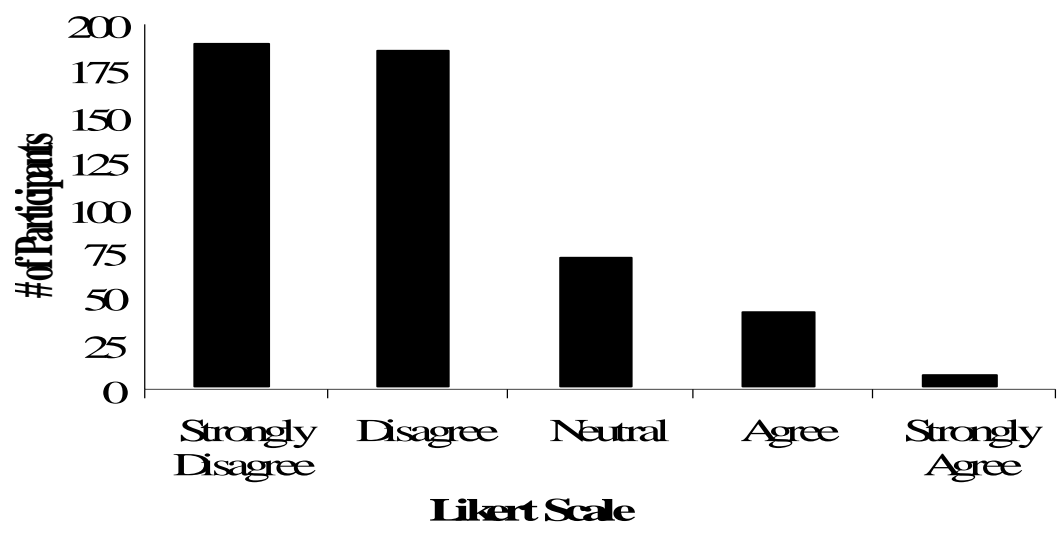


Figure 10. Elimination of teacher tenure law would lead to increased student achievement.

Survey question 14: If teacher evaluation processes were more effective, the teacher tenure law would have little effect on the dismissal of ineffective teachers.

If teacher evaluation processes were more effective, the teacher tenure law would have little effect on the dismissal of ineffective teachers was evident in the survey results. The quantitative data indicated 70% of teachers ($n = 349$) *agreed* that if the procedures for evaluating teachers were more adequate, tenure would not have any ramification on terminating incompetent teachers (see Figure 11).

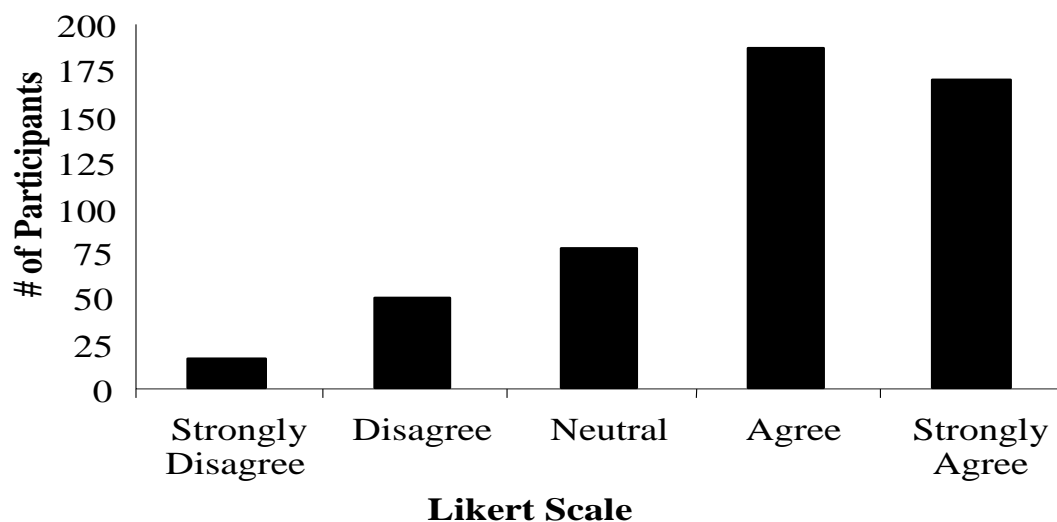


Figure 11. If teacher evaluation processes were more effective, the teacher tenure law would have little effect on the dismissal of ineffective teachers.

Survey question 15: Poor administrator evaluation of teachers, rather than the teacher tenure law, is responsible for the retention of below average tenured teachers. Survey question 15 responses mirrored the responses for survey question 14. If the procedures for evaluating teachers were more adequate, tenure would not have any ramification on terminating incompetent teachers. Based on the overwhelming responses among Missouri public school teachers shown in Figure 12, it appears the ability of the administrators performing teachers' evaluations is the reason for continued employment of ineffective tenured teachers. Of those surveyed, 374 ($n = 374$, 75%) *agreed* or *strongly agreed* the ability of administrators performing teachers' evaluations is the reason for continued employment of ineffective tenured teachers. Only 63 participants ($n = 63$, 13%) *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*.

