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What Works in Georgia High Schools with Small Students Enrollment in Meeting Annual Yearly Progress

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WHAT WORKS IN GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOLS WITH SMALL STUDENTS

ENROLLMENT IN MEETING ANNUAL YEARLY PROGRESS

by

CAROLE ELAINE STRICKLAND

(Under the Direction of Walter Polka)

ABSTRACT

Since the passage of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB*)*, 2001, many school districts across the nation have sought to find new sources to meeting the demands mandated by the legislation. Little research exists on the methods Georgia high schools with small student enrollment utilize to meet annual yearly progress (AYP) as outlined in the NCLB. This study was a mixed-method design gathering quantitative and qualitative data from twenty-eight Georgia high school principals and teachers with a small student enrollment. Fourteen of the twenty-eight counties identified responded to the <u>Survey on Characteristics of Successful Schools</u>. No single question received an overall mean of 3.0 indicating there was no single factor determined to meeting AYP. The factor receiving the highest mean (2.87) related to schools devoting adequate resources to professional development. Two of the principals from the small Georgia high schools participated in semi-structure, in-depth interviews. Five teachers from the same schools also participated in semi-structure, in-depth interviews. Interviews yielded insight into the factors principals and teachers felt were instrumental in meeting AYP in their county. The participants were all satisfied with the progress of their individual schools and were confident the school districts would continue to meet AYP.

INDEX WORDS: Accountability, High-stakes test, Small schools, Safe Harbor, Annual measurable objectives

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by

CAROLE ELAINE STRICKLAND

B.S., Valdosta State University, 1980

M.Ed., Georgia Southern University, 1988

Ed.S., Georgia Southern University, 2005

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CAROLE ELAINE STRICKLAND

Major Professor:	Walter Polka
Committee:	Linda Arthur
	Ralph Gornto

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DEDICATION

In recognition for her unconditional love, support, and especially patience, I hereby dedicate this dissertation to my daughter, Mackenzie Sean Strickland. She has given up countless hours of her "Mommy time" so I could work towards attaining this goal. She has been my inspiration and reason for reaching this milestone in my life.

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I began this journey with three other wonderful people for whom I will always be eternally grateful. We were known as the "Brunswick Four" throughout the entire Ed.S. program and Ed.D. program. If not for Sheryl, Rob and Kelly, I really don't think I would be at this point in the completion of this paper. Therefore, I personally wish to thank each of them for sharing the last five years of their lives with me and for the laughter and joy we shared especially when we thought we were just not going to make it through the programs. It has been a journey, but one filled with memories I will carry the rest of my life.

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I am grateful to the superintendents, principals and teachers in Georgia who participated in this study by responding to my survey and to those who participated in the interview. The two principals and teachers who participated in the interview, giving their

valuable time to talk to me about their experiences were very much appreciated. I was inspired by their dedication to their schools systems and to their students.

I am thankful to the Wisconsin Department of Education for allowing me to use their survey in conducting this study.

I am also grateful to my mother, Mrs. Alice Geneva Wiggins and my father, Mr. M.T. Wiggins for always encouraging me to reach for my dreams early in my life. To my father, who never once doubted my capabilities for accomplishing this goal, I am thankful. His help on some of my assignments still bring a smile to my face as I recalled his words of wisdom imparted on numerous occasions. I am only sorry my Mother is not here to witness this accomplishment. She would have been proud of her daughter. However, my father married a wonderful lady, Mrs. Phyllis Kirkland, who has always encouraged me and is just as proud of this accomplishment for me.

Last, but not least, I will be eternally thankful to my brothers and sisters, Wayne, Daniel, Sean and Sheryl for always assuming this goal of mine would be met. However, many times, if not for my sister Sheryl, this goal would not have been reached. She was with me every step of the way and often lifted me up when I needed it and pushed me to finish this goal in my life. For you see, my sister, Sheryl, and I will be graduating together upon completion of this degree.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"*We will lead the nation in improving student achievement.*"

- Kathy Cox

Kathy Cox, Georgia State Superintendent of Education, issued a challenge for all

educators in Georgia to take measures needed to increase student achievement on all

levels (Georgia Department of Education, 2006). Consequently, educational reform was a

topic of much debate in every sector, public or private, in the United States (Reeves,

2004; Sunderman, Kim, & Orfield, 2005). Reeves; Sunderman, Kim and Orfield

introduced discussion on various issues relating to the need for transformation of the

public school system in this country. In the beginning of the late 1960s and the early

1970s the reform movement of making schools less formal, more open, and more

humanistic was introduced (Guteck, 2002). Later, in 1981, Terrel Bell, U.S. Secretary of

Education created the Commission of Excellence in Education (National Commission On

Excellence In Education, 1981). This Commission was designed by Secretary Bell to

investigate concerns about "the widespread public perception that something is serious

remiss in our educational system" (National Commission on Excellence in Education,

1983, p. 1).

The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) issued its report, *A

Nation at Risk*, warning that part of the responsibility of the America's declining

productivity in the face of accelerating foreign competition could be traced to the

school's poor performance. Additionally, the consensus of the commission charged that

our society and its educational institutions seemed to have lost sight of the basic purpose

of schooling and of the high expectations and disciplined effort needed to attain those

expectations. Shortly thereafter, the George H. Bush Administration in 1990 issued the

report, *National Goals for Education*, providing a guide for school improvement in

education at the state and local levels (National Education Goals, 1994). In concurrence

with the National Education Goals, Congress passed *The Educate America Act* to

reaffirm the national goals of the 1990s and added the goals for improving the

professional skills of teachers and promoting parental involvement. Recently, the *No

Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) was the most significant and conflict-ridden

change in federal education strategy since the federal government assumed a key position

in U.S. education over four decades ago (Sunderman, Kim, & Orfield, 2005).

Accountability

Accountability for student achievement was a key issue guiding school policy in

districts across the nation (Hess, 2006; Carnoy, Elmore, & Siskin, 2003; Mintrop, 2004).

According to Stecher and Kirby (2004) with the passage of the *NCLB* in 2001, the

performance-based accountability system had become the cornerstone of the law. More

specifically, the accountability requirements in *NCLB* of 2001 intended to "close the

achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement

gaps between minority and non-minority students, and between disadvantaged children

and their more advantaged peers" (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary

and Secondary Education, 2002, p. ix). In regard to the passage of *NCLB*, performance

based accountability required public officials to determine clear goals for schools, explain

how performance would be measured, and prescribe consequences for success and failure

(Hess; Carnoy, Elmore, & Siskin). The components of performance-based accountability

were identified by a set of content or performance standards that schools and teachers use

to guide curriculum and instruction (Stecher & Kirby).

Excellence in education was essential to the economic well being of a country and

the democratic foundation of the general public (Gullatt & Ritter, 2000). According to

Gullatt and Ritter, efforts to strengthen public education had emerged throughout the

United States. Creating accountability in education had been a focus of governments and

educational authorities, and schools were held accountable for both the effective teaching

of students and for implementation of policies at the school level by the individuals

employed by the system (Reeves, 2004).

Meeting demands from parents, lawmakers, and stakeholders, educational systems

began scrambling to comply with the rules mandated by *NCLB* to ensure students receive

an adequate education (Stecher & Kirby, 2004). As a part of the accountability

procedure, educational systems were required to develop targets called annual

measurable objectives (AMO) in reading and mathematics to determine whether the

system was making adequate yearly progress (AYP) (Sunderman, Kim, & Orfield, 2005;

Hess, 2006). According to the Georgia Department of Education (2006) to meet AYP,

schools were required to achieve success on numerous criteria. Schools attempting to

meet AYP were required to demonstrate data indicating at least 95% of students

participated in the state assessments; met or exceeded the state's annual measurable

objectives for the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the state

assessments or demonstrate Safe Harbor; and show progression on an additional

academic indicator, that should be graduation rate for high schools and an indicator

selected by local education agencies (LEAs) from a menu provided by Office of Student

Achievement (OAS) for elementary and middle schools including for subgroups where safe harbor was applied (Georgia Department of Education, 2006).

High Schools

High schools across the nation were being held accountable, and the performance of teachers and administrators was measured indirectly through the achievement and behavior of students (Quality Counts, 2001). The school systems and Title I schools that did not meet AYP for two consecutive years were subject to various forms of assistance, intervention, and other actions, with consequence increasing each year the school or system remained on the "Needs Improvement List" (Georgia Department Of Education, 2006). Additionally, the department noted after four years of not meeting AYP, the school was identified for corrective action and either must change staffing or make another fundamental change (including instituting a new curriculum, appointing an outside expert to advise the school, or extending the school year or school day for the school). After the fifth year of not meeting AYP, the school must develop an "alternative governance" plan that included converting to a charter school, replacing all or most of the staff, turning the school over to a private management company, or having the state take the school over (Georgia Department of Education).

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

Once the United States became a nation, issues involving schools had arisen on the national, state, and local levels of government. Legislative issues stemming from incorporation of schools to mandatory attendance to student achievement, school issues had been an agenda item for all levels of government. However, within the past five years, school legislation had revolved around the accountability issue. In today's climate

of high-stakes testing and accountability, principals were continually challenged to monitor student progress to ensure achievement. The impact principals had on student achievement proved to have little direct effect on student achievement. Yet, principals had an indirect effect on student achievement (Aldrich, 2004).

The passage of legislation such as *NCLB* and the need for schools to meet AYP, has required principals to take a more active role in the curriculum being taught in the schools. The principal, most often in accordance to school improvement plans, determined whether and how to implement standards, what components were to be emphasized, and which components of certain standards could be omitted as a focus of creating a more productive environment in the school setting.

In Georgia high schools with fewer than 800 students, the need to locate and implement policies to meet AYP was difficult. There were sixty-five (65) high schools in Georgia with inadequate resources, a limited number of faculty and staff, and little or no business involvement. Many of these Georgia high schools were searching for viable alternatives to meet ever increasing demands dictated by national mandates. Additionally, of the 65 Georgia high schools with fewer than 800 students enrolled, only 28 of 65 schools were meeting AYP. The indicators to determine whether these schools were meeting AYP were tied to the following criteria: 95% participation, annual measurable objectives, and a second indicator. Georgia's plan for AYP allows great flexibility in how schools can demonstrate Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO). There were four ways to determine AMO: direct comparison of student performance to AMO; confidence interval; multiyear averaging and safe harbor. High schools with fewer than 800 students meeting AYP was the focus of my study. The strategies and techniques used by both the

principals and the educators would be investigated to look for certain trends among the successful schools meeting AYP in the state of Georgia.

The study sought to determine if a relationship existed between teachers' perceptions of factors contributing to improving AYP in Georgia high schools with fewer than 800 students meeting AYP. The study also sought to determine if a relationship existed between the principals' perception of factors for improving AYP and teachers' perceptions of factors contributing to improving AYP.

Research Questions

Overarching Question

The study examined the following overarching research question: To what extent do the perceptions of teachers and principals in Georgia High Schools with fewer than 800 students differ in factors contributing to attaining AYP?

Sub Questions

(1)   What factors did teachers perceive important in contributing to the attainment of AYP?

(2)   What factors did principals perceive important in contributing to the attainment of AYP?

(3)   What factors did teachers and principals differ in importance in contributing to the attainment of AYP?

Conceptual Framework

The theory behind the study is diagrammed in Figure 1. The figure was a model of the perceptions of teachers and principals in Georgia high schools with fewer than 800 hundred students making AYP. Teacher's perceptions would be a combination

of the factors these participants felt had been instrumental in effectively meeting AYP.

The participants would come from various counties throughout the state and would

represent a variety of characteristics such as racial, demographic regions, and levels of

education. Principal's perceptions also indicated a combination of the factors these

participants felt had been instrumental in effectively meeting AYP. Additionally, both the

principals and teachers were be able to give various perspectives through the use of

interviews from different schools across the state.
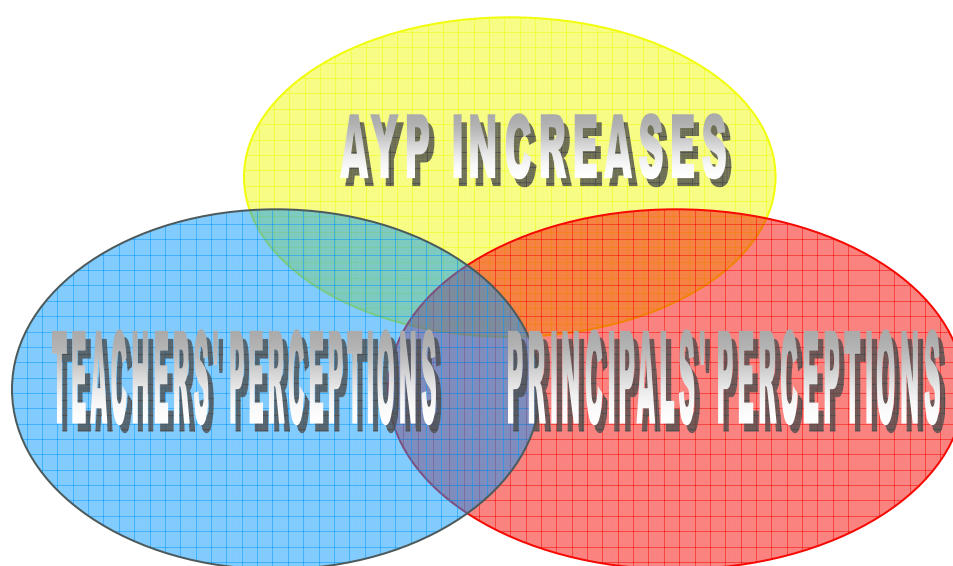
FIGURE 1: Conceptual Framework of the Perceptions of Teachers' and Principals'

Perceptions for Meeting AYP.

