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# A Study of Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning in New York State Middle Schools

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A STUDY OF INSTRUCTIONAL SCHEDULING, TEAMING,
AND COMMON PLANNING IN NEW YORK STATE MIDDLE SCHOOLS

BY

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## APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE

Doctoral Candidate, **Chad Corey,** has successfully defended and made the required

modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the **Ed.D.** during this **Fall**

**Semester 2014**.

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**ABSTRACT**

This descriptive study examined to what extent, if any, three school supports (instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning) are in existence in New York State middle schools. For the purposes of this study, middle schools were defined as schools that contained the grade configurations of 5-8, 6-8, and 7-8. The sample surveyed was comprised of 232 New York State middle school principals in school districts with an average need/resource capacity. Instrumentation for the data collection was through a five-part self-administered online web survey. Demographic data of the participating principals and their school along with the data collected from the research questions were analyzed using descriptive, inferential, and nonparametric statistics. In addition, demographic characteristics and principals' beliefs regarding these three school supports were also analyzed.

The results indicated that the majority of principals utilize a traditional departmentalized schedule with interdisciplinary and/or single-graded teaming with varying duration and frequencies of team, grade level, and departmental common planning. Statistically significant differences existed between specific principals' beliefs and grade configuration, school location, and years of principal experience at current school. Implications for practice along with recommendations for future research, policy and practice were also discussed. It was the intent of this researcher that the data collected provides administrators and policymakers with an additional layer of information regarding the use of these three school supports among New York State middle schools and serve as a reference to further understand the extent to which they are being implemented.

*Keywords*: middle school, instructional scheduling, teaming, common planning

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**DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated in loving memory of my grandparents (Ruth Corey, Joseph Corey, Belle Fuchs, and Abe Fuchs) who would have loved to have been able to celebrate and share this accomplishment with me and my family.  You will always be in my thoughts.

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**CHAPTER I**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Background**

Middle level education is critical for the learning, development, and success of young

adolescents (National Middle School Association, 2010a).  The number of middle schools

nationally has increased from less than 5,000 in 1971 to more than 13,000 in 2008 (McEwin &

Greene, 2011).  A plethora of school supports are put into place at this level to assist and

maximize student learning.  This study examined whether and how three specific school supports

(instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning) are in existence in New York State

middle schools.

The importance of these three school supports at the middle school level has been

discussed and examined by scholars and advocacy organizations.  In both *Turning Points:*

*Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century* (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development,

1989) and *Turning Points 2000: Educating Adolescents in the 21st Century* (Jackson, Davis,

Abeel, Bordonaro, & Carnegie Foundation on Adolescent Development, 2000) the authors

examined the following three variables as they related to learning: scheduling instructional

periods to maximize learning, creating small communities for learning, and providing time for

teachers to plan and prepare together.  In addition, research that has focused on the middle school

level has found that these three school supports – together or separately – have a positive impact

on student learning (Allen Gill, 2012; Boyer & Bishop, 2004; Brown, 2001; Cook & Faulkner,

2010; Flynn, Lawrenz, & Schultz, 2005; Grenda & Hackmann, 2014; Kiefer & Ellerbrock, 2012;

Mattox, Hancock, & Queen, 2005; Mertens, 2013; Mertens & Flowers, 2006; Wallace, 2007;

Wilson, 2007).  Discovering whether these three school supports are present or absent in New

York State middle schools will provide direction for educators, administrators, community members, and policymakers in making informed decisions regarding middle level education.

## Statement of the Problem

Data regarding the type of instructional scheduling utilized along with the use of teaming and common planning at the middle school level has not been collected nor reported on the New York State School Report Card, and therefore it is not known whether and how middle schools are implementing these three school supports. I acknowledge the possibilities that some schools might use only one or two of these school supports while others might use multiple supports in combination. Research at the middle school level has found that these three school supports – together or separately – had a positive impact on student learning. This descriptive study examined the current instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning practices of New York State middle schools.

The number of middle schools nationally has continued to increase from less than 5,000 in 1971 to more than 13,000 in 2008 (McEwin & Greene, 2011). It is important to determine whether these three school supports are present or absent in New York State middle schools in order to provide direction for the continued development of middle school programs and assist administrators and policymakers in making informed decisions to positively impact the student learning process.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a descriptive profile of three school supports (instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning) to be used to determine if they are either absent or present in New York State middle schools. Research has indicated that these three school supports can have a positive impact of student learning. Literature and research conducted focusing on middle school has indicated the need for additional research to be

conducted (Mertens & Flowers, 2006; National Middle School Association, 2010a; National Middle School Association, 2010b).  In particular, Mertens and Flowers (2006) stated that a critical issue facing middle level education is the paucity of good, reliable research studies that have been able to demonstrate the link between components of the middle school philosophy and learning outcomes.  This study will assist in advancing the research in this field by identifying the presence or absence of one or more of these three school supports and identifying when possible any unique features.

In addition, this study was designed to support the research recommendations of the National Middle School Association (NMSA, 2010a).  The NMSA identified seven recommendations to expand the middle grades education research base.  Three of these seven recommendations are followed in this study.  The third recommendation is that middle level education needs additional studies that examine multiple components of the middle school concept and how these components interact.  This study examined three school supports and their impact on middle school student learning.  The fourth recommendation was that studies needed to be replicated.  Although this descriptive study is not an exact replication of a previous study it does expand upon previous research that examined the practices of scheduling and teaming from a statewide perspective.  Lastly, the sixth recommendation is that there is a need to establish a national database to address questions related to the middle school concept.  The population of middle schools surveyed for this study provides a body of data that may illuminate patterns and trends that further research may confirm at the level of statistical reliability.

The population of New York State middle schools sampled included schools that have either a 5-8, 6-8, or 7-8 grade configuration.  These three grade configurations were selected because they are the three most common among middle schools in the United States (McEwin & Greene, 2011).  The middle schools selected for this study were limited to New York State

school districts that were labeled as an average need/resource capacity (N/RC) district by the New York State Education Department for the 2011-2012 school year. This need/resource capacity index is a measure of the ability of a district to meet the needs of its student with local resources. More specifically, it is the ratio of the estimated poverty percentage to the combined wealth ratio.

Districts are assigned to one of the following seven categories: High N/RC - New York City, High N/RC - Large City Districts, High N/RC - Urban-Suburban Districts, High N/RC - Rural Districts, Average N/RC Districts, Low N/RC Districts, and Charter Schools (New York State Education Department, 2013). The average need/resource capacity category is defined by the New York State Education Department as all school districts between the 20th (0.770) and 70th (1.1835) percentile on the index. The category of average need/resource capacity was selected for this study because, with the exception of the high need/resource capacity - New York City, it contained the largest percentage of middle schools. In addition, this average need/resource capacity category includes middle schools from approximately two thirds of the counties in the state allowing for a statewide sampling to occur.

It is my intent that the data collected provide administrators and policymakers with an additional layer of information regarding the use of specific school supports among New York State middle schools. This data can serve as a reference to further understand the extent to which middle schools in New York State are implementing these school supports.

## Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are the current instructional scheduling practices of NYS middle schools categorized with an average need/resource capacity?

2. To what extent, if any, is teaming present or absent in New York State middle schools categorized with an average need/resource capacity?

3. To what extent, if any, is common planning present or absent in New York State middle schools categorized with an average need/resource capacity?

4. To what extent, if any, are all three school supports (instructional schedules, teaming, and common planning) found to exist simultaneously in New York State middle schools categorized with an average need/resource capacity?

**Study Design and Methodology**

This study was a descriptive study that examined the presence or absence of three school supports (instructional schedules, teaming, and common planning) among New York State middle schools categorized with an average need/resource capacity. A self-administered online web survey (see Appendix D) examining these practices was created by me, reviewed by a panel of experts for content validity, and piloted to test for reliability. Included in the pilot test were middle school administrators from New York State whose districts were categorized with a need/resource capacity other than average. The population surveyed for this descriptive study was 232 New York State middle school principals in school districts with an average need/resource capacity (see Appendix A). For the purposes of this study, middle schools were defined as schools that contained the grade configurations of 5-8, 6-8, and 7-8. These three grade configurations were selected because they accounted for approximately 89% of all separately organized public middle schools in the county (McEwin & Greene, 2011). Descriptive, inferential, and nonparametric statistics were utilized to examine the data and report the findings.

**Significance of the Study**

This descriptive study adds to the body of research and literature already conducted by examining the presence or absence of three specific middle school supports.  Research and literature regarding middle school has indicated that the three school supports of scheduling instruction, teaming, and common planning can have positive influences on student learning.  New York State collects data from schools and districts on a yearly basis that includes: enrollment, average class size, demographic factors, attendance and suspensions, teacher qualification, teacher turnover rate, staff counts, and student performance (NYSED, 2013).  However, not included in this yearly report are data indicating the presence or absence of specific instructional schedules, teaming, and common planning practices for middle schools.

Furthermore, the need for this descriptive study was supported by the document developed by both the New York State Department of Education and New York State Board of Regents entitled "Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs" (University of the State of New York, 1999).  One of the six essential elements noted in this document was organization and structure.  In particular, this element refers to teacher teams sharing responsibility for educating a common group of students, common planning for teachers sharing responsibility for a common group of students, and schedules with flexible time assignments.

This study is significant, not only for the collection of data not presently available, but for the use of that data to point to policies, practices, and/or programs that could be needed or modified for increased support of improved learning in all middle schools in an average need/resource capacity district.

## Limitations and Delimitations

The following limitations and delimitations were present in this study:

1.  The sample was restricted to New York State middle schools with an average need/resource capacity and therefore cannot be generalized to other middle schools with different need/resource capacities.

2.  The sample was restricted to New York State middle schools with either grades five through eight, sixth through eight, or seven through eight and therefore cannot be generalized to other middle schools with different grade configurations.

3.  District and school websites were used to determine current principal names and email addresses.

In addition, it was the intent of this study to be statistically reliable through obtaining a minimum response rate of 35% when examining the absence or presence of these three school supports.  Although I made a concerted effort (through three different electronic solicitations), a 28% response rate was obtained.  I, along with the committee, believed that this study would still provide value to this research field by opening the door to examine how middle school principals in New York State utilize these three school supports.  Plausible conclusions were able to be drawn examining similarities, differences, and contradictions regarding instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning.  In addition, this study has value in terms of examining the beliefs and understanding of principals with regard to middle school supports.  This study started applying the foundation for further research with a larger amount of subjects to be conducted that examine middle school supports.

**Assumptions**

The following assumptions were utilized in this study:

1.  It was assumed for this study that principals would answer the questions honestly and without bias in order to support the research being conducted.

2.  It was assumed that the survey instrument being utilized to conduct the research would be valid, reliable, and appropriate for the research being conducted.

3.  Although the sample of participants did not meet the reliability assumption, the sample was considered large enough to justify the exploration that certain patterns and trends might emerge from the analysis of the data collected to provide plausible conclusions that further, statistically reliable studies might confirm.

**Definition of Terms**

What follows are the definitions of important terms used in the dissertation:

*Middle school*.  Schools with grades configurations of 5-8, 6-8, and 7-8.

*Traditional scheduling*.  This schedule consists of a fixed number of daily periods that are uniform in length with instruction being given within departmental configurations (Hackmann & Valentine, 2003).

*Block schedule*.  This type of schedule allows students to take fewer classes for longer periods of time.  A block schedule can take several forms that include: 4 x 4, alternating day, and Flexible/Alternate/Navigate (Queen, 2009).

*4 x 4 block schedule*.  Classes in this model are taught in periods of approximately 90 minutes and meet for only a part of the school year, usually a semester.  With this scheduling model, students have the opportunity to take eight different classes in one academic year (Queen, 2009).

*Alternating block schedule*.  Classes in this model (also known as A/B Block Schedule) are taught in periods of approximately 90 minutes and meet every other day for the entire school year (Queen, 2009).

*Flexible/Alternate/Navigate (FAN) block schedule*.  Classes in this model are taught either everyday or every other day and meet for either extended or shortened periods of time.  Within this scheduling model, the master schedule includes an advisory period and a combination of core and elective classes (Queen, 2009).

*Flexible Interdisciplinary Block Schedule (FIBS)*.  This schedule consists of blocks of time for teaching teams.  It provides individual teams the flexibility to determine how to best utilize this time for the core academic classes.  This type of schedule has also been referred to as flexible block schedule and interdisciplinary block schedule (Hackmann & Valentine, 2003).

*Modular scheduling*.  This type of scheduling allows for the school day to be divided into several modules in shorter amounts of time than a traditional schedule.  A modular schedule allows for classes to occur in varying time allotments (Hackmann & Valentine, 2003).

*Rotating schedule and rotating dropped schedule*.  The rotating schedule is a type of schedule that consists of classes rotating through different times of the school day.  A variation of this type of schedule is the rotating dropped schedule that incorporates the dropping of one class daily into the rotation (Hackmann & Valentine, 2003).

*Need/Resource Capacity (N/RC) category*.  This is a measure of the ability of a district to meet the needs of its students with local resources.  More specifically, it is the ratio of the estimated poverty percentage which is the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch to the combined wealth ratio which is the ratio of district wealth per pupil to state average wealth per pupil.  There are seven need/resource capacity categories: High N/RC - New York City, High N/RC - Large City Districts, High N/RC - Urban-Suburban Districts, High

N/RC - Rural Districts, Average N/RC Districts, Low N/RC Districts, and Charter Schools (New York State Education Department, 2013).

*Average Need/Resource Capacity districts*. This includes all districts between the 20th (0.770) and 70th (1.1835) percentiles on the index (New York State Education Department, 2013).

*Interdisciplinary teaming*. It is a way of organizing staff so that a group of teachers share: the same group of students, responsibility for planning, teaching, and evaluating the curriculum and instruction, similar schedules, and the same area of the school building (Boyer & Bishop, 2004).

*Common planning*. A regularly scheduled time during the school day when staff members who teach the same students meet for planning, parent conferences, material preparation, and student evaluation (Kellough & Kellough, 2008).