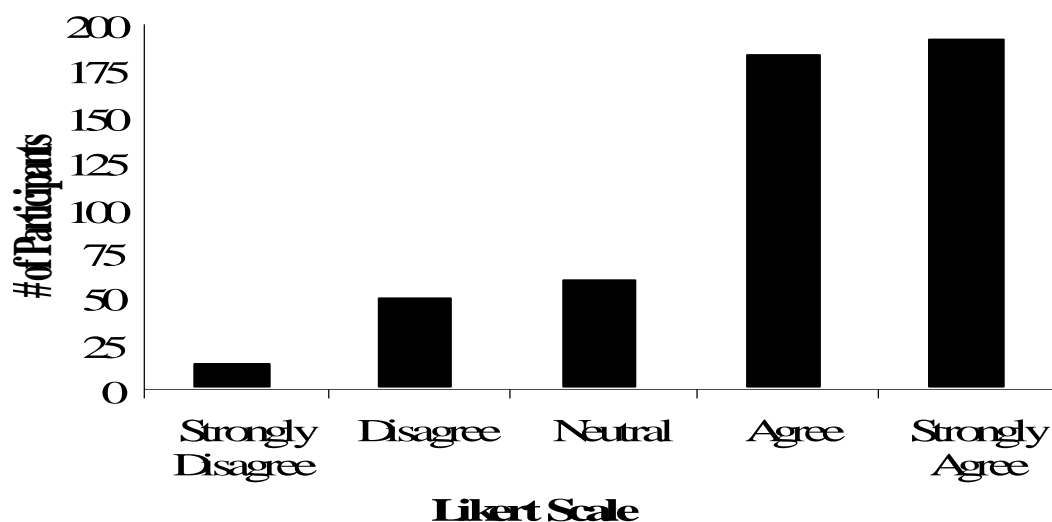


Figure 12. Poor administrator evaluation of teachers, rather than the teacher tenure law, is responsible for the retention of below average tenured teachers.

Survey question 16: Does teacher tenure hurt the professional image of teachers? On the survey instrument, teachers were specifically asked whether teacher tenure hurt the professional image of teachers. Of the 497 research study survey participants, 297 teachers ($n = 297$) reported the image of teachers is not effective by teacher tenure. Furthermore, 89 of those surveyed ($n = 89$) were *neutral* on the issue (see Figure 13). Overall, Missouri teachers do not believe teacher tenure gives their profession a bad name.

Shuls and Barnes (2013) argued tenure does not promote professionalism. The public views tenured teachers as incompetent teachers in the schools (Hassel et al., 2011). This opinion decreases respect for the teaching profession. Marzano and Toth's (2013) research provided evidence that ineffective teachers are in most schools throughout the United States. An ineffective teacher makes teaching "harder for the

good teachers while also diminishing the stature of the profession” (as cited in Tobias & Baffert, 2010, p. 73).

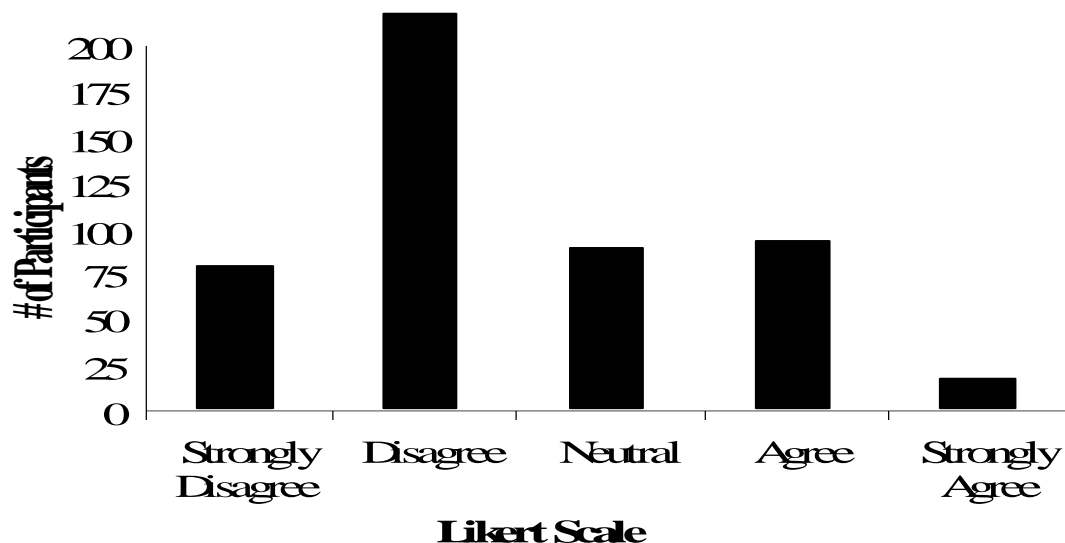


Figure 13. Does teacher tenure hurt the professional image of teachers?

Survey question 17: Do you have knowledge of the potential revised tenure law in Missouri? Missouri public school teachers were asked if they knew of the potential revised tenure law in Missouri. Variation was slight with 269 responding *yes* ($n = 269, 57\%$) and 228 responding *no* ($n = 228, 43\%$) (see Figure 14). Various bills have been introduced in the Missouri legislature proposing to overhaul some or all of the teacher tenure system and to modify the teacher evaluation structure in Missouri (Young, 2014).

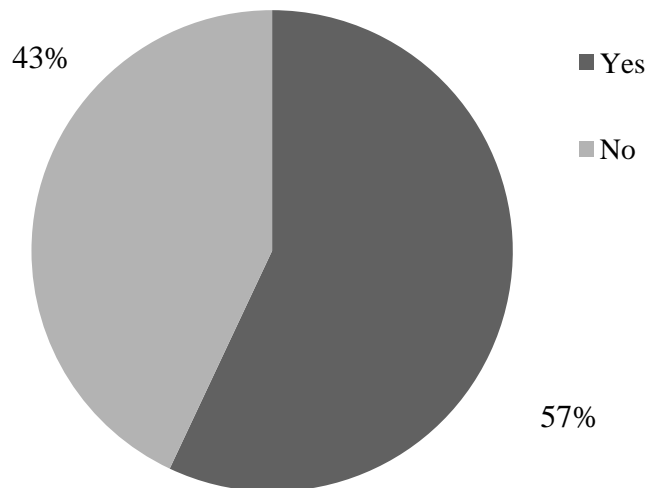


Figure 14. Do you have knowledge of the potential revised tenure law in Missouri?