Significance of the Study

The growing movement toward holding schools and systems accountable for

student progress was available in the research literature. The last five years has shown

school districts and systems across the nation taking steps to implement programs and

curriculums to increase student achievement. School systems were continually seeking

factors important to attaining AYP as mandated by the federal government; therefore this

study would be significant because it would provide information useful for school

districts. In small Georgia high schools with fewer than 800 students, identifying and

implementing procedures to meet AYP were difficult. Inadequate resources, limited

faculty and staff, and little or no business involvement, has required many small Georgia

high schools to search for viable alternatives to meet ever increasing demands dictated by

national mandates.

Information gathered through the study provided useful data for both site and

district leadership. The principals had confirmation through the data of the connection

between those programs and curricula determined to be successful in schools meeting

AYP. District leadership utilized the study to identify potential areas for future staff

development that may be tailored to district weaknesses in meeting AYP. Professional

organizations found the information useful in planning staff development, conference

topics, and other publications that can supplement staff development offered at the

district level. One additional important reason for the study was the high stakes testing

assessment making factors affecting student achievement more significant.

Given Georgia's rising new high school exit exams, future researchers and

educators would be able to analyze what factors contributed to the success of all students.

Insight would also be available to determine successful factors for students who had

consistently been disenfranchised through substandard schools, teachers, and curriculum.

Thus, the next step for educators and school administrators was to determine a

relationship between successful standards-based curriculum and instruction and state and

national accountability legislation. Teachers and administrators would be able to utilize

this information in the formative years of staff development opportunities for the Georgia

Performance Standards (GPS), data analysis of learning improvement discussion, and the selection of instructional leaders both at the district and site levels.

Limitations

The limitations of this study were as follows:

- The study was limited to the perceptions of teachers and principals in Georgia high schools with fewer than 800 students and may not reflect the perceptions of teachers and principals outside of the scope of the study.

- This study was limited in the sample population based on the teachers and principals employed in Georgia high school with fewer than 800 students meeting AYP during the 2004-2005 academic school year.

Delimitations

The delimitations of this study were as follows:

- Teachers may have had different perceptions from principals pertaining to why AYP was met in their particular schools.

- There may have been several different paths to meeting AYP for the school year 2004-2005 in schools with fewer than 800 students.

Procedures

In the study, the researcher examined the Georgia high schools with fewer than 800 students that had met AYP in order to obtain information about the success of these schools. A review of the literature provided information relating to the importance federal, state, and local governments had placed on the need for high schools across the nation to meet standards developed by the federal legislation.

Design

The researcher used a mixed method of study. Using a quantitative research method, the researcher sought participation to collect data by random sampling of teachers and principals to respond to a survey pertaining to meeting AYP. In a quantitative research design, the aim was to determine the relationship between one item and another in a population (Borg, Gall, & Gall, 2004). This study was conducted using a questionnaire. A questionnaire was used to survey teachers in selected Georgia high schools. The same questionnaire was used to survey administrators of the same high schools in Georgia. The questionnaires contained Likert scale items with which the teachers were asked to rate the importance of factors the research had indicated teachers consider important to meeting mandates created by recent legislation. The researcher reviewed data collected by the Georgia Department of Education and the Federal Education Department pertaining to meeting AYP to ensure the validity of the questionnaire. At the end of the questionnaire participants were to indicate whether or not they would be willing to be interviewed. To locate these participants for the interview, an additional email was sent to the school list serve participants to respond to email if an interview was desired.

Once the data had been collected, similarities of factors needed for attaining AYP between teachers and principals in three to four schools were contacted to participate in the qualitative portion of the research. The researcher questioned teachers and principals using interviews, to gain a richer depth for what works in the schools meeting AYP. The interview questions were generated from the responses gathered in the questionnaires sent to individual participants via email. For example, if the question stating "Teachers

use effective teaching methods to help all students achieve standards" generated a

"Strongly Agree" response from a majority of the participants, I made that quantitative

question a part of my interview question. Participants were then allowed the opportunity

to give examples of the types of teaching methods they employed and how effective the

methods were in reaching their students.

Population and Participation

A list of the Georgia high schools with fewer than 800 students meeting AYP was

obtained from the Georgia State Department of Education. The geographic area

representing the population to be sampled consisted of those school systems throughout

Georgia which have 800 or less students. The researcher surveyed through questionnaires

those administrators and teachers in the Georgia high schools with fewer than 800

students meeting AYP.

Data Collection

A brief introduction and the importance of this study was written in letter form and

sent to the superintendents of each school system requesting permission for conducting

the study. Teachers and principals of each of the schools meeting the criteria were then

contacted through email to obtain consent for participation in the study. The

questionnaires were emailed to schools capable of participating via internet.

Participation by the high school in their districts, superintendents were requested to

give approval by replying to the email indicating permission. Once approval from the

superintendents to allow teachers and principals to complete the questionnaire, the

researcher emailed the principals identified, explaining in a cover letter the nature of the

study. The email to the principals requested permission for the principal and teachers to

participate in the questionnaire, additionally a hyperlink was provided to access the questionnaire. Principals were requested to access and complete the questionnaire then submit their responses. The email was then forwarded to the teachers within the building with the request to also respond to the survey. The responses were automatically sent to a data collection system created by the researcher.

Questions were coded to indicate from which county the response was sent. Once principals from each of the counties had completed the questionnaire, the email was forwarded to the teachers within the individual high schools requesting their responses to the questionnaires. The cover letter assured confidentiality along with an explanation of the study. A hyperlink was located at the end of the letter in which the teachers accessed in order to participate in the survey. After completing the questionnaire, the teachers clicked on submit to enter their responses; the responses were sent to the same data collection system.

Once the quantitative data had been collected, those systems with similarities between teachers and principals were then contacted to request permission to participate in an in-depth interview to gain a richer depth of knowledge for what works in the schools meeting AYP. The questions of the interview were obtained from the responses indicated on the questionnaires. For example if on question stating "Teachers use effective teaching methods to help all students achieve standards" generates a "Strongly Agree" response from a majority of the participants, I made that quantitative question a part of my interview question. Participants were allowed the opportunity to give examples of the types of teaching methods they employed and how effective the methods were in reaching students.

Data Analysis

Using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), inferential statistics was used to report the findings of the study. The SPSS data analysis software allowed the researcher to construct decision-making information in a timely manner that was utilized key facts and trends. The data analysis was generated to establish a relationship between principals and teachers as to what was effecting when attaining AYP in the individual school systems.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined for the purpose of this study:

Accountability. An approach to school funding that begins with the premise that the amount of funding schools receive should be based on some estimate of the cost of achieving the state's educational goals. This approach attempts to answer two questions: How much money would be enough to accomplish the goals and where would the money be best spent (Chubb, 2005,)?

High-stakes test. A test that results in some kind of significant consequences for the students scoring low, some kind of reward for the students scoring high or both (Sunderman, Kim, & Orfield, 2005).

Safe Harbor. An avenue schools may use to meet AYP if the percent of students who did not meet or exceed the proficient level of academic achievement for the year in question decreased by 10 percent from the percent not proficient the preceding school year the schools and districts still maintained AYP for that year (Linn, 2005).

Summary

During the past fifty years, the national government passed various forms of legislation to address the growing concern over the country's failing school systems. Mandates issued to state and local school districts by the national government forced the districts to repeatedly conform in order to increase achievement among students. Now, with passage of the *NCLB* which introduced an entirely new accountability system was causing school districts to attain an even higher level of accountability in order to meet the new mandated legislation.

The mandates from the federal government designed to increase student achievement, had many states and local systems seeking new and better ways to educate students within districts. At the center of the need to create a better system for educating America's youth was accountability. States and local systems were held accountable for the success or failure of students within school districts across the nation.

In order to meet standards of accountability, school districts were required to attain adequate yearly progress toward proficiency, hopefully reaching 100% within a given year. Therefore, meeting AYP as mandated by *NCLB* required school districts to take aggressive measures to ensure schools were demonstrating adequate standards.

In high schools across the nation, effective strategies to improve student performance were being investigated by local educational professionals. Since the entire high school organization was responsible for accountability within the system, the desire to create a learning environment capable of producing successful students was paramount. Within the state of Georgia many high school districts were achieving

success, but the failure of some high schools was causing concern in the Georgia educational profession

Therefore, this study was proposed by the researcher to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship in teacher's and principal's perceptions of implementing programs successful at meeting AYP in schools with less than 800 students. Growing evidence supports teacher's and principal's perceptions about what was effective in a school system. This support substantiates the influence on student's performance on standardized test and the information the students were given in preparation for a test, whether a chapter test or a state mandated test.

This study may be useful for those high schools in Georgia with fewer than 800 hundred students which are both successful and unsuccessful in meeting AYP. A study in determining the success of the systems in Georgia may have positive benefits for the districts struggling to meet AYP and the demands dictated by federal legislation. Policy makers within the Georgia school districts had an opportunity to view successful school districts perceptions when choosing to implement programs for districts. The strategies and programs determined to be successful by both teachers and administrators in high schools meeting AYP were identified and made available for other districts to examine when making decisions relating to school achievement.

The researcher proposed to use a mixed method of study. Using the quantitative research approach, data was collected to determine the strategies and programs in high schools with fewer than 800 students effective for meeting AYP. The questionnaires from both principals and teachers were used to gather data in support of this research. Once the data had been collected and statistically analyzed, the researcher used the

information to determine interview questions for the schools with the closest match between principals and teachers.

Once the data had been collected through interviews, the researcher determined if there are any trends, patterns, or ideas among those Georgia high schools with fewer than 800 students meeting AYP. The findings of the study may have an impact for the future studies in determining what strategies and programs had been successful in one state with a small population of students. Additionally, the results of this study may have significance for those educators seeking to find options for the smaller high schools across the state and country struggling to meet AYP.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

At the dawn of the Twentieth Century, public education in the United States was moving toward a more centralized system of governance than envisioned by the founders of the country (Aldrich, 2004). Reformers were urging for radical changes in the public school system in order to prepare students for "life in an ultramodern era that is nearly upon us" (Aldrich, p. 28). Education and training of the population became a critical input to productivity and enhance economic growth (Bereiter, 2002) Bereiter reported schooling also spurred invention and innovation, and enabling the more rapid diffusion of technological advances. Moreover, the role of education changed with technological progress. Ulriksen (2002, p. 6), acknowledged "Since the early 1980s, the United States had become increasingly aware of the range of critical issues facing its schools." Additionally Ulriksen stated some of the issues included declining academic performance, student apathy, and the attrition and qualifications of public school teachers.

As school districts across the nation face yet another new century of educational challenges, the need to focus on factors designed to meet new standards was a main focus (Brandt, 2000). According to Brandt, the educational profession had the overwhelming task of equipping young people with the knowledge and skills needed in a constantly changing complex society. However, before schools and districts invest the resources needed to produce productive members of society; teachers, administrators and

community members needed to become informed regarding factors that contribute to educational success (Fashola, 2004).

<div align="center">History</div>

The roots of public schools in the United States and particularly the state of Georgia could be traced to the first permanent English settlement in the early colonies (Tindall & Shi, 2004). According to Tindall and Shi, to fully understand the influences on the establishment of public schools, the importance of the English role in the formation of our nation and later reformers in American education needed to be examined.

Colonial Era

Beginning influences regarding public schools within the colonies could be traced to the early settlements in the new world (Rury, 2002). According to Rury, the Virginia settlement of 1607 marked the beginning of a permanent teaching occupation that would allow for the establishment of education. However, no evidence of schools for the first ten years was recorded by any of the Virginia colonist (Aldrich, 2004). Additionally, in 1616, the king ordered money to be collected for a college in Virginia. Due to a massacre in 1622 leaving only a few survivors the opening of an American University ended (Aldrich). Two years later, an island off the coast of Virginia is secured by Sir Edwin Palmer to be used for the founding of a school, giving additional evidence for the desire to create an educated population in the new world (Merchant, 2002). The year, 1624 marked the initiation of school legislation as the Virginia House of Burgess decreed Native Americans were to receive education in religion and an English civil course in life (Rury).

The precedent for financing schools through tuitions, taxes, gifts, endowments, and land rentals also came from England (Merchant, 2002). According to Merchant, the first public school in America supported by direct taxations was located in Dorchester, Massachusetts, on May 1639. Additionally, the town of Dorchester, in 1645 appointed three overseers to the school, creating the beginnings of a school board as witnessed in public education today. Rury (2002), Massachusetts Bay Colony passed a law in 1642 requiring children be taught the principles of religion and the laws of the country. The town provided materials and tools needed for instruction (Rury). Although schools were not specifically mentioned, the educational law began a trend in the relationship between state and school within the New England colonies (Mungazi, 1999). Mungazi also stated, the Massachusetts colonists passed a visionary law in 1647 requiring the people to pay for teachers appointed to public schools. Additionally, the law required mandatory establishment of schools within the colony (Rury).

In 1702, the Virginia colony House of Burgess passed a law requiring children to be taught reading and writing (Tindall & Shi, 2004). Likewise, Pennsylvania required children to be taught a trade or skill (Mungazi, 1999). Apprenticeship laws were passed in various colonies to ensure masters were responsible for teaching the apprentices and not use the young workers as free laborers (Rury, 2002). According to Rury, early efforts were visible in each of the colonies to establish laws requiring the children to be educated.

New Nation Era

During the latter part of the eighteenth century, change in the political status of the United States demanded a corresponding change in the educational system (Mungazi,

1999). Mungazi also states in order to accomplish the new objective, the new nation needed to follow the provisions of the U.S. Constitution closely. Following the provisions of the Ordinance of 1785 and Northwest Ordinance of 1787, the new government continued to provide for the orderly conversion of the vast public domain into private property (Merchant, 2002). According to Merchant, following the guidelines from the Ordinances, each township established reserved one section at the center of each township to support a public school. Faragher, Buhle, Czitrom, and Armitage (2007) cite that the Northwest Ordinance decreed that "religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged" (p. 128).

