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Elementary School TVAAS Composites: A Comparison Between Title I Elementary Schools and Non-Title I Elementary Schools in Tennessee

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Elementary School TVAAS Composites: A Comparison Between Title I Elementary Schools
and Non-Title I Elementary Schools in Tennessee

A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

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December 2016

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ABSTRACT

Elementary School TVAAS Composites: A Comparison Between Title I Elementary Schools and Non-Title I Elementary Schools in Tennessee

by

Anthony W. Padelski

The goal of Title I is to provide extra instructional services and activities that support students identified as failing or most at risk of failing the state's challenging performance standards in mathematics, reading, and writing. Low-income schools or Title I schools are the primary target of Title I funds. A school is eligible for Title I status when 40% of the school's students are from low income families; these students are identified by their eligibility to receive free and reduced priced meals.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a significant difference in elementary schools' TVAAS Composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I schools. Specifically, this researcher examined the relationship of Title I funding with student academic growth at the elementary level. The schools were located in rural Tennessee. Data were gathered from the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 Tennessee State Report Cards and the Tennessee Department of Education to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the 2 types of schools. Research indicated mixed reviews on the impact Title I funds have on lower socioeconomic schools.

The researcher performed 5 paired t test and 8 Pearson correlation coefficients. There was a significant difference in the schools' composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee had higher composite scores than those of the Title I elementary schools. Results from the Pearson correlations indicated no significant relationships for mean years of teaching experience with school composite scores.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Brandi and our children Maddie, Mason, and Maddox. This has been a tremendous journey filled with many memories that will last a lifetime. Maddie, you are a determined and compassionate young lady whose fearless spirit inspires everyone around you. You are so persistent in everything that you do. Because of this gift, our family will never become complacent. Mason, your captivating personality has been crucial to our family in many difficult times. Your thirst for life has inspired our family to live life to the fullest. Maddox, you are our self-reliant and unique glue that holds our family together. You have challenged me to become a better father and teacher. Brandi, you are one of the most caring and hardest working women I've ever known. I'm such a blessed man. Thank you for your love, patience, and support throughout this journey. I wouldn't have achieved this milestone without my best friend by my side.

Further, this work is dedicated to my parents Keith and Jenny Turner. You believed in me when no one else did. For that I am so thankful. Your guidance and advice through this journey will always be remembered and cherished. Your hard work and dedication to others has provided me with many opportunities to witness great leadership. I applaud you for those experiences.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Coleman et al. (1966) in their report entitled *Equality of Educational Opportunity* revealed that students with a lower socioeconomic status (SES) lacked the same educational opportunities as those with a higher SES. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2012) defined SES as a student's access to social, financial, cultural, and human capital resources. According to Ravitch (1985) the Colman Report of 1966 contributed to the notion that schools as such do not make a difference in the achievement of their lower socioeconomic students—rather, it is the socioeconomic status of a family that does. However, evidence from the 1981 updated Coleman Report suggested otherwise. In contrast to the 1966 report, the updated Coleman Report showed that schools do indeed make a difference regardless of students' SES.

In 1983 the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983b) published *A Nation at Risk, The Imperative for Educational Reform* (ANAR), a report that publicly criticized American public education shortly after the launch of Sputnik by the U.S.S.R. before the Americans had any satellites. Bracey (2008) characterized the report as “a golden treasury of spun statistics” (p. 80). According to Bracey the commissioners of the report focused on a single trend that supported their criticism of the United States's educational system. They based their criticism on the decline in science achievement of 17-year-olds as measured by national assessments but neglected to mention that the other two age groups tested did not show any such declines. Schwartz and Robinson (2000) noted that by releasing this report President Reagan acknowledged the impact that American public education has on the U.S. economy and that the problem does not reside with the federal government but with the individual states. They also

stated in response to the criticism the states created more than 250 educational task forces whose roles were to develop initiatives to improve educational outcomes.

Ten years later President Clinton and his administration submitted their school reform proposal to congress. *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* was signed into law in 1994. According to Ravitch (2010) the proposal called for the states to develop their own standards, tests, and accountability for achievement. During this time elected officials of both political parties supported the idea that testing and accountability would lead to better schools. Two years later the President Clinton and his administration reauthorized the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) (Domina, 2005). This reauthorization presented a new provision that was designed to bring families and schools closer together by requiring the nation's poorest schools to spend at least 1% of their Title I funds on programs that would increase parental involvement. Schwartz and Robinson (2000) recognized that Goals 2000 provided an opportunity for the Clinton administration to reauthorize the ESEA that was later entitled the *Improving America's School Act of 1994* (IASA).

IASA was designed to direct the schools' and educators' attention to developing standards and tests that would influence Title I funding. According to Rudalevige (2003) the 1994 reauthorization emphasized the importance of schools' accountability in regards to measurable gains in student performance. As depicted in the legislative expectations by Wong and Meyer (1998), schools should work to improve the achievement of lower SES students, and their expectations of these students should be equal to that of the entire student population.

As President George W. Bush signed the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), "The scene was a civics text come to life. Flanked by jubilant members of Congress, cheered on by a young crowd, President Bush declared the start of a new era in American public education"

(Rudalevige, 2003, p. 23). This new act from the Congress represented the latest reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1994 (ESEA), first authorized in 1964. As noted by Linn, Baker, and Betebenner (2002), NCLB reinforced many state policies aimed at improving student achievement as well as accountability. According to Ravitch (2010) the accountability feature of NCLB required all states to participate in a federal achievement test called the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). NAEP scores were collected and analyzed to monitor progress throughout the states without resulting in any punitive measures for schools or districts. NCLB called for the release of state report cards that would display students' performance in Grades 3 through 8. Data representing schools were disaggregated by ethnic and economic subgroups (NCLB, 2002).

In January of 2010 President Obama announced his administration's first step in educational reform—Race to the Top (RTT). The RTT program was a competitive 4-year grant program that challenged and rewarded states for innovation and reform (Obama, 2011). In his state of the union address President Obama emphasized the importance of the family, school, and community contribution to a child's education:

Our schools share this responsibility. When a child walks into a classroom, it should be a place of high expectations and high performance. But too many schools don't meet this test. That's why instead of just pouring money into a system that's not working, we launched a competition called Race to the Top. To all 50 states, we said, "If you show us the most innovative plans to improve teacher quality and student achievement, we'll show you the money." (para. 36)

Tennessee was one of two states that created an innovative plan to improve teacher quality and student achievement. According to Smith and Partners (2013) the U.S. Secretary of Education Duncan announced that Tennessee was one of two states to win the RTT grant, with \$501 million to spend over 4 years. Tennessee promised to use the data from its value added

system as a significant part of school and teacher's evaluations and to implement standards aligned with the Common Core Standards (Derringer, 2010).

Value added models (VAM) are statistically adjusted gains in test scores achieved by students (Braun, 2005). According to Eckert and Dabrowski (2010) in Tennessee the evaluation of teachers, administrators, and schools based on value added data is becoming increasingly popular among policy makers, politicians, business interests, and the public. Value added data are designed to measure a student's progress from one year to the next, beginning in the fourth grade. A teacher's contribution to the school can be measured by subtracting the achievement scores of a teacher's students at the beginning of the year from the score at the end of the year and making statistical adjustments to account for SES (Glazerman et al., 2010). Developers of VAMs, such as William Sanders who developed the Tennessee Value Added System (TVAAS), claimed that the analysis of student test scores from one year to the next enables them to isolate the effect that teachers and schools have on student learning (Braun, 2005).

Tennessee students in Grades 4 through 8 take achievement tests that are evaluated according to the TVAAS. The TVAAS measures the impact schools and teachers have on their students' academic progress. In addition TVAAS is a system that is designed to measure a student's academic growth on an achievement test instead of comparing a student's score to a proficiency or cut score (Tennessee Department of Education [TNDOE], 2015b). The TNDOE analyzes the results of the TVAAS and reports the scores as a component of the annual state report card of every school in Tennessee. According to the TNDOE (2015a) the annual report card is a comprehensive showcase of state, district, and school-level data for each school year. The report card includes demographics, achievement results, accountability progress, value-added data, attendance figures, graduation rates, and more. The report card organizes and

compiles data by district and school, and its categories include school TVAAS composite scores such as numeracy, literacy, combined numeracy and literacy, and overall scores. Other data of note consist of student ethnicity, student enrollment, percentage of economically disadvantaged students, and per pupil expenditure.

Statement of the Problem

The present study was aimed at comparing Title I schools and Non-Title I schools in regards to elementary school TVAAS composite results. The schools were located in rural Tennessee. Data were gathered from the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 Tennessee State Report Cards to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the two types of schools. The report cards are shared with local school systems and parents; report cards reflect the notion of labeling schools based on their TVAAS composite scores.

According to the TNDOE (2014b) Tennessee's new accountability system was designed through the state's waiver from NCLB and designated Reward, Priority, and Focus schools. Reward schools comprise the top 5% of schools in the state for performance—as measured by overall student achievement levels—and the top 5% for year-over-year progress—as measured by school-wide value-added data. These schools received recognition for their success under the accountability system during the 2012-2013 school year. Priority schools are the lowest-performing 5% of schools in Tennessee in terms of academic achievement. During the 2012-2013 school year, 83 schools were eligible for inclusion in the Achievement School District (ASD) or in District Innovation Zones and could plan and adopt turnaround models for school improvement. Focus schools are the 10% of schools in Tennessee with the largest achievement gaps between groups of students such as racial and ethnic groups, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, students with disabilities, and English-language learners. The state

named 167 schools as Focus schools during the 2012-2013 school year; the state attributed this type of label to schools as a result of evaluating schools based on value added scores (TNDOE, 2014b).

Title I funding represents an average of between 8% and 10% of a school's operating budget. This helps put them on par with other Non-Title I schools. Therefore, closing the achievement gap will rely heavily on federal funding from the Title I program, and the financial support would depend on a school's Title I school status. Research is still needed to determine if Title I funded schools are at an advantage due to the amount of financial support received from the federal government. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a significant difference in elementary school's TVAAS Composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I schools.

Research Questions

This nonexperimental quantitative design study was guided by the following research questions.

Research Question 1: Is there a significant difference in schools' overall composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

Research Question 2: Is there a significant difference in schools' numeracy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

Research Question 3: Is there a significant difference in schools' literacy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

Research Question 4: Is there a significant difference in schools' combined numeracy and literacy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

Research Question 5: Is there a significant difference in the mean years of teaching experience between teachers in Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

Research Question 6: Is there a significant relationship between schools' overall composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Title I schools?

Research Question 7: Is there a significant relationship between schools' overall composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Non-Title I schools?

Research Question 8: Is there a significant relationship between schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Title I schools?

Research Question 9: Is there a significant relationship between schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools?

Research Question 10: Is there a significant relationship between schools' literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools?

Research Question 11: Is there a significant relationship between schools' literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools?

Research Question 12: Is there a significant relationship between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools?

Research Question 13: Is there a significant relationship between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools?

Definitions of Terms

The definitions of the principal terms used in this study are provided below.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). States must establish a definition of adequate yearly progress (AYP) that each school and district is expected to meet. States must identify yearly objectives to measure the progress of schools and districts to ensure that all groups and subgroups of students reach proficiency within 12 years. States must also provide additional performance indicators for all students; in elementary and middle schools this indicator is attendance, and in high schools it is graduation rate. In order to show AYP schools must test at least 95% of the following groups: low-income students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency. In calculating AYP for subgroups 45 or more students must be included to satisfy high levels of reliability (USDOE, 2009a).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). NCLB is a federally mandated bill that requires all states to establish an accountability system that holds all schools and districts accountable for students' performance (Owens, 2010).

Race to the Top (RTT). RTT is a \$4.35 billion competitive educational grant created by the United States Department of Education (USDOE) to reward innovation and reforms in state and local district k-12 education (USDOE, 2009b).

Socioeconomic Status (SES). SES is “the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation” (American Psychological Association, 2015, para. 1).

State Report Card. State report cards must be produced yearly and must provide information regarding academic achievement scores as well as information disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, English proficiency, disability, and lower SES (USDOE, 2013b).

Title I. Title I is a federal program that is intended to help ensure that all children, especially disadvantaged students, have the opportunity to receive a high quality education and reach proficiency on state achievement tests (USDOE, 2014).

Title I Schools. Title I schools are public schools with at least 40% of the students receiving free and reduced priced lunches funded from the federal Title I program (USDOE, 2014).

Non-Title I Schools. Non-Title I Schools are public schools that do not receive Title I funding to support lower SES students (USDOE, 2014).

TVAAS School Wide Composite Scores. Composite scores include the test scores of all tested grades and subjects in the school (TNDOE, 2015a).

TVAAS School Wide Literacy Scores. Literacy scores include the test scores of all tested grades but only subjects specifically associated with literacy. These subjects are SAT 10-Reading and Language, T-CAP Reading, EOC – English I, II, and III (TNDOE, 2015a).

TVAAS School Wide Numeracy and Literacy Scores. Combined numeracy and literacy scores include the test scores of all tested grades but only subjects specifically associated with numeracy and literacy (TNDOE, 2015a).

TVAAS School Wide Numeracy Scores. Numeracy scores include the test scores of all tested grades but only subjects specifically associated with numeracy. These subjects are SAT 10-Math, T-CAP Math, EOC – Algebra I and II (TNDOE, 2015a).

Value Added Models (VAM). VAM is a type of growth model based on changes in achievement scores over time, usually from one year to the next. VAMs are statistical

models that are designed to take into account a student's SES or school background characteristics in order to calculate the amount of learning that was attributed to a specific teacher or school. Teachers or schools that produce growth are considered to have added value to a student's knowledge base (UCLA IDEA, 2012).

Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS). TVAAS measures the impact schools and teachers have on student academic growth. It does not measure whether a student is proficient on a state assessment; however, it helps educators identify best practices and programs in order to make decisions regarding the use of resources so that every child has an opportunity to grow academically (TNDOE, 2015b).

Significance of the Study

Math and literacy standards have become more rigorous in Tennessee due in part to Common Core Standards that are aligned with other state standards. Under current law Tennessee is not required to develop assessments that can measure individual student growth. Many federal funding laws, such as Title I, exclude measures of individual growth as part of AYP. The USDOE has allowed states to include the measures as part of their annual report card, but they are not tied to federal funding. As Tennessee moves closer to fully implementing Common Core Standards, so will the idea of measuring the individual student growth promised by the Common Core Testing Consortia (Finn & Petrilli, 2011).

The results of this study may benefit legislators, policy makers, teachers, administrators, school systems, and states that will participate in the Common Core Assessment Consortium. In Tennessee the decision to adopt state Common Core Standards was made by the governor and the State Board of Education. State Common Core standards adoption was passed unanimously by the State Board of Education in 2010 (TNDOE, 2014a). Ravitch (2010) wrote that Common

Core Standards have never been field tested prior to state adoption and implementation. In the absence of sound research states have struggled to understand and implement new standards. This study will help determine whether a significant relationship exists between Title I schools and Non-Title I schools in regards to TVAAS Composite scores in the fourth and fifth grades.

Vaughan (2002) challenged Sanders's (1998) assumption that the greatest impact on student academic gains is teacher effectiveness, not a child's SES or per pupil expenditures. Title I funds are provided by the federal government to each state to close the gap between lower SES students and other students. These funds are provided to local school districts to help meet the academic needs of at-risk or low SES students. Kupermintz, Shepard, and Linn (2001) pointed out that despite their home environment lower socioeconomic students are frequently placed in inadequate facilities and received their education from a less experienced teaching force and with lackluster instructional resources. Non-Title I schools are at a disadvantage in states that use a value added model to evaluate teachers and schools. If school districts, schools, and administrators can determine the causes for these inconsistencies with TVAAS data, that knowledge will potentially help them understand how they can improve student academic growth. Perhaps Title I funds can be directed to programs that will improve students' academic growth rather than a proficiency level or state score.

Limitations and Delimitations

This research was conducted in school districts across the state of Tennessee. This study was limited to schools that administered the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment (TCAP) during the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years in the state of Tennessee. The data were limited to only 2 years due to Common Core Standards Implementation in the state of Tennessee. It was assumed that the school TVAAS data that were collected from the state report card were

valid and reliable. Tennessee state report cards publishes testing data in two different ways, growth (TVAAS) and achievement. TVAAS data were used for this study to determine student growth. Consideration of achievement data may result in different conclusions. Limitations of this study include schools' scores were averaged and not individual student scores. Teachers' years of experience was also based on the mean years of experience and not individual years of experience. A potential limitation of the study may be that school scores for social studies and science were not published on the state report card but were used in the overall school score. In addition the distribution of Title I funds to schools was limited by their percentage of lower socioeconomic students. This study was delimited to those elementary schools whose grades range from Pre-k-5 or K-5. This study was also delimited to schools' scores and not individual teacher's scores. The results may not be generalizable to schools systems or other states.