Survey question 18: If yes, how were you informed? An overwhelming number of respondents learned of upcoming Missouri legislation regarding teacher tenure laws from professional teaching organizations. Seventy-six participants responded that the best source of information was the newspaper/Internet when it came to upcoming teacher tenure legislation (see Table 5).

Table 5

How Are Teachers Informed about Upcoming Tenure Laws?

Source	Survey Results	Percentages
The school I am employed at	21	8
Information from the school board	2	1
Superintendent	28	10
Newspaper/Internet	76	28
Professional Teaching Organization	142	53
Total	269	

Summary

The primary purpose of this quantitative research study was to determine Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure. Presented in Chapter Four was the analysis of data that provided the results for addressing the research question and sub-questions. The information provided analytical insights and defensible conclusions with the aim of expanding the knowledge and understanding of Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure. The sample consisted of 497 Missouri public school teachers. Descriptive statistics were selected to analyze the data produced from the online survey. Percentages and frequencies were used to generate a summary of the online survey contributor. Bar graphs, pie charts, and charts representing the survey data on behalf of each of the research questions were presented.

In Chapter Five, a summary and discussion of the research study's findings, educational implications, and recommendations for future research are presented.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

The presentation and analysis of data were reported in Chapter Four. In Chapter Five, a summary and discussion of the research study's findings, educational implications, and recommendations for future research are presented. Information provided in this chapter offers a further understanding of Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure.

The purpose of this research study was to examine Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure. One research question was established as the basis for this research study: What is the perception of Missouri public school teachers on the issue of teacher tenure? There were four sub-questions adapted from Kersten (2006) for the purpose of the research study:

1. When teachers achieve tenure, are they more effective and highly qualified?
2. If teacher tenure was eliminated, would student achievement increase?
3. Does the teacher tenure law in Missouri protect good teachers from arbitrary dismissal?
4. Do teachers have knowledge of the proposed revised tenure law in Missouri?

The researcher examined and explored Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure. While there are research studies (Kersten, 2006; Shuls & Barnes, 2013; Webb, 2013) about teacher tenure from the perspectives of principals, superintendents, and school board presidents, there are no data available that provides information about how Missouri teachers feel about tenure.

The researcher designed a survey and sent each of the 550 Missouri public schools' superintendents the survey and permission for his or her district teachers to

participate in the research study. A sample of 497 public school teachers completed surveys across the state of Missouri.

In the United States many educational initiatives included the need for highly qualified teachers in every classroom, which determined the purpose of the study. As President Barack Obama has emphasized, the single most important factor to determine whether students succeed in school is the quality of their teachers (Vallas et al., 2010). Moreover, President Obama's educational reform initiative Race to the Top (RTTT) challenged states to compete for grants to support reform and innovation in schools (Hightower et al., 2011). The RTTT called for the winning states to implement procedures when considering teachers as candidates for tenure that take overall student achievement into account (Hightower et al., 2011). For RTTT grant money, states must re-evaluate school districts' teacher tenure policies (Posey, 2012).

Tenure's origins in the United States arguably stretch back to the guarantee of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" found in the United States' Declaration of Independence ("Teachers' Rights: Tenure and Dismissal," 2013, p. 1). The guarantee of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" was expanded upon throughout American history with Congress's 1883 passing of the Civil Service Act and the 1964 passage of the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Such sets of guidelines, while separate and distinct from tenure, focus on the ideas of fairness and equality in the place of work (J. Hernandez, personal communication, June 8, 2014). While they may seem antiquated in today's politically correct climate, their protections against unjust business practices cannot be discounted and they arguably still serve a valuable purpose in their protection

of the American worker and, in turn, the American economy and way of life (J. Hernandez, personal communication, June 8, 2014).

The concept of teacher tenure began to take hold in America shortly after the passing of the Civil Service Act in the 1880s, and it has since slowly expanded across the United States (Kersten, 2006). While some states were slower to adopt a system of tenure than others, it has nevertheless become a standard component of the teaching profession with regard to the public education system (Kersten, 2006). Furthermore, while tenure was undoubtedly necessary at the time of its creation, many argue that it has become an antiquated system that does more harm than good in the modern era and should be abolished (Kersten, 2006).

Proponents of the tenure system argue that instead of abolition, tenure simply needs more evolution and oversight to ensure the system works as it was originally intended: to ensure the teaching profession is staffed with qualified, experienced, and professional individuals (Hassel et al., 2011; Tobias & Baffert, 2010; Zinth, 2011). Recent programs and legislation, such as former President George W. Bush's NCLB (2002) and President Barack Obama's RTTT grant program (United States Department of Education, 2009), were created to focus on positive reform within the public education system, and in doing so, call for competent and qualified teachers.

These programs were framed to create and identify ideal teachers through new evaluation systems that emphasize the relation between teacher and student performance (Garrett, 2013). This relationship is at the center of many tenure debates across the country as opponents of tenure argue many tenured teachers are no longer effective in reaching and educating students, yet such teachers still cannot be removed

from their positions (Garrett, 2013). Supporters of a tenure system counter even the first tenure laws had provisions to guard against such ineffective teachers and those current laws simply needed to be evaluated and updated to take into account the unique problems facing teachers, students, and the public education system in the modern era (Goldstein, 2014).