Republican Era

Leaders of the United States throughout history motivated to seek reform were guided by a vision of the future and by the knowledge that the Constitution is designed to encourage new efforts to bring about meaningful change in the various national institutions, including the development of the educational institution (Welter, 1962). According to Welter, perhaps the leading advocate of universal education during the early years of the United States was DeWitt Clinton, governor of the state of New York for eight years during the early 1800s. Clinton recognized the opportunities of education might be the most effective social engine against vice, crime, and poverty (Aldrich, 2004). Clinton continually delivered messages to the state legislature pointing out that publicly supported common education was an unavoidable obligation of republican government to its people and to itself (Faragher et al.). However, the newly ratified federal Constitution lacked specific provisions for state-controlled education or school

systems, contributing to decentralized and local control over formal education (Aldrich, 2004). Schools emerged as arms of local government, particularly in the New England states (Mungazi, 1999). According to Mungazi, regional differences existed in schooling and social life in general, resulted in schools being an irregular and minor part of a child's life until the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Jacksonian Era

The changing developments taking place on a national level during the early 1800s, the country would be poised for the thrust of educational reform (Aldrich, 2004). Aldrich stated, Americans during that period understood the developments of transitions in politics and society ushering in an opportunity to bring change to national leadership as well as reform in education. By the time of the presidential elections of 1828, the Democratic-Republican contender, Andrew Jackson clearly understood the importance of education in the struggle for national development (Mungazi, 1999). From the 1830s on, Mungazi stated the growth of a school "system" that monopolized tax dollars brought greater clarity to the meaning of "public" school systems. State after state drafted constitutions requiring establishment of public schools; this would also be a requirement for the readmissions of the Confederate states into the Union in the 1870s (Aldrich).

The nineteenth century gave rise to the formation of state-supervised systems of public education, beginning with primary schools and ultimately extending to high schools and universities (Rury, 2002). Urbanization and economic development helped to generate a movement to improve the primary schools and expand the range of the schools (Sutton, 2004). According to Sutton, the spread of school reform beyond cities was assisted by the growth of political parties, primarily the parties participating in the

national development of schools through legislation. Basic changes in the economic and social arena were taking place (Rury, 2002). Economic development contributed to the expansion and improvement of education for as earnings rose and the economy became more versatile, people placed greater value on schooling (Stanley, 2005).

Horace Mann was noted as the most famous common school reformer of the nineteenth (19th) century (Rury, 2002). The ideas and dreams visualized two centuries earlier by the Puritan forefathers were acted upon by Mann (Semel, Cookson, and Sadoynik, 1992). Rury noted, with the appointment of Horace Mann in 1837 as secretary of the newly formed State Board of Education of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Mann opened a new phase in the history of American education. Mann undertook many educational issues and lobbied continually for the passage of new laws establishing the basis of a modern educational system in Massachusetts (Bereiter, 2002). According to Bereiter, from the annual reports of Horace Mann, published by the state and circulated extensively, influential statements of educational reforms were spread across the nation. Horace Mann's view of education was seen as the "great equalizer" believing schools were capable of solving problems of inequity (Semel et al.).

The communal experiments of Robert Owen's socialist cooperative in Indiana, called New Harmony could be most noted by critics as the development of the educational system in the United States during the nineteenth (19th) century (Rury, 2002). Additionally, the practice of schooling in New Harmony was viewed as radical as the socialist cooperative itself. Owens felt that loving care along with a liberal education within an established environment like the socialistic communities of equality "would lead inevitably to rational mental independence and universal human bliss." (Sutton,

2004). Sutton notes Owen's idealism was not sufficient to ensure the success of New

Harmony, and the venture ended amid disputes and misunderstandings.

Reconstruction Era

Race, as much as any other single issue in American history, challenged the

democratic ideas of the American dream (Tindall & Shi, 2004). According to Tindall and

Shi, contradicting ideals of equality of opportunity and justice had been traced through

the actual practices regarding African Americans and other minorities. Although legally

guaranteed equal protection by the Fourteenth Amendment, African Americans continued

to experience vast inequities (Faragher, Buhle, Czitrom, & Armitage, 2007).

Discrimination against African Americans was more evident in the educational

arena during the Reconstruction Era (Rury, 2002). According to Rury, despite the

constitutional amendments guaranteeing equality of treatment before the law little

positive effect occurred for the black population during the post-Civil War

Reconstruction period, especially in the South. Also during the latter years of the

nineteenth century, the Supreme Court successfully blocked civil rights legislation

(Tindall & Shi, 2004). In the famous 1896 decision relating to education, *Plessy v.

Ferguson*, the Court upheld a Louisiana law segregating railway passengers by race

(Rury). In a commonly referred doctrine, "separate but equal", the Court upheld the

constitutionality of segregated facilities (Faragher et al.).

The unequal and separate education of African Americans in the South became a

focal point of the civil rights movements of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s (Tindall & Shi,

2004). Tindall and Shi, stated while the Plessy decision supported separate but equal,

civil rights advocates protested the apparent inequality for African Americans and other

minorities. In terms of both educational advancements and outcomes, African Americans in both the North and South received little or no opportunities resembling equal treatment (Rury, 2002).

Progressive Era

During the Progressive Era of educational reform, great strides in the educational system along with criticism dominated the public arena for years to come even to present day (Berube, 2000). Berube, contended from 1894-1915, the goals of Progressive reformers would influence education in the United States, since education was seen as a way to teach children the proper values needed to become productive American citizens. Progressives were determined to alleviate society's woes to a degree by education for all classes that would create children for a proper role in society (Berube, 1994). According to Berube, progressive education was the first and perhaps greatest educational reform movement in the United States. Progressive education was on the cutting edge of intellectual progress of its time (Rhodes, 1998). Additionally, Rhodes contended the educational process of the progressive era was based on rising scientific discoveries, such as Darwin's biological evolution and the new science of psychology

Proponents of progressive education such as John Dewey, Margaret Naumberg and Nathan Oppenheim visualized schooling as "child centered, where creativity, self-expression, critical thinking, and individualism were to be nurtured." (Rhodes, 1998, p. 49). According to Rhodes, these values had become equivalent to education and individual character of the American population. Educational reformers, psychologists, and philosophers of the progressive era attempted to develop a school experience

benefiting the whole child's intellectual, social, artistic, and moral development (Stanley, 2005).

John Dewey one of the strongest proponents of progressive education believed education must have a social orientation (Rury, 2002). Rury also stated Dewey's concept of best learning was by doing; ideas are clearest when the ideas were experienced. Dewey fits the progressive model of intellectual, political, social, and cultural leader (Savage, 2002). According to Savage, Dewey's educational philosophy had a transforming moral vision; Dewey's followers were in education, as well as in social and political reform.

John Dewey would be the leader of progressive education and was considered by the followers of progressivism as the most important figure in the history of American education (Brosio, 2000). Brosio identified Dewey as one who redefined what constitutes intelligence and how the individual thinks, giving holistic purpose to education. Dewey's approach to education was renaissance in scope, seeing education as a "lever of social progress" (Savage, 2002). Additionally, Savage stated that for Dewey the school was the key institution in society to restructure the social order, not the churches, business, or the military.

However, the vagueness of Dewey's social aims and his failure to give specific steps for reconstructing society through schooling would bring criticism from other sectors, the most severe coming from the Roman Catholic right (Berube, 2000). In early writings, Dewey announced his atheist views thought by his followers to be a reaction to his overly pious mother, causing strife and a "fallout" among the moral progressives (Stanley, 2005). According to Berube, the Roman Catholics were put off by Dewey's

atheism, misunderstanding Dewey's message and accusing Dewey of promoting a type of pagan philosophy of secular education.

George Counts also gave rise to a different idea to educating the youth of America (Stanley, 2005). Stanley stated, in the 1930s, a strong form of education for social transformation was developed by Counts and remains part of more recent work by various proponents of counter-socialization. In 1932, when Counts was calling on teachers to build a new social order, progressive education was in full swing (Brosio, 2000). According to Brosio, Counts acknowledged progressive education's positive focus on the interests of the child, however "progress" implied moving forward and thus far no clearly defined path to "progress" was given. The philosophy of Counts was for progressive educators to free themselves from "philosophic relativism" and the influences of an upper middle class culture to permit the development of a realistic and comprehensive idea of social welfare (Stanley).

Dewey's approach to progressive education remained as a middle course for educational leaders to follow (Berube, 2000). While Dewey was never able to counter adequately the democratic realist argument, the philosopher did justify the continued faith in democratic participation, the process of intelligence, and the need to reject misinformation (Rury, 2002). The far reaching effects of John Dewey's educational philosophy were present throughout the twentieth century (Rhodes, 1998).

Post World War II Era

At the close of WWII, the issue of access to educational opportunity became an important topic (Semel, Cookson, & Sadoynik, 1992). Changes in the educational system began with the major victory for civil rights advocates in the landmark decision, *Brown v.*

Topeka Board of Education (Faragher et al.). Faragher et al. cited Chief Justice Earl

Warren remarking: "It is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed

in life if he is denied the opportunity of education. Such an opportunity, where the state

has undertaken to provide it, is a right that must be made available to all on equal terms."

The Supreme Court reversed the "separate but equal" doctrine upheld in the *Plessy*

decision and stated separate educational institutions are unequal in and of themselves

(Tindall & Shi, 2004, p. 1045).

Years following the Brown decision, the battle for equality of opportunity in the

educational system across the nation was fought with considerable conflict and resistance

(Rury, 2002). According to Rury, the attempts to desegregate schools first in the South,

and later in the North resulted in confrontation and, at times, violence. The will of the

federal government to uphold the *Brown* decision was manifested in 1957, in Little Rock,

Arkansas (Tindall & Shi, 2004). Tindall and Shi state, when Arkansas Governor Orval

Faubus responded to the Supreme Court's refusal to delay desegregation by closing Little

Rock's high school, the federal courts declared the Arkansas school closing laws

unconstitutional. The events in Little Rock made clear to the rest of the nation, the federal

government would not tolerate continued school segregation (Rury). Although protests

continued in the South into the 1960s, segregationists lost their battle to defend a

Southern tradition (Tindall & Shi, 2004).

End of the Century

In 1983 the U.S. Department of Education's study *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative*

for Education Reform was undertaken by the National Commission on Excellence in

Education, announced the inadequacies of American education and instituted the

excellence reform movement (Bell, 1993). Accordingly, Bell responded to *A Nation at Risk* with various legislative acts establishing mandates, visions, accountability instructions, and reforms in education policies. As identified as one of our nation's goals in, *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), was to "keep and improve on the slim competitive edge we still retain in world markets" (p.8). Commitments to the concepts of economy of scale and to the production of globally efficient workers had encouraged many in education to establish large comprehensive high schools (Fanning, 1995). Many states created commissions to study education systems, create school visions, and recommend reform measures (Tirozzi & Uro, 1997).

A product of *A Nation at Risk* was the unprecedented presidential attention to education (Aldrich, 2004). According to Aldrich, George H. Bush proclaimed himself to be the "Education President" during his successful 1988 campaign. However, in the next presidential election, Bill Clinton brought the lack luster Bush record in education to the attention of the voters during the campaign of 1992 and promised to be a more effective "Education President." In the nation's history education had never been such an effective campaigning tool for presidential candidates as in the election of 1996 (Rury, 2002). Additionally, Rury stated education was now a major, high-priority national concern, as well as a state and local responsibility. Due to the numerous additions and changes that occurred with the law regarding the education of children, educators should remain aware of new legislation, regulations and judicial decisions affecting the profession (Aldrich (2004).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

In 2001, the U.S. federal government launched an unparalleled drive for an

overhaul of early literacy education in the form of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)(Conley & Hinchman, 2004). By signing the legislation, President George W. Bush declared, "Today begins a new era, a new time for public education in our country. Our schools will have higher expectations—we believe every child can learn. From this day forward, all students will have a better chance to learn, to excel, and to live out their dreams (Committee on Education and the Workforce, 2002).

A major requirement of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* was for states to establish accountability systems that are both valid and reliable (Chubb, 2005). According to Chubb, the Act mandated all states establish a single statewide accountability system that effectively ensured that all districts and schools made adequate yearly progress. A state's AYP model defined how the state calculated adequate yearly progress for schools and districts (Fast & Erpenbach, 2004). The accountability system was based on academic standards and assessments, including achievement for all students, and sanctions and rewards to hold all public schools accountable for student achievement (Mintrop, 2004).

Safe Harbor

According to Fast and Erpenbach (2004) the term safe harbor was not included in the NCLB 2001 legislation or its related regulations. The term was adopted in 2002 to describe a provision of the law permitting schools and districts originally identified for improvement on the basis of missing a subject area AYP target to avoid identification (Fast & Erpenbach). Under the new legislation, safe harbor is explained as describing the percent of students not meeting or exceeding the proficient level of academic achievement for the year in question decreased by 10 percent from the percent not

proficient the preceding school year, the schools and districts still maintained AYP for

that year (Linn, 2005). According to Linn, the 10% reduction in students scoring below

the proficient level was a very high bar; very few schools that would not otherwise make

AYP do so because of the safe harbor provision. Additionally, only a tiny fraction of

schools actually met AYP through the safe harbor provision because it is so extreme

(Linn).

However, if a school failed to make adequate yearly progress, possible corrective

actions include:

1. Replacement of school staff relevant to the failure;
2. Institution and implementation of a new curriculum;
3. Significant reduction of management authority;
4. Appointment of outside experts;
5. Extension of school year or school day;
6. Restructure of internal organization of school (U.S. Department of
   Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2002, p. 6).

The NCLB Act established far reaching goals for having every student in the

approximately 15,000 public schools districts in the United States had a valid opportunity

for educational success (Reeves, 2004). According to Reeves, NCLB represented a

unique initiative to reshape the entire educational system around a set of research-based,

early literacy principles and practices. The legislation held potential for influencing

educational practices of all kinds (Chubb, 2005).