Overview of the Study

In Chapter 1 the researcher introduces the statement of the problem, research questions, definitions, significance of the study, and overview of the study. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature pertaining to the history of Title I and Non-Title I schools, standardized testing, Title I funding, Goals 2000, NCLB, RTT Initiative, Value Added System, and the Tennessee State Value Added System. The study's research design and method are detailed in Chapter 3. Chapter 3 also includes population, sample and selection procedures, instrumentation, data collection methods, and data analysis planning. Chapter 4 presents the analyses of the data in the form of narration and figures. This chapter also addresses the null hypothesis related to each of the 13 research questions. Finally, Chapter 5 contains the summary of findings, the conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tracing the historical roots of accountability leads back to the 1983 *A Nation at Risk* report (Ravitch, 2010). According to Rudalevige (2003) Goals 2000 and NCLB were the cumulative result of the standards and testing movement that began with the release of the *Nation at Risk* report during the Reagan administration. *A Nation at Risk* redirected the nation, including the state of Tennessee, on the road to continuous school reform efforts. Ravitch (2010) referred to the report as a recommendation and not a legal mandate. States and school districts were free to implement the report's recommendations or ignore them completely.

High-stakes testing was given the green light by the 1994 reauthorization of the *ESEA*, the *Improving America's Schools Act (IASA)*, which required states to develop assessments in reading and math aligned with state standards. IASA used the results of these assessments to determine if lower SES students were making AYP, to punish underperforming Title I schools, and to reward schools that were making progress in terms of their disadvantaged students (Webb, 2006).

Title I has achieved some notable success in reaching many goals associated with closing the achievement gap as well as providing an equitable education for all students. "One need only walk into almost any high-poverty school in the United States and observe the extra resources, materials, programs, and personnel that Title I provides" (Borman, 2003, p. 49). The purpose of Tennessee's federally funded Title I Part A program is to support the local school district's ability to improve teaching and learning for students in high-poverty schools so that the students meet the state's content and performance standards (TNDOE, 2014b). According to the USDOE (2014) students at a Title I school do not have to be from a low-income family in order to benefit

from Title I funds. In addition, it is not possible to establish a true cause-effect relationship between closing gaps and the improvement in Title I students' outcomes (Borman, 2003).

Borman asserted that: 1) a meta-analysis suggests that students served by Title I would certainly have been worse off academically without the program, and 2) The NAEP demonstrated that educational inequality can be overcome in a relatively short time when new policies and funding sources are targeted toward improving education and other services for disadvantaged students.

History of School Accountability

The 1954 landmark school desegregation decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* jumpstarted efforts to address public school inequities. The Supreme Court ruled that the segregation of children by race in public schools was a violation of the 14th Amendment. This ruling opened the door for not only to African-American students but also those students from a lower SES who had other disadvantages regardless of their race (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). According to Hanushek and Rivkin (2009) the amendment influenced a drastic change in school characteristics while increasing funding to African-American students who were part of the minority student population. Considering the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to place all schools on a level educational playing field, Ravitch (1985) argued that the difference in resources at a predominantly White school versus a predominantly Black school was very similar, and that the social composition of the students at a school had a greater impact on the achievement of African-American students.

During the 1960s the nation discovered and recognized that poverty existed, and the schools were the first to be criticized—what better place to start than where the nation's prejudices are said to reside (Ravitch, 2010). President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IV of this act prohibited discrimination against anyone, including students, on the

basis of race, color, or national origin in any institution receiving federal funds. This monumental piece of legislation authorized a survey to determine the availability of educational opportunities for all students who attended a publicly funded institution in the United States. This survey, conducted by Coleman et al. (1966), was directed on behalf of Johns Hopkins University and was named *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (also known as the *Coleman Report*).

Findings from the *Coleman Report* indicated a weak relationship between school resources and student achievement (Coleman et al., 1966). As noted by Hanushek and Rivkin (2009), the report did nothing to link students' achievements to the schools; instead, it focused on the SES of the families whose children attended the school. As maintained in the *Coleman Report*, the two most important variables that influenced student achievement were the educational background and social class background of the family, and the educational background and social class background of the other students in the school (Webb, 2006).

Brogan (2009) considered SES a concept of social class. It measured the impact that the social environment had on a student, family, community, and school. He stated that SES classifications are put in place to locate and determine the changing variables of inequality in our population. SES includes various components such as parental occupational status, parental educational attainment, and family income. The *Coleman Report* generated considerable discussion until it was challenged by the updated *Coleman Report of 1981*. As noted by Ravitch (1985), the updated *Coleman Report of 1981* (Stedman, Chilton, Jordan, & Library of Congress, 1981) disputed the idea of SES's impact on schools and instead found that schools make a difference regardless of a family's SES.

President Johnson initiated *The War on Poverty Act* in 1965 as a means to use education to eliminate poverty. In the 1960s the poverty rate of school-aged children was 14% (Kuttner & Rapoport, 2007), compared to 21% in 2012, as reported by the NCES (2012). The cornerstone of the education legislation enacted as part of the *War on Poverty* was *ESEA of 1965*. The ESEA allocated over \$1 billion in funds annually to education with no strings attached. The largest portion—Title I—received about 80% of the funds and provided assistance to local school districts for the education of children of lower SES (Webb, 2006). As described by Viteritti (2012), this piece of legislation was one of the first *carrot and stick* policies from the federal government. President Johnson provided school districts with billions of dollars in Title I funding as an incentive to comply with the desegregation mandate. According to Spring (1994) ESEA described lower SES children as children who were educationally deprived. In 1965 the Title I Act specifically stated:

The Congress hereby declares it to be the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance... to expand and improve their educational programs by various means (including preschool programs) which contribute particularly to meeting the special educational needs of educationally deprived children. (Elementary and Secondary School Act, 1965, p. 27)

Title I of the ESEA was the manifestation of the United States commitment to help educate all children regardless of their SES (Jennings, 2000). When the ESEA took effect, \$1 billion in new federal dollars began flowing into schools and school districts throughout the country. Mathis (2010) reported that lower SES students required up to 40% more funds per pupil than their higher SES peers. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s Title I funds increased drastically because of public policy and the American dream that all students could achieve excellence if given an equitable education (Jennings, 2000). Baker, Sciarra, and Farrie (2010) argued that funding should not be the only factor when evaluating academic performance for

students in high poverty schools. They reiterated that schools can achieve their desired outcomes with funding that is used efficiently and effectively.

President Reagan called for the complete elimination of the U.S. DOE while he was campaigning for president, and in 1981 he withdrew his support for Title I funding and other federal programs because of their strict guidelines and regulations (Clabaugh, 2004). However, in 1981 Secretary of Education Bell had been successful in forming a commission of cabinet level members who would study available research and data on our nation's public schools. Because of his indignation with the US educational system, President Reagan approved the NCEE (1983a), hoping it would open the door to school choice or school prayer. *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, released by the NCEE (1983b), criticized the performance of America's educational institution in regards to the declining economy (Webb, 2006).

Bell (1993), who was President Reagan's Secretary of Education during his first term, revealed that his first attempt to establish a National Commission on Education was rejected by President Reagan. Bell was a strong advocate for federal influence in educational funding and predicted that the report on the study of the condition of our educational system would inform and incite our country to promote federal funding, therefore making it difficult for President Reagan to eliminate or reduce the federal role in educational funding.

A Nation at Risk consisted of research papers and interviews with national scholars regarding our educational system. The report, as explained by Ravitch (2010), reiterated the importance of equity in terms of SES. This notion of equity was at risk in regards to students with a lower SES and these students should be provided with the same education and tools for

developing and sustaining educational success. According to *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (NCEE, 1983a):

Part of what is at risk is the promise first made on this continent: All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost. (p. 115)

During President Reagan's second term, Secretary of Education Bennett summed up the President's cuts in education spending by repeatedly asserting that "public education was not going to be improved by 'throwing money at it'" (Clabaugh, 2004, p. 258). Bennett also challenged the notion of poverty having any impact on educational possibilities. As clarified by Hewitt (2008) there isn't anything in the U.S. Constitution that creates a path to a federal role in education. *A Nation at Risk* kept the DOE alive and firmly established the role of federal influence in educational matters. As argued by Ravitch (2010) *A Nation at Risk* is a report contested by many academics, educators, and pundits over whether it was a truly accurate depiction of the American education system. However, Hewitt (2008) stated that the report actually ignited a continuous educational reform effort that is still present today.

President Regan's criticism was directed at the laws and strict regulations of Title I funding and the lack of accountability. At that time Title I funds did not have specific academic performance objectives that lower SES students were expected to meet. President Reagan, politicians, and business leaders argued that all public institutions receiving federal funds should be accountable for student learning (Jennings, 2000).

The goal of Title I is to provide extra instructional services and activities that support students identified as failing or most at risk of failing the state's challenging performance standards in mathematics, reading, and writing (USDOE, 2014). Low-income schools or Title I schools are the primary target of Title I funds. A school is eligible for Title I status when 40% of the school's students are from low income families; these students are identified by their

eligibility to receive free and reduced priced meals (NCES, 2015). Title I was amended in 1988 to require states to define the level of academic achievement that lower SES students should attain in schools receiving the funds (Jennings, 2000). This amendment also provided schools with more flexibility in terms of how the funds could be used. As summarized by Farkas and Hall (2000), schools with 75% or more of students in poverty no longer had to directly link Title I funds to programs that served only the lower SES students, but they could be used to improve the achievement of all students at the school, therefore qualifying the school for school wide program status. Schools under this status would be allowed greater latitude on how Title I funds are spent.

In 1993 President Clinton and his administration proposed a new initiative in educational funding coined *Goals 2000*, which provided federal dollars for states to develop their own standards and their own performance assessments aligned with the standards and defined levels of student mastery. Schwartz and Robinson (2000) questioned whether the funds from *Goals 2000* used by the states and districts to promote systematic reform would improve equity and achievement because both were difficult to measure. As *Goals 2000* directed federal dollars toward standards and assessments, an unintended form of accountability began to take shape in many states including Tennessee. These states and their school districts began to issue report cards to their constituents and to the general public that graded schools on specific performance indicators (Webb, 2006).

The ideas behind *Goals 2000* did not begin in Washington, DC but rather in Charlottesville, VA at the 1989 National Educational Summit. The meeting was considered by many as a historic event because at no other time in history did the nation's governors and the President meet to establish a set of national educational goals. This gathering of leaders

ultimately resulted in *Goals 2000* (Heise 1994; Schwartz & Robinson, 2000). According to Heise (1994) the joining together of all 51 leaders at the summit sent a strong message to the nation that the time had come for a national standards movement. As explained by Mathis (2010) this message also endured criticism from those who were against the growing federal role in education. Ravitch (2015) reiterated the importance of accepting the notion that testing and accountability would lead to better performing schools.

Goals 2000 was considered successful in its mission to provide the states with flexibility on the expenditure of funds and to have the desired impact on Title I funding (Schwartz & Robinson, 2000). According to Jennings (2000) President Clinton and US Secretary of Education Riley agreed that Title I was part of the problem because it led to instruction that emphasized low level skills for lower SES students. *Goals 2000*, however, changed the eligibility threshold for lower SES students to at least 50% (Jennings, 2000). As clarified by Farkas and Hall (2000), Title I provided a one-on-one personalized service to lower SES students prior to the 1994 reauthorization of the ESEA that increased the number of school-wide programs that spent funds on goods and services such as computers and reading materials.

In 1999 the congressionally required *National Assessment of Title I* reported positive gains in reading and math performance since the last reauthorization of Title I. According to Jennings (2000) the notion that Title I was responsible for raising student achievement in reading and math was a driving force for the Clinton Administration to submit its proposal to renew Title I and related programs. The primary mission of *Goals 2000*, as stated by Schwartz and Robinson (2000), was to provide an equitable educational environment with high levels of academic achievement for all students regardless of SES.

In 2001 President Bush proposed one of the most sweeping educational reform movements since the ESEA of 1965 by creating a much larger federal presence in educational policy and funding (Lewis, 2002). The centerpiece of President Bush's education program was the 2001 reauthorization of the ESEA, entitled No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002). The NCLB Act directed federal funds to promote higher achievement of lower SES students and hold schools accountable for the progress of all students. As stated by Mathis (2010), lower SES students received fewer resources than higher SES students even after Title I funds were taken into account. According to Ravitch (2015) federal funding increased by almost 60% during the early years of NCLB. The enactment of NCLB toughened the IASA testing and accountability provisions (Webb, 2006). NCLB was designed to force local school districts and states to pay attention to certain at-risk lower SES groups and to increase the resources that were available to these groups (McDonnell, 2005). As noted by Domina (2005), NCLB funding also provided an opportunity for Title I schools to increase parental involvement.

NCLB specifically required every state to develop AYP objectives that included statewide measurable objectives for all students and specific subgroups (Linn et al., 2002). AYP had to be based on state assessments and also had to include an additional academic indicator. School AYP results would be reported by the state to its constituents and most importantly would include any significant subgroups. Jennings and Rentner (2006) maintained that the NCLB had a positive impact because it shone a light on the poor performance of students who would have gone unnoticed if not for the disaggregation of test data. As indicated by Abedi (2004), the intention of NCLB to improve the academic achievement of various subgroups of students who had, for the most part, shown minimal progress might unintentionally place pressure on schools with large numbers of targeted subgroups. As explained by Darling-

Hammond (2007), high levels of lower SES students within a school had been shown to decrease achievement of all students regardless of their race or SES. Jennings (2000) depicted the argument of whether Title I alone could be attributed to raising student test scores among all SES students, or whether it to blame for not closing the achievement gap between the lower and higher SES students.

As emphasized by Manna and Ryan (2011), schools that received federal aid from the NCLB Title I program were required to obtain or surpass AYP objectives. Otherwise, they would be subjected to defined school improvement measures based on the years the funding was received. Meanwhile, Darling-Hammond (2007) pointed out that higher SES schools spent much more than lower SES schools. Viteritti (2012) argued that the data component of AYP, which required test results to be disaggregated by subgroups, brought to the forefront great disparities in student achievement based on income and race. McCluskey (2010) concluded that NCLB gave states the power to lower their standards or proficiency levels in order to stay out of trouble and continue receiving federal funding.

NCLB required each state to participate biennially in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading and mathematics at grades 4 and 8. An expert panel at NAEP (NCES, 2012) determined the three major components of SES: family income, parental educational attainment, and parental occupational status. They also concluded that home neighborhood and school SES could be used to justify the impact of SES in NAEP scores. NAEP continued to serve as a consistent benchmark for comparing state tests and monitoring state achievement trends (Linn et al., 2002). According to the USDOE (2005),

The results from the newest Report Card are in and the news is outstanding. Three years ago, our country made a commitment that no child would be left behind. The 2004 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Long-Term Trends in Academic Progress, also known as the Nation's Report Card, has been administered using the same

exact test in reading and mathematics for over 30 years. The 2004 Report Card is evidence that No Child Left Behind is working and is helping to raise the achievement of young students of every race and from every type of family background. And the achievement gap that has persisted for decades in the younger years between minorities and whites has shrunk to its smallest size in history. (p. 1)

NCLB was set to expire on September 30, 2007, but it stayed intact until a new law was passed (USDOE, 2014). In 2008 presidential candidate Barack Obama campaigned on the promise that his administration would oversee the rewriting of the expired NCLB Act. In 2010 President Obama and Secretary of Education Duncan put forward a revision of NCLB entitled *A Blueprint for Reform* (Higham, 2013). Because NCLB was not reauthorized, the Obama administration in 2011 provided State Educational Agencies (SEAs) with waivers from specific parts of NCLB in exchange for certain criteria. The criteria included college and career ready expectations for all populations of students, differentiated accountability, and including targeting the lowest performing schools, schools with the largest achievement gaps, and other schools with performance challenges for subgroups (USDOE, 2014).

Race to the Top

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The purpose of this act was to jumpstart the economy through strategic investment. A key educational component of this law was Race to the Top (RTTT), an initiative to invest in the country's educational system and stimulate efforts to reform schools (Boser, 2012). RTTT was a \$4.5 billion competitive grant program designed to close achievement gaps and prepare more students for college. According to Weiss (2013) some of the key reform strategies included adopting more rigorous standards and assessments, turning around low-performing schools, and building data systems that measured student success.