*Pull outs*. For the purposes of this study, this term refers to the removal of a student(s) from a regularly scheduled class in order to provide a type of remedial, special education, or English Language Learner service.

## Organization of the Dissertation

While this chapter provides an introduction and overview to the study, Chapter II consists of a literature review related to the work in this study. Chapter III discusses the research design, the methodology and instrument used for collecting the data to answer the research questions and the analysis procedures enacted to process the data. Chapter IV presents the research findings while Chapter V discusses the conclusions, recommendations, and future research implications.

**CHAPTER II**

**REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This study provides a descriptive profile of three school supports (instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning time) to be used to determine their presence or absence in New York State middle schools. This review of literature examines the peer-reviewed empirical studies conducted within the past 10 years that focused on these three school supports. In addition, this literature review culminates in the development of the theoretical foundation for this study, which is the potential indirect influence of these three school supports on student learning through the variables of school leadership and classroom instruction. Determining the presence or absence of these three school supports is important in assisting administrators in improving practices, programs and policies to maximize student learning.

This first section provides an introduction and overview to the literature review. The second section provides the literature search procedures utilized, and the third section examines the criteria used in developing this chapter. The next three sections discuss the three school supports of instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning. The seventh section examines the theoretical foundation previously mentioned while the last section provides a summary of this literature review and an overview of the next chapter.

**Literature Search Procedures**

A search was conducted to locate the literature and research pertaining to the topics of instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning. This search included: peer-reviewed journals, relevant historical and current texts, and literature obtained from various educational associations and organizations that focused on the purpose of this study. Electronic publications were obtained through educational databases that included Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost, and ProQuest. In addition to

educational databases, general web-based searches were performed using Google to access various professional websites and additional articles and publications.  The following keywords or combination of keywords were used to obtain relevant literature and research: middle school, middle grades, scheduling, instructional schedule, block schedule, alternating-day schedule, flexible block schedule, modular schedule, rotating schedule, teaming, interdisciplinary teaming, grade-level teaming, school leadership, classroom instruction, common planning, and common planning time.

## Criteria for Research

Criteria for studies used in this literature review included the following:

1.  Only empirical studies were reviewed that utilized middle schools from the United States and had one of the following three grade configurations (5-8, 6-8, or 7-8).

2.  Only peer-reviewed research was examined in this literature review to ensure a level of quality and credibility along with best research practices within this field of research.

3.  Only studies conducted within the last 10 years were reviewed unless considered a seminal work by other researchers and scholars.

4.  Non peer-reviewed research and literature were only referenced to provide a historical, theoretical, or informational perspective of the development and philosophy of middle-level schools and student learning.

5.  Both quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method studies were included in this literature review.

## Instructional Time Schedules

The importance of instructional scheduling as a school structure at the middle school level has been discussed and examined by scholars and advocacy organizations (Alexander, 1969; Hackman, 2002; Hackmann & Valentine, 2003; Queen, 2009; Rettig & Canady, 2000).

One of the seminal reports on middle-level education, *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century* (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989) states that in order for all students to learn, educational programs need to meet the needs of all students by scheduling class periods to maximize learning and expand the structure of opportunities for learning. This theme is echoed in a follow-up report, *Turning Points 2000: Educating Adolescents in the 21st Century* (Jackson et al., 2000), which presents the benefits of the flexible scheduling of periods with regards to instructional goals and student needs. In another seminal report, *This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents* (National Middle School Association, 2010a), how schedules with larger segments of time allow teachers to provide more in depth learning experiences to students is discussed.

This section of the literature review examines peer-reviewed empirical research conducted on types of instructional schedules that have been published within the past 10 years. Although several empirical research studies have been conducted that examined types of instructional schedules, many of them are dissertations (Bush, 2003; Caplinger, 2013; Dunham, 2009; Martinez, 2010; Mattox, 2001; Smith, 2010; Todd, 2007). Although it appears that there have not been many empirical peer-reviewed research studies conducted in the past ten years, the studies that have been conducted on type of instructional schedule focused on student achievement, curriculum and instructional practices, and teacher perceptions. This section examines these studies and is followed by a section that synthesizes the research and discusses future implications.

**Empirical Research**

One focus of the peer-reviewed empirical research conducted on types of instructional schedules is the examination of the influence or impact that the type of instructional schedule has on academic achievement. In a longitudinal study conducted by Mattox et al. (2005), the

researchers examined the effects of block scheduling on middle school students' math achievement over a 6-year period. The participants in the study were approximately 9,000 sixth-grade students who attended five different middle schools in a suburban school district in the southeastern United States. The average enrollments of these racially diverse middle schools ranged from approximately 800 to 1,200 students. The number of teachers in each middle school ranged from 54 to 73 with three of the five middle schools having some National Board Certified teachers.

This mixed-methods longitudinal study focused first on courses being taught using traditional schedules during the initial 3 years of study. Characteristics of this traditional schedule included: 50 to 55 minute class periods, reorganization of students between class periods, and students assignment to courses based on academic ability level. During the second 3 years of this study, courses in the five middle schools that were using one or more forms of block scheduling were examined. These different forms of block scheduling included 4 x 4, alternate day, and flexible/alternate/navigate (FAN) models. At the conclusion of each academic year, student achievement in mathematics was measured using the mandated state assessment. In addition, Mattox et al. (2005) interviewed a select group of teachers and reviewed school records to assist in the identification of additional variables that impacted the math achievement of students.

The results were reported by means, standard deviations, and sample sizes of mathematics achievement by school, academic year, and schedule. Mattox et al. (2005) indicated that student achievement improved each year in mathematics after all five schools transitioned from traditional to block scheduling. More specifically, the results indicated that although student achievement in mathematics improved in all five schools, during the first year of the transition to block scheduling there were no significant differences in math achievement in

schools A, C, D, and E. Significant differences did occur in math achievement with these four schools in the second and third years of block scheduling with effect sizes of .21, .58, .45, and .40 (at the $p<.01$ level of significance). With regard to school B, significant differences existed for all 3 years after implementing block scheduling and the effect sizes of these differences were .36, .59, and .46 (at the $p<.01$ level of significance). Mattox et al. (2005) indicated that this finding of consistent improvement in mathematics achievement after transitioning to block scheduling was important because each of the five middle schools had different characteristics and no other significant changes occurred in the schools during this 6-year time period. Therefore, they concluded that the type of instructional schedule had been isolated as a variable and that it accounted for the observed student improvement in mathematics.

This study made a contribution to this field of research by examining the impact or influence of instructional schedules at the middle school level. A strength of this study is that the researchers used the valid and reliable dependent variable of state assessments over a 6-year period of time. Providing details about the type of block scheduling that each middle school adopted would have added more depth to the study. A limitation of this study is that only one school district was sampled. Researchers should exercise caution regarding transferability of these results to other school districts and populations. In addition, researchers should exercise caution when assuming the variable of instructional schedule was isolated by these researchers. Replicating this study using a different population of middle schools would be valuable to the understanding of the influence of different types of instructional schedules on student achievement. Lastly, it would be valuable to this field of research to further explore longitudinally the influence instructional scheduling has on student achievement.

While Mattox et al. (2005) conducted a longitudinal study that examined the effect of block scheduling on middle school students' math achievement, Gill (2011) measured student

achievement in math and reading using state assessments given within 1 year. In a study published 6 years after that of Mattox et al. (2005), Gill (2011) examined differences in the performance of students on state examinations of math and reading relative to whether the student was exposed to an A/B (alternating day) block schedule or a traditional schedule. In addition, the researcher examined if the percentage performance on state examinations differed by race on the reading and math. The sample for the study included 43 middle schools in Virginia's Region IV and was comprised of approximately 34,000 students. Twenty-three of the middle schools utilized a block schedule while the remaining 20 used a traditional schedule. For the schools in this study, the alternating block schedule consisted of 80 to 90 minutes per block meeting every other day while the traditional schedules consisted of 40 to 60 minute classes that met on a daily basis.

The design of Gill's (2011) study was non-experimental since the researcher had no control over the independent variables of schedule types, ethnicity, and school. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent-measure $t$ tests, and an analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results indicated that there were no significant differences (using a $p<.05$ level of significance) between the percentage of students earning a pass/advance score in reading and math in the traditional or block scheduled schools. However, the results did indicate a significant difference (using a $p<.05$ level of significance) regarding race in that a larger percentage of Black and Hispanic students earned pass/advanced scores in the A/B block scheduled school than in the traditional schools.

Although this study by Gill (2011) contributed to the existing research on instructional scheduling by examining two different forms of schedules and their impact on student achievement, it was narrow in scope and had limitations. The researcher discussed limitations created by the small sample size, lack of random selection, and the use of test data for only 1

year, along with the absence of considering teacher practices, skills, and classroom experiences.

A strength of the study is that, in addition to examining the differences in overall student

achievement between two different scheduling configurations, the researcher explored the impact

scheduling configurations had on ethnicity and race.  Further research examining different

subgroups and student performance in different instructional scheduling configurations would be

beneficial to this field and would add to the current body of research.

While the two aforementioned studies examined student assessments, another focus area

found in the peer-reviewed empirical research was the examination of curriculum and instruction

practices as they related to type of instructional schedule.  In a study published the same year as

Mattox et al. (2005), Flynn, Lawrenz, & Schultz (2005) examined block scheduling and

mathematics and the potential differences in engagement in standards-based curriculum and

instruction practices between block scheduling and traditional scheduling schools.  The sample

utilized in this study included: 62 middle schools (25 block scheduled middle schools and 39

traditional scheduled middle schools), 156 middle school teachers (71 teachers in a block

schedule and 85 teachers in a traditional schedule), and 60 middle school principals (23

principals in a block schedule and 37 principals in a traditional schedule).  The teachers, schools,

and principals used in this study were located in Louisiana, Illinois, and Colorado.  Teacher

characteristics among the groups were similar in that of the 156 teachers surveyed, there was no

significant difference in their teaching experience (block schedule: $M$=5.59, $SD$=1.97, traditional

schedule: $M$=5.76, $SD$=2.26).

The design of the study utilized a quantitative survey design for teachers and principals.

The principals were asked questions regarding school enrollment, grade levels, percent of

students eligible for free or reduced lunch, and percent of Caucasians.  The teacher survey

focused on the degree of standards-based mathematics instruction by asking teachers to indicate

their use of seventeen different types of instructional activities. The results of the study by Flynn et al. (2005) indicated that despite some differences, the data demonstrated that teachers in both types of schedules (block and traditional) tend to follow similar patterns of whole class instruction, small group instruction, and individual student work. In addition, the results indicated that there were several differences in means scores between the two different types of schedules. *T*-tests were utilized to determine if any of the differences were considered statistically significant. When controlling for school socioeconomic status (SES), only the item of Writes reflections in notebook or journal, was statistically significant (*t*=2.695, *df*=136, and *p*=.01).

A strength of the study conducted by Flynn et al. (2005) is that a sample of teacher, principal, and school characteristics was used from across multiple states. A limitation or weakness of this study is the difference in SES status of the block and traditional scheduled schools. The researcher indicated that in the traditional schools sampled, over 50% of the students were eligible for free or reduced lunch, while in the block schedule schools the percentage of student eligible for free or reduced lunch was 20%. The comparison of instructional schedules among school with different socioeconomic statuses raises a concern about the reliability and transferability of these results. My study has been designed to examine the types of instructional scheduling in middle schools in New York State that have students from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, providing details regarding the specific types of block schedules utilized by the 25 middle schools would have added an additional layer of strength to Flynn's et al. (2005) study. It is also important to note that regardless of the type of schedule utilized (block or traditional), the pedagogical strategies employed by these two groups of teachers were similar. It could be hypothesized that similar patterns of teaching, such as the ones in this study, would result in similar results. A future area of study could focus on

why the pedagogical strategies were not altered between the traditional and block scheduling teachers.

While the aforementioned study by Flynn et al. (2005) examined instructional scheduling focused on student achievement and curriculum and instructional practices, this next study explored teacher perceptions of block scheduling. In a study conducted by Brown (2001), middle school teachers who were teaching in a 4 x 4 semester block scheduling configuration were interviewed. The sample size included 10 teachers from two different middle schools in a mid-Atlantic state. The average years of teaching experience among the 10 interviewed teachers was 14 years, and all of the teachers had taught in both the traditional and the 4 x 4 block scheduling formats. The grade levels that the sampled teachers taught included sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, and the subjects taught included math, science, English, social studies, and library media.

The design of the study was a qualitative research method that utilized the interpretivist theory. The method for collecting data was interviews that were taped and transcribed by the researcher. Brown (2001) designed a nonscheduled interview guide that consisted of 25 questions that focused on the ability of the 4 x 4 semester block schedule to meet the developmental learning needs of students, along with the beliefs that middle school teachers have about the effect the 4 x 4 schedule has on their instructional behaviors and curricular decisions. The length of the interviews ranged from 35 to 55 minutes.

The findings from the collected data were divided into four themes. The first theme was altering instruction, and focused on teachers stating that they utilize a larger variety of instructional strategies in the block-scheduling configuration. The second theme was the perceived effect on student learning, and the finding was that 9 of 10 teachers believed that the 4 x 4 scheduling format had a positive effect on their students' learning. The third theme reflected

the effects on curricula and the respondents' belief that curriculum needs to be adjusted (from a positive perspective) in the block scheduling format. The final theme that emerged from Brown's (2001) study was the impact on student assessment with half of the teachers indicating that assessment strategies (not assessment methods) needed to be altered in a 4 x 4 scheduling format. Overall, the data obtained for this study indicated that teacher perceptions with regard to implementing a 4 x 4 block schedule alter instruction and assessment in ways that encourage improved student learning.

A strength of this study conducted by Brown (2001), is the in-depth analysis of teacher perceptions regarding a specific type of block scheduling. In addition, the in-depth analysis added strength to the study by choosing a sample of teachers who had experience teaching in both a block and traditional scheduling format. This qualitative study by Brown (2001) examined and reported actions within a specific place and time. Therefore, with this limitation researchers should exercise caution in generalizing these findings to other populations. This study by Brown (2001) contributed value to research examining middle school instructional scheduling. It might prove valuable to this field of research for additional studies to explore the beliefs of other stakeholders regarding types of middle school instructional schedules. It is my intent, that by conducting a study that examines the presence or absence of various types of instructional schedules in New York State middle schools, additional studies be conducted in the future that build upon the data collected.