The Missouri public school system, for example, provides for termination of under-performing and ineffective teachers (“Teacher Tenure: The Great Debate,” 2014). While some argue the process is too tedious to be effective in removing incompetent teachers, it nevertheless exists as a method to ensure Missouri’s schools are staffed with the best possible educators (“Teacher Tenure: The Great Debate,” 2014). Furthermore, the process can always be revised through proposed legislation to make it more effective in achieving its ultimate goal of staffing Missouri’s public education system with the best possible educators, resulting in the best possible education for the state’s students (“Teacher Tenure: The Great Debate,” 2014).

Findings

In this section, the research question and sub-research questions are addressed. Additionally, conclusions are reached based on the research results. The research questions allowed the researcher to conduct a thorough analysis of Missouri public school teachers’ perception of teacher tenure.

Research question 1. What is the perception of Missouri public school teachers on the issue of teacher tenure? The purpose of this research study was to determine the perception of Missouri public school teachers on the issue of teacher tenure. The data showed that Missouri public school teachers have knowledge of

teacher tenure. It is important to point out that 62% of the participants in the research study were tenured teachers and 35% have been employed at least 11 or more years.

It is not the perception of most participants that the effectiveness of teachers improved because of teacher tenure. Of those who were surveyed, 225 *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* ($n = 225$), 118 participants *neither agreed nor disagreed* ($n = 118$), and 154 *agreed* or *strongly agreed* ($n = 154$). Overall, teachers in the state of Missouri do not believe that having tenure makes teachers more effective and highly qualified.

Ineffective teachers reflect poorly on the teaching profession. Participants agreed teacher tenure law shields competent public school teachers from capricious termination. It is difficult, time-consuming, and expensive to dismiss an incompetent teacher, but it can be done. Public school teachers in Missouri want the protection of tenure, but do not want tenure to be a barrier to removing ineffective teachers.

Results also suggested that while some teachers want a remedy for low student achievement, they do not perceive eliminating tenure would help. Proponents of teacher tenure attributed other factors for low student achievement, including lack of parental involvement, student motivation, and poverty (Kersten, 2006). Teachers argue that by putting a focus on student achievement, the right to self-regulation is lost (Tobias & Baffert, 2010). This can explain why teachers and teacher unions are defensive and want the continuation of teacher tenure (Tobias & Baffert, 2010).

If the procedures for evaluating teachers were more adequate, tenure would not have any ramification on terminating incompetent teachers. Based on 75% of participants, it appears the abilities of the administrators performing teacher evaluations

are the reason for the retention of below average tenured teachers. This suggests Missouri public school teachers do not have a favorable opinion of abilities of administrators when completing teacher evaluations.

Sub-research question 1. When teachers achieve tenure are they more effective and highly qualified? Of the Missouri public school teachers surveyed, 225 *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* that when a teacher achieves tenure they are more effective and highly qualified. One hundred eighteen participants answered *neither agreed nor disagreed*, and 154 *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that when a teacher achieves tenure, they are more effective and are highly qualified (see Figure 3). Overall, teachers do not believe having tenure makes teachers more effective and highly qualified.

The NCLB (2002) initiative had the objective of having a “highly qualified teacher” in every classroom (p. 12). In President Clinton’s *Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century* (1997) State of the Union Address five years earlier also had the goal of having “talented and dedicated teachers” in public schools (p. 1). It was made clear throughout *Improving Teacher Quality State Grants, ESEA Title II, Part A*, overhauling teacher tenure was the solution to the problem of improving teacher quality in the classroom (“Improving Teacher Quality,” 2006).

President Obama’s RTTT educational reform initiative called for states to adopt procedures that take overall student achievement into account when considering teachers as candidates for tenure (Hightower et al., 2011). During a town meeting in Arnold, Missouri, President Barack Obama (2009b) continued addressing the need for highly qualified teachers. President Obama (2009b) once again emphasized the “single

most important fact in the classroom is the quality of the person standing at the front of the classroom” (p. 1).

McNeal (2013) concluded all past and current educational initiatives center around tenure and the importance of teacher quality. Teachers should be highly qualified. Consequently, those teachers who are not highly qualified likely leave the career on his or her own due to long work hours, poor pay, over-crowded classrooms, too many students who misbehave, and maltreatment from administrators (Shuls & Barnes, 2013). Approximately 20% of first year teachers resign, and approximately half leave after five years of employment (Jasper, 2014).

Sub-research question 2. If teacher tenure was eliminated, would student achievement increase? Nearly three out of four survey participants (74%) reported eradicating teacher tenure would not aid in increasing student success. Approximately 15% of participants selected *neither agreed nor disagreed* (see Figure 10). Proponents of teacher tenure attributed other factors for low student achievement including lack of parental involvement, student motivation, and poverty. Many researchers have stated that student performance is based on the quality of the teacher and view teacher tenure as an obstacle (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Gordon et al., 2006; Stronge, 2007; Winter, 2012).

In 1996, the state of Missouri created a compilation of standards entitled the Show-Me Standards. These standards were designed, “provide a consistent and clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them” (MODESE, 2010, p. 1). Tobias and Baffert (2010) argued the teachers’ right to self-regulation is lost with the focus is on student

achievement. This clarifies why teachers and teacher unions are protective and want the continuation of teacher tenure (Tobias & Baffert, 2010).