<div align="center">Establishment of High Schools</div>

The establishment of the modern high school was the result of the Progressive

reform movement during the 1870 through the 1890s (Rury, 2002). Rury stated the

taxation to support high schools was a controversial issue, yet had been adopted in

varying degrees by the states by 1870. However, public opposition to supporting schools

was tested when three residents of School District Number 1 in Kalamazoo, Michigan, sued the school to stop paying taxes (Berube, 2000). According to Berube, the argument made by the individuals were based on old allegations that forcing people who did not have children in school to pay taxes was a violation of the principles of fairness. One Michigan Supreme Court Justice, Thomas M. Cookey (1824-1898) writing the opinion of the court, argued that taxation was necessary to ensure the adequate instruction of all students and to provide a transition between the ordinary common school and the state university (Gutek, 2002).

Once the reform effort to create and maintain high schools throughout the United States was implemented, the high schools were largely ignored, with many high schools struggling to keep up (Vander Ark, 2002). Additionally, Vander Ark noted high schools had trailed in achievement rate even into the mid-1990s, when high schools began receiving better-prepared students. During the mid-1990s however, commitments to the ideas of a greater yield of educated citizens and to the creation of globally resourceful workers had encouraged many in education to establish large comprehensive high schools (Chubb, 2005). At the same time, the large comprehensive high schools were also a problem because of size: Many of the high schools had enrollments of 2,000, 3,000, even as many as 4,000 students (Campbell, Voelkl, & Donahue, 1996). According to Campbell; et al. (1996) many of the high schools served students who were more diverse, come from more varied life circumstances, and were less motivated by traditional means.

The further introduction of new technological advances within our society had created a new scope of opportunities and challenges, and the economy market was

increasingly rewarding those with a college education (Adelman, 2000). Adelman also noted high schools in the United States continue to operate with the attitude of "business as usual", and the results had serious shortcomings. High schools have continued to grow in size within the last twenty years (Gregory, 2001). Additionally, Gregory argues the disparity of growth and the present research supporting smaller high schools exists for several reasons. However, according to Gregory, an important reason for the large high schools surrounds its complex role in the community. The high school is often more than a place of learning, it may be one of the few entities that unifies a community – a source of community pride and a central gathering place (Gregory).

Rise of Small High Schools

Research is available on school size points to several conclusions about the benefits of smaller schools (Mertens, Flowers, & Mulhall, 2001). According to Mertens; et.al smaller school size has been associated with higher achievement under certain conditions. Smaller schools promote substantially improved equity in achievement among all students, and smaller schools may be especially important for disadvantaged students (Myatt, 2004). Myatt argues small high schools offer the kinds of environments needed to experiment with newer ideas in school reform. The small high school cost more up front, however the data and experience showing that funding a completed education is much more cost-effective than dealing with poverty, unwanted pregnancies, crime, and unemployment that accompanies life of individuals lacking in an adequate education (Mertens; et.al).

Richard W. Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education from 1992 to 2000, stated in a speech he delivered to The American Institute of Architects in Washington, DC on

October 13, 1999, "Much of the research we have available to us now suggests that schools should be no bigger than 600 students…However, about 70 percent of all of our nation's students now go to schools with at 1,000 students" (Howley & Harmon, 2000). Additionally, in a study conducted by Lee and Smith (1997) the ideal size for a high school should consist of only 600-900 students. Lee and Smith noted their ideal size for a high school was in line with recommendations made by other scholars, although not all scholars based their recommendations on empirical analyses.

In a study conducted by Mark Maine, focusing on why small high schools are better able to economize on transaction costs than large high schools established interesting results (Maine, 2005). According to Maine, the study examines transaction cost economics (TCE) as a function of school size by examining the administration of the master schedule; student discipline; curriculum and instruction; and adaptation and innovation. Additionally, Maine used a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative research to examine the transaction as the basic unit of analysis to study existing differences between two high schools (Maine). The findings of the study found small school offers a high-school major/college preparation program in which highly specialized curriculum in five areas: health; teaching; media and technology; hospitality; and transportation professions (Maine). Furthermore Maine notes, the large high school offers a traditional comprehensive college preparation program tied to the district's standards based curriculum and instruction. The study found the small school is a flatter organizational structure able to economize on transactions in the administration of the master schedule, student discipline, curriculum/instruction, and adaptation and innovation enabling student success at a more economical rate that the large school (Maine).

Additionally, a study conducted by Daniel Keenan (2005), from Cleveland State University pertaining to the conversion of large to small high schools in northeast Ohio. According to Keenan, a questionnaire was used to determine if teachers felt the change from large to small schools was a positive change. The results showed that as teachers' perceived involvement and perceived opportunities for staff development increased, so did the concern levels (Keenan). In his study, Keenan recommended that change leaders involve all teachers in the planning process for change, and must assess the concern levels of teachers regarding the change and design staff development that specifically addresses the needs of those expected to implement the change.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is supporting efforts to create smaller, more personalized learning environments (Vander Ark, 2002). According to Vander Ark, the Foundation is investing more than $250 million in grants nationwide for the creation of new small schools and transforming large high schools through the schools-within-a-school model. Studies of small schools in Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia find higher academic grades and lower dropout rates (Wasley et al. 2000; Raywid, 1996). Wasley et.al and Raywid find students in smaller schools are more motivated, feel more connected to the schools, and are more likely to remain in school because of the need for every student to fulfill a position needed in academic and athletic activities.

Small schools had fewer incidents of violence and reported fewer discipline problems than large schools (Wasley et al. 2000). Research linked school size to social behavior investigated everything from truancy and classroom disruption to vandalism, aggressive behavior, theft, substance abuse, and gang participation (Lomotey & Swanson, 1989). Lomotey & Swanson also state school leaders in small schools are often seen as

role models for not students and staff but also leaders in the community, often diffusing potentially dangerous situations outside the school environment. Small schools gave students a sense of being known, cared about, and possessed a sense of belonging (Mertens, Flowers, & Mulhall, 2001). According to Mertens et.al, personal attention made possible in a small school was the single most important feature that contributed to successful student learning.

The research was conclusive, smaller schools were working better for most students (Wasley et al., 2000). According to Wasley, et al., fundamental to the success of small schools were the relationships they foster. Students succeeded in school when they connected with an adult or a subject. Small schools created spaces where young people had the opportunity to be known, participate in numerous extracurricular activities and to be a part of a nurturing environment (Vander Ark, 2002).

<div align="center">Summary</div>

The review of literature began with a discussion on the history of education in the United States from the colonial to present day. The review focused on the major events, reform movements and legislation that impacted the educational system. Schools made a difference in student's learning and the development of learning environments conducive to student learning had been a focal point throughout history. Ensuring all children in the United States had an opportunity to experience meaningful education will continue to be an agenda for educators seeking to provide adequate instruction for students.

Legislation to ensure the proper education for all children had resounding effects on local school districts across the nation. Perhaps the most encompassing governmental interaction in education during the twentieth century was traced to the *Brown v. Board of*

Education ruling, decided upon by the United States Supreme Court and reinforced by President Dwight Eisenhower. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, President George W. Bush signed into law a far more encompassing act, the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. State and local school districts were working to meet the new standards implemented through the passage of this law.

In the review of literature, an examination of the rise of the high schools in the United States reaffirmed that legislation to provide for adequate schooling for the transition period from common schools to universities was instituted in many states by 1870. However, the need to support high schools had been a subject of debate within many of the states. The decision by the Michigan State Supreme Court, the Kalamazoo Case, 1872 answered the question of the validity for high schools and gave precedence for the establishment of high schools across the country.

This historical review of literature ended with a discussion of the advantages of the small high schools. Research has shown evidence pertaining to the advantages of smaller, more compact school units. The single most important reason given was the contribution to successful student learning. Impact on other issues related to belongingness and nurturing of students also play an important role for students in a smaller high school setting. Students were likely to graduate if the sense of being a part of the school life, which was more likely to happen in the smaller high school setting. The small high school offered a personalized environment along with opportunities for participation in school life.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The chapter included the specific steps for the purpose of collecting and analyzing

the data, along with a synopsis of the purpose. The procedures contained the research

questions, an explanation of the research design, instruments and the measures used to

collect the data. Also included was a descriptive review of the population and the method

used to conduct the study. The purpose of this study was to determine what works for

Georgia High Schools with fewer than 800 students in meeting AYP. To perform the

research, a mixed method of data collection and analysis was used.

The study was conducted to determine if a statistically significant relationship

existed between principals and teachers of Georgia high schools with less than 800

students pertaining to meeting AYP during the 2004-2005 school year. Quantitative data

was collected through the use of a questionnaire developed by the Wisconsin Department

of Public Instruction; Division for Learning Support: Equity and Advocacy. The data was

analyzed using the SPSS to provide descriptive statistics. Since no names were required

to participate in the survey, the confidentiality of the teachers and principals was ensured.

The name of the participating school was the only identifying information requested.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to serve as a method of collection

for the qualitative data. Using the grounded theory approach, the qualitative data was

analyzed to determine emerging trends and patterns to discover original along with

existing theories. To better comprehend what the information gathered, the qualitative

data analysis involved organizing what was seen, heard, and read from the prospective interviews.

Research Questions

Overarching Question

To what extent did the perceptions of teachers and principals in Georgia High Schools with fewer than 800 students differ in factors contributing to attaining AYP?

Sub Questions

(1)   What factors did teachers perceive important in factors contributing to the attainment of AYP?

(2)   What factors did principals perceive important in factors contributing to the attainment of AYP?

(3)   To what extent did teachers and principals differ on the important factors they perceive in contributing to the attainment of AYP?

Research Design

The design of this study incorporated a mixed-method of data collection. The quantitative approach provided an extensive summary of general information. Through the use of a questionnaire, quantitative data was collected on what factors were involved in successful schools developed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Division for Learning Support: Equity and Advocacy. The Wisconsin questionnaire was modified to correlate with Georgia's qualifications for meeting AYP. Once the researcher received the responses from the questionnaire, the quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to provide descriptive statistics. Using the SPSS software, the researcher was able to generate decision-making information

quickly; the results obtained were analyzed to uncover key facts, patterns, and trends. Findings from this study were analyzed and led to an understanding of the various practices used in Georgia high schools with fewer than 800 students to meet AYP during the 2004-2005 school year. The information obtained from the responses of teachers and principals was presented in table form to correlate the quantitative items to the review of literature, research questions, and items on the questionnaire.

Quantitative research methods were designed to focus attention on measurements and amounts (more or less, larger and smaller, often and seldom, similar and different) of traits displayed by people and events the researcher studies (Thomas, 2003). According to Muija (2004), quantitative research was well suited for testing of theories and hypothesis. The purpose of making generalizations about some social phenomena by collecting numerical data that were analyzed using mathematical based methods, created predictions concerning those phenomena, and provided causal explanations, the experimental method of quantitative research was used in this study (Muija). The experimental method of quantitative research which was "a test under controlled conditions that is made to demonstrate known truth or to examine the validity of a hypothesis" will meet the criteria (Muija, p. 354).

The researcher's objectivity was one of the most important aspects of the quantitative research design (Thomas, 2003). Glesne (2006), the researcher's role was to observe and measure, and care was taken to keep the researchers from "contaminating" the data through personal involvement with the research subjects. Additionally, the rationale for quantitative research methods of using questionnaires: cost factor was much less and less time was required for the collections of data (Gall, Borg, and Gall, 2004).

However one fallacy for using the questionnaire was the probability of discovering a participant's deepest thoughts, feelings or opinions (Gall, et.al).

Marshall and Rossman (2000) supported the qualitative inquiry when the researcher becomes intrigued with the complexity of social interactions as experienced in daily life and with the meanings the participants themselves attribute to the interactions. Additionally, the natural interest then took the researcher into natural settings rather than laboratories and fosters pragmatism in using multiple methods for exploring the topic of interest. According to Thomas (2003) qualitative research methods were "multimethod" in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. According to Thomas, the researchers studied things in their natural settings, attempted to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative Research was used to understand some social phenomena from the perspectives of those involved, to conceptualize issues in a particular socio-cultural environment to transform or change social conditions (Thomas). Marshall and Rossman (2006), contended qualitative research was a broad approach to the study of social phenomena and drew on multiple methods of inquiry.

From the researchers Marshall and Rossman (2006), the qualitative researcher most often relied on four methods for gathering information: participation in the setting, direct observation, in-depth interviewing, and analyzing documents and material culture. Using the four methods for gathering information, the researcher was able to learn more than can be seen and explored through alternative explanations of what was seen and heard from other perceptions and attitudes toward a topic (Glense, 2006).

This researcher sought to develop a narrative of the teachers and principals in Georgia high schools with fewer than 800 students meeting AYP during the 2004-2005 school term. The experiences of the teachers and principals were analyzed through the detailed descriptions of the participants involved.

<div align="center">Instrumentation</div>

Using a questionnaire developed, validated and used by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Division for Learning Support: Equity and Advocacy, teachers and principals in Georgia high schools with fewer than 800 students were asked to participate. Permission to use this instrument was given through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to anyone wishing to conduct surveys pertaining to school improvement. This instrument was used to survey teachers and principals in Georgia high schools with fewer than 800 students meeting AYP during the 2004-2005 school year.

The questionnaire developed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Division of Learning Support: Equity and Advocacy consist of 33 questions addressed areas in school improvement designed to assist schools in becoming successful institute of learning. Included in the questionnaire were survey questions designed to identify schools that were successful based on seven characteristics identified by the Wisconsin teachers. These characteristics included Vision, Leadership, High Academic Standards, Professional Development, Family, School and Community Partnership, Standards of the Heart, and Evident of Success. The five point Likert scale was appropriate for collecting information on the perceptions teachers and principals had for meeting AYP. The responses were tabulated with the numerical value of "1" meaning not an indicator to the numerical values of "5" meaning a significant indicator.

Based on the review of literature, a semi-structured interview process was incorporated for this study. Given the opportunity to use the interviewing process in qualitative inquiry was an opportunity to learn more about what is not seen and can be explored with alternative explanations (Glesne, 2006). Glesne also noted using the semi-structured interviewing process allowed the interviewee the opportunity to expand and give views not available through questionnaires. Permission was granted through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Division for Learning Support: Equity and Advocacy, to use the interview questions from the school improvement survey. The interview questions are listed in the Appendix.