**Synthesis**

In the most recent and comprehensive national survey regarding the status of practices and programs in America's middle schools, McEwin and Greene (2011) stated that 72% of respondents reported that daily uniformed periods were the most commonly utilized instructional time schedule at their school. This percentage has decreased from 86% in 1993 and 75% in 2001.

It appears that although literature, research, and middle level organizations are placing more value on the block and flexible types of instructional schedules, the majority of middle schools still utilize a traditional fixed-period schedule. The empirical research conducted in the past 10 years that was reviewed found, to some extent, the positive influences block scheduling could have on student achievement (Brown, 2001; Mattox et al., 2005). To further understand the potential influence or impact that types of instructional schedules have on student achievement, further empirical research needs to be conducted. It would be in the interest of this field of research for longitudinal studies to be conducted examining student achievement in different scheduling configurations. In addition, it would be of interest for additional studies to explore the finding by Mattox et al. (2005) that student achievement differs by race and ethnicity depending upon the type of instructional scheduling. Furthermore, none of the research reviewed examined the affective tone of the relationship between the teacher and students. It could be hypothesized that the longer instructional periods would encourage greater familiarity between the two groups. The present study, examines the beliefs of middle school principals about the influence longer instructional periods have on the teacher-student relationship. It will also add to the existing body of research by collecting data that has never been previously collected regarding the types of instructional scheduling utilized by a specific socioeconomic population of New York State middle schools.

## Teaming

The importance of teaming as a school structure at the middle school level has been discussed and examined by scholars and advocacy organizations. The value of teaming has been supported by many of the seminal reports that focused on middle level education. In a speech presented at a conference for school administrators in 1963, Alexander discussed his view of a middle school stating that grouping students into teams of teachers is important. Almost 40

years later in the document *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century* prepared by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989), one of the recommendations for transforming middle grade schools focused on creating small communities for learning to encourage the development of relationships between students and adults. In a follow-up document published 11 years later titled *Turning Points 2000: Educating Adolescents in the 21st Century*, Jackson et al. (2000) echoed the recommendations by stating that within the teaming structure students are able to receive both the attention of a single teacher or a group of teachers. In another seminal report, *This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents* (National Middle School Association, 2010a), it is discussed how interdisciplinary teams are a significant part of high-performing schools and that teaming can have an impact on improving student achievement.

This section of the literature review examines peer-reviewed empirical research conducted within the past 10 years that focused on teaming. Although several empirical studies have been conducted that examined teaming, a large amount of this research occurred prior to the 10-year limit placed on this literature review. The studies that have been conducted on teaming within the 10 years prior to the current study focused on school reform, student social bonding, the fostering of an adolescent-centered community, student perceptions, preservice training, and distributive leadership. Also, it should be noted that when reviewing this research a theme that emerged was common planning time. Since this has been viewed as a key component of the middle-level concept, research focusing specifically on common planning time will be discussed in the next section of this literature review. This section will examine the studies on teaming, followed by a section that synthesizes the research and discusses future implications.

**Empirical Research**

One focus of the empirical research conducted on teaming was the influence it has had on whole school reform. For the purposes of this review of the literature, one study will be discussed. Mertens and Flowers (2006) conducted a study that examined the implementation and effectiveness of a comprehensive school reform design program focused on middle schools and young adolescents. Titled "Middle Start," this reform program began in 1994 and focused on increasing the quality of teaching and learning among Michigan's middle schools. The targeted for this program was schools and districts with large populations of at-risk students. The sample for this study included three different groups. The first group consisted of 11 middle schools that received comprehensive school improvement (CSI) grants and had over 40% free/reduced lunch student populations. The second group consisted of 18 middle schools that received Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) grants and had over 50% free/reduced lunch populations. The third group, the control group, consisted of 43 middle schools that did not received any grant monies or additional services.

The design of this study by Mertens and Flowers (2006) was a longitudinal quasi-experimental design with multiple sources of data. The data collected for this study were collected through the School Improvement Self-Study, which is a data collection system developed at the University of Illinois. This data collection system consists of different sets of survey measures that include teacher, student, administrator, and parent. Each of the three groups in the study had data collected over the course of multiple school years.

Although this study examined many facets of school reform, for the purposes of this literature review the results with regard to organizational structure are discussed. Mertens and Flowers (2006) examined school-level interdisciplinary teaming implementation. After examining the results of their study, Mertens and Flowers (2006) created three school-level

interdisciplinary teaming implementation categories: teaming in all middle grades with high levels of common planning time, teaming in all grades with low level of common planning time, and some or no teaming. Schools in the comprehensive school reform demonstration group made the most progress in implementing the highest level of interdisciplinary teaming. Over the course of a 2-year period from 1999 to 2001, the percentage of comprehensive school reform demonstration schools' common planning time increased from 11% to 56%. In addition, the researchers concluded that comprehensive school reform demonstration schools had the most significant gains (at the $p<.05$ level of significance) for all team practices during their grant period (range from a $p=.001$ to a $p=.037$ level of significance). The interdisciplinary team practices included: curriculum coordination, coordination of student assignments and assessments, parent contact, and contact with other staff. In addition, the results indicated that schools (regardless of group) that engaged in high levels of common planning time had the largest achievement gains (25% in reading and 14% in math).

This study contributes to the research by examining middle school teaming from the perspective of school reform. A strength of this study is that it included the element of common planning time, which is further examined in the next section of this literature review. In addition, the study incorporated the impact of teaming on academic achievement. A limitation of the research by Mertens and Flowers (2006) is that it focused on a specific demographic population. Researchers should use caution when transferring these results to other populations with different demographics. Although Mertens and Flowers (2006) did not examine the reasons why teaming practices increased at a higher rate in the middle schools that received grants than compared to the control group, it would be of interest to this researcher as to why this occurred. This study by Mertens and Flowers (2006) examined the concept of school reform with a middle school population that included a large population eligible for free/reduced lunch. The current study

that this researcher is conducting will examine the presence or absence of teaming in New York State middle schools that have been categorized as having an average need/resource capacity by the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

While Mertens and Flowers (2006) examined teaming from the school reform perspective, Wallace (2007) examined students' perceived levels of social bonding with their peers by comparing two configurations of sixth grade students and core teachers. The sample for the study included approximately 250 sixth grade students in a 100-student/4-teacher team format and approximately 250 sixth grade students in the 50-student/2-teacher team format. School selection was restricted to middle schools in Wisconsin, and a sample of 10 teams were matched on size, socioeconomic status, percent of minority students, percent of students eligible for free/reduced lunch, and special education programs.

The design of Wallace's (2007) study was a matched pairs design that utilized sixth grade interdisciplinary teams. This method was selected to minimize the effects of other variables on the outcomes. The instrumentation used in this study was the Social Bonding Scales (SBS) from the Wisconsin Youth Survey. In particular this survey measured three types of social bonding: peers, school, and teachers. The subscales were checked for internal validity and had the following alpha coefficients: peers (.72), school (.76), and teachers (.76). Two-tailed *t*-tests were conducted on each of the separate matched pairs with each measure of social bonding to determine if the interdisciplinary teaming configuration produced different effects.

The results indicated that when comparing the combined scores of the five schools with one teaming configuration to the five schools of the other teaming configuration, the students' scores on the two teacher teams were significantly higher on all three measures of social bonding (peer: *M*=3.23, *SD*=.45, *df*=408, *p*=.010; school: *M*=3.36, *SD* =.55, *df* =397, *p*=.000; and teacher: *M*=3.30, *SD* =.53, *df* =396, *p*=.016). In addition, the results indicated that although the degree to

which interdisciplinary teaching team configurations impact student social bonding is small, it is considered to be significant.

The study by Wallace (2007) contributed to the overall research on teaming by its exploration of the effects of interdisciplinary teaming on social bonding. One of the strengths of this study is in its design. Wallace (2007) used a matched pair methodology that grouped similar samples to control for variables that may have impacted the results. A limitation of the study that was acknowledged by Wallace (2007) was the unknown with regard to schools using social bonding criteria in teaming selection. It would have added to the study for Wallace (2007) to explore the influence that social bonding has or does not have on the teaming configuration process. Lastly, Wallace (2007) acknowledged the fact that certification played a role in the flexibility of interdisciplinary teaming in that sixth grade teachers typically had more of a general certification than seventh and eighth grade teachers who had a more specific certification area. It would be of interest to me to determine if a two-teacher team is more common in sixth grade compared to seventh and eighth grade due to the difference in scope of certification. This concept is explored in my study within the teaming section of the survey that will be administered to principals.

While Wallace (2007) examined the impact of interdisciplinary teaming on social bonding, Kiefer and Ellerbrock (2012) explored how one interdisciplinary team developed a responsive adolescent-centered community for eighth-grade students. The sample for this study was purposefully selected and included nine participants from a middle school located within a large socioeconomically and ethnically diverse school district in the southeastern United States. The nine participants included four eighth grade students, four eighth grade team teachers, and one principal. The four teachers and students were from a split-level (seventh and eighth grade) team that included 56 eighth-grade students.

Kiefer and Ellerbrock (2007) utilized a within-site, qualitative, case study approach to gather information as to how one interdisciplinary team developed an adolescent-centered environment that was responsive to student needs. During the spring of the 2009 school year, data were collected from observations, individual interviews, and focus group interviews. An inductive approach was used to analyze the data for patterns from which conclusions could be drawn.

Two types of emergent relationships that served as a way to promote an adolescent-centered community within the eighth grade students' interdisciplinary team were found. The first emergent relationship focused on organizational structures (interdisciplinary teaming, flexible scheduling, homeroom, and common planning time) that served as a way to promote the adolescent-centered community. In addition, the second emergent relationship was that team teachers (teacher characteristics and practices) aided in promoting this community.

Kiefer and Ellerbrock's (2007) study contributed to the existing research that had examined middle school supports by its exploration of how an adolescent-centered community developed and how it was fostered within an interdisciplinary team. Kiefer and Ellerbrock's (2007) study raises the question as to whether the variable of social bonding had an indirect effect on student learning. Due to the nature of case study methodology, one limitation discussed by Kiefer and Ellerbrock (2007) was that the sample included only nine participants. Although the study was part of a larger study that had a sample size of 23 participants, caution should be exercised regarding the transferability of these results to other populations. Kiefer and Ellerbrock (2007) stated that the interdisciplinary team from which the participants were selected was a multi-graded team of seventh-grade and eighth-grade participants. It would have added to the study if an explanation was provided as to why a multi-graded team was selected and if a discussion had been provided as to the potential differences that might have occurred with regard

to social bonding if the sample interdisciplinary team was homogenous by grade level. In addition, the Kiefer and Ellerbrock (2007) study raises a question as to whether social bonding has an indirect effect on student learning. When middle school principals are surveyed for the purposes of my study, questions will be asked inquiring about their beliefs regarding the influence identity and belonging has on student learning.

While the sample used by Kiefer and Ellerbrock (2007) included teachers, students, and a principal, Boyer and Bishop (2004) focused specifically on the student perceptions of interdisciplinary teaming. The purpose of their study was to analyze students' perceptions of effective interdisciplinary teaming. The sample for this study included 77 final-year, middle-level students. The study was conducted within three middle schools in New England. A purposeful sample was utilized for both site and student selection. A panel was used, comprised of middle-level researchers, to select one team from each of the three schools. The first team was a two-teacher team in which sixth grade teachers and students looped together to seventh grade and was in its second year of existence. The second team was a three-teacher team that included sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students and was in existence for 10 years. The third team was a four-teacher team that included fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grade students and was in existence for 31 years.

Qualitative methods were used to investigate students' perceptions of effective teams. Multiple data collection methods were used including: participant observation, document review, journal writing, focus groups, and photo-elicitation interviews. All 77 students participated in a free-write, while 12 students (three from each team) participated in the focus group, photography interview, and individual interviews. Boyer and Bishop (2004) indicated that their data collection was ongoing throughout the study and organized using inductive analysis for emerging

patterns and themes.  Data was collected in the forms of transcriptions, field notes, and journal free writes.

The findings of the study were organized into three sections.  The first section focused on long-term relationships, and how students indicated a sense of acceptance into a community and knowing other students.  Students reported that they had a sense of history associated with their team.  The second section focused on the democratic learning environment and how students believed that decision making was shared among students and teachers.  In addition, Boyer and Bishop (2004) noted that each team had a regular team meeting that was led by students.  The last section focused on tolerance for others and how students learned from each other and appreciated each other's differences.  Students indicated that being on a team increased their self-confidence.

The study by Boyer and Bishop (2004) contributes to the body of research on middle-level teaming by exploring student perceptions.  A strength of this study by Boyer and Bishop (2004) is that the researcher used purposeful sampling and used a panel of experts to select the teams allowing for diversity among the teams.  Although there was diversity in the make-up of team in terms of teachers and years as a team, a limitation of the study is that looping occurred if the team was comprised of only one grade or the team was multi-graded.  There were no teams in the sample that were single graded and that did not loop.  Therefore, researchers should exercise caution in transferring these findings to other compositions of teams other than the ones used in this study.  In addition, Boyer and Bishop (2004) did not mention the variable of team size.  It would be of interest to determine the potential difference in results by team depending on the teacher to student ratio.  The survey that will be administered to middle school principals in the present study will include demographic information about average student to teacher ratios for teams.

While the aforementioned studies focused on school reform, student's social bonding, and the fostering of an adolescent-centered community, Wilson (2007) examined teaming from a preservice training perspective by simulating interdisciplinary teaming for a semester with 24 preservice middle school teachers. This study occurred as part of a required course at a midwest university that recently received the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) status for its middle level program. After completion of this course, these 24 preservice middle school teachers would enroll in their senior year student teaching. When selecting team placement, Wilson (2007) considered content area majors and created eight, three-person teams. There was no attempt on the part of Wilson (2007) to match personalities.