The interdependence of the NCLB and RTTT is indicated by Manna and Ryan (2011), as President Obama and Secretary Duncan critiqued NCLB in two ways. First, NCLB aided states

in excusing their lower standards and proficiency levels. Second, NCLB encouraged a collaborative approach for measuring student learning and evaluating school performance. These critiques framed the landscape in which RTTT emerged. According to Spring (2014) RTTT is the Obama administration's way of achieving its political aspiration of reducing poverty and income inequalities. Mathis (2010) considered the Obama administration's blueprint document as a way of stressing the importance of *common standards* that encourage high expectations in contrast to earlier reform efforts that required students to achieve minimum basic skills. Viteritti (2012) implied that the Obama administration and its use of power and resources were moving states to national standards by guiding the states to design the standards collectively, which allowed ownership by the states and not the federal government.

As speculated by Weiss (2013), the major provision of RTT that enables Tennessee to identify struggling schools and provide them with the means to succeed is flawed. As stated by Mathis (2010), the RTT grant mandates specific turnaround strategies for schools that do not perform. These strategies include firing the principal, firing some or most of the staff, converting the school to a charter school, or closing the school. Schools are currently labeled by their TVAAS composite scores, which could hinder their enrollment, reputation, or existence, but this label does not necessarily limit the amount of financial support a school receives from the federal government. Weiss (2013) argued that none of the components of the RTT grant were designed to support Title I schools; instead, it only exacerbates the gaps federal funding should close.

To apply for the RTTT grant states had to submit a detailed application that met certain criteria and policies approved by the USDOE. In 2010, with support from Governor Bredesen, the Tennessee General Assembly, and the TDOE, Tennessee passed the First to the Top (FTTT) Act. Among other provisions FTTT removed a restriction on the use of value-added data for

promotion, retention, tenure, and compensation decisions (USDOE, 2013a). According to Camera (2014) Governor Bredesen promised to use the implementation of the FTTT in Tennessee's favor when striving to meet the requirements of the RTTT; this legislative bill promised to turn around its lower SES schools and initiate common standards, otherwise known as Common Core Standards, throughout the state. In regards to data systems that measured student success, Governor Bredesen said that Tennessee had the upper hand in the competition because it had already had its own value added system (VAS) for the past 20 years.

Three months after Tennessee passed FTTT Tennessee and Delaware were the only recipients of the RTTT grant to implement extensive educational reform over the next 4 years; Delaware received approximately \$100 million and Tennessee received approximately \$500 million. The grant was provided in part because of Tennessee's effort to establish FTTT (USDOE, 2013a). According to Camera (2014) Tennessee used \$44 million from the grant to instruct more than 70,000 teachers on the comprehensive Common Core Standards. Derringer (2010) insisted that using the Tennessee Value Added System to improve lower SES schools was one of the components that ultimately lead Tennessee to win the RTTT grant.

In 2012 the TDOE reworked its accountability structure to align with its approved ESEA flexibility request. The aim of this new accountability structure was based on a blending of achievement and gap closure targets and identification of schools based on achievement scores and value added data. Weiss (2013) noted that the advancement of the RTTT components did not promote the economic and racial integration that would ultimately close achievement gaps. According to the TNDOE (2015b) Tennessee's lowest achieving schools would be categorized as Focus and Priority schools, while schools with the highest proficiency scores and rate of growth would be categorized as Reward schools.

Common Core Standards

In April 2009 representatives from 41 states, including Tennessee, met with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA) to create a common set of standards for education (Mathis, 2010). NGA and CCSSO were given the opportunity to draft the new Common Core Standards in reading and math. According to McClusky (2010) the Common Core Standards Initiative (CCSI) was the first time that progress was made toward developing national standards. Mathis (2010) stated that 65 people, including one classroom teacher, were involved in the review and design. This group did not include any administrators “because they were determined to draft standards based on the best available research about effective math and reading curricula, rather than the opinion of any single person or organization” (p. 2).

The mere idea of a national curriculum as it relates to the Common Core Standards confused many educators, parents, and politicians (Spring, 2014). In a blog post entitled “Why I cannot support the Common Core Standards,” Diane Ravitch (2013) criticized the lack of field-testing prior to rolling out the Common Core Standards. At the same time, Ravitch was known to support the idea of national standards as reflected in “National Standards in American Education: A Citizens Guide.” She argued that national standards would eradicate unfair expectations for students based on socioeconomic status or race. Mathis (2010), stated that “common standards are an essential step toward ensuring equity and high quality learning for all children everywhere” (p. 2).

President Obama emphasized the importance of the Common Core Standards in preventing states from lowering expectations as they did with the NCLB (Manna, 2010). McCluskey (2010) argued that all schools and school districts would be evaluated on the same

standard, instead of altering proficiency scores allowed by NCLB. In their defense of national standards, many advocates argued that national standards would eliminate a proficiency or cut score based on the state the student resided in, but not what knowledge they possessed. The Common Core Standards instead designated a list of skills that students are expected to master by the end of each grade. The Common Core Standards implementation will move classroom instruction toward an engaging curriculum that will promote a variety of instructional techniques that develop cognitive strategies instead of the traditional focus on worksheets, and drill and practice (Conley, 2011).

Beginning in 2011-2012 school year Tennessee, one of the states that adopted the Common Core Standards, was able to incorporate the standards within its curriculum in grades K-2. During the 2012-2013 school year school districts in Tennessee partially implemented the standards in math in grades 3-8. By 2014-2015 every school district in the state was incorporating the Common Core Standards into its curriculum. According to President Obama's blueprint documents, the Common Core Standards are essential in providing students of all socioeconomic classes with the opportunity to achieve at high levels (Mathis, 2010).

To test student performance on the Common Core Standards and state content standards, Tennessee used the TCAP (Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program) Achievement Test during the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 school years. This test is a multiple-choice test designed to measure student achievement in four content areas: Reading/Language Arts (Literacy), Mathematics (Numeracy), Science, and Social Studies. According to the TNDOE (2016) a new and improved assessment program in ELA and math was adopted in 2014 to replace the old TCAP tests. The new Assessment program is called Tennessee Ready (TN Ready) and was administered in the 2015-2106 school year. Tennessee's Education

Commissioner Candice McQueen stated, “Tennessee’s new TN Ready assessment was designed to be nimble to allow for changes as needed in anticipation of revised standards” (Aldrich, 2016, p. 1).

In Tennessee the Common Core State Standards are currently under review due to public backlash and heated political debates. The Tennessee State legislature is considering a bill that would repeal the CCSS. According to Bidwell (2015) Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam signed a bill that would ultimately replace the Common Core Standards with “Tennessee Academic Standards” after a thorough review process. The bill requires the state board of education to create two committees, one of which is represented by higher education officials and the other represented by K-12 schools. The committees would be required to recommend new English language arts and math standards to be implemented during the 2017-2018 school year. Newman (2015) pointed out the possibility that the Common Core Standards would be reinstated under a new name. Instead of repealing and eliminating the standards, the legislation allows for rebranding after the review.

Value Added System

Vaughan (2002) stated that accountability systems were unlikely to survive unless teachers, parents, and other taxpayers believed that the criteria and processes employed in state accountability systems were legitimate, fair, consistent, and understandable. There is evidence to demonstrate that all students, even those from a lower SES, can succeed in the right educational setting. At the same time it is much more challenging to raise the achievement level of lower SES students to new standards (Ballou, Sanders, & Wright, 2004). According to Ballou et al. a VAM would achieve the desired accountability system. The VAM is based on a students’ academic progress rather than the percentage of students able to meet an absolute standard.

Ballou et al., stated that the VAM measures gain from an individual student's starting point and, as such, it inherently controls for SES and other environmental factors.

Ravitch (2015) criticized the VAM as being technology driven in that every aspect of a child's learning can be identified through certain variables being computed from a certain algorithm. Schools and teachers would be evaluated based on data regardless of the curriculum or the real life experiences of their students. However, NCLB was frequently criticized for not having a VAM component. Mathis (2010) disputed this criticism, saying that the idea of growth scores having an impact on NCLB and being the answer to comparing very different groups of students had many fundamental flaws. Subject matter content and state-created tests must be vertically equated from grade to grade. Heck (2006) defined VAM as a growth model that tracks student's experiences at a particular school throughout several years rather than 1 year with a particular teacher.

Tennessee Value Added System

In 1992, Governor McWherter signed the Education Improvement Act. This piece of legislation provided a considerable increase in funding and an accountability system by which the public could hold educators accountable for student academic achievement. The state adopted a model called the Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS) or the *Sanders Model*. This VAM, developed by Sanders of the University of Tennessee, was directed at student academic growth or gains within the district, school, and classroom levels (Baker & Xu, 1995). According to Sanders (1998) TVAAS is a statistical method of determining the effectiveness of school systems, schools, and teachers in continuous academic growth for student populations. Although TVAAS was developed for Tennessee, it is frequently criticized by other

parts of the nation for not doing enough to control for SES and demographic factors (Ballou et al., 2004).

The main concept of the *Sanders Model* is that in regards to learning outcomes the school, school system, and teachers should be held accountable for the amount of academic gains earned as a result of their students' schooling. If a student enters fourth grade at a certain level of achievement on a prior state assessment, the teacher, school, and school system are responsible for raising the student's average achievement level by a criterion set forth by the State Department of Education (Bock, Wolfe, & Fisher, 1996). The idea of adding demographic and SES variables to the TVAAS model to see if it makes any significant difference has been suggested by many critics of the TVAAS. In response to this criticism, Ballou et al. (2004) noted:

This solution is not, however, as straightforward as it may first appear. Students are not assigned at random to teachers and schools. If better teachers are able to obtain jobs in schools serving an affluent student population, or if more affluent parents seek the best schools and teachers for their children (say, by residential location, or pressuring school administrators to place their children in desired classes), demographic and SES variables become proxies for teacher and school quality. Because they are correlated with otherwise unmeasured variation in school and teacher quality, the coefficients on these variables will capture part of what researchers are trying to measure with residuals. Predictors of school and teacher effectiveness will accordingly be biased toward zero. (pp. 38-39)

In this way, when state data demonstrate that students with lower SES do not gain as much from one year to the next as their higher SES peers, it is debatable whether to attribute that to SES or their quality of school (Ballou et al., 2004).

TVAAS is designed to follow students from Grades 4 through 8 as they transition from school to school or school district to school district throughout Tennessee, while taking into account the student's community and home background. The TVAAS model overcomes this

predicament by directing the measurement of the student's test performance year after year (Bock et al., 1996).

Sanders (1998) asserted that for Grades 3 through 8 the gains for schools in Tennessee were found to be inapplicable regarding the ethnicity of a school, the percentage of students receiving free and reduced price lunches, and the mean achievement level of the school. These findings confirm the idea of a student's control of his or her achievement (the longitudinal component of TVAAS) eliminates any variables that are not necessary. Sanders stated that schools that perform consistently better on the TVAAS are schools that provide academic growth opportunities for all SES students. The data have shown that these schools have successfully identified the school's needs and have the ability to show academic progress for all students (Sanders, 1998). However, Heck (2006) defined school equity as the notion that school scores are free from any factors that can introduce bias in school comparisons.

Tennessee State Report Card

According to the TNDOE (2015a) Tennessee is one of four states providing a web based report card that provides information to all school districts. The annual report card is a comprehensive showcase of state-, district-, and school-level data for each school year. The TNDOE analyzes results of the TVAAS and issues these results as a component of the annual state report card to every school in Tennessee. The report card includes subgroups such as economically disadvantaged students, English-language learners, students with disabilities, as well as TVAAS composite scores for individual schools.

Composite scores are based on growth for one year from the previous academic year. The scores are given on a Likert-type scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest score. The overall composite score includes all available data in math, reading/language arts,

science, and social studies. The numeracy score includes all available data in math. The literacy score includes all available data in reading/language arts. The combined literacy and numeracy score includes math and reading/language arts scores but excludes science and social studies (TNDOE, 2015b).

Socioeconomic Status and Achievement

Weiss (2013) described the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) as a rigorous and reliable sample test of reading and mathematics that is given every 2 years to a representative sample of students in Tennessee in grades 4, 8, and 12. The NAEP is a federally funded testing program established to measure the performance of American students in mathematics, science, reading, and other key subjects (Kober, 2001). According to Weiss (2013) Tennessee State Achievement tests are not as rigorous as the NAEP because of the way Tennessee set its standards to appease or to meet the proficiencies set by NCLB. Giroux and Schmidt (2004) noted that state accountability systems have shown evidence of increased achievement of lower socioeconomic students.

Welner and Mathis (2015) argued that current education policy has failed our lower socioeconomic students by ignoring the many obstacles those children face outside schools that adversely affect their school performance. The authors also claimed that schools with an abundance of resources can make a difference in the lives of their students of lower socioeconomic status: “But it is not realistic to expect schools to be the nation’s primary anti-poverty program” (p. 3). Bracey (2003) viewed the concept of summer loss as one of the phenomena that have an effect on the achievement of students with lower socioeconomic status. Students of higher socioeconomic status, on the other hand, show considerable gains in mathematics and reading during the summer months. Therefore, schools that actually make

adequate yearly progress (AYP) will be labeled by USDOE as failing due to the decline in achievement during the summer.

Bracey (2003) stated that the background of families and the socioeconomic mix of students in the school have a strong influence on the academic achievement of the student population. Kupermintz et al. (2001) further contended that factors such as “school culture and climate, teacher qualifications, curriculum frameworks and instructional approaches all interact jointly to produce measurable growth in student achievement skills and knowledge” (p.24). Malecki and Demaray (2006) insisted also that evidence of student poverty is a strong indicator of low academic performance, which places the student at risk of failing in school.

Title I Schools

In 1965 President Lyndon B. Johnson placed the importance of funding higher poverty schools in the hands of the federal government, and many of these schools became known as Title I schools. A Title I School is any school receiving Title I funds (Kirby, 2003). As revealed by the National Assessment of Title I (2006), these funds may be used to pay teachers and other instructional staff, purchase instructional materials and equipment, support parent involvement, and fund after school programs and other programs that could raise student achievement. Every school has a certain level of poverty measured by the percentage of students eligible for the free and reduced priced lunch program. According to the National Assessment of Title I (2006) schools with at least 75% of their students eligible for free and reduced price lunches are considered high poverty schools. Low poverty schools are where fewer than 35% of the students are eligible for free and reduced lunches. As indicated by Mathis (2010), research studies on funding schools has shown that higher poverty schools require 20% to 40% more funds per pupil than lower poverty schools.

According to Van der Klaauw (2008) Title I is the largest federal program to date. In 2005 it exceeded \$12 billion and impacted more than 12.5 million students. As depicted in the National Assessment of Title I (2006), nearly all (93%) of the nation's school districts were allocated Title I funding. It was first authorized for 5 years, and has been reauthorized eight times since 1965. As reported by Farkas and Hall (2000), for many critics Title I is nothing more than a revenue sharing program that provides funds to local school districts to assist the needs of their lower SES students. Van der Klaauw (2008) found the allocation of Title I funding to schools is first dispersed to the county, then school districts, and then the individual schools. Whether the school will use Title I funds to serve individual students or the entire school as a whole ultimately depends on the type of educational services that the individual school provides.

A school district's poverty level determines its Title I allocation (Gordon, 2004). The assessment of Title I allocation to districts based on poverty can be difficult, as has been reported by previous empirical studies (Gordon, 2004). Title I funding is based on the poverty of children from the decennial censuses of population and is updated at 10-year intervals. Thus, though the poverty of districts can change on a continuous basis, changes to Title I allocations to a school district only happens every 10 years.

Farkas and Hall (2000) explained how these census statistics regarding low SES children ages 5 to 17 are the force behind Title I funding allocations at the county level. The funds are then suballocated to school districts by state education agencies based on the number of children from lower SES families. School districts are then able to allocate funds to individual schools based on the number of lower SES students in each school; these schools are labeled as Title I Schools. As implied by Lyons (2006), Title I funds do not necessary reach all the lower socioeconomic students. Title I allocation by school districts deflects funding away from lower

SES students in non-Title I Schools who have academic needs similar to those students in Title I Schools.

According to Van der Klaauw (2008) poverty in schools may be measured in one of two ways: the number of children from families receiving welfare benefits or the number of children eligible for free and reduced lunch under the national school lunch program. According to Lyons (2006) school districts must evaluate all schools above a 75% poverty level for Title I funding before they identify any other schools for funding. Schools with greater or equal to 75% poverty are considered “highest poverty schools.” Schools with greater or equal to 50% poverty are considered “high poverty schools.” Schools with poverty levels between 35% and 49.99% are considered “low to medium poverty schools.” Schools with poverty levels less than 35% are considered “low poverty schools.” As indicated by Lyons (2006) elementary schools are given priority by school district officials. This is because elementary schools, compared to middle and high schools, are more effective in implementing programs, activities, and remediation due to school curriculum and schedule.