As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), the Obama Administration's RTTT investment reform, provided \$4.35 billion in grants to states that develop plans to improve schools, close the achievement gap, and reform measures supporting the correlation between student performance and teacher quality (United States Department of Education, 2009). The states awarded the grant money give up decisions about education to the federal government. Several states have amended their teacher tenure laws to include student achievement in teacher evaluations (McGuinn, 2010). As the value of teacher tenure is discussed and debated in the United States, research about the effects of tenure on student achievement is slowly surfacing ("Earned, Not Given: Transforming Teacher Tenure," 2012).

Sub-research question 3. Does the teacher tenure law in Missouri protect good teachers from arbitrary dismissal? The research, as well as the findings from this study, demonstrates that teacher tenure provides public school tenured teachers with protection from arbitrary dismissal. Missouri public school teachers believe that teacher tenure is important for job protection. A majority of the survey participants did not fear arbitrary, unsubstantiated firing. Of those surveyed, 374, or 77%, *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that teacher tenure protects good teachers from arbitrary dismissals. Only 57, or 12%, *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that teacher tenure protects good teachers from arbitrary dismissals. Without just cause (e.g., proven incompetent, insubordination, or immoral behavior) a tenured teacher cannot be terminated (Garrett, 2013).

In the United States, to dismiss a tenured teacher, all due process procedures must be fully followed before a teacher can be terminated (McNeal, 2013). There are four procedures created by the United States Supreme Court for teacher tenure due process (“Procedural Due Process Rights: What Individual Interests are Protected?” 2011). First, the tenured teacher must be given an explanation of the circumstances surrounding his or her dismissal. Second in a dismissal of a tenured teacher, the school district or local board of education is required to tell the teacher the reason. Third, the school district or local board of education is mandated to explain the evidence for dismissal against the tenured teacher. Finally, the teacher has a right to a hearing (“Procedural Due Process Rights: What Individual Interests are Protected?” 2011).

Sub-research question 4. Do teachers have knowledge of the proposed revised tenure law in Missouri? Fifty-seven percent of the survey participants responded *yes* when asked if they knew of the potential revised tenure law in Missouri. Various bills have been introduced in the Missouri legislature proposing to overhaul some or all of the teacher tenure system in Missouri (Henningsen, 2013). On the November 2014 ballot, through a signature drive, Amendment 3 attempted to revise teacher tenure and teacher performance evaluation systems (Singer, 2014).

Amendment 3 would have required half of public school teachers’ evaluation be based on students test scores, and teachers’ compensation would also have been based on student achievement dictated by local school districts (Stuckey, 2014). In addition, school districts would have had more control over teacher contracts (Stuckey, 2014). Teachers’ collective bargaining power would have been banned by the Constitutional Amendment 3 (Stuckey, 2014).

In the current climate of school reform, it is important for teachers to have up-to-date knowledge of the potential revised amendments to the tenure law in Missouri. Teachers need to know if their rights are not being protected and to have knowledge of proposed policy related to education. School districts determine whether to grant teacher tenure; however, state policymakers decide the criteria a teacher must meet to be awarded tenure.

Conclusion

It is important to remember, teacher tenure evolved to protect teachers from political abuse and arbitrary termination (Kersten, 2006). Teacher tenure protects teachers from firing without just cause (Garrett, 2013). Tenure also provides teachers with due process before a termination can take place (Tobias & Baffert, 2010). Without just cause and due process, a tenured teacher cannot be terminated (Garrett, 2013).

Furthermore, Obama's RTTT educational reform requires states to have local school districts take into account students' test scores when awarding teachers tenure (Hightower et al., 2011). However, teachers have long recognized what a student learns is not always within the teacher's control, including students' attitudes and motivations, background knowledge of the course content, and students' personal challenges (Kersten, 2006).

If teacher tenure is eliminated, what incentive will be offered to public school teachers in Missouri? In the teaching profession there is no career advancement beyond the salary schedule that compensates advancements in education and length of service (Tobias & Baffert, 2010).

Educational Implications

One of the major criticisms of public school teacher tenure is that it was designed to protect teachers rather than students by providing job security, stability, and academic freedom (Kersten, 2006). Teacher tenure can result in serious harm to the education of students through ineffective teachers who cannot be terminated due to teacher tenure (Chetty et al., 2011). Research studies on teacher tenure exposed ineffective teachers take an entire grade level's worth of achievement away from students (Hanushek, 2011).

Additionally, Chetty et al. (2011) wrote poor-performing teachers contribute to teen pregnancies and limit students from advancing after high school graduation. These consequences can have a negative impact on potential earnings (Chetty et al., 2011). This concept was affirmed by President Obama in his State of the Union Address (2012) when he declared highly qualified teachers can aid in the elimination of poverty in the United States by providing students an education so as to "increase the lifetime income of a classroom by over \$250,000" (p. 1).

One common theme reflected throughout the research study is the evaluation of tenured teachers. Once a teacher is tenured, evaluations are not completed on a timely basis (Darling-Hammond, 2012). In Missouri a probationary teacher must minimally be evaluated once per year, whereas a tenured teacher is only evaluated once every five years ("District Policy: Springfield Public Schools, Missouri," 2013). Darling-Hammond (2012) validated:

Everyone agrees that teacher evaluation in the United States needs an overhaul. Although successful systems exist, most districts are not using approaches that help teachers improve or remove those who cannot improve in a timely manner. Clearly, we need a change. (p. 32)

Baratz made known, “Changing the amount of time to [gain] tenure is not going to be helpful if you don’t have a good evaluation system” (as cited in Sawchuk, 2010, p. 3).