The design of Wilson's (2007) research was an action research study in which the researcher worked with preservice teachers to improve their understanding and ability to operate within a middle level interdisciplinary team. Data were collected through student artifacts, a researcher journal, tape-recorded interviews, and field notes. The data were analyzed using both grounded theory and constant comparative methods.

By using the multiple sources of data collection, Wilson (2007) was able to develop themes, advance her findings, and provide historical context to the study. In terms of findings, three overlapping themes emerged. The first theme was team cohesiveness and community while focusing on respect, support, and chemistry/team dynamics. The second theme was preservice teachers developed the skills necessary for working on effective teams that included collaboration, compromise, and interpersonal communication. The last theme that emerged from Wilson's (2007) study was that preservice teachers recognized and valued the authenticity of their experience in terms of virtual teaming and concerns about reality.

This action research study added to the literature and research on interdisciplinary teaming. Unlike the studies that were previously reviewed, this study by Wilson (2007) provided

preservice teachers with a simulated experience of working with other teachers on an interdisciplinary team. The limitations of the study that are acknowledged by Wilson (2007) included the inability to generalize results and the potential bias that came as a result of the researcher having an active role in the research. In addition, another limitation of the study was that the simulated experience did not include any interaction or involvement with middle school students. The level of effectiveness that these eight teams demonstrated could have been different if students had an active role in the study. Future areas of research could expand upon this study by following these students into their student teaching and examine their skill sets working with real interdisciplinary middle level teams.

The last theme that emerged from reviewing the research on teaming is the advantages and challenges of distributing leadership in middle-level schools. In a study by Grenda and Hackmann (2014) the leadership practices of three middle school principals were examined. The research explored how successful middle school principals were at utilizing distributed leadership practices within their schools. In addition to the overarching research question, four sub-questions were explored. For the purposes of this section of the literature review, the sub-question, How does the presence of interdisciplinary teaming facilitate distributed leadership practices in middle-level schools?, will be examined. The sample for Grenda and Hackman's (2014) study included three middle-level schools within the same state in the midwestern United States. The sampling was purposeful in that principals were identified as successful learning leaders who utilized distributed leadership practices. Principals were selected who met specific criteria such as student academic performance, high levels of faculty engagement, and having served at least 3 years in their current position.

The first middle school was comprised of grades 6, 7, and 8 and had a population of approximately 1,100 students with 10 interdisciplinary teams consisting of four to five teachers

and approximately 90 students for each team.  The principal was in his 13th year as principal of the school and was responsible for hiring approximately 70% of the current faculty.  The second middle school was comprised of only grades 7 and 8 and had a population of approximately 800 students with an unreported number of teams by grade level.  The principal was in his 15th year as principal of the school with a young staff averaging 2 years of teaching experience.  Lastly, the third middle school was comprised of grades 6, 7, and 8 with an unreported number of teams by grade level.  The principal was in her 8th year as principal of the school.

Grenda and Hackmann's (2014) study used a qualitative multiple-site case study design. The primary data collection methods were interviews and observations.  Each of the three principals were interviewed three times while various other faculty members were interviewed one time.  These faculty members included: assistant principals, deans of students, interdisciplinary team leaders, committee chairs, teachers' union leadership, disciplinary coaches, and teacher mentors. An inductive, thematic analysis of the interview, observation, and collected artifact data was conducted.  Grenda and Hackmann (2014) utilized coding to identify themes and patterns.  The coding of the data was completed through the use of the NVivo qualitative analysis software.

The findings of the study were divided into different themes that included: developing empowering organizational structures, developing structures that support a culture of democratic governance, teachers leading in curriculum and professional development, building management, principals surrounding themselves with experts to address improvement, a variety of leadership may make accurate communication a challenge, and interdisciplinary teams are a platform for school-wide decision making.  For the purposes of this literature review, the last theme regarding interdisciplinary teams is discussed.  One pattern that emerged was that in all three schools the team leaders also served in a building-wide leadership capacity.  The team leaders were

considered an important connection between the school administration and the teaching staff. In addition, Grenda and Hackmann (2014) identified that the collaborative nature of interdisciplinary teams assisted in forwarding building initiatives.

This study contributed to the existing body of literature on teaming because it examined how principals built on the interdisciplinary teaming structure to encourage democratic governance. A strength of this study is that interdisciplinary teaming was explored from the leadership perspective of middle school principals. The idea of teaming being associated with school leadership is explored further in this literature review. A limitation of this study that was discussed by the researchers was that the purposeful sampling procedures might not have identified all principals within the state who met the criteria. In addition, another limitation of the study was the assumption that if middle schools had interdisciplinary teaming that they had other components of the middle school concept in place. A future study might explore a random sample of principals to determine differences in leadership philosophy and implementation. The current study samples from an entire population of middle school principals, and data is collected regarding the three school supports of instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning.

**Synthesis**

In the most recent and comprehensive national survey regarding the status of practices and programs in America's middle schools, McEwin and Greene (2011) state that the percentage of middle schools organized into teams was 72% in 2009. This represents a decrease of 5% from 77% in 2001. It appears that although literature, research, and middle level organizations are placing value on organizing students onto interdisciplinary teams, approximately 25% of middle schools are not utilizing this form of student organization. The empirical research conducted in the past 10 years that was discussed, indicates that teaming had a positive influence in terms of school reform, students' social bonding, the fostering of an adolescent-centered community,

student perceptions, preservice training, and distributive leadership. It appears important for future studies to examine teaming using both different and larger populations. In addition, only one study by Grenda and Hackmann (2014) focused specifically on teaming and the influence it had on school leadership. School leadership is part of the theoretical foundation for the present study, and it is examined in a later section of this literature review.

## Common Planning

In addition to instructional scheduling and teaming, the importance of common planning as a school support at the middle school level has been discussed and examined by scholars and advocacy organizations. One of the seminal reports on middle-level education, *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century* (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989) states that common planning with teachers allows students to be provided with clear expectations of achievement. This theme is expanded upon in a follow-up report, *Turning Points 2000: Educating Adolescents in the 21st Century* (Jackson et al., 2000). The authors stated that it is important to provide team planning time to teachers. Another seminal report, *This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents* (National Middle School Association, 2010a), discussed how regular common planning is necessary so teams can plan curriculum, assess student work, discuss current research, and reflect on practices.

This section of the literature review examines empirical research conducted within the past 10 years that focused on common planning. Although several empirical research studies have been conducted that examined common planning, it appears that a significant amount of research occurred prior to the 10-year limitation placed on this literature review. The themes that emerged from the empirical studies conducted within the last 10 years concerned common planning time benefits such as: improved student learning, a more effective learning environment, improved collaboration and networking, communication, and professional development. The

following section will examine these studies and is followed by a section that provides a synthesis of the research and a discussion of the implications for common planning.

**Empirical Research**

In a study by Cook and Faulkner (2010) that was later expanded upon and included in the Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group (MLER SIG) common planning time project, the use of common planning time by two interdisciplinary teams in Kentucky was explored. In particular, the study had three overarching research themes: factors and characteristics that enhance common planning time effectiveness, beliefs and perceptions of teachers concerning their use of common planning time, and topics and activities addressed during common planning time. The sampling for this study was purposeful in that the researchers focused on the effective use of common planning time in high performing middle schools. Criteria for inclusion included: reported use of common planning time, reputation for academic excellence as measured by state assessment results, and designation as a Kentucky School to Watch.

With regard to descriptions of the schools, the first school had an approximate population of 750 students with 7% having free/reduced lunch status and 12% classified with a disability. The first school's adjusted accountability index on the 2007 state accountability assessment was 104. Cook and Faulkner (2010) do not provide details as to how the accountability assessment index was created. The second school had an approximate population of 700 students with 18% having free/reduced lunch status and 18% classified with a disability. The second school's adjusted accountability index on the 2007 state assessment was 93. The 25 participants in the study were from six different teams; one from each grade level in each school. The six teams had an average of 9 years of total teaching experience with an average of 5 years of middle school teaching experience.

Cook and Faulkner (2010) collected data through the use of interviews, observations, and the identification of demographic information.  The data was transcribed and codes were developed that identified common trends and themes.  The results indicated that common planning time was considered necessary to the success of each of the three schools.  The specific findings were divided into three themes of common vision and mission, clearly defined goals for common planning time, and effective building level leadership.

With regard to common vision and mission, Cook and Faulkner's (2010) findings indicated that teachers consistently stated in interviews that the primary goal of the school was to meet the needs of the children and that common planning time afforded them that opportunity. In terms of clearly defined goals for common planning time, both schools included three distinct types of planning: interdisciplinary team, grade level, and professional learning communities. Interdisciplinary team planning mainly focused on student behavior and academic issues along with parent communication and planning units of study.  In addition to the interdisciplinary team focuses, the grade level planning focused on school policies and assessment requirements, and the professional learning community planning examined curriculum alignment as well as common assessment development and the analysis of student assessment data.  Lastly, with regard to effective building level leadership, it was noted that the principals in both schools created an environment of professionalism and high expectations.  In addition, the researchers stated that common planning time was supported at both the building and districts levels through staff development, finances, communication, and scheduling.

The study by Cook and Falkner (2010) contributes to the research conducted on common planning time through the examination of its use in two Kentucky middle schools.  A strength of this study was in the purposeful sampling of two high achieving middle schools.  By limiting the sample to high achieving middle schools, the school performance variable was more controlled.

A limitation of the study was that the results could not be generalized to other populations of middle schools.  It would add to the existing research on common planning for the study to be replicated using a sample of middle schools from different regions of the country.  An additional limitation was that the specifics of the frequency and duration of common planning time were not examined or discussed.  The possibility exists that depending upon the frequency and duration of common planning, it might be difficult to allocate time for the three different types of common planning that the researchers discussed.  The study conducted by me will further the research related to common planning from a different sample of middle schools.

The most comprehensive research study conducted to date that examined common planning time was by the Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group (MLER SIG) (Mertens, 2013), which is affiliated with the peer-reviewed, Journal of the American Educational Research Association (AERA).  Before examining the empirical research conducted by the MLER SIG, a summary of the formation and history of this group is provided.

In 2006, the MLER SIG started an initiative to further understand common planning time based on the needs revealed by the expanding middle grades research such as: additional large scale longitudinal studies, replication of previous studies, and the necessity to create a national level database (Mertens, 2013).  The common planning time project (Mertens, 2013) addressed the following five primary research questions: (a) What are the teachers' understandings of common planning time?, (b) How do teachers use their common planning time?, (c) How are teachers prepared professionally to use their common planning time?, (d) What are the perceived benefits of common planning time?, and (e) What are the perceived barriers to common planning time? *("A national research project revitalizes and strengthens a SIG's membership, leadership, and the quality of research in the field"*, 2011).

This common planning time project was implemented in two phases. The first phase began in November of 2007 and used a qualitative design, which permitted the researchers to observe middle school common planning meetings and conduct teacher interviews. The second phase began in November of 2009 and during this phase quantitative data was collected on elements of common planning through the use of an online teacher survey. Although numerous individual studies were conducted in both phases of this project, for the purposes of this review of literature summaries of the overall analysis of both phase 1 and phase 2 are discussed. After discussing these two phases, limitations and strengths of the study are examined.

In phase 1, approximately 22 researchers observed middle school common planning time meetings and conducted teacher interviews. The project researchers observed approximately 80 common planning time meetings and interviewed approximately 220 teachers who were involved in those meetings. These data were collected from 29 different schools in 13 states beginning in November of 2007 and finishing in 2009. All researchers utilized a standardized observation and interview protocol. Each researcher submitted their collected data along with transcriptions to the national database for the project.

The primary analysis involved coding teachers' responses and calculating their frequencies. The findings were organized to answer the five overarching research questions. In terms of demographics, the average teaching experience was approximately 11 years with an average of 9 years of middle school teaching experience, while the average teacher team size was approximately 5 teachers serving an average 118 students. Lastly, the average time for common planning was approximately 3 days per week averaging approximately 45 minutes each meeting.

The first research question asked about teachers' understandings of common planning time. The findings (in order of most to least) indicated that teachers thought common planning time was used to: address student-related issues, focus on curriculum concerns, coordinate with

teachers, address scheduling issues, meet with parents, foster community between teacher and student, receive professional development, and celebrate teachers' accomplishments.

The second research question asked about teachers' uses of common planning time. The findings (in order of most to least) indicated that teachers used common planning time to: address student issues, collaborate over curriculum, meet with parents, organize field trips, plan projects, reflect on lessons, address scheduling conflicts, and share teaching practices. The third research question asked how teachers were prepared professionally to use common planning time. The findings indicated that 31% of the teachers majored in middle school education and 42% of those teachers did their student teaching within a team setting. In addition, 78 teachers responded that they did not receive any training on common planning while attending college, while 138 teachers indicated that no professional development had been offered.

The fourth research question asked about perceived barriers to common planning time. The findings were organized into the following three categories: general barriers, meeting issues, and negative effects. General barriers included inadequate time, personality issues, and limited time with other teachers. Meeting issues included off-task behaviors, timeliness, and administration's use of common planning time. Regarding negative effects, the results were divided into negative effects or no negative effects for teachers, students, teams, or school. The largest number of responses indicated that common planning had no negative effects for teachers, students, teams, or school.

The final research question for phase 1 of the study asked about the perceived benefits of common planning time. The findings were organized into the following three categories: overall benefits, benefits by role, and student learning and achievement. Overall benefits included: communication, collaboration and networking with peers, student-centered approach, planning and coordinating efforts, community, consistent expectations, and professional development.

Those who benefited included: teachers, students, teams, and schools. Student learning and achievement benefits included: improved instruction, student progress monitoring, positive learning environments, support for struggling students, specific strategies or teaching approaches, consistent expectations and additional supports. Overall, the most common perceived benefit for all roles was community.