<div align="center">Procedures</div>

After the approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) the researcher began the study (See Appendices A). Georgia high schools with fewer than 800 students meeting AYP were identified to be used in the study. The researcher emailed a cover letter to the superintendents and principals identified, along with a copy of the survey to be emailed to the teachers within the individual high schools). The email addresses for the superintendents and principals were obtained from the Georgia Department of Education. A cover letter assured confidentiality along with an explanation of the study.

The return emails were coded with the address of each school district in which the principals and teachers were employed to establish a response pattern. The cover letter provided information encouraging each participant to complete the questionnaire and submit the completed information. After the data had been collected from the individual returned emails, the emails were deleted from the Inbox on the researcher's email to

ensure confidentiality. A follow-up email was sent to those participants that did not

respond within a three week time period. The cover letter is included in the Appendix.

According to Sprinthall (2003) the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

(SPSS) is an integrated system of computer program for analyzing, managing, and

displaying data. The SPSS was used to analyze the quantitative data from the

questionnaire to determine the frequency distributions of participant's responses in each

category to find the central tendency for each indicator for meeting AYP. Once the

questionnaire had been completed, the participants were asked if they were willing to

take part in an in-depth interview.

<div align="center">Participants</div>

For the quantitative data needed to complete the study, the population that was

considered in collecting data from the questionnaire provided by the Wisconsin

Department of Public Instruction; Division for Learning Support: Equity and Advocacy

was be the 28 of the 65 Georgia high schools with fewer than 800 students meeting AYP

during the 2004-2005 school term. The names of the principals meeting the criteria were

obtained from the Georgia Department of Education website. The researcher sought to

have 100% participation from the principals and teachers in the Georgia high schools

with fewer than 800 students who were successful in meeting AYP during the 2004-2005

school year.

The qualitative input designed to strengthen the depth of this study was determined.

Two to three principals along with the teachers from their schools employed by the

systems successful in meeting AYP during the 2004-2005 consenting to be interviewed

were identified. A table was created to display demographic information for each of the systems interviewed.

Method of Analysis

The SPSS software was utilized to analyze the data collected from the quantitative results gathered from the participating Georgia high schools. A frequency distribution was established to summarize the data from the Questionnaire. Sprinthal (2003) states the frequency distributions help in identifying patterns and the numbers assist in shaping a more specific hypothesis about attitudes.

Measures of central tendency were incorporated to describe the frequency distribution for the items on the Questionnaire. The mean score of each item on the questionnaire was used to provide a descriptive analysis of items identified as successful tools for meeting AYP.

Once the quantitative data was collected and reviewed, six to eight principals along with teachers from the identified high schools in Georgia were asked to participate in a semi-structured, in-depth interview. A high correlation of answers between principals and teachers in the same schools were used to determine which principals and teachers were invited to participate in the interviewing process. Once the interviews were conducted, the audio-taped interviews were transcribed. The transcripts were analyzed to identify themes, patterns, idea, and reported in narrative form.

Summary

This chapter included a restatement of the research questions, the research design, instrumentation, procedures, participants, and methods of analysis. The study involved a mixed-method of study using both quantitative and qualitative data. The participants in

the study were selected from the 28 of the 65 Georgia high schools with fewer than 800

students successful in meeting AYP during the 2004-2005 school year. The questionnaire

utilized by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Division of Learning

Support: Equity and Advocacy was used to survey the participating principals and

teachers. A frequency distribution was used to summarize the data from the

questionnaire. The researcher also conducted a semi-structured interview with the

principals and teachers responding to the questionnaire and agreed to be interviewed to

give in-depth support for the findings from the questionnaires. Transcribed audio-taped

interviews were analyzed to reproduce the perceptions of principals and teachers in

Georgia high schools with less than 800 students meeting AYP during the2004-2005

school year.

CHAPTER IV

REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to develop a narrative profile of schools making AYP with a small school population. The study was a mixed-method design using both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were obtained through the survey, <u>Wisconsin's Characteristics of Successful Schools</u> completed by 330 of the approximate 1200 school personnel employed in Georgia high schools with a student population of less than 800 and made AYP during the 2004-2005 school year. In Appendix A, permission was obtained from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Division of Learning Support: Equity and Advocacy. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with two of the principals and five of the teachers who responded to the questionnaires that yielded the qualitative data.

Research Questions

Overarching Question

To what extent did the perceptions of teachers and principals in Georgia High Schools with fewer than 800 students differ in factors contributing to attaining AYP?

Sub Questions

(1)   What factors did teachers perceive important in factors contributing to the attainment of AYP?

(2)   What factors did principals perceive important in factors contributing to the attainment of AYP?

(3)   To what extent did teachers and principals differ on the important factors they

perceive in contributing to the attainment of AYP?

This chapter reported the results of the data analysis from the questionnaire as well as the interviews that were conducted. The data from the questionnaires were organized as follows: biographical and demographic characteristics, academic preparation and characteristics of successful schools. The information resulting from the interviews was organized around the patterns identified in the interviews with the administrators and teachers; district vision, flexibility, advantages of technology, effective teaching pedagogies, school issues, classroom and after-school programs, expectations for student and staff behavior, parent involvement and professional development.

Quantitative

District Vision

The schools have goals that support the district vision (34%) strongly agreed, (51%) agreed, (7%) were neutral, (6%) disagreed and (1%) strongly disagreed (See Table 1).

Table 1

The School has goals that support the district vision

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	111	34
Agree	165	51
Neutral	24	7
Disagree	21	6
Strongly Disagree	3	1

N=324

The district vision for this study involved the perspectives of school community in organizing the goals to make AYP (See Table 2).

Table 2

In developing the district's vision, there was a broad input from school and community members

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	204	62
Agree	90	27
Neutral	27	8
Disagree	6	2
Strongly Disagree	1	1

N =328

In developing the district vision there was broad input from school and community members of the respondents (62%) strongly agreed, (27%) agreed, (8%) were neutral, (2%) disagreed and (1%) strongly disagreed (See Table 3).

Table 3

District goals have been developed under the leadership of the school board

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	108	33
Agree	160	50
Neutral	32	10
Disagree	27	6
Strongly Disagree	3	1

N = 330

Leadership

The leadership patterns for this study include leadership qualities seen in individuals within the leadership team of the school district. School leaders are flexible in dealing with change and are willing to experiment (46%) strongly agreed, (44%) agreed, (6%) were neutral,(5%) disagreed, and (0%) strongly disagreed (See Table 4).

Table 4

School leaders are flexible in dealing with change and are willing to experiment

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	150	46
Agree	144	44
Neutral	18	6
Disagree	15	5
Strongly Disagree	0	0

N = 327

School leaders analyze information from many sources and use it to make decisions (35%) strongly agreed, (41%) agreed, (17%) were neutral, (6%) disagreed, and (1%) strongly disagreed (See Table 5).

Table 5

School leaders analyze information from many sources and use it to make decisions

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	114	35
Agree	135	41
Neutral	54	17
Disagree	21	6
Strongly Disagree	3	1

N = 330

School leaders practice and promote equity and excellence for all our staff and students

(34%) strongly agreed, (47%) agreed, (12%) were neutral, (7%) disagreed, and (0%)

strongly disagreed (See Table 6).

Table 6

School leaders practice and promote equity and excellence for all staff and students

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	111	34
Agree	153	47
Neutral	39	12
Disagree	24	7
Strongly Disagree	0	0

N = 327

School leaders model the behaviors expected of staff and students (42%) strongly agreed,

(37%) agreed, (14%) were neutral, (7%) disagreed, and (0%) strongly disagreed (See

Table 7).

Table 7

School leaders model the behaviors expected of staff and students

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	138	42
Agree	120	37
Neutral	45	14
Disagree	24	7
Strongly Disagree	0	0

N = 330

School leaders cultivate community support for the school and its vision (29%) strongly agreed, (48%) agreed, (18%) were neutral, (5%) disagreed, and (1%) strongly disagreed (See Table8).

Table 8

School leaders cultivate community support for the school and its vision

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	93	29
Agree	156	48
Neutral	57	18
Disagree	15	5
Strongly Disagree	3	1

N = 323

High Academic Standards

High academic standards refer to the goals created and incorporated in order to make AYP. The school has adequate resources to achieve its goals (25%) strongly agreed, (32%) agreed, (19%) were neutral (20%) disagreed, and (4%) strongly disagreed (See Table 9).

Table 9

The school has adequate resources to achieve its goals

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	81	25
Agree	105	32
Neutral	63	19
Disagree	66	20
Strongly Disagree	12	4

N = 327

Every student is expected to achieve at a high level (38%) strongly agreed, (41%) agreed, (12%) were neutral, (6%) disagreed, and (2%) strongly disagreed (See Table 10).

Table 10

Every student is expected to achieve at a high level

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	123	38
Agree	135	41
Neutral	39	12
Disagree	21	6
Strongly Disagree	6	2

N = 324

Teachers use effective teaching methods to help all students achieve standards (38%) strongly agreed, (41%) agreed, (12%) were neutral, (6%) disagreed, and (2%) strongly disagreed (See Table 11).

Table 11

Teachers use effective teaching methods to help all students achieve standards

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	123	38
Agree	135	41
Neutral	39	12
Disagree	21	6
Strongly Disagree	6	2

N = 324

The school has established criteria for measuring the academic performance of all students (37%) strongly agreed, (41%) agreed, (16%) were neutral, (6%) disagreed, and (0%) strongly disagreed (See Table 12).

Table 12

The school has established criteria for measuring the academic performance of all students

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	120	37
Agree	132	41
Neutral	51	16
Disagree	21	6
Strongly Disagree	0	0

N = 324

Curriculum, instruction, resources, and assessment are culturally inclusive (35%) strongly agreed, (39%) agreed, (19%) were neutral, (6%) disagreed, and (1%) strongly disagreed (See Table 13).

Table 13

Curriculum, instruction, resources, and assessment are culturally inclusive

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	114	35
Agree	126	39
Neutral	63	19
Disagree	18	6
Strongly Disagree	3	1

N = 324

Professional Development

Professional development refers to the resources utilized to meet the needs of the school population. Professional development meets the needs of participants (44%) strongly agreed, (44%) agreed, (8%) were neutral (5%) disagreed, and (0%) strongly disagreed (See Table 14).

Table 14

Professional development meets the needs of participants

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	144	44
Agree	144	44
Neutral	27	8
Disagree	15	5
Strongly Disagree	0	0

N = 330

Professional development helps school staff meet the needs of diverse students (32%) strongly agreed, (46%) agreed, (8%) were neutral, (12%) disagreed, and (2%) strongly disagreed (See Table 15).

Table 15

Professional development helps school staff meet the needs of diverse students

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	105	32
Agree	153	46
Neutral	27	8
Disagree	39	12
Strongly Disagree	6	2

N = 330

The school devotes adequate resources to professional development (36%) strongly agreed, (45%) agreed, (15%) were neutral, (3%) disagreed, and (2%) strongly disagreed (See Table 16).

Table 16

The school devotes adequate resources to professional development

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	120	36
Agree	147	45
Neutral	48	15
Disagree	9	3
Strongly Disagree	6	2

N = 330

Family, School and Community Partnership

Those participants responding to the questionnaire concerning family, school and community partnerships reported: The school recognizes the contributions that families and the community make in fostering core values (34%) strongly agreed, (46%) agreed, (15%) were neutral, (6%) disagreed, and (0%) strongly disagreed (See Table 17).

Table 17

The school recognizes the contributions that families and the community make in fostering core values

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	111	34
Agree	150	46
Neutral	48	15
Disagree	18	6
Strongly Disagree	0	0

N = 327

School administrators support family-community partnerships (30%) strongly agreed, (51%) agreed, (14%) were neutral, (4%) disagreed, and (1%) strongly disagreed (See Table 18).

Table 18

School administrators support family-community partnerships

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	99	30
Agree	168	51
Neutral	45	14
Disagree	12	4
Strongly Disagree	3	1

N = 327

Parents actively participates in their children's education (43%) strongly agreed, (31%) agreed, (11%) were neutral, (12%) disagreed, and (4%) strongly disagreed (See Table 19).

Table 19

Parents actively participate in their children's education

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	138	43
Agree	99	31
Neutral	36	11
Disagree	39	12
Strongly Disagree	12	4

N = 324

The school responds positively to the needs of families and their children (34%) strongly agreed, (46%) agreed, (9%) were neutral, (8%) disagreed, and (3%) strongly disagreed (See Table 20).

Table 20

The school responds positively to the needs of families and their children

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	111	34
Agree	150	46
Neutral	30	9
Disagree	27	8
Strongly Disagree	9	3

N = 326

`The school involves the community in improving student learning (38%) strongly agreed, (39%) agreed, (18%) were neutral, (6%) disagreed and (0%) strongly disagreed (See Table 21).

Table 21

The school involves the community in improving student learning

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	123	38
Agree	126	39
Neutral	60	18
Disagree	18	6
Strongly Disagree	0	0

N = 327

Families from different backgrounds and/or cultures participate in school activities (35%) strongly agreed, (38%) agreed, (15%) neutral, (10%) disagreed, and (2%) strongly disagreed (See Table 22).

Table 22

Families from different backgrounds and/or cultures participate in school activities

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	114	35
Agree	126	38
Neutral	51	15
Disagree	33	10
Strongly Disagree	6	2

N = 330

Standards of the Heart

Standards of the Heart refer to school climate and core values demonstrated in the districts. Students are expected to learn and demonstrate a core set of values including respect, tolerance, and responsibility (38%) strongly agreed, (42%) agreed, (15%) were neutral, (5%) disagreed, and (1%) strongly disagreed (See Table 23).