Most teacher participants in the survey agreed there was a need to improve the teacher evaluation system. School principals are responsible for the quality of teachers in each classroom. With this responsibility, school principals are responsible for teacher evaluations.

School principals should be required to devote more time to the evaluation of teachers and to establish documentation procedures for such evaluations. Inept administrators are just as much to blame as incompetent teachers for failing schools and harm to the education of students (Baker, 2014). Research has uncovered “86% of administrators indicated they do not always pursue dismissal” of underperforming teachers because of the costs and time (Akhavan, 2011, p. 1). Many administrators are discouraged from evaluating teachers after the end of the teachers’ probationary periods (Shuls & Barnes, 2013). Teachers need to be evaluated on a continuous basis. Teacher tenure makes the termination process of poorly performing teachers a costly one by involving teacher unions, the school board, administrators, and the legal system (Stephey, 2008).

First, a need for a well-designed evaluation policy is required. The well-designed evaluation policy “should be part of a reformed system that improves teacher

quality and thus gives America's public school pupils a better start in life" (Winters, 2012, p. 13). Teacher unions do not grant tenure to teachers; administrators do. It is the administrators' responsibility to continue to evaluate the teacher after tenure is granted.

It is important to allocate professional development money for training administrators on how to identify ineffective teachers and how to evaluate tenured and non-tenured teachers' professionalism and classroom success (DeMonte, 2013). Administrators must have the ability of time management to schedule teacher evaluations in a timely manner (DeMonte, 2013). Chetty et al. (2011) proclaimed if legislation is passed to include value-added (the statistical process wherein teachers are evaluated on student's test scores) to teachers' evaluations to earn tenure, administrators must be educated on what dictates how much a teacher contributes to a student's progress.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings and conclusions from the research study, future research recommendations include the following:

1. Replicate the research study to include parental input for a comprehensive perception of teacher tenure in Missouri. The results would be helpful for school districts and the state's policymakers in making better decisions concerning teacher tenure.
2. It would be of interest to determine if there is a difference in the way tenure and non-tenured teachers perceive teacher tenure. This research could yield specific reasons as to why responses were strongly positive in this research study.

3. A recommendation is made for further research employing a qualitative study design. Open-ended questions would produce an even greater body of information that could be used to provide meaningful debate and discussion on teacher tenure.

4. Finally, it is recommended Missouri legislators research states that have implemented a new teacher evaluation policy which includes student achievement when awarding teacher tenure. This information needs to be studied and evaluated before enacting new legislation that will impact the current tenure system in Missouri.

Summary

The results of this study created a body of research on Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure. There are many misconceptions about teacher tenure. It was anticipated that individuals without any talent for teaching would by no means earn tenure (Goldstein, 2014). Nevertheless, teacher tenure came out of the need to protect teachers from being fired for non-work related reasons (Kersten, 2006).

Without just cause, such as severe misconduct, insubordination, or ineffectiveness, a tenured teacher cannot be terminated (Garrett, 2013). Teachers cannot be terminated for personal or political reasons (Chen, 2010; Kersten, 2006; Sediak & Schlossman, 1987). A tenured teacher should be assured his or her position is not in jeopardy without just cause. Competent teachers need to be protected by teacher tenure as well. Districts cannot remove an experienced teacher to hire an inexperienced, less expensive one to save money (Chait, 2010).

Opponents of tenure believe teacher tenure keeps incompetent teachers in schools (Garrett, 2013). Teacher tenure status increases teachers' job security by reducing the possibility of being terminated. The public seems to feel tenure fosters

complacency by guaranteeing incompetent teachers jobs even if they continue to perform ineffectively (Garrett, 2013). The focus on teacher tenure and improving student achievement should be placed on the state's school administrators. Inept administrators are just as much to blame as incompetent teachers for failing students (Baker, 2014). Shuls and Barnes (2013) uncovered that teachers believe administrators do not want to take the trouble or do not know how to dismiss the underperforming teacher.

The results of this research suggest school administrators should focus time and energy on teacher evaluations to improve the quality of education for students. Many administrators are discouraged from evaluating teachers after the end of their probationary periods (Shuls & Barnes, 2013). Teacher evaluations need to be more meaningful. Thus, the researcher contends that much needs to be done in preparing district administrators with comprehensive knowledge to evaluate teachers effectively. Administrators must have the knowledge, skills, and disposition to evaluate teachers.

Due to Obama's RTTT, many states are utilizing student achievement to measure teacher performance and to abolish or modify teacher tenure laws (Boser, 2012). Performance expectancies need to be set forth in a clear written description; therefore, teachers can expect to be evaluated according to these performance standards. Teacher evaluations ought to be valuable and done on a timely basis. If the teacher needs specific improvement, suggestions to improve should be provided and outlined. Teachers who are competent, secure, and knowledgeable of course content should not be fearful of evaluations. Finally, it is essential to have adequate administrators and high-quality personnel policies.

Legislators created teacher tenure, and tenure can only be changed by legislation. The public debates the value and need for tenure. Rhetoric and anecdotes seem to drive the tenure debates and policy changes. Data play a relatively limited role in the decision-making concerning public school teacher tenure laws. Improving teacher tenure is imperative as public education moves forward for the success of the global economy by preparing children for the challenges of the future.

In order to achieve the goal of improving public education in the United States, the focus must be on current research. Further studies on the topic of teacher tenure are needed to inform policymakers in making ethically sound decisions with accurate data. Research has important implications for many policies. At a time of high demand for changes in teacher tenure, research-supported best practices can assist legislators with making new laws.