Title I funds were intended to provide additional educational services to the lower SES students. However, Fullerton and Hochman (2011) revealed that congress discovered many school districts were not using their Title I allocation for their lower SES students. As a result, the federal government instituted three fiscal requirements that had a tremendous impact on Title I allocation. According to the USDOE (2008) a school district was required to have a Maintenance of Effort (MOE) or a comparability provision that stated its Title I schools were comparable in services to non-Title I schools, and that the Title I funds were going to supplement, not supplant, regular nonfederal funds. In regards to these three fiscal requirements, McClure (2008) discovered a great deal of confusion on part of local and state school officials.

Part of the confusion stemmed from the absence of any published guidance or federal monitoring concerning the fiscal requirements.

As stated by USDOE (2015), the MOE required every school district to maintain its expenditures from state and local funds from one year to the next, thus a school district cannot reduce spending and substitute those funds with federal funds. As stated by Wiener (2008), the MOE provision places accountability on school districts to spend at least 90% of funding toward the education of its students in the current year, as it has in the past. If a school district does not meet this accountability requirement and reduces its expenditures by more than 10%, the state in turn will reduce its Title I allocation to the school district by the same amount and redistribute the funds to other school districts.

According to Title I of ESEA of 1965 schools receiving funds under Title I must be comparable in the services to schools that do not receive Title I funds. This requirement of “comparability” was summed up by McClure (2008) as intended to fix certain issues such as school districts’ placing their least qualified and least paid teachers in their lower SES schools. As emphasized by Lyons (2006), the highest poverty schools were more likely to have more inexperienced teachers and a higher rate of teacher attrition than lower poverty schools. As discovered by Luebchow (2009), the more experienced teachers with advanced credentials within a school district had seniority; therefore, they tended to transfer to low poverty schools with more favorable conditions. There was also a greater disparity in the applicant pool of a lower poverty school versus a higher poverty school, as more experienced applicants tended to apply for lower poverty schools. According to Luebchow (2009) research has shown the continued hiring of applicants with little to no experience has a negative effect on student achievement. In conclusion, the Title I comparability provision was intended to prevent any of

these disparities by requiring school districts to use state and local funds to provide the same services to both non-Title I Schools and Title I Schools. Then, once all schools in the district were comparable in services, the district would use Title I funds to provide additional services to meet the needs of their SES or high poverty schools.

As emphasized by Lyons (2006), the comparability provision at best encourages districts to demonstrate in one of two ways that they are providing comparable services to Title I and non-Title I schools. One option, which the majority of schools adopt, is a written assurance of comparability filed with the state. This assurance is evidence or proof that a school district has implemented salary schedules, curricular materials, and instructional programs. The second option involves comparing the actual resources that a district provides to its Title I and non-Title I schools. Lyons (2006) asserted that the comparability provision has watered down regulations, inadequate enforcement, and a statutory loophole. Roza and Hill (2006) also determined that whether a school receives adequate funding depends ultimately on the district's allocation practices. The average expenditure at the district level is not as important as equitable distribution of funds among the schools. McClure (2008) stated the comparability provision is the only current education law that stands a chance in correcting inequities in intra-district school spending. Roza (2008) points out the importance of the comparability provision in regards to high poverty schools. This provision is the current tool used by federal officials to hold all school districts accountable for disbursement of funds in an equitable way.

The third provision was the supplement not supplant provision. This provision, according to McClure (2008), began to take shape due to school districts that were using federal money on the general needs of the school as well as paying for services that had been previously purchased with state and local funds. Wiener (2008) emphasized the importance of this

provision, as it provides lower SES students with additional funds separate from state and local funds. If state and local funds are allocated to lower SES students on an equitable basis, Title I funds would serve their purpose and provide extra support services. Roza (2008) concluded that federal officials began realizing that in order for Title I funds to have an impact on lower SES students, federal funding would have to be supplementary to what state and local funds were providing across schools.

The types of educational services provided by Title I funds are left up to the school district and individual schools. The two most commonly used programs are the “targeted assistance program” and the “school wide program.” Van der Klaauw (2008) pointed out that the targeted assistance program has been the most commonly used educational service that is financed by Title I funds. The targeted assistance program increased in popularity due to the release of the comparability provision and the supplement, not supplant provision.

According to Van der Klaauw (2008) the most effective way for school districts to comply with these provisions is to have a targeted assistance program in all their schools. Every school adopted a pull-out program in which lower SES students are pulled out of their regular classrooms to receive remedial instruction by reading specialists or a Title I teacher who was paid entirely from Title I funds. Wang and Wong (1997) acknowledged the targeted assistance program as a program that chose to focus Title I resources on early intervention strategies that served lower SES students through pull out arrangements. This meant that students who were not considered lower SES students were unable to receive any assistance from a Title I teacher, or for example, were not allowed to use any computer equipment that was purchased with Title I funds.

However, Title I schools with a school-wide program have more flexibility. The concept of improving the entire educational program is considered a “school wide program.” Schools that operate as school-wide programs are also referred to as School Wide Schools. These schools are allowed to use Title I funds for all students regardless of SES status (Wang & Wong, 1997). Under the ESEA 1994 reauthorization, “high poverty schools” were allowed to use Title I funds to improve the entire school for all students rather than the targeted lower SES students (Kirby, 2003). “A Title I school wide program is a comprehensive reform strategy designed to upgrade the entire educational program in a Title I school with a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to improve the achievement of the lowest achieving students” (USDOE, 2015, para. 6). According to the National Assessment of Title I (2006) in the 2004-2005 school year, 87% of Title I students were accounted for through a school-wide program as well as 67% of all Title I funds.

Sunderman (2006) stated that school-wide programs removed many of the major issues schools had with integrating Title I funds into the school curriculum. However, Farkas and Hall (2006) insisted that school-wide programs gave administrators too much freedom with how they spent Title I funds. The possibility that an administrator could spend funds on goods and services that the district would have paid for using state and local funds was completely ignored by many educational reformers. As inferred by McClure (2008), all students are eligible for Title I funds in a School Wide School. Therefore, Title I funds become general aid in high poverty schools and did not have to target specific students or services. The USDOE (2015) has been instrumental in persuading and advocating fund consolidation in order to promote more flexibility in schools.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a significant difference in elementary schools' TVAAS Composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I schools. As Sanders (1998) revealed, aggregated data on the TVAAS has continually shown that students at the lowest levels of achievement display more growth year to year than their peers. Specifically, this researcher examines the impact of Title I funding on student academic growth at the elementary level. This chapter includes a description of the research design, selection of the population, data collection procedure, research questions, null hypotheses, data analysis procedures, and a summary of the chapter.

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

This nonexperimental quantitative design includes the following research questions and null hypotheses.

Research Question 1: Is there a significant difference in schools' overall composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

Ho1: There is no significant difference in schools' overall composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee.

Research Question 2: Is there a significant difference in schools' numeracy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

Ho2: There is no significant difference in schools' numeracy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee.

Research Question 3: Is there a significant difference in schools' literacy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

Ho3: There is no significant difference in schools' literacy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee.

Research Question 4: Is there a significant difference in schools' combined numeracy and literacy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

Ho4: There is no significant difference in schools' combined numeracy and literacy composite scores combined between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee.

Research Question 5: Is there a significant difference in the mean years of teaching experience between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

Ho5: There is no significant difference in the mean years of teaching experience between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee.

Research Question 6: Is there a significant relationship between schools' overall composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools?

Ho6: There is no significant relationship between schools' overall composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools.

Research Question 7: Is there a significant relationship between schools' overall composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-

Title I elementary schools?

Ho7: There is no significant relationship between schools' overall composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools.

Research Question 8: Is there a significant relationship between schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Title I Schools?

Ho8: There is no significant relationship between schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Title I elementary schools.

Research Question 9: Is there a significant relationship between schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Non- Title I elementary schools?

Ho9: There is no significant relationship between schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools.

Research Question 10: Is there a significant relationship between schools' literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools?

Ho10: There is no significant relationship between schools' literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Title I elementary schools.

Research Question 11: Is there a significant relationship between schools' literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools?

Ho11: There is no significant relationship between schools' literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools.

Research Question 12: Is there a significant relationship between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the average years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools?

Ho12: There is no significant relationship between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the average years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools.

Research Question 13: Is there a significant relationship between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools?

Ho13: There is no significant relationship between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools.

Instrumentation

The TVAAS data for this study were collected from TNDOE state report card. According to the TNDOE (2015) school-level TVAAS are scores that assess growth at the school level. Scores are reported on a 1-5 scale and consist of literacy, numeracy, combined literacy and

numeracy, and a composite score. Each elementary school with Grades 4 and 5 receives a score for each of these subjects. These scores are based on the Tennessee Comprehensive Achievement Test (TCAP), a criterion referenced achievement test given in Grades 3-8. It measures student achievement in reading/language arts, also known as literacy; math, also known as numeracy; science; and social studies. The state of Tennessee uses the TVAAS to analyze the increase in T-CAP scores from year to year.

The TVAAS score on the state report card is based on Sanders's (1998) mathematical formula that is used to calculate academic growth from one year to the next. Each grade level and subject area has a norm target gain of 0.00, which is considered one year of growth. Because TVAAS scores measure the amount of growth, one year of data are needed as a baseline to calculate the gain score.

The TVAAS is a statistical analysis used to measure the impact of districts, schools, and teachers on the academic progress of groups of students from year to year (TNDOE, 2015b). TVAAS composites are 1-year scores reported on a scale of level 1 to level 5, whereby level 1 or level 2 scores indicate that a school is achieving less than the expected growth, a level 3 score indicates that a school is achieving the expected growth, and a level 4 or level 5 score indicates that a school is exceeding the expected growth.

Each school included in the study was coded as a Title I school or non-Title I school. For the purpose of this study, any school with an economically disadvantaged population, defined as having greater than or equal to 75% were coded as a Title I school. Any school with an economically disadvantaged population, defined as having less than 35% of its students eligible for a free or reduced meal, was coded as a non-Title I school. The data for the SES were obtained from the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 state report cards for each school.

Population

The population involved in this study consisted of students in Grades 4 and 5 in the participating county public schools. Out of all Tennessee elementary schools, 48 elementary schools within nine school systems were selected, based on a PreK-5, K-5, or 3-5 school model, school wide school status, and on the percent of free and reduced priced meals. These schools had valid TVAAS scores for students in Grades 4 and 5 for the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. The researcher chose Title I schools with an economically disadvantaged population greater than or equal to 75% and Non-Title I schools with an economically disadvantaged population equal to or less than 35%. The researcher collected school-wide data from the National Center for Education Statistics and the TDOE. Each school in the state of Tennessee is placed in its database. This database stores certain school characteristics such as number of students, teacher to student ratio, Title I status or Non-Title I status, and per pupil expenditures.

To increase the validity of this study and provide consistent political and geographic influences on the results, the researcher only considered schools from Tennessee. Two years of report card data were compared independently of each other by subject area to account for any major discrepancies that may occur from using one year of report card data. In order to account for the gap between lower and higher SES schools, Title I schools having a SES population of 75% or greater and non-title I schools having a SES population of equal to or less than 35% were used in this study. The school systems in this study included those from two cities (Kingsport, and Tullahoma) and seven counties (Bradley, Hamilton, Knox, Montgomery, Rutherford, Sullivan, and Sumner). All the elementary schools chosen to participate in this study included grades 4 and 5. All participating schools were also on a traditional schedule, which means they

had a long summer break, a short winter break, and a short spring break. The selected schools shared a similar grading scale for communicating student progress to parents.

Data Collection

For this study all schools and school systems were coded to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all parties involved. Schools' TVAAS scores were retrieved from the TNDOE using the electronic report card, which populates all data by school year. Teachers' years of experience was retrieved by the TNDOE and sent to researcher.

The researched obtained data for this study by using electronic reporting from the years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 for fourth and fifth grade students through the TNDOE. To be considered for this study schools must have had all the required data on the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 state report cards; elementary schools without Grades 4 and 5 or those having incomplete data on the state report card could not become a part of this study. All elementary schools included in this study operated on a traditional school year calendar (August-May) and were located in Tennessee.

Tennessee publishes an electronic report card for each school system and for each school in the district. Electronic report card information is available on the state website where a filter can be used to review the school system and school's report card; the website presents TVAAS composite scores in each school profile (TNDOE, 2015a).

Data Analysis

In this quantitative nonexperimental study, the researcher compared relationships among Title I and non-Title I elementary schools in regards to their TVAAS literacy composite scores, numeracy composite scores, combined literacy and numeracy composite scores, and overall composite scores. The school-wide TVAAS scores comprise some of the components on the

Tennessee state report card. Only schools that used Title I funds as a school-wide program were considered for this study. This study included 2 years of interval data.

The statistical program IBM-SPSS was used to analyze data. Research Questions 1 through 5 were conducted using a series of paired *t*-tests to determine if there were differences in the TVAAS score between Title I and non-Title I elementary schools for the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. Pearson correlations were used to determine if a relationship exists between the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Title I and Non-Title I schools and the relationships between mean years of experience and TVAAS literacy composite scores, numeracy composite scores, combined literacy and numeracy composite scores, and overall composite scores. All data were analyzed at the .05 level of significance.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to compare Title I schools and Non-Title I schools in regards to elementary school TVAAS composite results. All the schools were located in Tennessee. The researcher chose 48 elementary schools within nine school systems, based on a Pre-K-5, K-5, or 3-5 school model, school wide school status, and on the percent of free and reduced priced meals. Data were gathered from the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.

In this chapter the data were analyzed to answer 13 research questions and 13 null hypotheses. To provide those answers, the researcher analyzed a compilation of school-specific data using the statistical program IBM-SPSS.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1: Is there a significant difference in the schools' overall composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

Ho1: There is no significant difference in schools' overall composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee.

A paired sample t-test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in the schools' overall composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools for 2 consecutive years (2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years). The results indicated that the mean Title I school score ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.23$) was significantly less than the mean Non-Title I score ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.93$), $t(23) = 4.0$, $p < .001$. Therefore, Ho1 was rejected. Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee had a higher overall composite score than Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. The effect size was medium ($\eta^2 = .41$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was -2.11 to -.68.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of Title I and Non-Title I school's overall composite scores in the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.

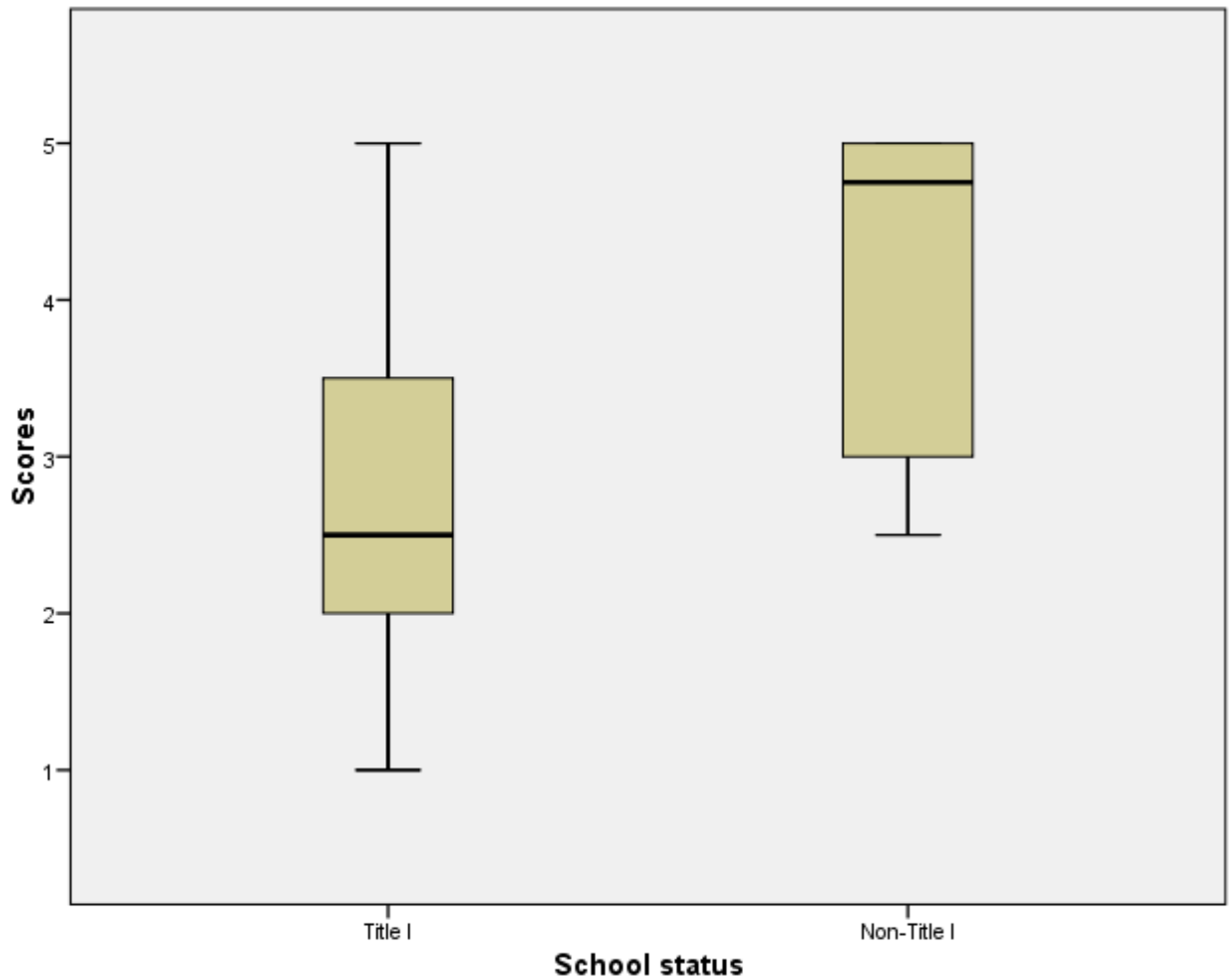


Figure 1. The schools' overall composite scores: 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2: Is there a significant difference in the schools' numeracy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the schools' numeracy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee.