Table 23

Students are expected to learn and demonstrate a core set of values including respect,

tolerance, and responsibility

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	123	38
Agree	135	42
Neutral	48	15
Disagree	15	5
Strongly Disagree	3	1

N = 324

The school climate ensures that each person feels safe and respected (30%) strongly

agreed, (50%) agreed, (12%) were neutral, (6%) disagreed, and (3%) strongly disagreed

(See Table 24).

Table 24

The school climate ensures that each person feels safe and respected

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	99	30
Agree	162	50
Neutral	39	12
Disagree	18	6
Strongly Disagree	9	3

N = 330

The school promotes positive relationships among students and adults (39%) strongly agreed, (41%) agreed, (13%) were neutral, (6%) disagreed, and (1%) strongly disagreed (See Table 25).

Table 25

The school promotes positive relationships among students and adults

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	129	39
Agree	135	41
Neutral	42	13
Disagree	18	6
Strongly Disagree	3	1

N = 327

Evidence of Success

In this study the evidence of success refers to the responses that deal with technology, teaching methods, school issues. Technology is used effectively in the school (32%) strongly agreed, (36%) agreed, (19%) were neutral, (12%) disagreed, and (1%) strongly disagreed (See Table 26).

Table 26

Technology is used effectively in the school

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	105	32
Agree	117	36
Neutral	63	19
Disagree	39	12
Strongly Disagree	3	1

N = 327

The school addresses issues that limit students' ability to be productive citizens (42%) strongly agree, (43%) agree, (8%) were neutral, (6%) disagree, and (1%) strongly disagree (See Table 27).

Table 27

The school addresses issues that limit students' ability to be productive citizens

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	138	42
Agree	141	43
Neutral	27	8
Disagree	18	6
Strongly Disagree	3	1

N = 327

The school provides a variety of classroom and after-school programs to engage every student (51%) strongly agreed, (33%) agreed, (9%) were neutral, (6%) disagreed, and (0%) strongly disagreed (See Table 28)

Table 28

The school provides a variety of classroom and after-school programs to engage every student

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	168	51
Agree	108	33
Neutral	30	9
Disagree	21	6
Strongly Disagree	0	0

N = 327

High expectations are the norm for student and staff behavior in the classroom, at school events, and in the community (52%) strongly agreed, (38%) agreed, (5%) neutral, (4%) disagreed, and (2%) strongly disagreed (See Table 29).

Table 29

High expectations are the norm for student and staff behavior in the classroom, at school

events, and in the community

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	171	52
Agree	123	38
Neutral	15	5
Disagree	12	4
Strongly Disagree	6	2

N = 327

There is evidence that all students meet high expectations (31%) strongly agreed,

(43%) agreed, (14%) were neutral, (10%) disagreed, and (3%) strongly disagreed (See

Table 30).

Table 30

There is evidence that all students meet high expectations

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	102	31
Agree	141	43
Neutral	45	14
Disagree	33	10
Strongly Disagree	9	3

N = 330

School staff review student behavior data (36%) strongly agreed, (45%) agreed, (13%)

neutral, (6%) disagreed, and (1%) strongly disagreed (See Table 31).

Table 31

School staff review student behavior data

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	117	36
Agree	147	45
Neutral	42	13
Disagree	18	6
Strongly Disagree	3	1

N = 327

Information about student academic performance is easily understood in the school

and in the community (32%) strongly agreed, (46%) agreed, (15%) neutral, (6%)

disagreed, and (0%) strongly disagreed (See Table 32).

Table 32

Information about student academic performance is easily understood in the school and

in the community

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	105	32
Agree	150	46
Neutral	48	15
Disagree	21	6
Strongly Disagree	0	0

N = 324

Information about student performance is reviewed to identify gaps in achievement

(32%) strongly agree, (54%) agree, (11%) were neutral, (3%) disagree, and (0%) strongly

disagreed (See Table 33).

Table 33

Information about student performance is reviewed to identify gaps in achievement

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	105	32
Agree	177	54
Neutral	36	11
Disagree	9	3
Strongly Disagree	0	0

N = 327

Biographical and Demographic Characteristics

The typical age of principal and teacher of small high schools in Georgia were

The average age of the respondents was 30-39 (33%) with (26%) respondents between

the ages of 25-29 (See Table 34).

Table 34

Age

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Under 25 years	48	15
25-29	84	26
30-39	108	33
40-49	60	18
50-59	27	8

N = 330

The typical principal and teacher in small high schools in Georgia was married

(51%) with (28%) responding they were single and (5%) widowed.

Table 35

Marital status

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Single	93	28
Married	168	51
Widowed	18	5
Divorced or Separated	51	15

N = 330

The highest degree earned is a doctorate (4%) with (17%) reporting earning a specialist degree (46%) earning a master's degree and (34%) a bachelor's degree (See Table 36).

Table 36

Highest degree earned

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor's	111	34
Master's	150	46
Specialists	54	17
Doctorate	12	4

N = 330

The sample population of principals and teachers of small high schools in Georgia were white (71%), those Black, not of Hispanic origin (22%), Hispanic (4%), Asian or Pacific Islander (2%), and (2%) American Indian/ Alaskan Native (See Table 37).

Table 37

Racial/ethnic origin

Responses	Frequency	Percent
America Indian/Alaskan Native	6	2
Asian or Pacific Islander	6	2
Hispanic	12	4
Black/not Hispanic origin	72	22
White, not Hispanic origin	234	71

N = 330

The highest average of those reporting in a district with 600-999 students is (59%), of the student population was 300-599 was (40%), and (1%) reported having a student population 1-299 (See Table 38)

Table 38

Number of students in district where employed

Responses	Frequency	Percent
1-299	3	1
300-599	132	40
600-999	195	59

N = 330

The metro status of the participants where they were employed was (54%) rural, (41%) small town, (4%) suburb with (1%) reporting urban center or large city (See Table 39).

Table 39

Metro status where employed

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Rural	177	54
Town or Small City	135	41
Suburb	12	4
Urban Center or Large City	3	1

N = 330

From this group surveyed (34%) has been in their present position 5-8 years. Those in current positions 1-4 years were (33%), those serving 9 or more years (23%) and those with less than one year experience (10%) (See Table 40).

Table 40

Number of years in present position

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Less than one year	33	10
1-4 years	108	33
5-8 years	111	34
9 or more years	75	23

N = 330

Qualitative

The data was analyzed from the interviews of the two principals and five teachers that yielded themes and patterns for the purpose of this study. The information resulting from the interviews was organized around the patterns identified in the interviews with the administrators and teachers. The qualitative is presented in the following order: district vision, flexibility, advantages of technology, effective teaching pedagogies, school issues, classroom and after-school programs, expectations for student and staff behavior, parent involvement and professional development.

The two Georgia high school principals along with teachers from their schools agreeing to participate in the in-depth interview were from small rural counties with each county containing a small town as the county seat. Principal 1, to be identified as Jerry T.

Tall has been a principal for the last 10 years, holds a specialist degree in Educational Administration, and has a faculty of 65 teachers. Principal 2, to be identified as Johnny Lately has been a principal for 8 years, holds a specialist degree in Educational Administration, and has a faculty of 72 teachers.

The participating teachers involved in the study will be identified as Lucy Loo for Teacher 1, Sara Smartly for Teacher 2, Dora Clark for Teacher 3, Betsy Tucker for Teacher 4 and Cindy Downs for Teacher 5.

District Vision

Jerry T. Tall felt he was very instrumental in helping to establish the vision for the district. In the interview, he replied, "I was a part of the committee formed to help create the criteria our school district would consider for our vision; because of this input, I was involved from the very beginning"(February 12, 2007, p. 1).

Johnny Lately did not feel he had input in the development of the vision for the district, however he was very comfortable with the vision the county had in place and would not at this time, change the current vision. Mr. Lately replied, "I was a new principal when the district's vision had been adopted. I was questioned about the importance of the district's vision when I applied as a candidate for the position of principal at the high school. I was comfortable with the present vision and didn't feel any changes were needed" (February 13, p. 1).

Lucy Loo replied "In reference to the district's vision, I feel that my input has been limited. However, as a whole community, I believe there was much input" (February 12, 2007, p. 1).

Sara Smartly was more positive about input regarding the district's vision. She was on the committee appointed by the high school to represent that particular school's employees' opinions regarding the district's vision. She stated, "As a part of the committee to review and possibly revise the district's vision, I held a very active part and gained a lot of insight into the direction of the school district and felt the input from different personnel would be beneficial to all" (February 12, 2007, p. 1).

Dora Clark stated, "Our district has done a good job of involving teaches at various levels of planning. Surveys were conducted and committees formed to discuss the direction our school should take. Community members were involved in the decision-making process too"(February 13, p. 1).

Betsy Tucker felt she had little say in the development of the district's vision. Mrs. Tucker stated, "I felt that I had a little impact in the development of the vision through the use of a survey conducted by the district office. The school did involve the community in the development more than they are involving this group in things now. I feel the community needs to be involved in school policy then the community would buy into the different programs we have or would like to have"(February 19, 2007, p. 1).

Cindy Downs stated, "The district's vision has been in place since I have been employed within the district. Although, I know the leaders of our district are cognizant of the importance of involving all personnel in matters affecting our system as a whole; the vision we have at this time is concise and well-written. It clearly states what we are about and that is educating our community's children" (March 1, 2007, p. 1).

Leadership

        Jerry T. Tall felt flexibility has been a key component for any leader in the educational field. When dealing with the necessary changes needed to make sure the school is making AYP, flexibility is a needed factor. Mr. Tall stated, "The engagement our students actively participating in the educational process is essential whether it is attending school or making a concerted effort to excel on the standardized test. Whether the test is the EOCT [End of Course Test] or the GHSGT [Georgia High School Graduation Test]"(February 12, 2007, p. 1).

        Johnny Lately stated, "Any leader within any organization must be flexible. However, I feel in recent years, assistant principals and principals are required, now more than ever to be flexible in all aspects of the occupation. For example, when I come to school in the morning with an agenda in mind, it is rare that I will be able to follow that agenda without any modifications"(February 13, 2007, p. 1).

        Four of the five teachers reported flexibility to be a key component when addressing the need to experiment with various avenues needed to meeting AYP within their districts. Lucy Loo noted, "There has been much flexibility afforded to our faculty in order to meet AYP. For example, students have tutoring available at their disposal in almost every subject. Also, we offer credit recovery; credit recovery takes the place of a traditional summer school program. The program allows the student to be exposed to the subject matter for a second time. (February 12, 2007, p. 1). Dora Clark stated, "Although the administrator was new to our school the year we first met AYP, he came here with an open mind. He was receptive to our ideas and seemed to value teacher input"(February

13, 2007, p. 1). However, Betsy Tucker felt "the school administrators adjusted well, but was not sure they helped teachers adjust to the changes"(February 19, 2007, p. 1).

Advantages of Technology

When asked about the technological applications employed within their systems both principals felt there will always be a need to improve the present equipment. The need for new technological equipment is an ongoing process because of the rapid changes constantly taking place in that area. Jerry T. Tall felt the teachers within his system, "They are making use of all available technology to engage students in learning" (February 12, 2007, p. 2).

All teachers were using some form of technology in their classrooms on a daily basis, some more than others. Lucy Loo responded, "In my class, I use technology on a daily basis. One such example stems from my Current Issues class. In that particular class, students submit their assignments via e-mail to me as well as creating web pages as projects"(February 12, 2007, p. 2). Sara Smartly responded in a similar fashion citing her Directed Studies class, "the use of technology is necessary in my Directed Studies class in order to challenge these students to perform at a level higher than they are normally are required to do in their other classes. The students use wireless internet to research various topics in social studies and then create different types of formats to display their findings"(February 12, 2007, p. 2). Dora Clark stated "Our school offers web design, computer applications, business law and video broadcasting. In the regular classroom, we try to incorporate a variety of computer programs to enhance our student's knowledge of technology"(February 13, 2007, p. 2).

Effective Teaching Pedagogies

Both principals are employed by counties in which the high schools are on the block schedule. The school year is divided into two semesters, with students taking four classes each semester. Each principal has incorporated "Skinnies" ["Skinnies" are block classes that are divided into two segment classes and are taught the entire school year] into their systems with limited success in order to maintain high standardized test scores. Jerry T. Tall recorded, "The need to offer year long classes became apparent when the EOCT scores for ninth grade classes in science and math began to drop. We reviewed the success a local system was having using a split block to teach two classes all year. Our school adopted these types of classes with some teachers adapting easily and others not so easily"(February 12, 2007, p. 2). Additionally Johnny Lately reinforced the need to make adjustments for the ninth grade classes, "Our ninth graders were required to know a large amount of information in a short period of time. Second semester was worse than first semester before we made the switch. Our scores are improving, I feel, because the students are having a longer period in which to comprehend and digest the material. At the same time teachers are utilizing different teaching strategies to present the material"(February 13, 2007, p. 3).

All teachers responded positively about using different types of effective teaching pedagogies and helping students achieve success in meeting school expectations. Lucy Loo responded, "In my teaching, I attempt to cater to all of the various learning types. I use powerpoint, audio, hands-on projects and field trips. I believe these various styles of teaching methods are used to meet or exceed school expectations" (February 12, 2007, p. 3). Sara Smartly stated, "In teaching my

the classes , it is important to stimulate the student's mind in order to help these students

meet the challenges they are required to know when taking standardized test, especially

in the Advanced Placement classes. I employ many different strategies to engage every

learner in my classroom from teacher centered to student centered. These strategies may

include student presentations, powerpoints, role playing, historical narratives to name a

few"(February 12, 2007, p. 3). Betsy Tucker added, "The use of computer programs such

as Georgia411 and GCIS (Georgia Career Information System) are useful programs

utilized in my classroom"(February 19, 2007, p. 3).