Phase 2, the quantitative phase of the project, was the part of the process during which data from middle grade teachers was collected through the use of an online survey about common planning time. In particular, the survey asked about their preparation and training, attitudes and experiences, engagement levels, and the challenges and benefits of common planning time. This initial analysis of the phase 2 data collection included 510 teacher surveys from 23 schools in 7 states. The demographics of the sample were as follows: 35% of the teachers taught sixth grade, 30% taught seventh, and 35% taught eighth. In addition, 32% of the teachers had worked in the middle level for less than 5 years while 43% had taught middle school students between 6 and 15 years.

The survey used during this phase of the project was developed by the Center for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD) at the University of Illinois. The CPRD designed, managed, and processed the survey data. The lead researchers for this common planning study spoke to the validity and reliability of the survey design by stating that the constructs of their survey have been used prior by CPRD for national survey data collection. With regard to data analysis, descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were calculated along with bivariate analyses of the descriptive variables. In addition, analyses of variance (ANOVA) were utilized to examine the potential impact that the amount of common planning time had on interdisciplinary teaming variables.

The first findings discussed by Mertens (2013) focused on team structure. Ninety-two percent of the sample of 510 teachers reported that teaming occurred in all middle-level grades in their school. In addition, the average team was comprised of approximately 5 teachers with 150 students. With regard to common planning time, 12% of the teachers indicated there was no common planning time while 45% met at least once or twice a week and 31% met four or more times a week. Lastly, the reported average length of common planning time sessions was 44 minutes.

The second overarching research question asked how teachers use their common planning time. The findings were reported in three categories that included common planning activities, team practices, and team decision making. With regard to common planning activities, the three most frequent activities were: discussing student behavior problems/issues, discussing student-learning problems/issues, and planning special team activities. In terms of team practices, the three with the highest mean score were: discussing problems of specific students and arranging for help ($M$=5.58), discussing school-wide issues ($M$=5.01), and coordinating efforts with special education, title 1, music, and bilingual education ($M$=4.99). The mean scores were measured on a 7-point, Likert-type scale. When examining team decision making, the three with the highest mean score were: team activities ($M$=4.21), kind and amount of homework that students receive ($M$=4.17), and team goals ($M$=4.12). These mean scores were measured on a 5-point, Likert-type scale.

The third overarching research question asked how teachers were professionally prepared to use common planning time. The findings were divided into two categories, preservice preparation program and professional development experiences. With regard to preservice preparation program, 74% of the teachers indicated that they learned a small amount about common planning. In addition, 42% of the teachers reported that they had worked with teams as

part of their student teaching assignment.  When participation in professional development was

examined, the three items with the highest mean score were: addressing student behavior

(*M*=3.4), addressing student learning (*M*=3.3), and functioning as a team (*M*=3.1).  The mean

scores were measured on a 5-point, Likert-type scale.  Lastly, the three items with the highest

mean score with regard to professional development needs were: integrating technology (*M*=2.5),

coordinating and integrating curriculum (*M*=2.4), and coordinating or developing student

assessments (*M*=2.2).  These mean scores were measured on a 4-point, Likert-type scale.

The fourth and fifth research questions examined teachers' perceptions of the benefits

and barriers of common planning time.  The survey included 26 items that examined common

planning time.  The mean scores, based on a 5-point, Likert-type scale, indicated that teachers

did not believe that any of the 26 items were a barrier (mean range of 3.4 to 4.5).

This review of the initial analysis from the MLER SIG project on common planning time

provided an in depth analysis and insight, from both the quantitative and qualitative perspectives,

into common planning practices in middle-level schools.  Although this was a nationally-based

study with many researchers, a strength of this study is its methodology.  Research assistants in

both phases of the study were required to attend training sessions on the protocols of conducting

interviews, observing common planning time, and administering the teacher survey.  In addition,

each assistant received a training manual that contained information regarding the necessary

documents, protocols, and information to be gathered and this contributed to consistency in the

methodology.

In addition, both the qualitative and quantitative findings of this mixed-methods study

support each other.  Overall, both methodologies revealed that the most common activities

during common planning were discussing student learning problems and facilitating special team

activities.  In addition, both types of research revealed that teachers received small amounts of

training on common planning during their preservice preparation programs. Furthermore, the results from phase 2 of this project indicated that teams with higher levels of common planning time reported higher levels of interdisciplinary team practices. This finding is consistent with the aforementioned study by Mertens and Flowers (2006).

Although not discussed by Mertens (2013) in their overall analysis of this mixed-method designed study, there are some limitations to this study. First, the compositions of the teams in terms of homogenous or heterogeneous grade levels were not examined. It would be of interest to examine specific teachers' perceptions of common planning time relative to whether they were part of a team that was single or multi-graded. In addition, the researchers did not examine the variable of teams having a team leader or facilitator. Research has indicated (Grenda & Hackmann, 2014) that having a teacher lead the team can influence school leadership. These variables related to the composition of teams and use of a team leader are explored in the survey used in the present research study.

Lastly, it should be noted that Mertens (2013) indicated that this analysis was preliminary with the data collection for the quantitative phase ending in 2012. Although this appears to be the most extensive study to date, research should continue to explore the operation of common planning time along with exploring the relationship with student learning.

**Synthesis**

In the most recent and comprehensive national survey of the status of practices and programs in America's middle schools, McEwin and Greene (2011) found that 77% of schools provided five or more common planning periods per week to academic teachers. It appears that although literature, research, and middle level organizations place value on common planning, there is a population of middle schools that have either no common planning time or less than five periods per week. The empirical research examined in this section indicated that common

planning benefits include: improved student learning, more effective learning environment, better collaboration and networking, better communication, and more focused professional development. It appears important that additional studies be conducted to examine the frequency and duration of common planning. It seems clear to me that the influence of common planning time is, in part, impacted by its frequency and duration. In addition, there appears to be a lack of common planning teaching in preservice preparation programs. Further research should explore teacher preparation programs with regard to common planning. The previous three sections of this literature review examined the school supports of type of instructional schedule, teaming, and common planning and their influence on student learning. The next section will explore the direct influence of other variables on student learning.

## Influence of Other Variables on Student Learning

Research on the three middle-level school supports of instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning reviewed in this chapter indicates that there is some influence on improved student learning when these supports exist. The extent to which these school supports directly or indirectly influence student learning is not as clearly identified in the research. However, research has clearly indicated that there are other variables that have more of a direct influence of student learning than these three school supports. Two variables that directly influence student learning are school leadership and classroom instruction. These were the variables explored to create a theoretical framework for my study. The influence instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning have on the student learning process is in part achieved indirectly through the student learning variables of school leadership and classroom instruction. This section of the literature review examines a seminal research study that explored the influences these three school supports had on school leadership and classroom instruction.

**School Leadership and Classroom Instruction**

In one of the most extensive research studies to examine variables influencing student learning, Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, and Anderson (2010) examined the nature of successful educational leadership and how leadership improved both educational practices and student learning. The researchers claimed, and supported with research, the notion that leadership is next only to classroom instruction as having the most influence on student learning. The study was a mixed-method design that included: qualitative case studies, large-scale quantitative studies of leadership effects on schools and students, effects of specific leadership practices, and leadership effects on student engagement. The overall sample for the study included participants from 9 states, 43 school districts, and 180 elementary, middle, and secondary schools. The study had three main parts. The first part focused on what school leaders did to improve student achievement. The second part examined districts and their leaders and how they fostered school improvement while the final part focused on state leadership and relationships with districts. For the purposes of this literature review, the part that focused on what school leaders did to improve student achievement is examined.

This first part of Wahlstrom et al.'s (2010) study is divided into six sub-sections. The headings for the six sub-sections are: collective leadership effects on teachers and students, shared leadership: effects on teachers and students of principals and teachers leading together, patterns of distributed leadership by principals: sources, beliefs, interactions, and influences, leadership practices considered instructionally helpful by high performing principals and teachers, instructional leadership: elementary versus secondary principal and teacher interactions and student outcomes: poverty, size, level, and location, and a synthesis of implications for policy and practice about school leadership. Within three of these sections key findings are identified that have an indirect influence on the three middle-level supports of instructional

scheduling, teaming, and common planning.  Findings from these three sections are discussed next.

The sub-section on collective leadership by Wahlstrom et al. (2010) examined the effects on teachers and students and produced a key finding that is relevant to the middle-level school supports of teaming.  Wahlstrom et al. (2010) discussed that higher-performing schools give greater influence to teacher teams, parents, and students.  The sample for this sub-study was based on data that was collected from surveys by 2,570 teachers in 90 different schools. Wahlstrom et al. (2010) analyzed the data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and the following statistical tests: Cronbach's alpha, paired-sample $t$-tests, factor structure, hierarchical multiple regression, path-analytic techniques, and goodness-of-fit tests.

There were a total of nine different stakeholders used to measure collective leadership. The stakeholders included: students, parent advisory groups, some individual parents, some individual teachers, staff teams, teachers with designated leadership roles, building level administrators (other than principals), district-level administrators, and principals.  Among the teacher sources of influence, teachers with designated leadership roles had the strongest influence ($M$=4.43, $SD$=.37, $t$=3.51, $p$<.01) followed by staff teams ($M$=4.36, $SD$=.41, $t$=5.54, $p$<.001) and some individual teachers ($M$=4.28, $SD$=.30, $t$=2.19, $p$<.05).  Using the researchers' claim that leadership influences student learning, these results demonstrate that staff teams are viewed as a source of collective leadership and therefore indirectly influence student learning. These results support and strengthen the claims by middle-level researchers and scholars that teaming is an important and valuable component of the middle school concept in improving student learning.

While the first sub-section of the study by Wahlstrom et al. (2010) examined collective leadership, the next sub-section focused on shared leadership.  In this particular sub-section

Wahlstrom et al. (2010) discussed a key finding that is relevant to the middle-level school supports of teaming and common planning.  The key finding discussed was that leadership largely affected student achievement because effective leadership strengthened professional communities.  Wahlstrom et al. (2010) indicated that professional communities were a strong indicator of instructional practices, which in turn were associated with student achievement. Wahlstrom et al. (2010) defined a professional community as an environment in which teachers worked together to improve their practice and student learning.  There is overlap in this definition with the definitions of common planning and teaming that were discussed in previous sections of this literature review.

The sample for this sub-study by Wahlstrom et al. (2010) was based on data that was collected from two rounds of surveys by a total of over 8,000 teachers in 9 states, 43 school districts, and 180 elementary, middle, and secondary schools.  Within this second sub-section, the researchers focused on the indirect nature of leadership effects by examining correlations between survey variables (focused instruction, professional community, shared leadership, instructional leadership, and trust) and student achievement (mathematics assessments).  The results indicated that professional community has a significant indirect effect ($p$=.023, $N$=106) on student achievement.  Using the researchers claim that leadership influenced student learning, these results demonstrate that professional communities are viewed as a source of shared leadership and therefore indirectly have influence on student learning.  These results support and strengthen the claims by middle-level researchers and scholars that teaming and common planning are important and valuable components of the middle school concept in improving student learning.

The last sub-section focuses on leadership practices that are considered to be instructionally helpful by high-performing principals and teachers.  In this particular sub-section,

Wahlstrom et al. (2010) discussed a key finding that is relevant to all three middle-level school supports of instructional scheduling, teaming and common planning. Wahlstrom et al. (2010) discussed that the most instructionally helpful leadership practices were: focusing the school on goals and expectations for student achievement, keeping track of teachers' professional development needs, and creating structures and opportunities for teachers to collaborate. Data were collected from a sub-sample of 12 principals and 65 teachers through teacher interviews, principal interviews, and classroom observations. In terms of the finding of creating structures and opportunities for teachers to collaborate, 92% of principals and 67% of teachers believed this to help instruction. Using the researchers' claim that leadership influences student learning, these results demonstrated that creating structures and opportunities for teachers to collaborate were viewed as instructionally helpful leadership practices, and therefore indirectly had an influence on student learning. These results support and strengthen the claims by middle-level researchers and scholars that instructional scheduling, teaming and common planning are important and valuable components of the middle school concept in improving student learning.

This extensive study by Wahlstrom et al. (2010) examining variables that influence student learning demonstrated that school leadership and classroom instruction have an impact on the student learning process. The major strengths of this study are the size of the database, multiple methodological approaches, multiple theoretical approaches, and the comprehensiveness of the leadership sources. Furthermore, the study by Wahlstrom et al. (2010) demonstrated that aspects of instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning were associated with school leadership and classroom instruction. These conclusions are part of the theoretical foundation for my study in that these three middle school supports have a collective indirect influence on student learning through school leadership and classroom instruction.

**Synthesis**

This section examined other variables that influence student learning. For the purposes of this literature review, the two variables, school leadership and classroom instruction, were discussed. These are the variables explored to create a theoretical framework for my study. The importance and value for instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning lies in the fact that they mainly have an indirect influence on student learning through the direct influences of school leadership and classroom instruction. In the study by Wahlstrom et al. (2010), student learning was measured by student test results on state assessments. This appears to be the dominant criteria for research studies. Additional research is needed to more comprehensively understand the influence these middle school supports can have on classroom instruction and thus on the success of all students as measured by formal assessments of learning.

<div align="center">

**Conclusion**

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This review of literature examined the studies that were published in peer-reviewed journals that were conducted within the past 10 years that focused on three middle-level school supports (i.e. instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning time). In addition, the review of the literature helped to identify a theoretical foundation for the present study and its focus on the potential relationship between these three school supports and the larger complex variables of school leadership and classroom instruction. Although this review of the literature has clearly demonstrated that research has shown that these three school supports have a positive influence on middle school students, what is not as clear is how or to what extent these supports influence student learning. In order to provide additional clarity to the influence these three school supports have on student learning, there needs to be research regarding the presence, absence, type, frequency, and/or duration of these supports in middle schools. The present study provides a descriptive profile of instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning time to

determine their presence or absence in New York State middle schools.  The next chapter

examines the research design and methodology used for this study.

**CHAPTER III**

**RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study was to provide a descriptive profile of three school supports (instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning) and to determine whether they are absent or present in New York State middle schools.  This chapter provides a discussion of the research design and methodology that was utilized.  This first section is an overview of the six main sections.  The second section explains the research design.  The third section provides the research questions for this study.  The fourth section describes the sample for this study.  The fifth section describes the instrumentation that was used for this study.  The final section describes the descriptive, inferential, and nonparametric statistical methods that were used to analyze the data.