A paired sample t-test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in school's numeracy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools for 2 consecutive years (2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years). The results indicated that the mean Title I school score ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.3$) was significantly lower than the mean Non-Title I score ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.80$), $t(23) = 2.57$, $p < .001$. Therefore, H_0 was rejected. Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee had a higher numeracy composite score than Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. The effect size was small ($\eta^2 = .22$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was -1.32 to -0.142. Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of Title I and Non-Title I schools' numeracy composite scores in the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.

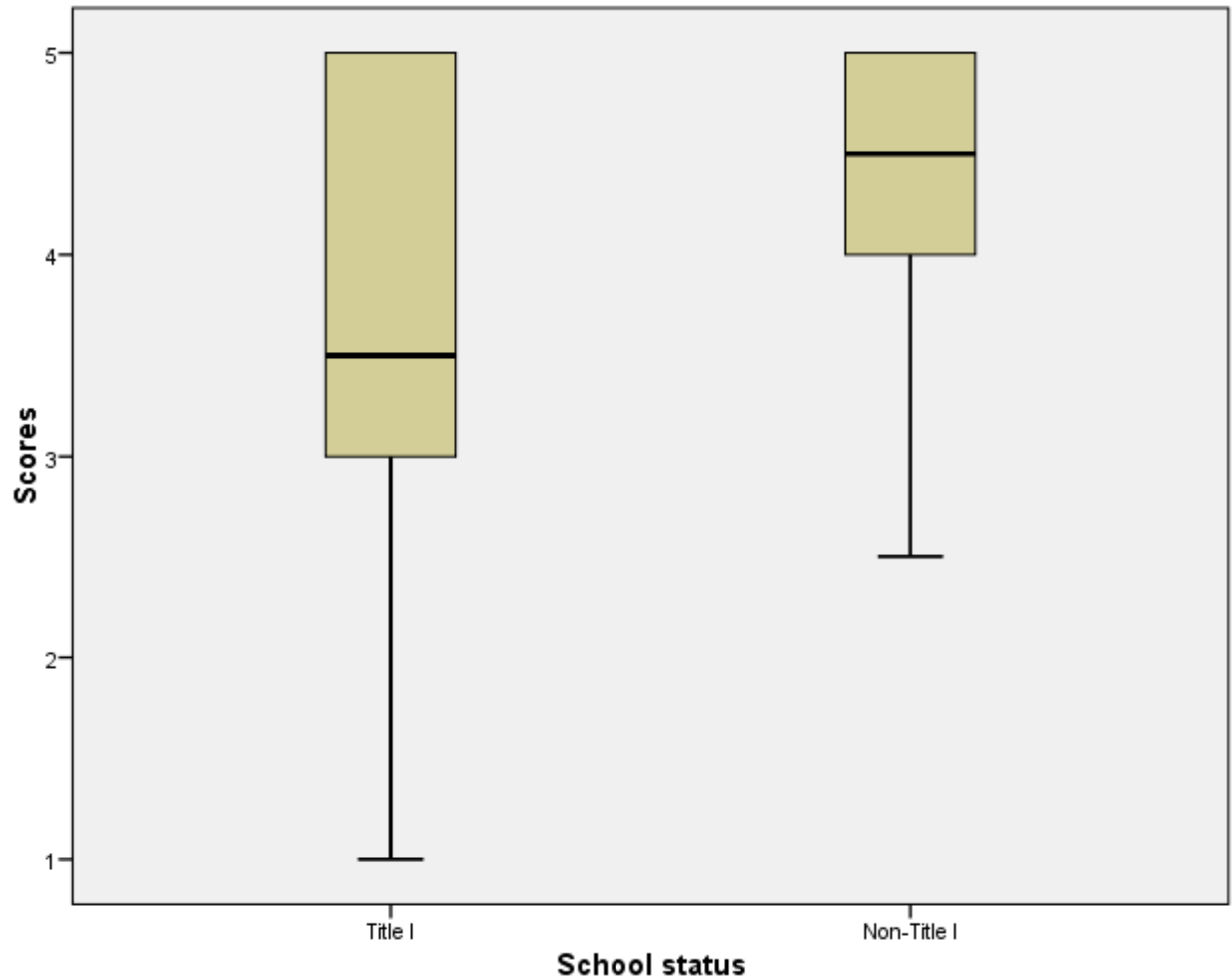


Figure 2. The schools' numeracy composite scores: 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3: Is there a significant difference in the schools' literacy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the schools' literacy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee.

A paired sample t-test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in the schools' composite literacy scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools for 2 consecutive years (2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years). The results indicated that the mean Title I school score ($M = 2.47$, $SD = 1.18$) was significantly lower than the mean

Non-Title I score ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.75$), $t(23) = 4.81$, $p < .001$. Therefore, H_03 was rejected. Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee had a higher literacy composite score than Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. The effect size was medium ($\eta^2 = .50$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was -2.03 to $-.81$. Figure 3 shows the distribution of Title I and Non-Title I the schools' literacy composite scores in the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.

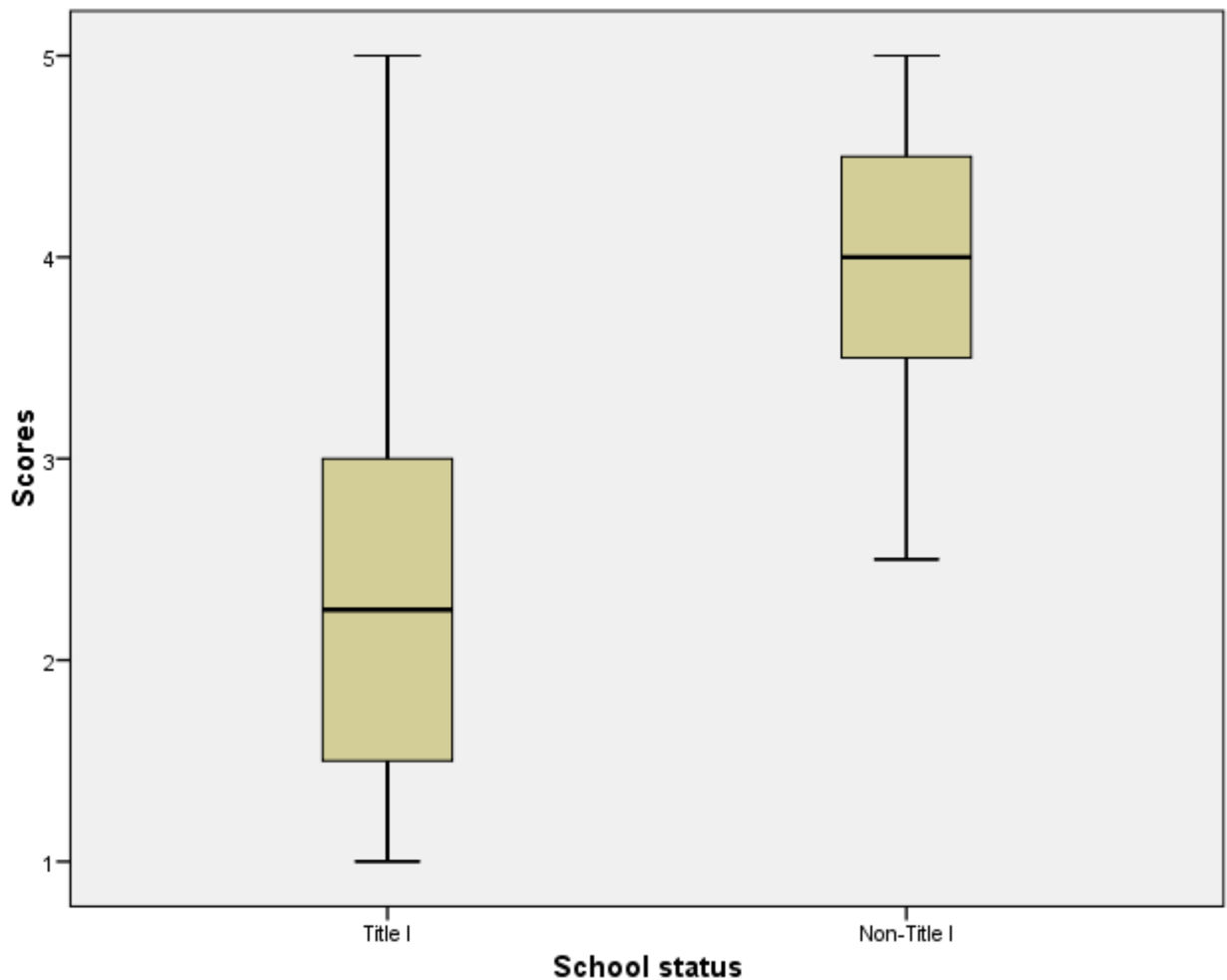


Figure 3. The schools' literacy composite scores: 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4: Is there a significant difference in the schools' combined

numeracy and literacy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

Ho4: There is no significant difference in the schools' combined numeracy and literacy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee.

A paired sample t-test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in the schools' combined numeracy and literacy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools for 2 consecutive years (2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years). The results indicated that the mean Title I school score ($M = 3.0$, $SD = 1.16$) was significantly lower than the mean Non-Title I score ($M = 4.27$, $SD = .68$), $t(23) = 4.1$, $p < .001$. Therefore, Ho4 was rejected. Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee had a higher combined numeracy and literacy composite score than Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. The effect size was medium ($\eta^2 = .42$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was -1.91 to -0.63. Figure 4 shows the distribution of Title I and Non-Title I schools' combined numeracy and literacy composite scores in the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.

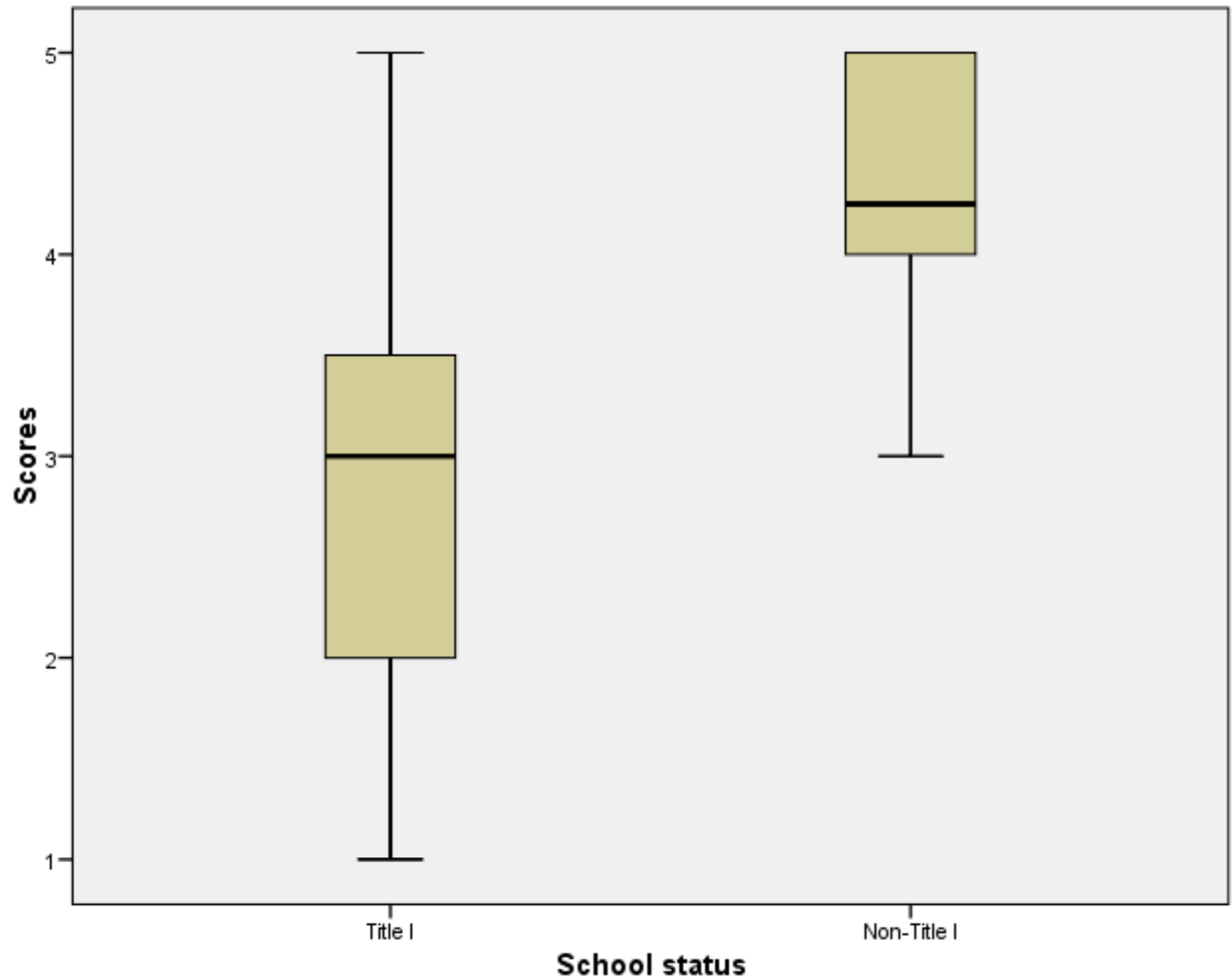


Figure 4. The schools' combined numeracy and literacy composite scores: 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.

Research Question 5

Research Question 5: Is there a significant difference in the mean years of teaching experience between teachers at Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

Ho5: There is no significant difference in the mean years of teaching experience between teachers at Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee.

A paired sample t-test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in the mean years of teaching experience between teachers at Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools for 2 consecutive years (2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years). The

results indicated that the mean Title I school score ($M = 10.55$, $SD = 2.52$) was significantly lower than the mean Non-Title I score ($M = 12.25$, $SD = 2.55$), $t(23) = 2.41$, $p < .001$. Therefore, H_05 was rejected. Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee had a higher mean years of teaching experience than Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. The effect size was small ($\eta^2 = .20$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was -3.16 to -.24. Figure 5 provides data for the Title I and Non-Title I schools' mean years of teaching experience in the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.