Appendix A

Survey

Please answer the following questions and statements related to your perception of Teacher Tenure. Simply click the appropriate response.

Demographic Data

1. What is your gender?

[1] Female

[2] Male

2. How many years of experience do you have in your current position?

[1] Less than one year

[2] 1-3 years

[3] 4-6 years

[4] 7-10 years

[5] 11 years or more

3. Level of education.

[1] Bachelors

[2] Masters

[3] Specialist

[4] Doctorate

4. Describe the students in your building.

[1] Early Elementary (PreK-2)

[2] Intermediate (3-5)

[3] Middle School (6-8)

[4] Secondary (9-12)

[5] Other

5. How would you characterize your school district's region?

[1] Rural

[2] Suburban

[3] Urban

Perception of Teacher Tenure

6. Are you tenured?

[1] Yes

[2] No

7. If so, at what year of employment did you receive tenure?

[1] 0-1 year

[2] 2-3 years

[3] 4-5 years

[4] 6-7 years

[5] 8+ years

8. Teachers who have achieved tenure are more effective and are considered highly qualified.

[1] Strongly disagree

[2] Disagree

[3] Neither agree nor disagree

[4] Agree

[5] Strongly agree

9. The teacher tenure law protects good teachers from arbitrary dismissals.

[1] Strongly disagree

[2] Disagree

[3] Neither agree nor disagree

[4] Agree

[5] Strongly agree

10. Tenure is a barrier to terminating ineffective teachers.

[1] Strongly disagree

[2] Disagree

[3] Neither agree nor disagree

[4] Agree

[5] Strongly agree

11. The teacher tenure law is a roadblock to educational reform.

- [1] Strongly disagree
- [2] Disagree
- [3] Neither agree nor disagree
- [4] Agree
- [5] Strongly agree

12. The teacher tenure law promotes teacher responsiveness to stakeholders.

- [1] Strongly disagree
- [2] Disagree
- [3] Neither agree nor disagree
- [4] Agree
- [5] Strongly agree

13. The elimination of the teacher tenure law would lead to increased student achievement.

- [1] Strongly disagree
- [2] Disagree
- [3] Neither agree nor disagree
- [4] Agree
- [5] Strongly agree

14. If teacher evaluation processes were more effective, the teacher tenure law would have little effect on the dismissal of ineffective teachers.

- [1] Strongly disagree
- [2] Disagree
- [3] Neither agree nor disagree
- [4] Agree
- [5] Strongly agree

15. Poor administrator evaluation of teachers, rather than the teacher tenure law, is responsible for the retention of below average tenured teachers.

- [1] Strongly disagree
- [2] Disagree
- [3] Neither agree nor disagree
- [4] Agree
- [5] Strongly agree

16. Does teacher tenure hurt the professional image of teachers?

- [1] Strongly disagree
- [2] Disagree
- [3] Neither agree nor disagree
- [4] Agree
- [5] Strongly agree

17. Do you have knowledge of the potential revised tenure law in Missouri?

- [1] Yes
- [2] No

18. If yes, how were you informed?

- [1] The school I am employed at
- [2] Information from the school board
- [3] Superintendent
- [4] Newspaper/Internet
- [5] Profession Teaching Organization

Adapted from Kersten, T. (2006). *Teacher Tenure: Illinois School Board Presidents' Perspectives and Suggestions for Improvement*.

Appendix B

Lindenwood University

School of Education

209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Letter to Superintendents in Missouri

“Missouri Public Schools Teachers’ Perception of Teacher Tenure”

April, 2014

Dear Missouri Superintendent:

I am writing to request your assistance and permission to have your district’s teachers participate in survey via SurveyMonkey as part of the data collection and analysis process for my doctorate dissertation. My research study is entitled, *Missouri Public Schools Teachers’ Perception of Teacher Tenure*, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a doctoral degree in instructional leadership at Lindenwood University. The data gathered will assist in providing insight and perception of Missouri public school teachers’ view of teacher tenure.

I have enclosed a copy of the survey, which has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of Lindenwood University, for your review. The survey is brief and should not take more than 10 minutes to complete. Teachers have the option of taking the survey 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so as not to intrude on instructional time. Additionally, consent is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

If you approve your teachers’ participation, please forward the attached consent letter to your district’s principals to begin the distribution of the email with the survey link. Teachers will be provided a copy of the “Informed Consent Form” to read and review prior to completing the survey. The “Informed Consent Form” is enclosed for your review also.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns about your district’s participation at xxx-xxx-xxxx or xxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxx.xxx. You may also contact my dissertation adviser for this research study, Dr. Sherry DeVore, at 417-881-0009 or sdevore@lindenwood.edu.

You should retain a copy of this letter and your written consent for future reference. Thank you very much for your time, and I greatly appreciate your help with this research study.

Sincerely,

Roberta Roache
Doctoral Candidate



Recruitment Letter
to Principals[1].docx



Informed Consent
for Participation in Re

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Teachertenure>

Appendix C**Lindenwood University**

School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Recruitment Letter to Principals

“Missouri Public Schools Teachers’ Perception of Teacher Tenure”

April, 2014

Dear Principal:

I am currently conducting a research study entitled, *Missouri Public Schools Teachers’ Perception of Teacher Tenure*, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a doctoral degree in instructional leadership at Lindenwood University. The data gathered will assist in providing insight and perception of Missouri public school teachers’ view of teacher tenure.