Although the sample of participants did not meet the reliability assumption, the sample was considered large enough to justify the exploration of certain patterns and trends that emerged from the data collected to provide plausible conclusions that further research might confirm.

**Research Design**

The research design used in this study was a descriptive quantitative survey that identified the presence or absence of three school supports (instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning) in New York State middle schools.  A survey-designed study can provide a quantitative description of trends, beliefs, or attitudes of a population (Creswell, 2009).  Descriptive research focuses on organizing and summarizing information from a collection of data or observations (Witte & Witte, 2010).  Conducting a quantitative study was a practical approach to collecting data due to the potential sample size of 232 middle school principals dispersed throughout New York State.

A self-administered online web survey (see Appendix D) was designed to identify the presence or absence of these three school supports in New York State middle schools whose school district was categorized as having an average need/resource capacity for the 2011-2012 school year. Data were collected from these middle school principals using either closed-ended questions, partially open-ended questions, or Likert rating scale questions and statements. The survey is discussed in detail in the instrumentation section of this chapter.

## Research Questions

As discussed in Chapter I, the following research questions are addressed in this study:

1. What are the current instructional scheduling practices of NYS middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity?

2. To what extent, if any, is teaming present or absent in New York State middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity?

3. To what extent, if any, is common planning time present or absent in New York State middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity?

4. To what extent, if any, are all three school supports (instructional schedules, teaming, and common planning time) found to exist simultaneously in New York State middle school categorized as having an average need/resource capacity?

## Sample

The participants in this study were principals from New York State middle schools whose district was categorized as having an average need/resource capacity during the 2011-2012 school year. For the purposes of this study, middle schools included had grades 5 through 8, 6 through 8, and 7 through 8. These three grade configurations were selected because they account for approximately 89% of all separately organized public middle schools in the country (McEwin & Greene, 2011). The list of middle school principals and their email addresses were obtained

by downloading the New York State School Report Card database for 2011-2012, along with the use of district/school websites to verify contact information. The New York State School Report Card is published annually and made publicly available by the New York State Education Department.

To determine whether the survey would be reliable and valid, it was first submitted to a panel of experts for their critique. The panel consisted of the mentor of this dissertation, the readers of this dissertation, and administrators with middle school experience. After modifications were made to the survey in the light of the experts' suggestions, permission was requested from the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix B) to conduct a pilot survey. According to Andres (2012), the piloting process should be a test, in part, for the following components: the clarity and salience of the individual words, directions, questions, the response categories, the scales utilized, and the layout of the survey.

After receiving permission from the Seton Hall IRB to conduct the pilot study, I emailed a letter of solicitation to 97 middle school principals that included a link to the pilot survey (see Appendix C). The principals selected for the pilot study were from school districts that were categorized as having a need/resource capacity other than average during the 2011-2012 school year. A follow-up email reminder was sent to the principals asking them to complete the survey, if they had not already done so. I completed the pilot study by making any revisions based on recommendations that would improve the components of the survey.

Every effort was made by me to develop a valid and reliable survey instrument that would benefit this field of educational research. Although the sample of participants did not meet the reliability assumption, it was considered large enough to justify the exploration of patterns and trends that emerged from the data collected to provide plausible conclusions that future studies might confirm.

**Instrumentation**

The instrument used for data collection was a five-part, self-administered, online web survey. The three aspects of the survey format (self-administered, online, and web) were chosen to maximize the accuracy and quality of information that could be collected from the participants. According to Andres (2012), there are several advantages to a self-administered online web survey. The advantage of self-administration is that since participants are able to complete the survey at their leisure (within a specified timeframe), the responses may be more reflective, thoughtful, and accurate. Furthermore, Andres (2012) noted that surveys that are read by the participant can utilize lengthier lists of similar questions and can be developed with more complex response categories.

In addition to the advantage of a survey being self-administered, Andres (2012) also noted some benefit to surveys being completed online. These benefits included: cost, environmental considerations, quick data collection, and ease of follow up with non-respondents. Andres (2012) did express caution about the use of Internet surveys because there are parts of any population that does not have regular access to computers and the Internet. With regard to the present descriptive study, the non-sampling coverage error would be minimal since computers, Internet, and email are part of everyday working life for principals.

The last advantage of a survey format is that it is web-based. According to Andres (2012) there are two types of online surveys, email and web surveys. An email survey is more basic, while a web-based survey allows for more features. Some of the features of a web-based survey include the embedding of audio/video streaming along with the sequencing of questions (Andres, 2012). In addition, Andres (2012) pointed out that data can be automatically collected and this limits the costs and human error factors. Lastly, the web-based survey was tested on multiple browsers to ensure that it had a consistent layout.

The survey questions used for this study examined the presence or absence of three school supports among New York State middle schools whose district has been categorized as having an average need/resource capacity during the 2011-2012 school year.  In addition, the survey accounted for the possibility that some schools used only one or two of these school supports, while others might use multiple supports in combination.  Each of the five parts of the survey are described below.

The first part of the survey focused on the instructional schedules utilized by New York State middle schools.  Questions were asked about the different aspects of the instructional schedule, including its structure and course offerings.  In addition, questions were asked that focused on the perceptions and beliefs of the principals regarding instructional scheduling.  Data were collected using either closed-ended, partially open-ended, or Likert-type rating scale questions and statements.

The second part of the survey focused on collecting data about the presence or absence of any teaming that was occurring within the middle school.  Questions were asked about the different types and configurations of teaming, including grade level and/or whether the teaming was interdisciplinary.  In addition, questions were asked about the perceptions and beliefs of the principals regarding teaming.  Data were collected using either closed-ended, partially open-ended, or Likert-type rating scale questions and statements.

The third part of the survey asked about the presence or absence of any common planning that was occurring within the middle school.  Questions asked about the different configurations of common planning, including its intended purposes.  In addition, questions were asked about the perceptions and beliefs of the principals regarding common planning.  Data were collected using either closed-ended, partially open-ended, or Likert-type rating scale questions and statements.

The fourth part of the survey provided an opportunity for general reflections by the participants. Questions were asked that included ranking the influence of these three school supports. In addition, questions were asked about the perceptions and beliefs of the principals regarding the interconnectedness of these three school supports. Data were collected using either closed-ended, partially open-ended, or Likert-type rating scale questions and statements.

The final part of the survey asked for demographic information that included the respondents' gender, age, years of experience, professional education, and their perceptions of school characteristics. The data collected from this part of the survey were used to identify any association between the presence or absence of these three school supports and individual or school background information.

### Data Collection

I utilized survey methodology to collect quantitative data. After receiving approval from the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board to conduct the pilot study, a letter of solicitation (see Appendix E) was sent electronically through surveymonkey.com to 97 potential participants. This letter explained the study and asked for their participation in responding to an online survey. In addition to providing information about how to access the survey using surveymonkey.com, the letter of solicitation for the pilot study included a statement about: my affiliation with Seton Hall University, the purpose of the research, the anticipated time required to complete the survey, the description and procedures of the survey format, the volunteer nature of the pilot survey, the ways that anonymity would be preserved, and the ways that the data would be securely stored. Also, potential participants were informed that they were allowed to discontinue their participation at any time.

A time frame of 7 days was allotted for the principals to complete the pilot survey. An email reminder was sent through surveymonkey.com to those principals who did not respond to

the letter of solicitation after the 7 day timeframe had expired. Once the pilot study was tested and determined to be both reliable and valid, I applied to the Seton Hall University IRB to obtain approval for conducting the study.

After receiving approval from the Seton Hall University IRB to conduct the study, a letter of solicitation was sent electronically through my Seton Hall University email account to 232 potential participants explaining the study and asking for their participation in responding to an online survey. It was decided by me and my dissertation committee that the likelihood of the principals receiving the email would be greater if it was sent directly from a university email system as opposed to a survey software company website.

In addition to providing information about how to access the survey using surveymonkey.com, the letter of solicitation for the study included a statement about: my affiliation with Seton Hall University, the purpose of the research, the anticipated time required to complete the survey, the description and procedures of the survey format, the volunteer nature of the pilot survey, the ways that anonymity would be preserved, and the ways that the data would be securely stored. Also, potential participants were informed that they were allowed to discontinue their participation at any time.

A time frame of 10 days was allotted for the principals to complete the survey. Two additional reminders (in 2-week intervals) were sent electronically through my Seton Hall University email account to potential participants. A reminder email was not sent to participants who had emailed me a message indicating that they had completed the survey. The online survey allowed participants to electronically submit their responses to the questionnaire. The protection of the participants' names and other identifying information were of particular concern to me. In order to maintain their anonymity, all identifying information was excluded

from this study.  Upon completion of the survey, the participants' responses were electronically stored on the website of the survey company.

## Data Analysis

This study was undertaken to examine several research questions regarding the presence or absence of three school supports (instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning) in New York State middle schools whose districts have been categorized as having an average need/resource capacity during the 2011-2012 school year.  I used descriptive, inferential, and nonparametric statistical methods to analyze the data.  Although the sample of participants did not meet the reliability assumption, the sample was considered large enough to justify the exploration of patterns and trends that emerged from the data collected so as to provide plausible conclusions that further studies might confirm.  The findings from this study are presented in Chapter IV.

## Summary

This chapter provided the research design, research questions, sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis that were utilized in this study.  This study examined the presence or absence of three school supports (instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning) in New York State middle schools whose districts have been categorized as having an average need/resource capacity during the 2011-2012 school year.

**CHAPTER IV**

**THE FINDINGS**

The purpose of this study was to provide a descriptive profile of three school supports (instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning) to determine whether they are either absent or present in New York State middle schools. The importance of these three school supports at the middle level has been discussed and examined by scholars and advocacy organizations. In both *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century* (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989) and *Turning Points 2000: Educating Adolescents in the 21st Century* (Jackson et al., 2000) the authors examine the concepts of scheduling instructional periods to maximize learning, creating small communities for learning, and providing time for teachers to plan and prepare together. The number of middle schools nationally has continued to increase from less than 5,000 in 1971 to more than 13,000 in 2008 (McEwin & Greene, 2011). It is important to determine whether these three school supports are present or absent in New York State middle schools in order to provide direction for the continued development of middle school programs and assist administrators and policymakers in making informed decisions to positively impact the student learning process.

This study was guided by four research questions. The research questions were as follows: (a) What are the current instructional scheduling practices of NYS middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity? (b) To what extent, if any, is teaming present or absent in New York State middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity? (c) To what extent, if any, is common planning time present or absent in New York State middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity? (d) To what extent, if any, are all three school supports (instructional schedules, teaming, and common

planning time) found to exist simultaneously in New York State middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity?

Prior to conducting the study, the survey was piloted to determine validity and reliability. It was first submitted to a panel of experts for their critique and after revisions were made the survey was emailed to 97 middle school principals from school districts that have been categorized as having a need/resource capacity other than average during the 2011-2012 school year. After two electronic letters of solicitations, 26 responses were collected. Using this data, the survey reliability was found to be .75 using Cronbach's Alpha, which is above the criterion level of .70.

Using the methodology described in Chapter III, I utilized an online survey, which was distributed to 232 New York State middle school principals in school districts with an average need/resource capacity. Three electronic letters of solicitation were sent to the sample of 232 New York State middle school principals over the time span of approximately 2 months. These three electronic letters of solicitations resulted in 66 principals completing the survey.

It was my intent that by obtaining a minimum response rate of 35% percent when examining the absence or presence of these three middle school supports this study would be statistically reliable. Although I made a concerted effort (through three different electronic letters of solicitation), a 28% response rate was obtained. I, along with members of the dissertation committee, believed that this study would still provide value to the research field by examining how middle school principals in New York State utilize these three school supports. Plausible conclusions were able to be drawn by examining the similarities, differences, and contradictions regarding instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning. In addition, this study has value in that it examined the beliefs and understanding of principals with regard to middle school supports. The sample was considered large enough that certain patterns and

trends would emerge from the data collected to provide plausible conclusions that future studies might confirm.

Middle schools included in the present study had grades 5 through 8, 6 through 8, or 7 through 8. These three grade configurations were selected because they account for approximately 89% of all separately organized public middle schools in the country (McEwin & Greene, 2011). The category of average need/resource capacity was selected because, with the exception of the high need/resource capacity - New York City, it contained the largest percentage of middle schools. In addition, this average need/resource capacity category includes middle schools from approximately two thirds of the counties in the state and this permitted statewide sampling. The list of middle school principals and email addresses was obtained by downloading the New York State School Report Card database for 2011-2012, and district/school websites were used to verify contact information. The New York State School Report Card is published annually and made publicly available by the New York State Education Department.

This chapter provides the results of the survey that was designed to provide a descriptive profile of three school supports (instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning) to be used to determine whether they are either absent or present in New York State middle schools. A self-administered online web survey examining these practices was created by me, reviewed by a panel of experts for content validity, and a pilot study was conducted to test for reliability.

The three components to the survey format (self-administered, online, and web) were chosen to maximize the accuracy and quality of information collected from the participants. Data were collected using either closed-ended questions, partially open-ended questions, or Likert-type scale questions and statements. The remaining sections of this chapter detail the demographic information as it relates to the four research questions.

**Research Questions and Data Analysis**

The purpose of this study was to provide a descriptive profile of three school supports (instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning) to be used to determine whether they are absent or present in New York State middle schools. The analysis began by conducting descriptive statistics for the survey items. Based on either the research questions or a specific survey item, additional analyses were conducted. These additional analyses were nonparametric statistical analyses, which included chi-square tests, Friedman tests, and Kruskal-Wallis tests.