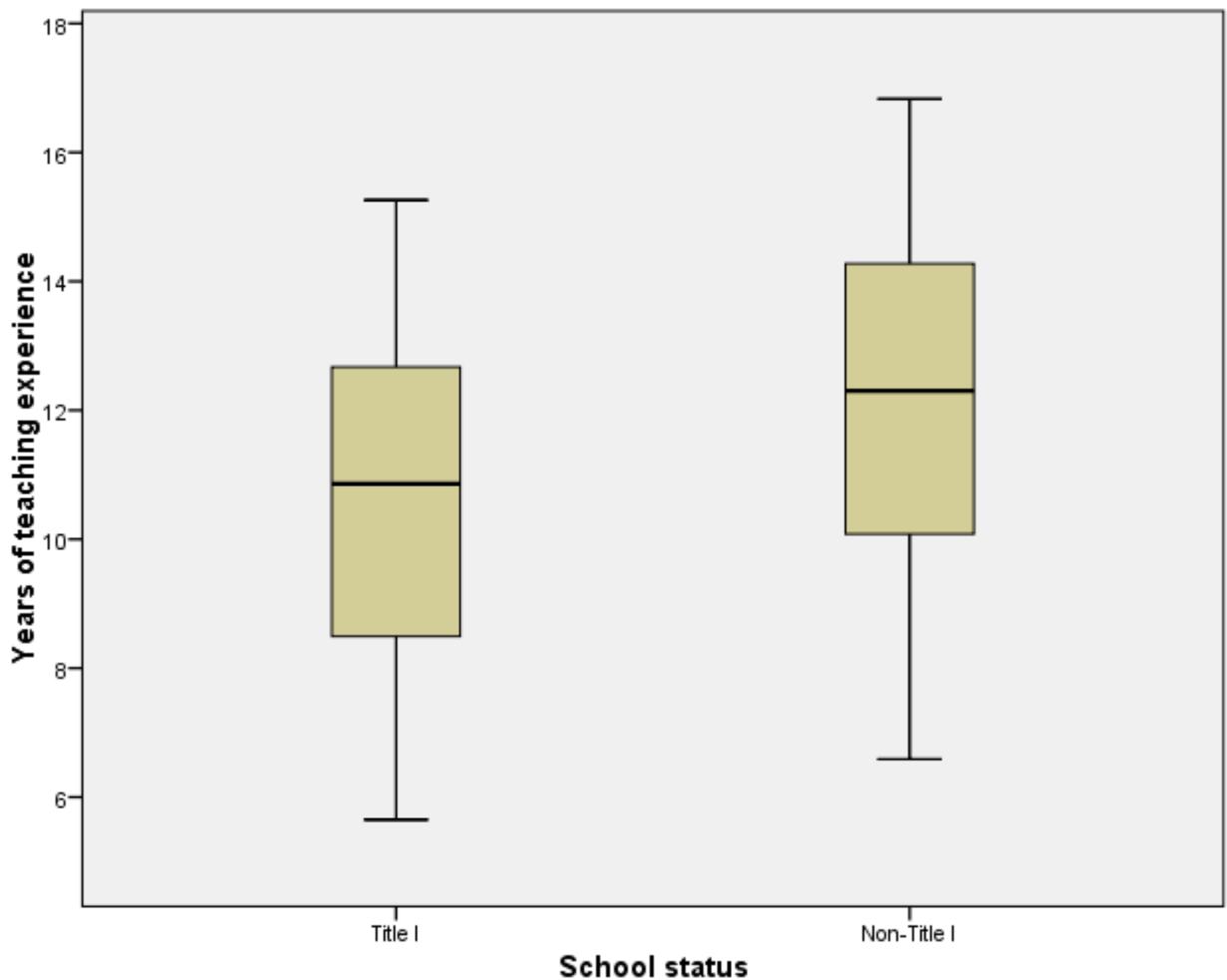


Figure 5. Mean years of teaching experience: 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.

Research Question 6

Research Question 6: Is there a significant relationship between the schools' overall

composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools?

Ho6: There is no significant relationship between the schools' overall composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the schools' overall composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I schools. The test showed a weak positive correlation between the two variables, $r(24) = .09, p = .687$. Therefore the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Figure 6 summarizes the results: there was a weak positive correlation between the schools' overall composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience in Title I schools.

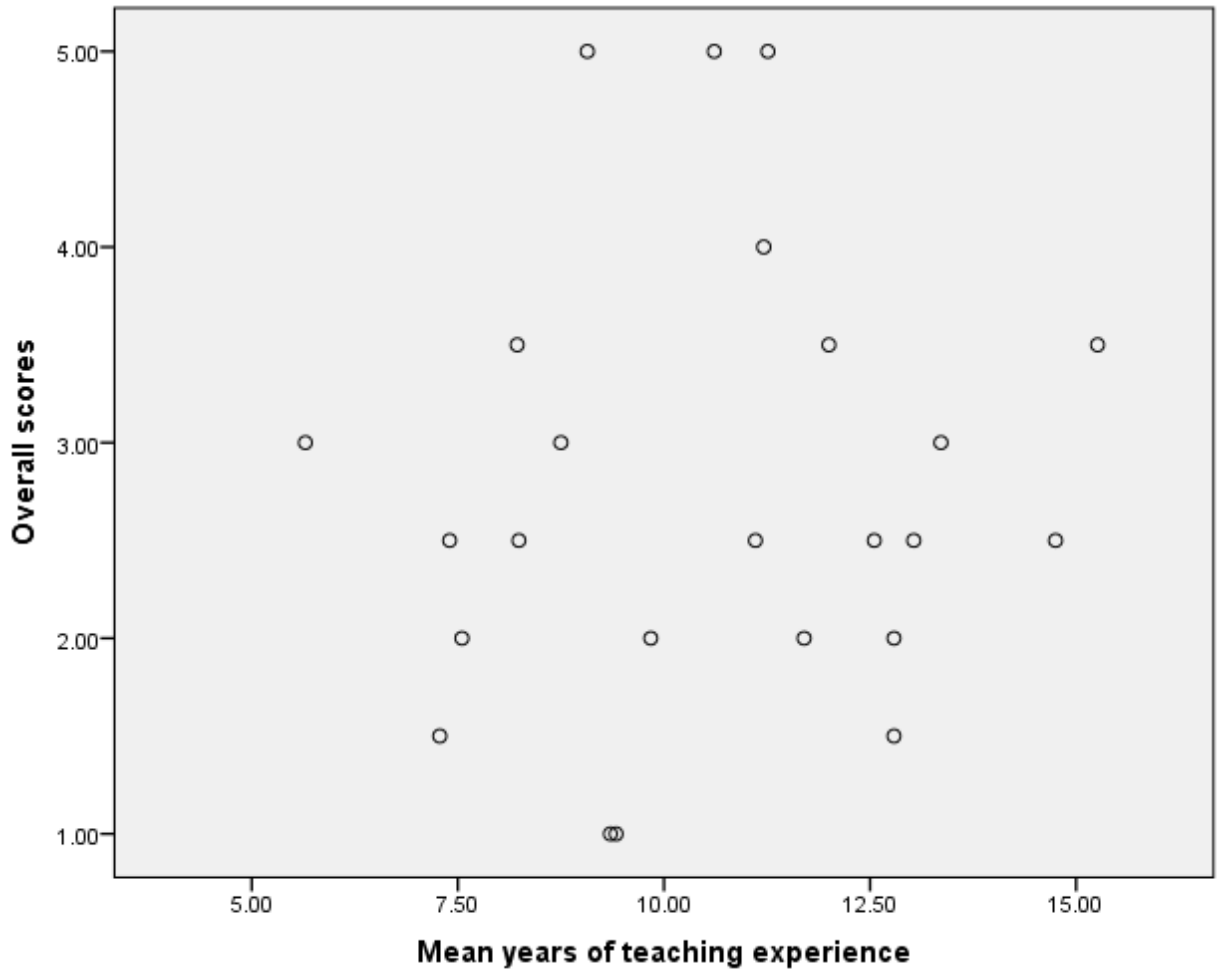


Figure 6. Overall composite scores and mean years of teaching experience in Title I schools.

Research Question 7

Research Question 7: Is there a significant relationship between the schools' overall composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools?

Ho7: There is no significant relationship between the schools' overall composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship between

the schools' overall composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I schools. There was a weak negative correlation between the two variables, $r(24) = -.13, p = .552$. Therefore the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Figure 7 summarizes the results, showing a weak negative correlation between the schools' overall composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience in Non-Title I schools.

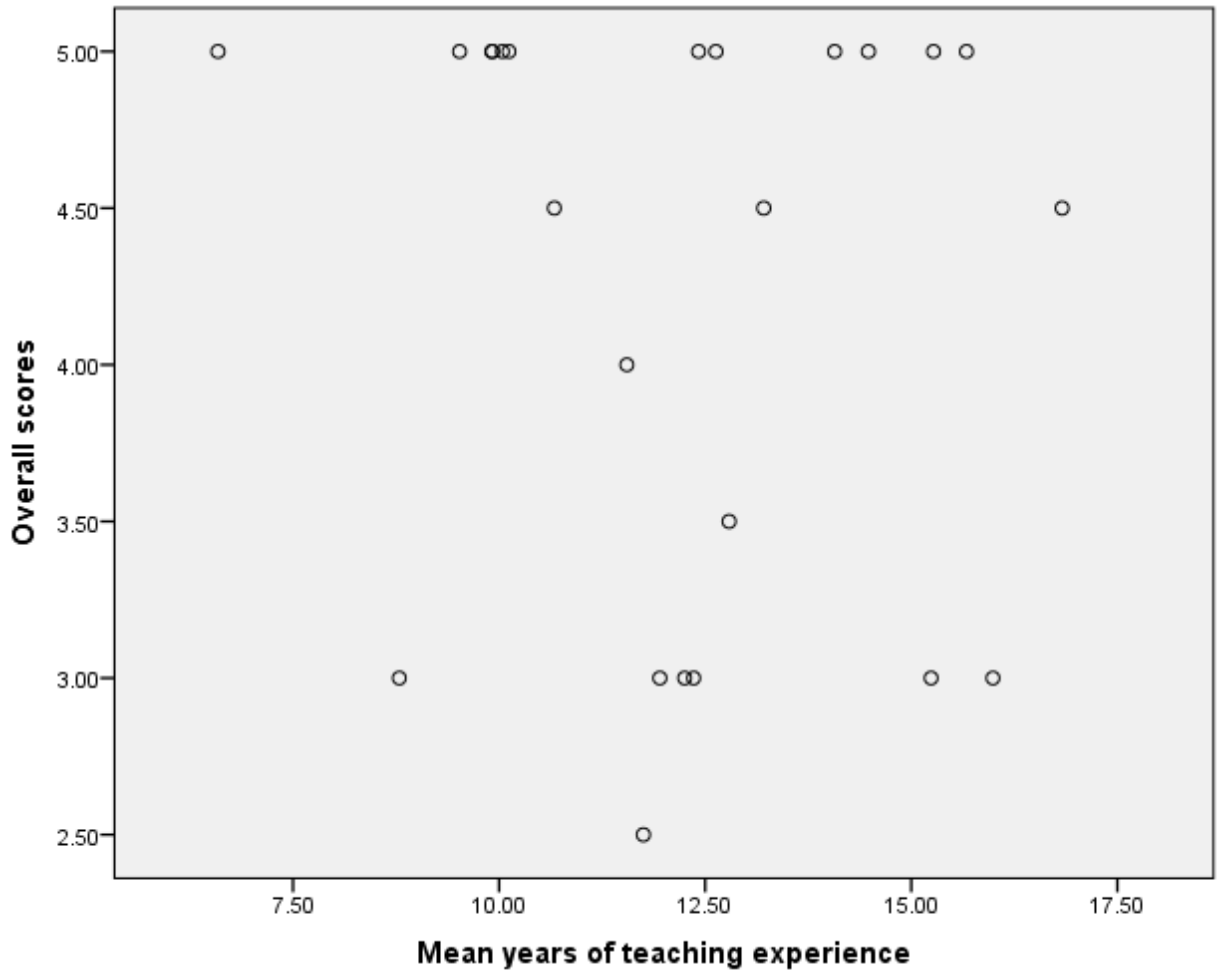


Figure 7. Overall composite scores and mean years of teaching experience in Non-Title I schools.

Researching Question 8

Research Question 8: Is there a significant relationship between the schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Title I Schools?

Ho8: There is no significant relationship between the schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Title I elementary schools.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the Title I schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for their teachers. There was a weak negative correlation between the two variables, $r(24) = -.11, p = .625$. Therefore the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Figure 8 summarizes the results and shows a weak negative correlation between the schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience in Title I schools.

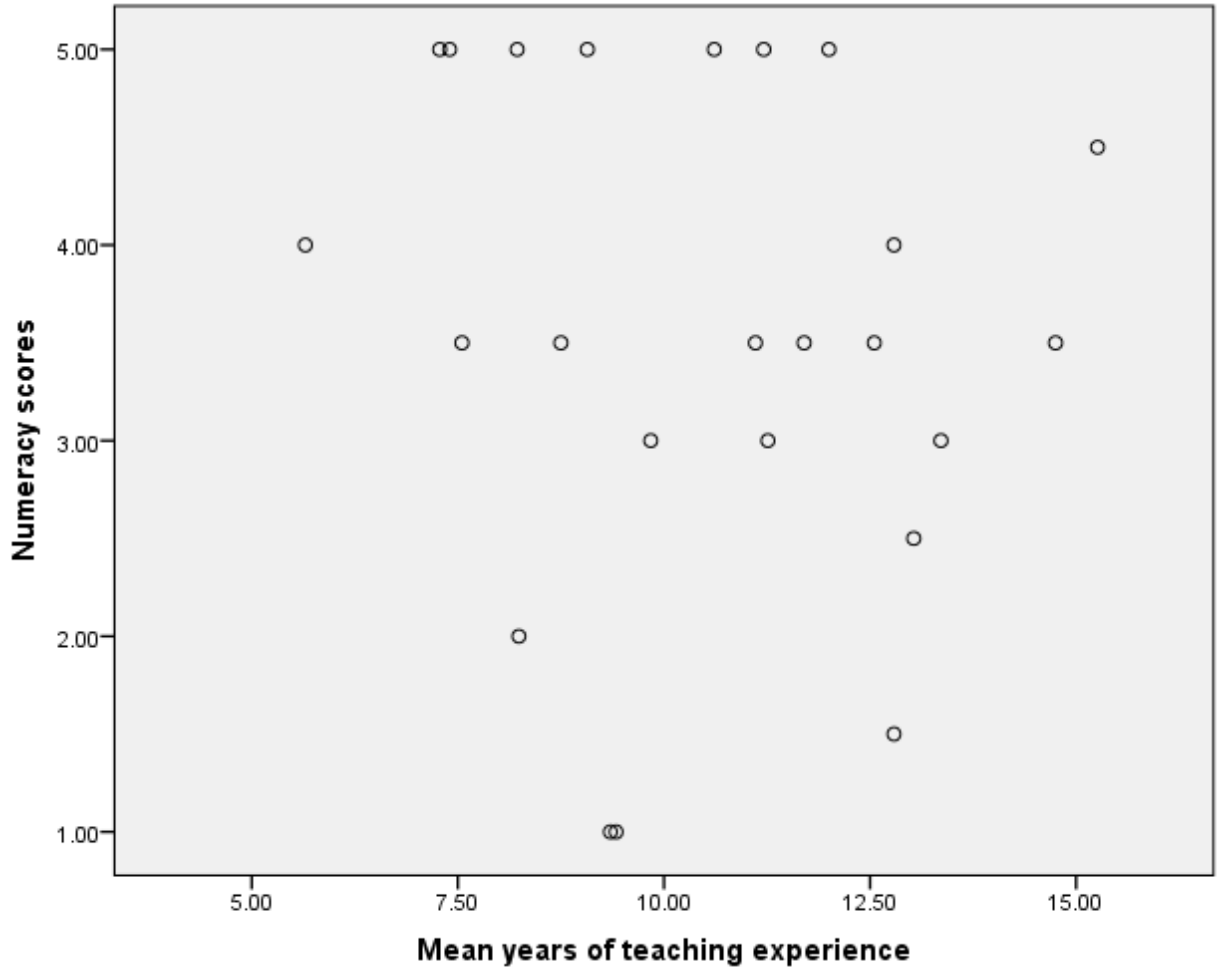


Figure 8. Numeracy composite scores and mean years of teaching experience in Title I schools.

Research Question 9

Research Question 9: Is there a significant relationship between the schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools?

Ho9: There is no significant relationship between the schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between

the schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I schools. The results showed there was a weak positive correlation between the two variables, $r(24) = .06, p = .797$. Therefore the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Figure 9 summarizes the results, there was a weak positive correlation between the schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience in Non-Title I schools.