School Issues

Both Jerry T. Tall and Johnny Lately expressed the same sentiment regarding

the shortage of money. Johnny Lately stated, "All small high schools across the state are

facing a money shortage needed to implement the various programs, especially if we are

to stay competitive with the larger school systems near us"(February 13, 2007, p. 4). Both

principals also stated the problems attracting "highly qualified" teachers to their

individual systems. Jerry T. Tall recorded, "The advantages of living in a small

community versus a large metropolitan area are the relative minor discipline problems

small schools deal with, and the camaraderie among the staff. These are viewed as assets

enjoyed by the employees" (February 12, 2007, p. 4).

The teachers had various issues they felt were impacting their individual

schools. Each teacher did respond to insufficient funding for various programs of interest

as a school issue. Lucy Loo recorded, "Some of the school issues that would limit the

productivity of the students in the future would be: high drop-out rate, low socio-

economic status of the community, teenage pregnancy, lack of an effective

abstinence/sex-education program, and drug and alcohol abuse"(February 12, 2007, p. 4).

Sara Smartly expressed, "There is a need to offer more Advanced Placement courses for

the students attending the high school. Also, a more rigorous curriculum for the gifted

students entering the system needs to be addressed"(February 12, 2007, p. 4). Dora Clark

stated "More parental involvement among those students who are lagging behind or

failing" (February 13, 2007, p. 3). Betsy Tucker responded "fighting was a school issue

in need of a conflict resolution program" (February 19, 2007, p. 4). Cindy Downs

reported the "Inclusion classes were not being implemented correctly and felt more staff

development needed to be conducted to better instruct all teachers on the positive benefits

of the type of this type of teaching"(March 1, 2007, p. 4).

Classroom and After-school Programs

Jerry T. Tall and Johnny Lately from both high schools were very positive

about the numerous programs available within the classrooms and after-school programs.

Jerry T. Tall responded, "The different programs being offered and recently implemented

were the Jr ROTC; AP U.S. History, AP Biology, AP Calculus; Web Design and

Industrial Arts Class offered by the local technology college"(February 12, 2007, p. 4).

All teachers responded with positive comments pertaining to classroom and

after school programs available for students. Lucy Loo responded, "Many students are

engaged in various school activities. Some of those activities include: Model United

Nations, Y-Club, National Honor Society, and various athletic events. All the above

mentioned activities demonstrate students are challenged either physically and/or

academically" (February 12, 2007, p. 5). Sara Smartly cited, "Students are involved in

many academic extracurricular activities including Social Studies Fair, Governor's

Honors, National History Day, Literary Competition, and Math Quiz Bowl. The

classroom programs include inclusion for the special education students, AP classes for

those wanting to receive college credit, and honors classes for those preparing for a

college endorsed diploma" (February 12, 2006, p. 5). Dora Clark also commented on the

opportunities for students to take remediation classes for the GHSGT, and tutoring

offered by the various departments.

Expectations for Student and Staff Behavior

Both principals had positive expectations regarding student and staff behavior

in the classroom, at school events and in the community. Both principals also felt the

positive expectations for student and staff behavior resulted in a positive reaction to the

success of the school climate. Jerry T. Tall noted, "The positive reaction I received about

my staff and students from the community during field trips are appreciated. Students are

expected to maintain the same behavior they are required to exhibit at school and school

functions"(February 12, 2007, p. 5). Johnny Lately responded, "Expectations for the

students and staff can be linked to the leadership qualities of the administration. Not only

are the administrators of the school the instructional leaders, but they are also leaders for

the moral and sportsmanship-like qualities they wish their faculty and students to

follow"(February 13, 2007, p. 5).

All five teachers felt student and staff behavior should exhibit positive moral

behavior in the classroom, at school events, and in the community. However, the teachers

also felt the school administration has little or no effect on the behavior of some of the

students and staff outside of the school setting. Lucy Loo recorded "I feel that students,

parents, teachers and the administrators should maintain a certain level of respect in every

aspect of the community. In reference to how this improves school climate, if a person maintains themselves in a respectable manner outside of school then (hopefully) respect will be maintained in the classroom"(February 12, 2007, p. 5). Sara Smartly stated "I do feel the community holds teachers to a higher standard, and it should. Teachers are seen as the caretakers of tomorrow's leaders and should take that position seriously. This is a very important aspect of school climate because teachers set the tone for how the school operates not only by their own behavior, but by how they also conduct their classrooms" (February 12, 2007, p. 5). Dora Clark stated "For staff and students to have a good working relationship they need to have respect for each other and be productive in the classroom. This is very important for the climate of the school and the community. [Staff and students] having respect for one another definitely has a positive affect on the school climate" (February 13, 2007, p. 4). Cindy Downs 5 responded "Respect for yourself and others is important; good sportsmanship, displaying respect for self, school pride and community are all conducive to creating a positive climate within the school"(March 1, 2007, p. 4).

Parent Involvement

Both principals identified several programs already in place within their respective schools that offer parents opportunities to participate in their child's education. Jerry T. Tall noted "Parents are always welcome in our school; we are always in need of volunteers who are willing to come into our school to help with activities ranging from academic to extracurricular. We also have a school council involving parents and community leaders to participate in school functions." Johnny Lately stated "Parents are often used to fill in for school activities offered at our school but are not funded. Parents

are used to help with extracurricular activities involving sports, dances, and academic competitions" (February 13, 2007, p.6).

Four of the five teachers had used parents to help with extracurricular activities at the school. The fifth teacher had used parent participation to assist with Chess Club and with academic decathlons. Lucy Loo responded, "We have various programs throughout the course of the year which allows parents to be more interactive with their children. Some of those programs include: Student Support Team (SST), parent conferences, and various other events throughout the year" (February 12, 2007, p. 6). Betsy Tucker stated, "The SST meetings, parent conferences, Track Night for 9th graders determining college or vocational diplomas and Senior night.(February 19, 2007, p. 6). Cindy Downs noted, "Parents are often invited into the Sociology classroom as guest speakers for the numerous topics discussed in community and job opportunities available in the area" (March 05, 2007, p. 6).

Professional Development

Both principals identified various professional development programs available for the participants within their schools. Professional Development Units (PLU) were developed through RESA or the county's Curriculum Director and made available for teachers to participate if desired. Again, both principals identified this program as very beneficial to the participants and cost effective for both the participants and the county school system. Jerry T. Tall stated, "Learning Focus Training is offered at the high school allowing teachers from the other schools to meet and fulfill a requirement mandated by the county Board of Education. Other opportunities involved GPS (Georgia Performance

Standards) redelivery training for teachers, by Instructional Coaches or teachers and

United Video Streaming (February 12, 2007, p. 8).

All teachers agreed there were professional development programs available at

their schools. Each of the teachers identified PLU's were made available to those needing

to obtain the credits for re-certification. Lucy Loo noted, "Programs offered at the local

RESA greatly impacts the needs of the participants of the school"(February 12, 2007, p.

8). Dora Clark stated, "RESA is great about offering courses that will enhance our

teaching profession"(February 13, 2007, p. 8).

Summary

Chapter 4 offers a brief overview of the purpose of this study and the research

questions. Data from the survey and interviews, an analysis of the data reported was

identified. The principals and teachers participating in the study were portrayed through

the use of the biographical and demographical information requested through the survey.

Tables were utilized to reinforce the factors the participants in the survey felt were

instrumental in meeting AYP in their particular school systems. The components

principals and teachers in small Georgia high schools felt were instrumental in attaining

AYP were included and ranked in tabular form. The factors receiving the lowest ranking

were also identified and listed in tabular form.

The principals and teachers interviewed identified the various strategies employed

in their schools as instrumental for attaining AYP. The principals were confident and

looked forward to the challenges of meeting AYP in their school. The teachers also

appeared self-assured and secure in their positions as educators. The personal experiences

given by the interviewees all identified the need to stay focused on the goal through all

the necessary steps needed for the attainment of AYP. All participants in the interview process were able to give a more personal insight to the different strategies each would employ when looking for avenues to meeting the mandated legislation.

While each participant employed different successful strategies for meeting AYP; the need for a district vision and goal was a very important component indicated from the surveys and from all interviewed, The individuals participating in the interview process were well informed of the requirements their individual schools needed for meeting AYP and saw the challenges as opportunities for growth in their own educational experiences. The different avenues each employed to encourage not only students but others in their school and community were inspirational and refreshing to hear.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Chapter V presents a summary, an analysis of the research findings, and

discussion of research findings, implications for individuals seeking to find ways for

meeting AYP in small high school, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

The discussion of research findings included data from the questionnaires organized as

follows: biographical and demographic characteristics, academic preparation and

characteristics of successful schools. The information resulting from the interviews was

organized around the patterns identified in the interviews with the administrators and

teachers; district vision, flexibility, advantages of technology, effective teaching

pedagogies, school issues, classroom and after-school programs, expectations for student

and staff behavior, parent involvement and professional development.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to develop a narrative profile of what works in

Georgia high schools with small student enrollment to improve AYP during the 2004-

2005 school year. The study was a mixed-method design of data collection. Quantitative

data were collected from participants' responses to the Survey <u>Wisconsin's</u>

<u>Characteristics of Successful Schools.</u> The questionnaire is included in Appendix B.

Three hundred thirty of the approximate 1200 participants returned the questionnaires.

Descriptive statistics were generated from the web page calculations. Two of the

principals and five of the teachers participated in semi-structured in-depth interviews.

The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed to develop themes and patterns of

principals and teachers involved in schools with small student enrollment in Georgia and made AYP for the year 2004-2005.

The analysis of the data resulted in the following findings: The average principal and teacher of small schools in Georgia responding to the Wisconsin's Characteristics of Successful Schools questionnaire is white (71%) with an average age of 30-39 (33%). He/She is married (51%) and has earned a Master's degree (46%). The highest average of those serving in a district with 600-999 students is (59%). From the group surveyed (54%) were employed in a rural school district.

Those items from the Wisconsin's Characteristics of Successful Schools questionnaire receiving a high percentage rate from the respondents in meeting AYP were: In developing the district's vision, there was broad input from school and community members (62%), High expectations are the norm for student and staff behavior in the classroom, at school events, and in the community (52%), The school provides a variety of classroom and after-school programs to engage every student (51%), School leaders are flexible in dealing with change and are willing to experiment (46%), Parents actively participate in their children's education(43%). School leaders model the behaviors expected of staff and students (42%), and the school addresses issues that limit students' ability to be productive (42%).

Those items receiving the lowest percentages on the survey Wisconsin's Characteristics of Successful Schools were: District goals have been developed under the leadership of the school board (33%) and School leaders cultivate community support for the school and its vision (29%).

On the <u>Wisconsin's Characteristics of Successful Schools,</u> the respondents were asked to give their opinions on a Likert scale that best represented their perceptions of strategies that work in Georgia High Schools with a small student enrollment to improve annual yearly progress. The scale ranged from strongly agree representing a strategy that was successful in meeting AYP, to strongly disagree representing a strategy that was not successful in meeting AYP.

The top ten most effective strategies for meeting AYP were: In developing the district's vision, there was broad input from school and community members (62%), High expectations are the norm for student and staff behavior in the classroom, at school events, and in the community (52%), The school provides a variety of classroom and after-school programs to engage every student (51%), School leaders are flexible in dealing with change and are willing to experiment (46%), Parents actively participate in their children's education(43%), School leaders model the behaviors expected of staff and students (42%), The school addresses issues that limit students' ability to be productive (42%), The school promotes positive relationships among students and adults (39%), Every student is expected to achieve at a high level (38%), Teachers use effective teaching methods to help all students achieve standards (38%), The school recognizes the contributions that families and the community make in fostering core values (38%).

The least successful strategies for meeting AYP were: The school has adequate resources to achieve its goals (25%), School leaders cultivate community support for the school and its vision (29%), The school climate ensures that each person feels safe and respected (30%), School administrators support family-community partnerships (30%), and There is evidence that all students meet high expectations (31%).

Discussion

District Vision

The survey question receiving the highest percentage for meeting AYP according to the respondents was, in developing the district's vision; there was broad input from school and community members (62%). Similarly, Bell (1993) reported in a *Nation At Risk*, with various legislative acts it is imperative that schools across the nation need to improve in educating the youth of America through creating school visions, accountability instructions, and reforms in educational policies. Jerry T. Tall stated in the interview, " I was a part of the committee formed to help create the criteria our school district will consider for our vision; because of this input, I was involved from the very beginning" (February 12, 2007, p.1). This concurs with Tirozzi & Uro (1997) research in which many states created commissions to study education systems and establish school visions and recommend reform measures. Sara Smartly responded, "I was on the committee appointed by the high school to represent that particular school's employee's opinions regarding the district's vision. As a part of the committee to review and possibly revise the district's goal, I held a very active part in gained a lot of insight into the direction of the school district and felt the input from the varied personnel would be beneficial to all" (February 12, 2007, p. 1).

In the same context, high expectations are the norm for student and staff behavior in the classroom, at school events, and in the community (52%) received the next highest percent for meeting AYP. According to Maine (2005) small schools offer specialized programs in high schools such as college preparatory programs, highly specialized areas of concentration in subject areas, as well as student involvement in

sports. Lucy Loo responded, "The districts vision has been in place since I have been employed in the district. Although I know the leaders of our district are cognizant of the importance of involving all personnel in matters affecting our system as a whole. The vision we have at this time is concise and well written: It clearly states what we are about and that is educating our community's children" (March 1, 2007, p. 1).

The school provides a variety of classroom and after-school programs to engage every student (51%) was the third highest percentage for small schools in Georgia making AYP. Wasley et.al (2000) notes students in smaller schools are more motivated, feel more connected to the schools and are more likely to remain in school because of the need for every student to fulfill positions in academic and athletic activities. Lucy Loo, "Many students are engaged in various school activities. Some of those activities include: Model United Nations, Y club, National Honor Society, and various athletic events, in al the above mentioned activities students were challenged either physically and/or academically" (February 12, 2007, p. 5).