Descriptive statistics organize and summarize information regarding a collection of data to assist in describing and analyzing patterns and trends. Descriptive statistics can be presented in the form of graphs, frequency distributions, means, medians, modes, ranges, variances, and standard deviations (Witte & Witte, 2009). Nonparametric tests are utilized when the assumptions of a parametric test are violated and they do not rely on assumptions about the shape or parameters of the population or sample (Leech, Barrett, Morgan, 2008). A chi-square test is a nonparametric test that compares the observed frequencies to expected frequencies. Included in the chi-square analyses are the standardized residuals that aid in determining which of the categories are the predominant contributors to the statistical significance of the chi-square (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 2003). The Friedman Test utilizes rank-order for nonparametric data when there are two or more levels of one related sample (Leech et al., 2008).

To further analyze rank-ordered data, Mann-Whitney or Kruskal-Wallis tests can be performed. A Mann-Whitney test is utilized when there are two levels of independent variables to make comparisons while a Kruskal-Wallis test is the nonparametric equivalent of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and uses the mean ranks to compare the variables (Leech et al., 2008). It was my intent to utilize both of these nonparametric tests, if needed, to analyze the

data.  However, the independent variables in the present study required only the Kruskal-Wallis test to be performed.

The demographic survey items on which the Kruskal-Wallis tests were performed were: grade configuration, student population, school location, and years of principal experience at current school.  The rationale for utilizing these four demographic variables was to explore if there was a statistically significant difference in the instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning beliefs of middle school principals when compared with grade configuration, student population, school location, and years of principal experience at current school.  In addition, these four demographic variables have been examined and referenced in previous research and literature examining middle schools (Boyer & Bishop, 2004; Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; Cook & Falkner 2010; George & Alexander, 1993; Grenda & Hackmann, 2014; Jackson & Davis, 2000; McEwin & Greene, 2011) but not utilized to compare the instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning beliefs of middle school principals. Comparing these demographic items with principals' school support beliefs will assist in advancing the research in this field by identifying any unique features of how these middle school supports are utilized.

Survey items such as making adequate yearly progress consistently in English Language Arts and Math, principal gender, and highest degree earned were not analyzed due to the principals selecting the same answer approximately 80% of the time or more.  In addition, the survey item that asked about free or reduced lunch percentage was not utilized due to the sample of middle schools having the same categorization of an average need/resource capacity, and therefore, similar estimated poverty percentages.

**Demographic Data**

This section of the chapter presents the demographic data collected from the respondents regarding themselves and their schools. The demographic data collected included: gender, age, years of experience, professional education, school configuration, school population, type of school location, percentage of students receiving free or reduced meals, attendance and suspension percentages, whether or not school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and student performance percentages on both the English Language Arts (ELA) and math assessments. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data.

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents to the survey were male principals.

Table 1

*Percentages and Frequencies for Gender of Respondents (N=59)*

|  | Percent | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 81.4% | 48 |
| Female | 18.6% | 11 |

Table 2 shows the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum ages of the respondents.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics for Age of Respondents (N=56)*

|  | $N$ | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age of Respondents | 56 | 32 | 63 | 45.02 | 7.646 |

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics related to years of principal experience at present school.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics for Years of Principal Experience in Current School (N=57)*

|  | *N* | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Principal Experience | 57 | 1 | 19 | 5.67 | 4.584 |

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics for respondents' years of administrative experience.

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics for Years of Administrative Experience (N=57)*

|  | *N* | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Administrative Experience | 57 | 2 | 30 | 11.74 | 6.659 |

Table 5 shows the percentages for the highest degree earned.

Table 5

*Percentages and Frequencies for Highest Degree Earned (N=58)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Bachelor | 0.0% | 0 |
| Master | 87.9% | 51 |
| Doctorate | 12.1% | 7 |

Table 6 shows the percentages of respondents whose middle school contained specific grade levels. The one response to the *Other* category was that the principal's school was a sixth grade campus.

Table 6

*Percentages and Frequencies for Grades Included in Middle School (N=66)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| 5, 6, 7, 8 | 18.2% | 12 |
| 6, 7, 8 | 65.2% | 43 |
| 7, 8 | 15.2% | 10 |
| Other (please specify) | 1.5% | 1 |

Table 7 shows descriptive statistics for the student population of the respondents' middle school.

Table 7

*Descriptive Statistics for Student Population (N=62)*

|  | *N* | Minimum | Maximum | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student Population | 62 | 110 | 2400 | 703.77 |

Table 8 shows the number and percentage of respondent schools that were in urban, rural, and suburban locations.

Table 8

*Percentages and Frequencies for School Location (N=58)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Urban | 6.9% | 4 |
| Rural | 32.8% | 19 |
| Suburban | 60.3% | 35 |

Table 9 shows the number and percentage of racial/ethnic student populations in the respondents' schools.

Table 9

*Percentages and Frequencies for Racial/Ethnic Student Populations*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 6.9% | 4 |
| Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander | 22.4% | 13 |
| Black or African American | 63.8% | 37 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 50.0% | 29 |
| Multiracial | 19.0% | 11 |
| White | 98.3% | 57 |

Table 10 shows the descriptive statistics regarding students who received either free or reduced lunch for the 2011-2012 school year.

Table 10

*Descriptive Statistics for Students Receiving Either Free or Reduced Lunch (N=49)*

|  | *N* | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Free or Reduced Lunch | 49 | 6 | 75 | 27.49 | 16.666 |

Table 11 shows the descriptive statistics for attendance for the 2011-2012 school year.

Table 11

*Descriptive Statistics for Student Attendance (N=50)*

|  | *N* | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student Attendance | 50 | 85 | 98 | 95.32 | 2.142 |

Table 12 shows the descriptive statistics for suspensions for the 2011-2012 school year.

Table 12

*Descriptive Statistics for Student Suspension (N=46)*

|  | *N* | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student Suspension | 46 | 1 | 30 | 4.98 | 4.915 |

Table 13 shows the percentage of respondents' schools that made Adequate Yearly

Progress (AYP) in the previous 3 school years in English Language Arts (ELA).

Table 13

*Percentages and Frequencies for AYP in ELA (N=55)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 76.4% | 42 |
| No | 23.6% | 13 |

Table 14 shows the descriptive statistics for students in the categories: partially

proficient, proficient, and exceeding proficient on the 2013 English Language Arts (ELA)

assessment.

Table 14

*Descriptive Statistics for ELA Scores: Levels II, III, and IV (N=33, 34, 33)*

|  | *N* | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level II (Partially Proficient) | 33 | 15 | 70 | 37.52 | 13.182 |
| Level III (Proficient) | 34 | 15 | 80 | 37.00 | 16.203 |
| Level IV (Exceeding Proficient) | 33 | 1 | 35 | 10.64 | 7.470 |

Table 15 shows the number and percentage of respondents' schools that made Adequate

Yearly Progress (AYP) in mathematics during the previous 3 school years.

Table 15

*Percentages and Frequencies for AYP in Mathematics (N=50)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 82.0% | 41 |
| No | 18.0% | 9 |

Table 16 shows descriptive statistics for students in the categories: partially proficient,

proficient, and exceeding proficient on the 2013 Mathematics assessment.

Table 16

*Descriptive Statistics for Math Scores: Levels II, III, and IV (N=33, 34, 33)*

|  | *N* | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level II (Partially Proficient) | 33 | 10 | 70 | 38.79 | 14.467 |
| Level III (Proficient) | 34 | 8 | 85 | 36.21 | 17.942 |
| Level IV (Exceeding Proficient) | 33 | 1 | 30 | 9.73 | 7.954 |

This previous section of Chapter IV discussed the demographic data that was collected

from the respondents.  In general, the demographic data revealed a sample of predominantly

male respondents in their mid-40's, with master degrees, who have been principals of their

school for an average of 5 years.  In general, the demographic data regarding the respondents'

schools revealed a sample of predominantly suburban middle schools with grades 6, 7, and 8 that had an average population of 700 students, with a majority of the students reported to be White with regard to race/ethnicity. In addition, these middle schools had a high attendance rate, low suspension rate, low free/reduced lunch percentage, and regularly maintained AYP in ELA and math. The following sections examine each of the four research questions that guided this study.

**Research Question 1**

Research question 1: What are the current instructional scheduling practices of NYS middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity?

The first part of the survey focused on gathering data regarding the instructional schedule utilized by New York State middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity. This part of the survey was divided into two sections, with the first focusing on collecting instructional scheduling information and the second examining instructional scheduling beliefs. This section of Chapter IV is divided into three sub-headings: type of instructional schedule utilized, instructional scheduling history, and instructional scheduling beliefs.

**Type of Instructional Schedule**

There were five questions in the survey that addressed the type of instructional schedule utilized. Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the data. The third question on the survey asked respondents to select a response that best described the type of instructional schedule currently in existence at his or her school. Table 17 shows that approximately 70% of the respondents utilized a traditional departmentalized schedule, $\chi^2$ (6, $N=65$)=164.277, $p<.001$). With regard to the *Other* category, the majority of the eight respondents that selected this category indicated that their instructional schedule is a combination of several of the scheduling types listed.

Table 17

*Chi-Square Analysis on Type of Instructional Schedule (N=65)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Traditional Departmentalized Schedule | 69.2% | 45 | 45 | 9.3 | 35.7 | 11.70 |
| Alternate Day Block Schedule | 4.6% | 3 | 3 | 9.3 | -6.3 | -2.07 |
| Flexible Interdisciplinary Block Schedule | 1.5% | 1 | 1 | 9.3 | -8.3 | -2.72 |
| Modular Schedule | 1.5% | 1 | 1 | 9.3 | -8.3 | -2.72 |
| Rotating Schedule | 3.1% | 2 | 2 | 9.3 | -7.3 | -2.39 |
| Dropped Schedule | 0.0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Rotating Dropped Schedule | 7.7% | 5 | 5 | 9.3 | -4.3 | -1.41 |
| Other (please specify) | 12.3% | 8 | 8 | 9.3 | -1.3 | -0.43 |

In addition to gathering data on the type of instructional schedule utilized, there were four questions on the survey that examined exploratory/encore subjects along with remedial, special education, and English Language Learner (ELL) instruction. Survey question 9 asked what exploratory/encore subjects were offered during the school day. Table 18 shows that physical education, music, technology, and art were all offered during the school day. In addition, both health and home and careers were offered during the day in all but one of the respondents' schools. There were 22 respondents that checked the *Other* option. The majority of the exploratory/encore subjects listed in this category included: computers, languages other than English (LOTE), cyber-bullying, literacy, and Internet use.

Table 18

*Percentages and Frequencies for Exploratory/Encore Subjects (N=66)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Physical Education | 100.0% | 66 |
| Music | 100.0% | 66 |
| Technology | 100.0% | 66 |
| Art | 100.0% | 66 |
| Health | 98.5% | 65 |
| Home and Careers | 98.5% | 65 |
| Other (please specify) | 33.3% | 22 |

The final three questions in the section on instructional scheduling obtained information regarding the structure of remedial, special education and English Language Learner (ELL) instruction. For remedial, special education, and ELL instruction, Tables 19, 20 and 21 respectively, show that the respondents selected smaller student/teacher ratio classes, inclusion in mainstream, additional support period, and pull-outs as the most frequently utilized instructional supports. Although these were the most common selections, ELL differed in that the additional support period was utilized less frequently than it was for remedial and special education instruction.

Table 19

*Percentages and Frequencies for Structure of Remedial Instruction (N=66)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Smaller student/teacher ratio classes | 77.3% | 51 |
| Inclusion in mainstream classes | 72.7% | 48 |
| Pull outs | 50.0% | 33 |
| Additional support period | 72.7% | 48 |
| Extended school day programs | 27.3% | 18 |
| Summer programs | 37.9% | 25 |
| Other (please specify) | 12.1% | 8 |

Table 20

*Percentages and Frequencies for Structure of Special Education Instruction (N=66)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Smaller student/teacher ratio classes | 71.2% | 47 |
| Inclusion in mainstream classes | 93.9% | 62 |
| Pull outs | 42.4% | 28 |
| Additional support period | 78.8% | 52 |
| Extended school day programs | 15.2% | 10 |
| Summer programs | 36.4% | 24 |
| Other (please specify) | 10.6% | 7 |

Table 21

*Percentages and Frequencies for Structure of ELL Instruction (N=63)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Smaller student/teacher ratio classes | 44.4% | 28 |
| Inclusion in mainstream classes | 63.5% | 40 |
| Pull outs | 52.4% | 33 |
| Additional support period | 41.3% | 26 |
| Extended school day programs | 11.1% | 7 |
| Summer programs | 14.3% | 9 |
| Other (please specify) | 17.5% | 11 |

**Instructional Scheduling History**

There were three questions in the survey that asked the type of instructional schedule utilized. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The fourth, fifth and sixth questions on the survey asked respondents how long the current instructional scheduling had been in existence, if it had been altered, and if so, why had it been changed. Table 22 shows that the average length of time that the current instructional schedule was in existence was approximately 10 years. Furthermore, Tables 23 and 24 show that the majority of respondents have made or are looking to make changes to their instructional scheduling structure. The last question regarding the history of the principals' instructional schedule asked why they were either looking or not looking to modify their current instructional schedule. The majority of the

responses for wanting to modify their current instructional schedule focused on: additional time

needed for ELA and math, increase instructional time, improve staff utilization, and budget

reductions.

Table 22

*Descriptive Statistics for Length of Time Instructional Schedule Has Been in Existence (N=53)*

|  | *N* | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Existence of Instructional Schedule | 53 | 0 | 50 | 10.26 | 8.385 |

Table 23

*Percentages and Frequencies for Changes in Instructional Schedule (N=66)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 63.6% | 42 |
| No | 36.4% | 24 |

Table 24

*Percentages and Frequencies for Interest in Modifying Instructional Schedule (N=64)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 56.2% | 36 |
| No | 43.8% | 28 |

**Instructional Scheduling Beliefs**

To collect data about instructional scheduling beliefs, the respondents were asked to rank

different types of instructional schedules and provide their beliefs on components of instructional

scheduling. Descriptive and nonparametric statistics were used to analyze these data.