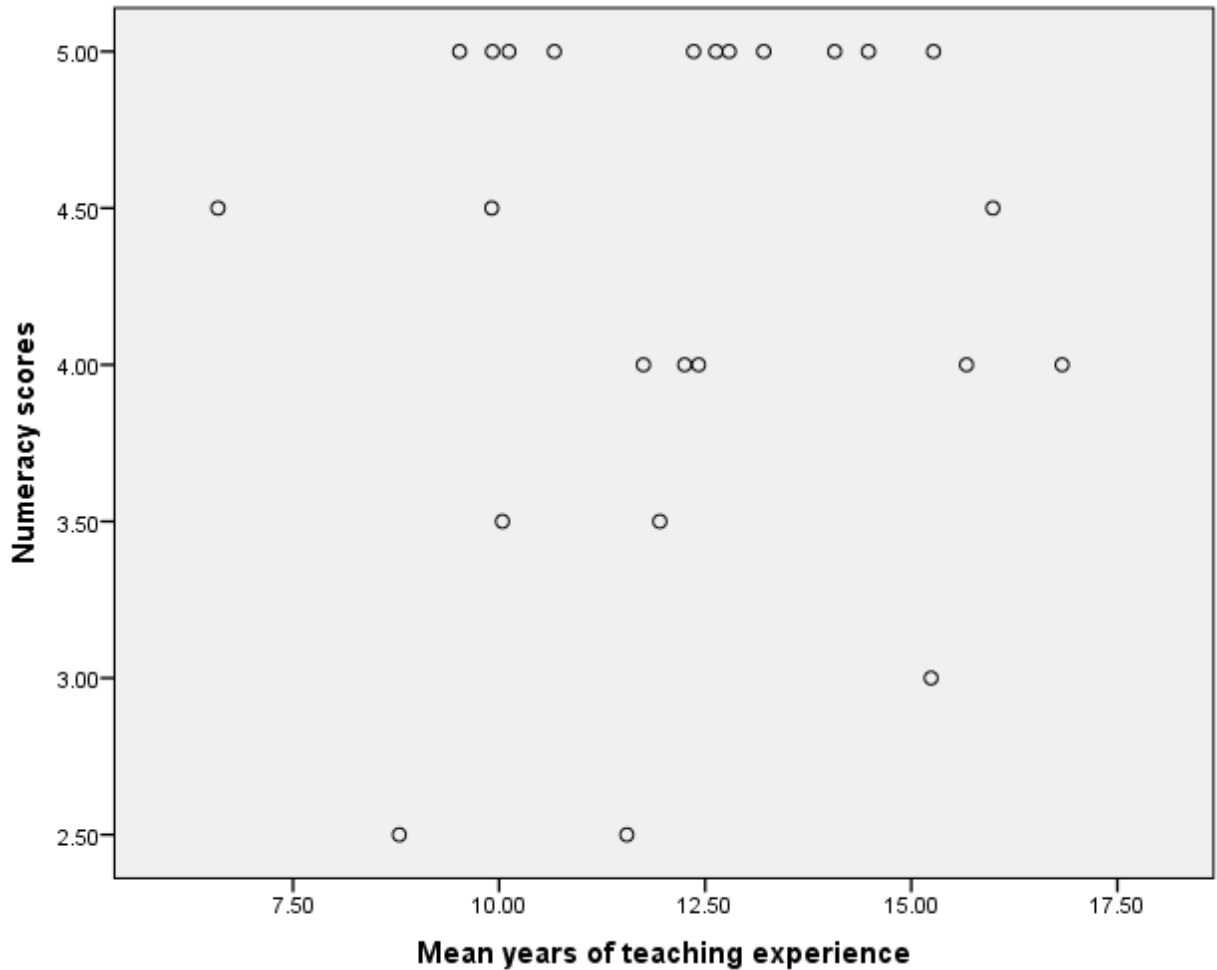


Figure 9. Numeracy composite scores and mean years of teaching experience in Non-Title I schools.

Research Question 10

Research Question 10: Is there a significant relationship between the schools' literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools?

Ho10: There is no significant relationship between the schools' literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Title I elementary schools.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the schools' literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I schools. There was a weak positive correlation between the two variables, $r(24) = .10$, $p = .642$. Therefore the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Figure 10 summarizes the results: there was a weak positive correlation between school's literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience in Title I schools.

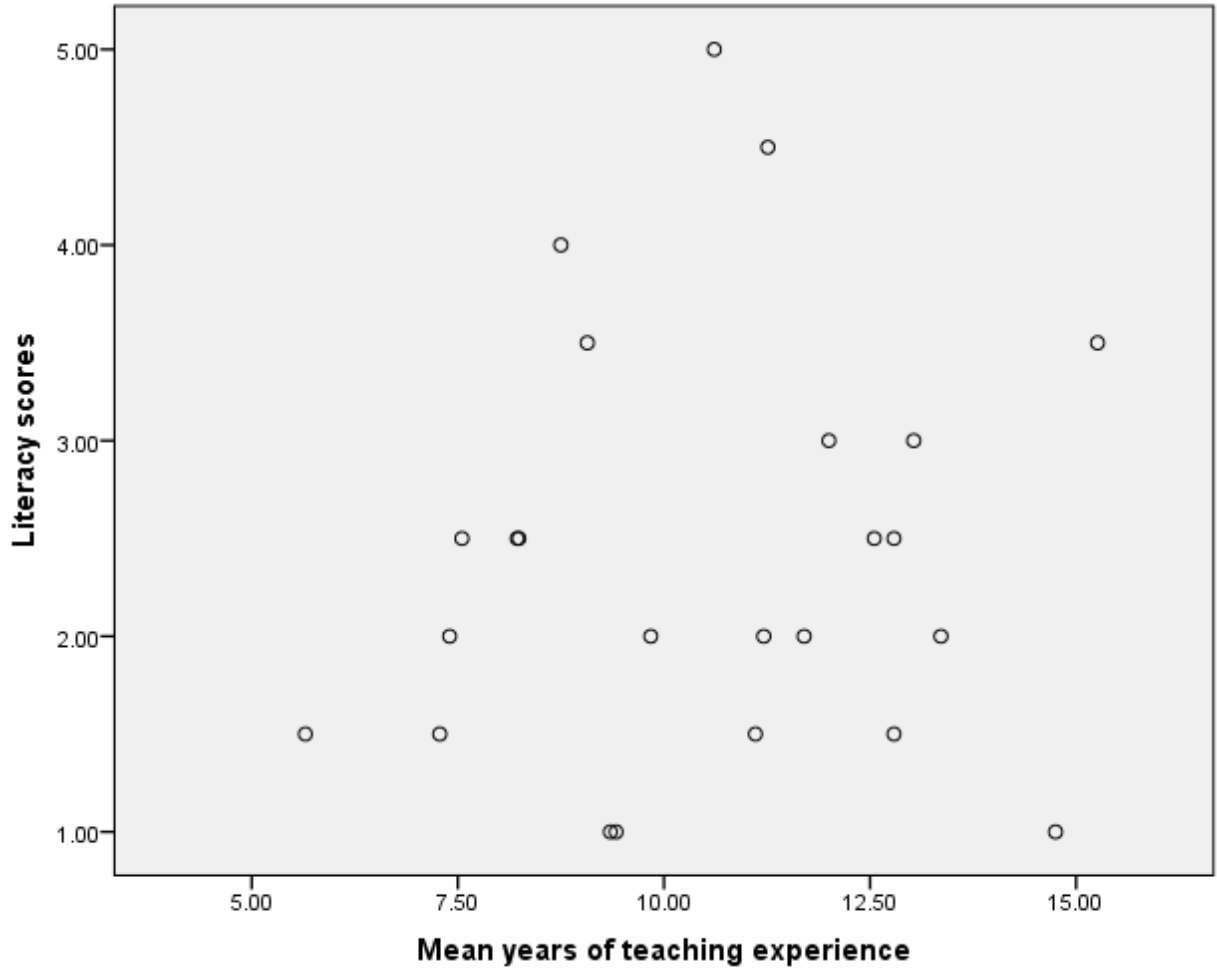


Figure 10. Literacy composite scores and mean years of teaching experience in Title I schools.

Research Question 11

Research Question 11: Is there a significant relationship between the schools' literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools?

Ho11: There is no significant relationship between the schools' literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between

the schools' literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I schools. There was a weak negative correlation between the two variables, $r(24) = -.21, p = .322$. Therefore the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Figure 11 summarizes the results, showing a weak negative correlation between the schools' literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience in Non-Title I schools.

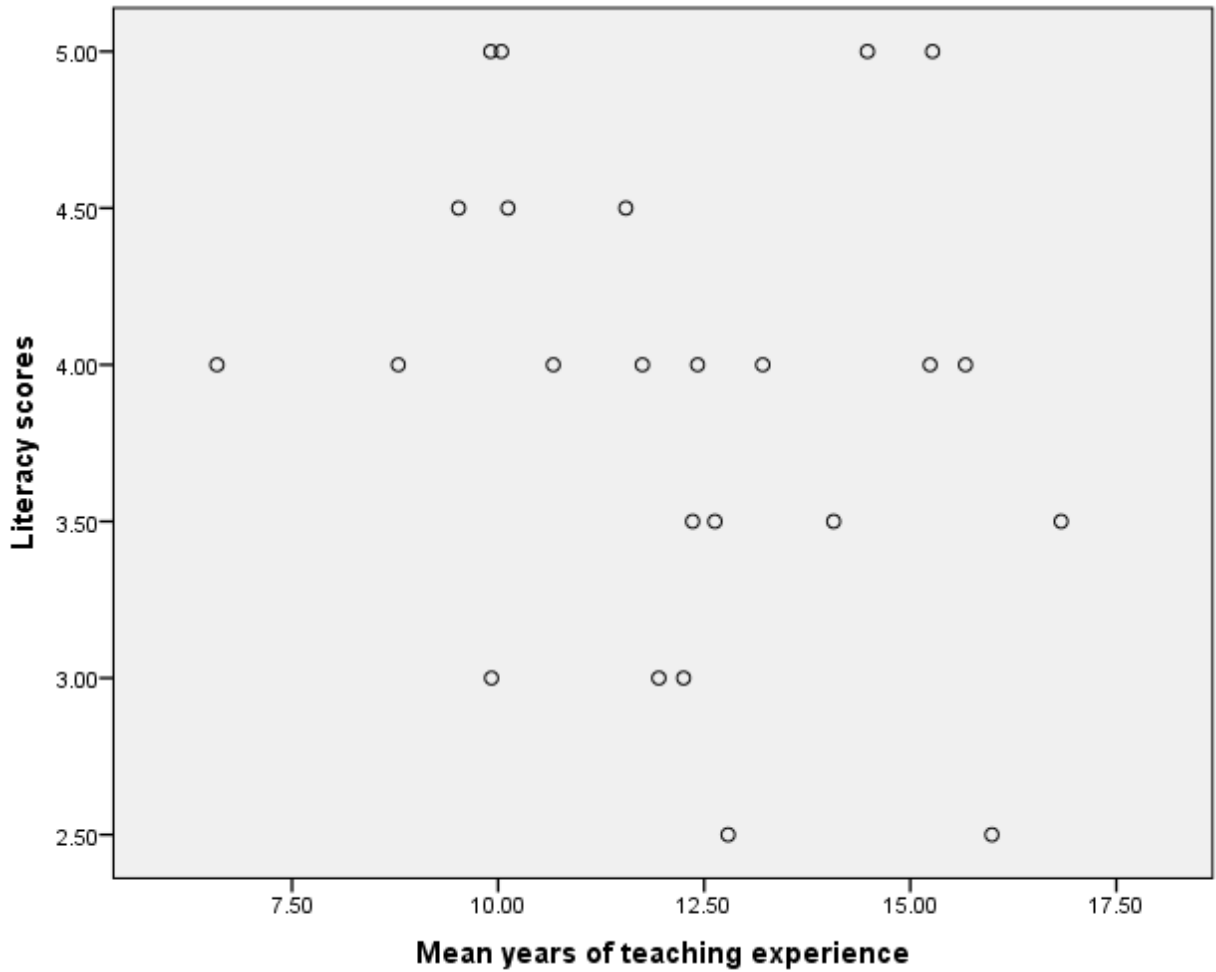


Figure 11. Literacy composite scores and mean years of teaching experience in Non-Title I schools.

Research Question 12

Research Question 12: Is there a significant relationship between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the average years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools?

Ho12: There is no significant relationship between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the average years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I schools. There was a weak negative correlation between the two variables, $r(24) = -.01, p = .954$. Therefore the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Figure 12 summarizes the results: there was a weak negative correlation between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience in Title I schools.

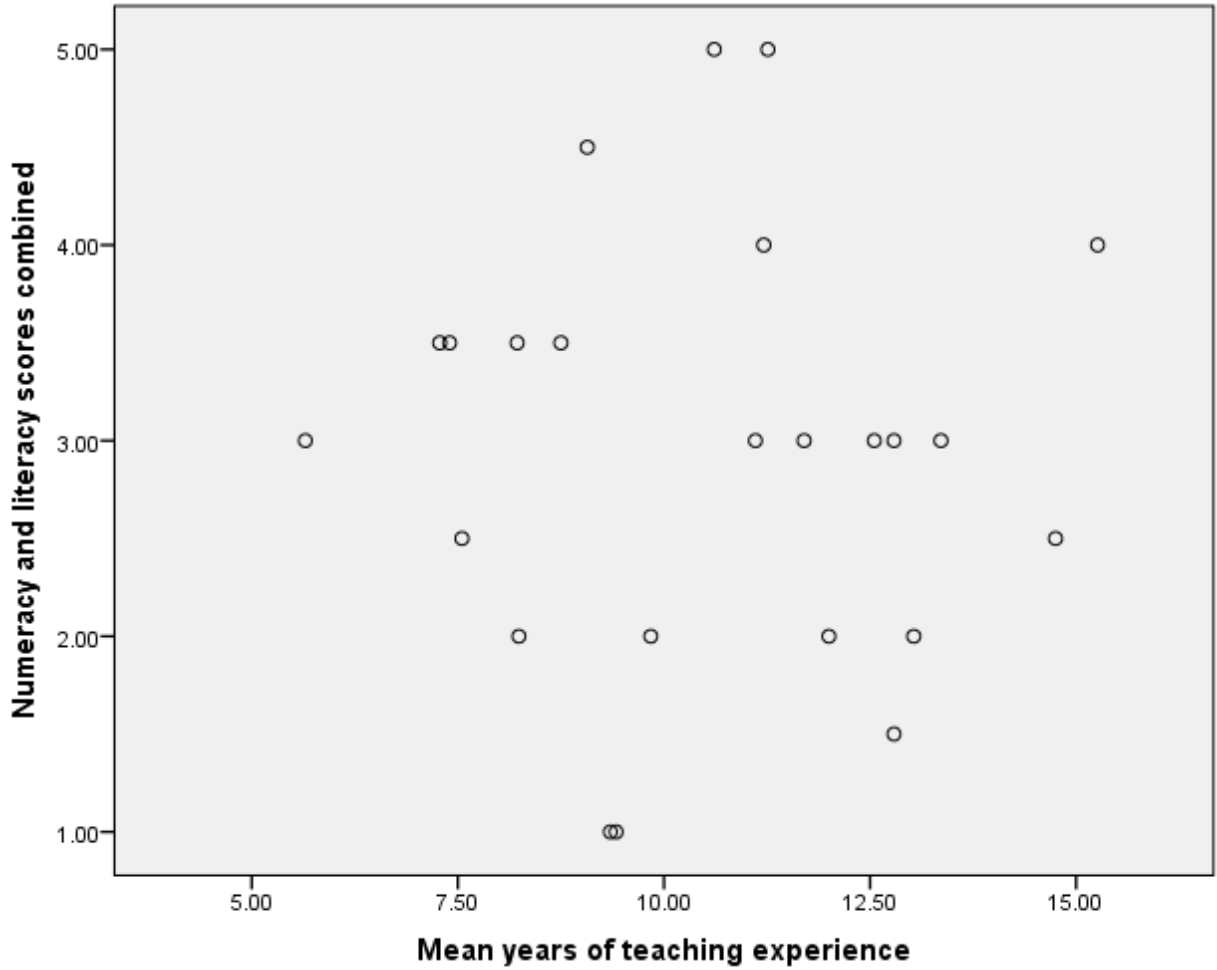


Figure 12. Combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and mean years of teaching experience in Title I schools.

Research Question 13

Research Question 13: Is there a significant relationship between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools?

Ho13: There is no significant relationship between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I schools. There was a weak negative correlation between the two variables, $r(24) = -.14, p = .503$. Therefore the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Figure 13 summarizes the results: there was a weak negative correlation between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience in Non-Title I schools.