Leadership

Based on responses to the Wisconsin's Characteristics of Successful Schools, the strategy with the highest percent in making AYP for leadership was school leaders are flexible in dealing with change and are willing to experiment (46%). According to Myatt (2204) "Small high schools offer the kinds of environments needed to experiment with newer ideas in school reform. Johnny Lately reported, Expectations for the students and staff can be linked to the leadership qualities of the administration" (February 13, 2007, p.5).

School leader's model the behaviors expected of staff and students (42%) was ranked as a successful strategy for small schools making AYP. All participants being interviewed expressed their expectations of school leaders. Johnny Lately stated, "Not only are the administrators of the school the instructional leaders but they are also the leaders for the moral and sportsman like qualities they wish for their faculty and students to follow" (February 13, 2007, p.5). Lomotey & Swanson (1989) state school leaders in small schools are often seen as role models for their students and staff as well as being leaders in the community.

School leaders analyze information from many sources and use it to make decisions (35%) was ranked as the third highest percent for small school meeting AYP. According to Aldrich (2004) states due to the numerous additions and changes that occurred with the law regarding the education of children, educators should remain aware of new legislation, regulations, and judicial decisions affecting the profession.

High Academic Standards

Every student is expected to achieve at a high level and teachers use effective teaching methods to help all students achieve standards, were ranked (38%) as the highest percent affecting academic standards for small school meeting AYP. Sara Smartly responded, "Students are involved in many academic extra-curricular activities including Social Studies Fair, Governors Honors, National History day, Literary Competition, and Math Quiz Bowl. The classroom programs include inclusion, AP classes for those wanting to receive college credit and Honors classes for those preparing for college endorsed diplomas (February 12, 2007, p. 5).

The school has established criteria for measuring the academic performance of all students (37%) was raked as the third highest percent in small school meeting AYP. In contrast the question in the survey ranking the lowest for high academic achievement was, the school has adequate resources to achieve its goals (25%).

Professional Development

Lucy Loo responded, "Programs offered at the local RESA impact greatly the needs of the participants of the school system in providing Professional Learning Units (PLU's), Learning Focus Training, Content specific workshops and Georgia Performance Standards training" (February 12, 2007, p.6).

Betsy Tucker responded, "Our teachers are given numerous opportunities to participate in programs offering PLU's through staff development. Also RESA is great about offering courses that will enhance our teaching profession. Cindy Downs was in agreement and verbalized "PLU's are great in providing opportunities for teachers to advance in performance and knowledge" (March 1, 2007, p.5).

Sara Smartly and Dora Clark were adamant about PLU's in providing opportunities for "gaining valuable knowledge" and "new perspectives" on subject matter taught in classrooms.

Family, School and Community Partnerships

According to Mertens et.al, (2001) personal attention made possible in a small school is the single most important feature that contributes to successful student learning. Similarly, the principals and teachers responding to the survey ranked Parents actively participate in their children's education (43%) as the highest percent for small schools making AYP.

Jerry T. Tall and Johnny Lately identified several programs already in place within their respective schools that offer parents opportunities to participate in their child's education. These opportunities arrange from activities involving academics to extra-curricular.

Four out of the five teacher's interviewed had utilized parents in helping with extracurricular activities at school. Lucy Loo responded, "Parents involved in their child's education know what needs to be done in order for their child to be successful" (February 12, 2007, p. 6). Dora Clark and Betsy Tucker verbalized their excitement at having parents involved in their classroom activities when creating projects where much help is needed.

Standards of the Heart

The school promotes positive relationships among students and adults (39%) and students are expected to learn and demonstrate a core set of values including respect, tolerance, and responsibility (38%) were the top two highest ranked percents in small schools making AYP. Lucy Loo responded, "I feel that students, parents, teachers and the administrators should maintain a certain level of respect in every aspect of the community. In reference to how this improves school climate, if a person maintains themselves in a respectable manner outside of school then (hopefully) respect will be maintained in the classroom" (February 12, 2007, p. 5).

Wasley (2000) noted fundamental to the success of small schools were the relationships they foster. Students succeeded in school when they are connected with an adult or subject. Nancy Tucker replied, "I know my students have respect for me because I initiated the respect. In order for anyone to gain respect first, they must give respect"

(February 19, 2007, p. 5).

Sara Smartly and Dora Clark agree, that in order for students to feel safe and a part of the school community a sense of trust and respect must be in place for all parties to be successful in the learning process. Lucy Loo equates humor as being the best policy in dealing with situations that can become volatile (February 12, 2007, p.3).

Evidence of Success

The school provides a variety of classroom and after-school programs to engage every student (51%) was the highest ranking percent in small schools meeting AYP. Sara Smartly responded, "Many activities students are involved academically include Social Studies Fair, Governor's Honors, National History Day, Literary Competition, and Math Quiz Bowl which involves students in various events to engage in productive activities" (February 12, 2007, p.5). According to Vander Ark (2002) small schools created spaces where young people had the opportunity to be known, and participate in extracurricular activities and to be a part of a nurturing environment.

Dora Clark responded, "I have seen students engaged in school related activities which helped them become more involved in the community and with service oriented organizations" (February 13, 2007, p. 6). Betsy Tucker and Cindy Downs responded likewise, "Students involved in programs after-school are more inclined to want to help others when help is needed. According to Wasley (2000) students in smaller schools are more motivated, feel more connected to the schools, and are more likely to remain in school because of their connections with programs after school.

Implications

There are obvious implications for the findings of this study in favor of
maintaining small schools in Georgia. The participants in the survey strongly identified
five areas needed to become successful schools. The five areas included developing the
district's vision, classroom and after-school programs, high expectations, parent
participation, and leadership. Superintendents, principals, curriculum directors, and other
personnel employed in small rural school systems searching for new avenues to
becoming successful schools in meeting AYP can use the strategies found in this study.

According to Vander Ark (2002), although too many high schools are not
providing students with the education they deserve; a growing number of public, private
and charter schools are defying the trend and each of the mentioned schools are small.
Additionally, Johnny Lately states, "Our small school has maintained an average equal to
or above the larger surrounding counties on the Georgia Report Card issued last year
(2006)"(February 13, 2007, p. 8). The success of small Georgia high schools across the
state has been exhibited by the 28 schools with fewer than 800 students, with each school
noting particular strategies employed to achieve its goals.

Principals seeking to find alternate avenues to achieving AYP within their
system must be cognizant of the available research indicating what works for similar high
schools throughout the same state. Jerry T. Tall recorded, "Finding the right fit for your
school is imperative to reaching your goal. Everyone involved in attaining that goal must
also buy into the programs you are seeking to use"(February 12, 2007, p. 7).

Conclusions

Educational reform is a hot topic in the political arena and has far reaching affects for all public schools across the United States. Schools are adapting to meet the mandated regulations most recently passed by the U.S. Congress. Small high schools across the nation are addressing the need to offer a curriculum with rigorous course offerings filled with highly qualified teachers. How the school leaders meet these needs often employ unique strategies often juggling one area of finance to fulfill the requirements of another.

Excellence in our educational system is important to the economic, political and social well being of this nation. However, in Georgia high schools with fewer than 800 students, the need to locate and implement policies to meet AYP is becoming increasingly difficult. Many of the principals responding to the survey identified strategies their individual counties employed had involved district vision, flexibility, advantages of technology, effective teaching pedagogies, school issues, classroom and after-school programs, expectations for student and staff behavior, parent involvement and professional development.

Teachers and administrators will be able to utilize the information gathered in this study to assist in formulating staff development opportunities for the implementation of the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS), data analysis of learning improvement discussions, and the selection of instructional leaders both at the district and site levels. Educators and educational policy makers will also be able to use the data from this study to determine the most effective avenues needed for schools looking for new ways in meeting AYP.

However, the difficulty obtaining information via the internet proved to be a daunting task. The researcher on numerous occasions made telephone calls to the individual superintendents and principals of the identified Georgia high schools to encourage participation in the online surveys. Even with the personal contact, the response to the online survey was much lower than anticipated. Obtaining assistance from teachers within the high schools helped to generate a larger response from that teacher's school.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further research include:

- A qualitative study over a period of time using one small high school in Georgia to determine the long term effects of programs and strategies implemented to assist in meeting AYP.

- A study on educational leadership and teacher programs offered by universities and colleges across the state of Georgia to determine what if any classes are taught to prepare future educators and leaders in federal and state legislation.

- A follow-up study on the continued success of the counties in Georgia with a small student population in meeting AYP.

Recommendations for Implementation:

The researcher will offer the information identified in the study to the two principals interviewed as requested by each. Additionally, the researcher has already been requested to present to the faculty of Brantley County High School the findings of the research indicating the results of the study. An executive summary of the study will be reviewed to present to the *Delta Kappa Magazine* and *The Know* for publication by one

of its professional members. If the United States Congress renews the NCLB law in the

coming year, future researchers investigating effects of national legislation will find this

dissertation useful in determining factors used by small schools to meet federal mandated

laws.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PERMISSION TO USE QUESTIONNAIRE

Permission to use survey Wisconsin's Characteristic's of Successful Schools

Date: October 15, 2006

Time: 12:30 p.m.

Contact: Carolyn Stanford Taylor, Assistant State Superintendent

Telephone: (608) 266-1649

Per telephone conversation permission was given for use of the <u>Wisconsin's Characteristic's of Successful Schools</u> survey in the study *What Works In Georgia High Schools With A Small Student Enrollment To Improve Annual Yearly Progress.* A dissertation completed by Carole Strickland for the doctorate program at Georgia Southern University.

APPENDIX B

SURVEY ON WISCONSIN'S CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

Wisconsin's Characteristics of Successful Schools

1. In developing the district's vision, there was broad input from school and community members.

○ Strongly Agree
○ Agree
○ Neutral
○ Disagree
○ Strongly Disagree

2. District goals have been developed under the leadership of the school board.

○ Strongly Agree
○ Agree
○ Neutral
○ Disagree
○ Strongly Disagree

3. The school has goals that support the district vision.

○ Strongly Agree
○ Agree
○ Neutral
○ Disagree
○ Strongly Disagree

4. The school has adequate resources to achieve its goals.

○ Strongly Agree
○ Agree
○ Neutral
○ Disagree
○ Strongly Disagree

5. School leaders are flexible in dealing with change and are willing to experiment.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

6. School leaders analyze information from many sources and use it to make decisions.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

7. Technology is used effectively in the school.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

8. School leaders practice and promote equity and excellence for all staff and students.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

9. School leaders model the behaviors expected of staff and students.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

10. School leaders cultivate community support for the school and its vision.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

11. Every student is expected to achieve at a high level.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

12. Teachers use effective teaching methods to help all students achieve standards.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

13. The school has established criteria for measuring the academic performance of all students.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

14. Curriculum, instruction, resources, and assessment are culturally inclusive.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

15. Students are expected to learn and demonstrate a core set of values including respect, tolerance, and responsibility.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

16. The school climate ensures that each person feels safe and respected.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

17. The school recognizes the contributions that families and the community make in fostering core values.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

18. The school addresses issues that limit students' ability to be productive citizens.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

19. The school promotes positive relationships among students and adults.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

20. The school provides a variety of classroom and after-school programs to engage every student.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

21. High expectations are the norm for student and staff behavior in the classroom, at school events, and in the community.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

22. School administrators support family-community partnerships.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

23. Parents actively participate in their children's education.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

24. Families from different backgrounds and/or cultures participate in school activities.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

25. The school responds positively to the needs of families and their children.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

26. The school involves the community in improving student learning.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

27. Professional development meets the needs of participants.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

28. Professional development helps school staff meet the needs of diverse students.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

29. The school devotes adequate resources to professional development.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

30. There is evidence that all students meet high expectations.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

31. School staff review student behavior data.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

32. Information about student academic performance is easily understood in the school and in the community.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

33. Information about student performance is reviewed to identify gaps in achievement.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

34. Age

- ○ Under 25 years
- ○ 25-29
- ○ 30-39
- ○ 40-49
- ○ 50- 59

35. Marital status

- ○ Single
- ○ Married
- ○ Widowed
- ○ Divorced or Separated

36. Highest degree earned

- ○ Bachelor's
- ○ Master's
- ○ Specialist
- ○ Doctorate

37. Racial/Ethnic Origin

○ American Indian/Alaskan Native

○ Asian or Pacific Islander

○ Hispanic

○ Black, not Hispanic origin

○ White, not Hispanic origin

38. Indicate the county in which you are employed.

○ Bacon County

○ Banks County

○ Bartow County

○ Berrin County

○ Bleckley County

○ Candler County

○ Charlton County

○ Clinch County

○ Dade County

○ Early County

○ Echols County

○ Evans County

○ Hancock County

○ Johnson County

○ Lamar County

○ Lanier County

○ Miller County

○ Montgomery County

○ Pulaski County

○ Putnam County

○ Rabun County

○ Taylor County

○ Telfair County

○ Toombs County

○ Turner County

○ Twiggs County

  ○ Wheeler County

  ○ White County

39. Number of students in district where employed

  ○ 1-299

  ○ 300-599

  ○ 600-999

40. Metro status where employed

  ○ Rural

  ○ Town or Small City

  ○ Suburb

  ○ Urban Center or Large City

41. Number of years in present position

  ○ Less than one year

  ○ 1-4 years

  ○ 5-8 years

  ○ 9 or more

42. Are you willing to participate in an in-depth interview (approximately 2 hours)?

    Yes

    No

Submit answers

APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL FORM

	Georgia Southern University
	Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Phone: 912-681-5465		Administrative Annex P.O. Box 8005
Fax: 912-681-0719	Ovrsight@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Carole Strickland
5646 Laura Walker Road
Waycross, GA-31503

CC: Dr. Walter Polka
P.O. Box-8131

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
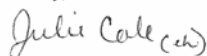(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: February 2, 2007

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered: **H07105**, and titled **"What Works in Georgia High Schools According to Teachers and Principals to Improve Annual Yearly Progress in Schools With Fewer than 800 Students"**, it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter. If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,

Julie Cole (ch)

Julie B. Cole
Director of Research Services and Sponsored Programs