I am seeking your permission, as the principal, to conduct an electronic survey via SurveyMonkey as part of the data collection and analysis process for my research study. The survey is brief and should not take more than 10 minutes to complete. Teachers have the option of taking the survey 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so as not to intrude on instructional time. Additionally, consent is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns about your teachers’ participation at xxx-xxx-xxxx or xxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxx.xxx. You may also contact my dissertation adviser for this research study, Dr. Sherry DeVore, at 417-881-0009 or sdevore@lindenwood.edu.

You should retain a copy of this letter and your written consent for future reference. Thank you very much for your time, and I greatly appreciate your help with this research study.

Sincerely,

Roberta Roache
Doctoral Candidate



Informed Consent
for Participation in Re

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Teachertenure>

Appendix D**Lindenwood University**

School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Consent Letter

“Missouri Public Schools Teachers’ Perception of Teacher Tenure”

April, 2014

Dear Missouri Public School Teacher:

I am currently a doctoral student at Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri, and I am conducting a research study on Missouri public school teachers’ perception of teacher tenure. I will be collecting data through an electronic survey via SurveyMonkey to assess teachers’ perception of teacher tenure.

The survey is brief and should not take more than 10 minutes to complete. You have the option of taking the survey 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so as not to intrude on instructional time. Additionally, consent is voluntary and you may withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns about your participation at xxx-xxx-xxxx or xxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxx.xxx. You may also contact my dissertation adviser for this research study, Dr. Sherry DeVore, at 417-881-0009 or sdevore@lindenwood.edu.

Sincerely,

Roberta Roache
Doctoral Candidate



Informed Consent
for Participation in Re

Appendix E**Lindenwood University**

School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

“Missouri Public Schools Teachers’ Perception of Teacher Tenure”

April, 2014

Primary Investigator: Roberta Roache

Telephone: xxx-xxx-xxxx E-mail: xxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxx.xxx

Participant _____ Contact info _____

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Roberta Roache under the guidance of Dr. Lisa Christiansen and Dr. Sherry DeVore. The purpose of the research study is to assess Missouri public schools teachers’ perception of teacher tenure.

1. This survey will include the following:
 - a. Your participation will involve completion of a brief survey regarding your perception of teacher tenure in Missouri. The survey will be conducted online through SurveyMonkey, and the information you provide will remain confidential and anonymous.
 - b. The amount of time involved in your participation will be approximately 10 minutes. You have the option of taking the survey 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so as not to intrude on instructional time.
2. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research study.

3. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge regarding Missouri public school teachers' perception of teacher tenure. The effects may help guide educators and policy makers in decision-making regarding teacher tenure.
4. 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 decide not to answer any questions. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.
5. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this research study, or if any problems arise, you may contact the Primary Investigator, Roberta Roache, at xxx-xxx-xxxx or xxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxx.xxx. You may also contact the dissertation adviser for this research study, Dr. Sherry DeVore, at 417-881-0009 or sdevore@lindenwood.edu. You may also ask questions of/or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzell, Vice President for Academic Affairs, at 636-949-4846.

I have read this consent form and have been give the opportunity to ask questions. I should retain a copy of the Consent Form for future reference. By completing this survey, I consent to participate in this research study.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Teachertenure>

Appendix F

Lindenwood University

School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Final Email Reminder

“Missouri Public Schools Teachers’ Perception of Teacher Tenure”

May, 2014

Dear Missouri Superintendent:

I am writing to request your assistance and permission to have your district’s teachers participate in survey via SurveyMonkey as part of the data collection and analysis process for my doctorate dissertation. My research study is entitled, *Missouri Public Schools Teachers’ Perception of Teacher Tenure*, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a doctoral degree in instructional leadership at Lindenwood University. The data gathered will assist in providing insight and perception of Missouri public school teachers’ view of teacher tenure.

I have enclosed a copy of the survey, which has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of Lindenwood University for your review. The survey is brief and should not take more than 10 minutes to complete. Teachers have the option of taking the survey 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so as not to intrude on instructional time. Additionally, consent is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

If you approve your teachers’ participation, please forward the attached consent letter to your district’s principals to begin the distribution of the email with the survey link. Teachers will be provided a copy of the “Informed Consent Form” to read and review prior to completing the survey. The “Informed Consent Form” is enclosed for your review also.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns about your district’s participation at xxx-xxx-xxxx or xxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxx.xxx. You may also contact my dissertation adviser for this research study, Dr. Sherry DeVore, at 417-881-0009 or sdevore@lindenwood.edu.

You should retain a copy of this letter and your written consent for future reference. Thank you very much for your time, and I greatly appreciate your help with this research study.

Sincerely,

Roberta Roache
Doctoral Candidate



Recruitment Letter
to Principals[1].docx



Informed Consent
for Participation in Re

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Teachertenure>

Appendix G**IRB Approval**

Date: 04/23/2014 12:19 PM
To: "Sherry DeVore" <sdevore@lindenwood.edu>, "Roberta Roache" <rsr167@lionmail.lindenwood.edu>
From: "Robyne Elder" <no-reply@irbnet.org>
Reply To: "Robyne Elder" <relder@lindenwood.edu>
Subject: IRBNet Board Action

Please note that Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board has taken the following action on IRBNet:

Project Title: [580242-1] Missouri Public School Teachers' Perception of Teacher Tenure
Principal Investigator: Roberta Roache

Submission Type: New Project
Date Submitted: April 14, 2014

Action: APPROVED
Effective Date: April 22, 2014
Review Type: Expedited Review

Should you have any questions you may contact Robyne Elder at relder@lindenwood.edu.

Thank you,
The IRBNet Support Team

www.irbnet.org

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