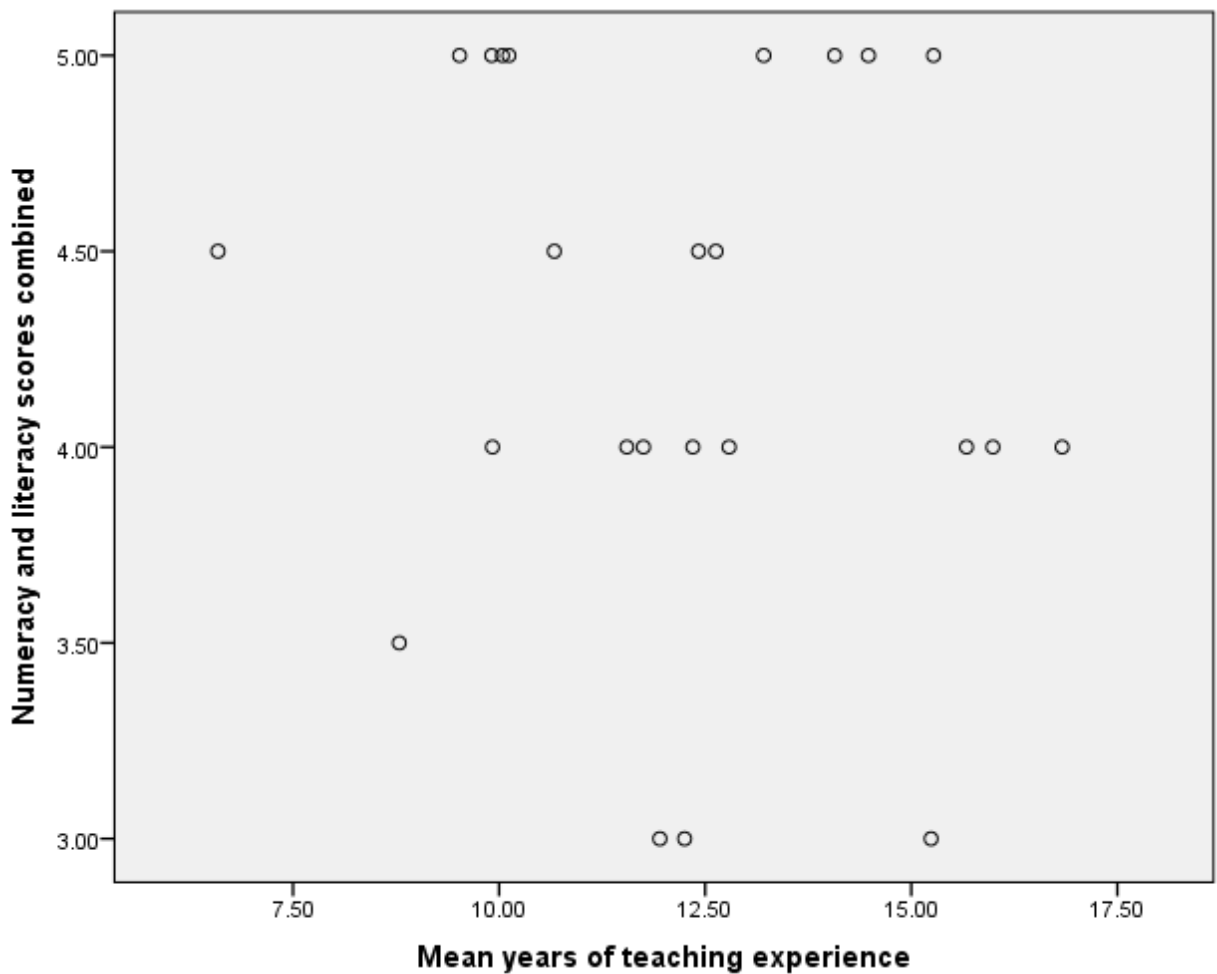


Figure 13. Combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and mean years of teaching experience in Non-Title I schools.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 5 contains the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for readers who may use the results of this study to evaluate Title I funding and its relationship to achievement in their school system. The purpose of this study was to compare Title I schools and Non-Title I schools in regards to elementary school TVAAS composite results. The study was conducted using data retrieved from the Tennessee State Report Card on school TVAAS composite scores as well as data from TNDOE on the mean years of teaching experience in each elementary school in the study.

Summary

The statistical analysis reported in the study was based on 13 research questions presented in Chapters 1 and 3. Each research question had a corresponding null hypothesis. The researcher used a paired t-test to answer research questions 1 through 5. Research questions 6 through 13 were analyzed using a Pearson correlation coefficient. The researcher selected 48 elementary schools within nine school systems, based on a Pre K-5, K-5, or 3-5 school model, school wide school status, and the percent of free and reduced priced meals. The schools were located in Tennessee. Data were gathered for the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. To make the study more specific, only schools that used Title I funds as a school-wide program were considered for this study. To account for the gap between lower and higher SES schools, Title I schools having a SES population of 75% or greater and Non-Title I schools having a SES population equal to or less than 35% were used in this study. The purpose of the study was to determine if there was a relationship between Title I funding and elementary school academic growth in Tennessee.

As a result of the analyses, the researcher determined that non-Title I schools had a significantly higher composite score than Title I schools. The results also supported the findings of Welner and Mathis (2015), who argued that current education policy has failed our lower socioeconomic students by ignoring the many obstacles those children face outside schools that adversely affect their school performance. This study contributes to the growing body of research that substantiates the impact of environmental factors that lead to school performance.

The 13 research questions and findings are summarized in the following section.

Research Question 1: Is there a significant difference in the schools' overall composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

There was a significant difference ($p < .001$) in the schools' overall composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. The analysis revealed that the mean overall composite score for Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee was greater than the mean overall composite score for Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. Therefore, Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee had a higher overall composite score.

Research Question 2: Is there a significant difference in the schools' numeracy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

There was a significant difference ($p = .017$) in the schools' numeracy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. The analysis revealed that the mean numeracy composite score for Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee was greater than the mean numeracy composite score for Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. Therefore, Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee had a higher numeracy composite score.

Research Question 3: Is there a significant difference in the schools' literacy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

There was a significant difference ($p < .001$) in the schools' literacy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. The analysis revealed that the mean literacy composite score for Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee was greater than the mean literacy composite score for Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. Therefore, Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee had a higher literacy composite score.

Research Question 4: Is there a significant difference in the schools' combined numeracy and literacy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

There was a significant difference ($p < .001$) in the schools' combined numeracy and literacy composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. The analysis revealed that the mean combined numeracy and literacy composite score for Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee was greater than the mean combined numeracy and literacy composite score for Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. Therefore, Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee had a higher combined numeracy and literacy composite score.

Research Question 5: Is there a significant difference in the mean years of teaching experience between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee?

There was a significant difference ($p < .001$) in the mean years of teaching experience between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. The analysis revealed that the number of mean years of teaching experience for Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee was greater than that for Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. Therefore, Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee had a greater number of years of teaching experience.

Research Question 6: Is there a significant relationship between the schools' overall composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools?

The Pearson correlation of .09 indicated a weak positive relationship between the schools' overall composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools.

Research Question 7: Is there a significant relationship between the schools' overall composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools?

The Pearson correlation of -.13 indicated a weak negative relationship between the schools' overall composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools.

Research Question 8: Is there a significant relationship between the schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Title I Schools?

The Pearson correlation of -.11 indicated a weak negative relationship between the schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools.

Research Question 9: Is there a significant relationship between the schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience of teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools?

The Pearson correlation of .06 indicated a weak positive relationship between the schools' numeracy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools.

Research Question 10: Is there a significant relationship between the schools' literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools?

The Pearson correlation of .10 indicated a weak positive relationship between the schools' literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools.

Research Question 11: Is there a significant relationship between the schools' literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools?

The Pearson correlation of -.21 indicated a weak negative relationship between the schools' literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools.

Research Question 12: Is there a significant relationship between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the average years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools?

The Pearson correlation of -.01 indicated a weak negative relationship between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I elementary schools.

Research Question 13: Is there a significant relationship between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools?

The Pearson Correlation of $-.14$ indicated a weak negative relationship between combined numeracy and literacy composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Non-Title I elementary schools.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship in elementary school TVAAS Composite scores between Title I schools and Non-Title I schools. Specifically, this research assessed the relationship of Title I funding on student academic growth at the elementary level.

The following conclusions were based upon the findings from the data of this study:

1. There was a significant difference in the schools' overall composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee had a higher overall composite score. This difference in schools composite scores did agree with research that demonstrated the influence of socioeconomic status has on school achievement. Bracey (2003) concluded that the background of families and the socioeconomic mix of students in the school have a strong influence on the academic achievement of the student population. With this difference in mind, Farkas and Hall (2000) reported Title I is nothing more than a revenue sharing program that provides funds to local school districts to assist the needs of their SES students.
2. There was a significant difference in the mean years of teaching experience between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee had a greater number of years of teaching

experience. This finding is the same as what is found in the literature. For example, Lyons (2006) pointed out that Title I schools were more likely to have more inexperienced teachers and a higher rate of teacher attrition than low poverty schools. As discovered by Luebchow (2009), more experienced teachers with advanced credentials within a school district had seniority; therefore, they tended to transfer to low poverty schools with more favorable conditions. Further study in this area would be recommended to determine if there in fact was a significant difference in teachers' advanced credentials between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools

3. There were no significant relationships between the schools' composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools. This finding was contradictory for what was found in other research. For example, Luebchow (2009) found the continued hiring of applicants with little to no experience has a negative effect on student achievement. According to Kirby (2003) Title I schools were more likely to have a greater percentage of inexperienced teachers than non-Title I schools. Baker, Sciarra, and Farrie (2010) argued that funding should not be the only factor when evaluating academic performance for students in high poverty schools. They reiterated that schools can achieve their desired outcomes with funding that is used efficiently and effectively.

Recommendations for Practice

Title I funding in lower SES schools has increased throughout the years with each legislative measure. Although there have been studies on Title I, school achievement, and school

assessments there have been limited studies on Title I funding's true effect on school value added growth. The fact that there was a significant difference in the schools' composite scores between Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee keeps alive the debate on whether Title I funding alone has an impact on school's academic growth. As Darling-Hammond (2007) pointed out, schools with a higher level of lower SES students had been shown to decrease in achievement of all students regardless of their race or SES. The present study provides a tool with which the state of Tennessee can better use preexisting value-added data to determine if Title I funding is being used to improve lower SES school performance.

McClure (2008) explained the requirement of comparability as a means to resolve the issue with school districts placing their least qualified and least paid teachers in their lower SES schools. The data revealed that the mean number of years of teaching experience for Non-Title I elementary schools in Tennessee was greater than the same number for Title I elementary schools in Tennessee. The fact that lower SES students had less experienced teachers than the higher SES students raises the question of whether school districts are complying with the requirement of comparability. According to Title I of ESEA of 1965, schools receiving funds under Title I must be comparable in the services to schools that do not receive Title I funds. In fact, the results of the analysis did not show a positive relationship between the schools' composite scores and the mean years of teaching experience for teachers in Title I and Non-Title I schools. In the review of literature most sources concluded that it is the obstacles students face outside the school that affect their school performance as opposed to the level of funding at the school level. Some implications for practice are the following:

1. Policymakers should undertake and make public an examination of where Title I funds are being spent and how. This information is available online, it is not intuitive for the average consumer of information to locate and disaggregate it.
2. The assignment and hiring of teachers to a particular school is an important variable that research has shown to have the most impact on student achievement. Districts have control over how they assign teachers. Title I schools need the most experienced and best teachers. Districts should evaluate teachers' years of experience in each school to determine if any schools have an advantage or disadvantage.
3. Instead of using a school wide approach, Further research should be replicated using Title I funds that is allocated for individual students and programs.
4. Parents and the public should become better consumers of data by studying the patterns and trends of district Title I spending. As depicted in the National Assessment of Title I (2006), nearly all (93%) of the nation's school districts were allocated Title I funding. Many have criticized the Title I program as nothing more than a revenue sharing program that provides funds to local school districts to assist the needs of their lower SES students.
5. School districts should implement a plan to use funds to influence students outside the school rather than in the classroom. Lyons (2006) agreed that elementary schools are given priority by school officials when distributing Title I funding. Elementary schools, as compared to middle and high schools, are more effective in implementing programs, activities, and remediation due to school curriculum and schedule. School districts should host summer school or afterschool programs to assist lower SES students to increase their academic growth. Bracey (2003) argued the growth in math

and reading of higher SES students during the summer months as an indication of how important those summer months are for the lower SES population.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study has enabled the researcher to identify the following recommendations for future research for those interested in the impact that Title I funding has on school growth scores.

1. This study should be replicated in other states that use value added scores to evaluate their schools to further validate its results and strengthen the body of research surrounding Title I funding and value added growth.
2. This study should be replicated by expanding the range of schools as this study only included elementary schools. Studies that examine these relationships in middle schools would provide more information for better decision-making.
3. This study should be replicated using data that include composite scores for elementary schools in Tennessee during the schools years that required full implementation of Common Core Standards.
4. This study should be replicated by further investigating the relationship of size (number of students) and achievement. Other variables such as school size and class size may also be significantly related to school value added growth.
5. This study should be replicated by conducting research on elementary schools that use Title I funding for summer school and after school enrichment programs for lower SES.

6. Additional research could be conducted on school districts in Tennessee using qualitative research to further investigate factors outside the school that impact lower SES school performance.
7. Further quantitative research may be conducted to expand research concerning value added models in other states.
8. Further quantitative studies could be conducted on TVAAS composite scores for individual grades in elementary schools in Tennessee.
9. Additional research could be conducted on rural school districts in Tennessee regarding teachers' years of experience.
10. Additional research could be conducted on urban school districts in Tennessee regarding teachers' years of experience.

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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS



Data Request Details
Office of Data Reporting and Management
Division of Data and Research

Data Requested:

- The teachers' years of experience (mean) for the school years noted.

Parameters:

- **School Years:**
 - (2012-2013), (2013-2014), and (2014-2015)
- **Schools listed below:**
 - **Bradley County Schools**
 - -North Lee Elementary
 - -Taylor Elementary
 - **Hamilton County Schools**
 - -Big Ridge Elementary
 - -Clifton Hills Elementary
 - -Chattanooga School for the Arts
 - -East Lake Elementary
 - -Lookout Mountain Elementary
 - -Hillcrest Elementary
 - -Nolan Elementary
 - -East Side Elementary
 - -Ooltewah Elementary
 - -Orchard Knob Elementary
 - -Thrasher Elementary
 - -Red Bank Elementary
 - -Wallace A. Smith Elementary
 - -East Ridge Elementary
 - -Westview Elementary
 - -Spring Creek Elementary
 - Hardy Elementary
 - Lake Side Academy
 - **Kingsport City Schools**
 - -John Adams Elementary
 - -Roosevelt Elementary
 - **Knox County Schools**

- Green Magnet Math and Science Academy
- Inskip Elementary
- Lonsdale Elementary
- -A.L Lotts Elementary
- -Sarah Moore Greene Magnet Technology Academy
- -Blue Grass Elementary
- -Norwood Elementary
- -Farragat Intermediate
- -Dogwood Elementary
- -Hardin Valley Elementary
- -Christianberry Elementary
- -Rocky Hill Elementary
- -Belle Morris Elementary
- -Sequoyah Elementary
- -Spring Hill Elementary
- -Shannon Dale Elementary
- -Pond Gap Elementary

- **Montgomery County Schools**
- -Carmel Elementary
- -Byrns L Darden Elementary
- -East Montgomery Elementary
- -Norman Smith Elementary

- **Rutherford County Schools**
- -John Coleman Elementary
- -Lascassas Elementary

- **Sullivan County Schools**
- -Emmett Elementary
- -Indian Springs Elementary

- **Sumner County**
- -Jack Anderson Elementary
- -Benny C. Bills Elementary
- -Madison Creek Elementary
- -Vena Stuart Elementary

- **Tulahoma City Schools**
- -Robert E Lee Elementary
- -East Lincoln Elementary

APPENDIX B

IRB APPROVAL LETTER



Office for the Protection of Human Research Subjects • Box 70565 • Johnson City, Tennessee 37614-1707
Phone: (423) 439-6053 Fax: (423) 439-6060

February 16, 2016

Dear Anthony Padelski,

Thank you for recently submitting information regarding your proposed project "Elementary School TVAAS Composites".

I have reviewed the information, which includes a completed Form 129.

The determination is that this proposed activity as described meets neither the FDA nor the DHHS definition of research involving human subjects. Therefore, it does not fall under the purview of the ETSU IRB.

IRB review and approval by East Tennessee State University is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities are human subject research in which the organization is engaged, please submit a new request to the IRB for a determination.

Thank you for your commitment to excellence.

Sincerely,
Stacey L. Williams, Ph.D.
Chair, ETSU IRB

VITA

ANTHONY W. PADELSKI

- Education: Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership,
East Tennessee State University
Johnson City, TN
December, 2016
- Masters of Education, Administration and Policy
University of Georgia,
Athens, GA
May, 2007
- Bachelor of Science, Interdisciplinary Studies
East Tennessee State University,
Johnson City, TN
May, 2004
- Professional Experience: Elementary Teacher, Johnson City Schools
Johnson City, TN
2007-Present
- Elementary Teacher, Clarke County Schools
Athens, GA
2005-2007
- Elementary Teacher, Glynn County Schools
Brunswick, GA
2004-2005