A Friedman test was used to analyze how the respondents ranked seven different

instructional scheduling models. Table 25 shows the mean, mean rank and standard deviation

for each instructional scheduling model and the table is presented in mean rank order from

lowest to highest. All seven models were found to be statistically significant and the chi-square

associated with this Friedman test was $\chi^2$ (6, *N*=65)=219.105, *p*<.001).  The most popular

scheduling model was the Flexible Interdisciplinary Block Schedule with a mean rank of 2.15,

while the least popular was the Rotating Dropped Schedule with a mean rank of 6.45.

Table 25

*Friedman Test on Instructional Scheduling Models (N=65)*

|  | *N* | Mean | Standard Deviation | Mean Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Flexible Interdisciplinary Block Schedule | 65 | 2.15 | 1.314 | 2.15 |
| Traditional Departmentalized Schedule | 65 | 2.45 | 1.323 | 2.45 |
| Alternate Day Block Schedule | 65 | 3.32 | 1.592 | 3.32 |
| Modular Schedule | 65 | 3.63 | 1.206 | 3.63 |
| Rotating Schedule | 65 | 4.18 | 1.467 | 4.18 |
| Dropped Schedule | 65 | 5.82 | .950 | 5.82 |
| Rotating Dropped Schedule | 65 | 6.45 | 1.392 | 6.45 |

Further analysis was conducted to determine if there were any statistically significant

differences between survey demographic items and the principals ranking of the instructional

scheduling models.  The four demographic items analyzed were grade configuration, student

population, school location, and years of principal experience at current school.  The analysis

was conducted using a Kruskal-Wallis test, and the results indicated a statistically significant

difference by the category of "grade configuration" at the .05 level of significance.  The mean

rank of "Rotating Dropped Schedule" for grades 5-8 (38.04) and grades 6-8 (34.48) were higher

than the mean rank for grades 7-8 (20.00).  There was only one response recorded for the *Other*

category and that principal indicated that his or her school was solely comprised of sixth grade

students.  Table 26 shows the ranking of instructional scheduling models by grade configuration.

Table 26

*Kruskal-Wallis Test on Instructional Scheduling Models Ranked by Grade Configuration*

|  | Grade Configurations | *N* | Mean Rank | Asymptotic Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Traditional Departmentalized Schedule | 5, 6, 7, 8 | 12 | 38.83 | .403 |
|  | 6, 7, 8 | 42 | 32.01 |  |
|  | 7, 8 | 10 | 32.45 |  |
|  | Other | 1 | 10.00 |  |
|  | Total | 65 |  |  |
| Alternate Day Block Schedule | 5, 6, 7, 8 | 12 | 30.08 | .551 |
|  | 6, 7, 8 | 42 | 35.11 |  |
|  | 7, 8 | 10 | 29.40 |  |
|  | Other | 1 | 15.50 |  |
|  | Total | 65 |  |  |
| Flexible Interdisciplinary Block Schedule | 5, 6, 7, 8 | 12 | 27.67 | .550 |
|  | 6, 7, 8 | 42 | 33.62 |  |
|  | 7, 8 | 10 | 35.15 |  |
|  | Other | 1 | 49.50 |  |
|  | Total | 65 |  |  |
| Modular Schedule | 5, 6, 7, 8 | 12 | 29.25 | .830 |
|  | 6, 7, 8 | 42 | 33.27 |  |
|  | 7, 8 | 10 | 35.85 |  |
|  | Other | 1 | 38.00 |  |
|  | Total | 65 |  |  |
| Rotating Schedule | 5, 6, 7, 8 | 12 | 39.42 | .231 |
|  | 6, 7, 8 | 42 | 29.73 |  |
|  | 7, 8 | 10 | 38.15 |  |
|  | Other | 1 | 42.00 |  |
|  | Total | 65 |  |  |
| Dropped Schedule | 5, 6, 7, 8 | 12 | 29.17 | .350 |
|  | 6, 7, 8 | 42 | 32.37 |  |
|  | 7, 8 | 10 | 40.10 |  |
|  | Other | 1 | 34.50 |  |
|  | Total | 65 |  |  |
| Rotating Dropped Schedule | 5, 6, 7, 8 | 12 | 38.04 | .011 |
|  | 6, 7, 8 | 42 | 34.48 |  |
|  | 7, 8 | 10 | 20.00 |  |
|  | Other | 1 | 40.50 |  |
|  | Total | 65 |  |  |

In addition to ranking different types of instructional schedules, the respondents indicated

on a Likert scale their agreement or disagreement with 10 statements. A chi-square analysis and

a Friedman test were used to analyze these data. Utilizing a chi-square analysis, all except one of the Likert scale items showed statistical significance. The following Likert scale items were statistically significant: The instructional schedule should allow teachers an opportunity to see students at different times during the day $\chi^2$ (3, *N*=64)=48.875, *p*<.001), The instructional schedule should support flexibility for periods to be of different lengths $\chi^2$ (3, *N*=63)=38.270, *p*<.001), An instructional schedule can have a positive influence of student learning $\chi^2$ (1, *N*=65)=36.938, *p*<.001), Longer class periods can have a positive influence on student learning $\chi^2$ (2, *N*=64)=19.344, *p*<.001), Longer class periods can have a positive influence on the relationship between teacher and student $\chi^2$ (2, *N*=64)=19.906, *p*<.001), The current instructional schedule in my school meets the needs of all students $\chi^2$ (3, *N*=64)=25.875, *p*<.001), The current instructional schedule in my school meets the needs of all remedial students $\chi^2$ (3, *N*=64)=36.250, *p*<.001), The current instructional schedule in my school meets the needs of all special education students $\chi^2$ (3, *N*=64)=24.375, *p*<.001), and The current instructional schedule in my school meets the needs of all ELL students $\chi^2$ (3, *N*=60)=22.533, *p*<.001). The one Likert scale item that was not statistically significant was Longer class periods can have a positive influence on student behavior $\chi^2$ (2, *N*=64)=4.156, *p*<.125). Table 27 shows the chi-square frequencies for instructional scheduling beliefs.

Table 27

*Chi-Square Analysis on Instructional Scheduling Beliefs (4-Strongly Agree; 3-Somewhat Agree; 2-Somewhat Disagree; 1-Strongly Disagree)*

| Instructional schedule should allow teachers an opportunity to see students at different times during the day | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 1 | 1 | 16.0 | -15.0 | -3.75 |
| 2 | 5 | 16.0 | -11.0 | -2.75 |
| 3 | 36 | 16.0 | 20.0 | 5 |
| 4 | 22 | 16.0 | 6.0 | 1.5 |
| Total | 64 | | | |

| The instructional schedule should support flexibility for periods to be of different lengths | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 1 | 3 | 15.8 | -12.8 | -3.22 |
| 2 | 4 | 15.8 | -11.8 | -2.97 |
| 3 | 27 | 15.8 | 11.3 | 2.82 |
| 4 | 29 | 15.8 | 13.3 | 3.32 |
| Total | 63 | | | |

| An instructional schedule can have a positive influence on student learning | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 3 | 8 | 32.5 | -24.5 | -4.30 |
| 4 | 57 | 32.5 | 24.5 | 4.30 |
| Total | 65 | | | |

| Longer class periods can have a positive influence on student learning | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 2 | 5 | 21.3 | -16.3 | -3.53 |
| 3 | 27 | 21.3 | 5.7 | 1.23 |
| 4 | 32 | 21.3 | 10.7 | 2.32 |
| Total | 64 | | | |

| Longer class periods can have a positive influence on student behavior | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 2 | 18 | 21.3 | -3.3 | -0.71 |
| 3 | 29 | 21.3 | 7.7 | 1.67 |
| 4 | 17 | 21.3 | -4.3 | -0.93 |
| Total | 64 | | | |

| Longer class periods can have a positive influence on the relationship between teacher and student | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 2 | 5 | 21.3 | -16.3 | -3.53 |
| 3 | 33 | 21.3 | 11.7 | 2.53 |
| 4 | 26 | 21.3 | 4.7 | 1.02 |
| Total | 64 | | | |

| The current instructional schedule in my school meets the needs of all students | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 1 | 4 | 16.0 | -12.0 | -3.00 |
| 2 | 21 | 16.0 | 5.0 | 1.25 |
| 3 | 30 | 16.0 | 14.0 | 3.50 |
| 4 | 9 | 16.0 | -7.0 | -1.75 |
| Total | 64 | | | |

| The current instructional schedule in my school meets the needs of all remedial students | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 1 | 3 | 16.0 | -13.0 | -3.25 |
| 2 | 27 | 16.0 | 11.0 | 2.75 |
| 3 | 29 | 16.0 | 13.0 | 3.25 |
| 4 | 5 | 16.0 | -11.0 | -2.75 |
| Total | 64 | | | |

| The current instructional schedule in my school meets the needs of all special education students | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 1 | 2 | 16.0 | -14.0 | -3.50 |
| 2 | 20 | 16.0 | 4.0 | 1.00 |
| 3 | 29 | 16.0 | 13.0 | 3.25 |
| 4 | 13 | 16.0 | -3.0 | -0.75 |
| Total | 64 | | | |

| The current instructional schedule in my school meets the needs of all ELL students | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 1 | 2 | 15.0 | -13.0 | -3.36 |
| 2 | 19 | 15.0 | 4.0 | 1.03 |
| 3 | 27 | 15.0 | 12.0 | 3.10 |
| 4 | 12 | 15.0 | -3.0 | -0.78 |
| Total | 60 | | | |

In addition to the chi-square analysis, a Friedman test was used to analyze how the respondents' answers ranked with regard to their agreement or disagreement with the 10 statements. Table 28 shows the mean, mean ranks, and standard deviations for scheduling beliefs. The items are sorted in mean rank order. They were all found to be statistically significant, $\chi^2$ (9, *N*=59)=219.105, *p*<.001). The mean ranks of an instructional schedule can have a positive influence on student learning (8.36) and longer class periods can have a positive influence of student learning (6.68) had the strongest agreement while the strongest disagreement was regarding the instructional schedule meeting the needs of all remedial (3.56) and all students (4.13).

Table 28

*Friedman Test on Instructional Scheduling Beliefs (N=59)*

| | *N* | Mean | Standard Deviation | Mean Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| An instructional schedule can have a positive influence on student learning | 59 | 3.88 | .326 | 8.36 |
| Longer class periods can have a positive influence on student learning | 59 | 3.44 | .650 | 6.68 |
| Longer class periods can have a positive influence on the relationship between teacher and student | 59 | 3.34 | .633 | 6.28 |
| The instructional schedule should support flexibility for periods to be of different lengths | 59 | 3.27 | .806 | 6.22 |
| The instructional schedule should allow teachers an opportunity to see students at different times during the day | 59 | 3.22 | .671 | 5.92 |
| Longer class periods can have a positive influence on student behavior | 59 | 2.98 | .754 | 4.84 |
| The current instructional schedule in my school meets the needs of all special education students | 59 | 2.81 | .776 | 4.52 |
| The current instructional schedule in my school meets the needs of all ELL students | 59 | 2.83 | .791 | 4.51 |
| The current instructional schedule in my school meets the needs of all students | 59 | 2.69 | .749 | 4.13 |
| The current instructional schedule in my school meets the needs of all remedial students | 59 | 2.56 | .650 | 3.56 |

Further analysis was conducted to determine if there were any statistically significant differences when comparing survey demographic items to the principals' instructional scheduling beliefs. The four demographic items analyzed were grade configuration, student population, school location, and years of principal experience at current school. The analysis was conducted using a Kruskal-Wallis test, and the results indicated that there were no statistical significant differences at the $p<.05$ level of confidence. The results of this analysis are further discussed in Chapter V.

This section of Chapter IV discussed the instructional scheduling data collected. The data indicated that the a sample of principals predominantly utilized a traditional

departmentalized instructional schedule that offered a contingency of encore/exploratory courses that include physical education, music, technology, art, health, and home and careers.  In addition, the scheduling structure for remedial, special education, and ELL students took the form of smaller student/teacher ratio classes, inclusion in mainstream classes, and pullout programs.

With regard to instructional scheduling history, the data indicate that the sample of principals predominately utilized an instructional schedule that was in existence for an average of 10 years.  The majority of principals indicated that they had either changed or were looking to modify the current instructional schedule.  When examining instructional scheduling models, the majority of respondents believed that the flexible interdisciplinary block schedule best fit the needs of their students, followed by the traditional departmentalized schedule, and the alternating day schedule.  Lastly, regarding instructional scheduling beliefs, the majority of principals indicated that an instructional schedule could have a positive influence on student learning along with longer class periods.

### Research Question 2

Research question 2: To what extent, if any, is teaming present or absent in New York State middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity?

The second part of the survey collected data on the presence or absence of any teaming that was occurring within New York State middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity.  Similar to the instructional scheduling section of the survey, the teaming section of the survey was divided into two parts: the first focused on teaming information and the second examined teaming beliefs.  This section of Chapter IV is divided into the following three groups for the analysis of the teaming data: type of teaming currently utilized, teaming history, and teaming beliefs.

**Type of Teaming**

With regard to the type of teaming utilized, a series of nine questions on the survey

focused on the characteristics of teaming at the respondents' middle schools.  The first question

asked if the respondents' middle schools utilized teaming.  Table 29 shows that over 95% of the

principals that responded to the survey utilized teaming in some capacity.  The next five

questions examined the types, grades, and student assignment of teams.  Tables 30-34 show that

the teams in the respondents' middle schools were predominately interdisciplinary and/or single

graded across all grade levels and that the majority of students were randomly assigned to teams.

In addition, the collected data indicate that approximately 90% of students were fully teamed.

Table 29

*Percentages and Frequencies for Teaming Utilized (N=64)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 95.3% | 61 |
| No | 4.7% | 3 |

Table 30

*Percentages and Frequencies for Type of Teaming Utilized (N=61)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Interdisciplinary | 59.0% | 36 |
| Single Grade Level | 73.8% | 45 |
| Multiple Grade Levels | 13.1% | 8 |
| Other (please specify) | 4.9% | 3 |

Table 31

*Percentages and Frequencies for Grade Levels that use Teaming (N=61)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| 5th Grade | 14.8% | 9 |
| 6th Grade | 86.9% | 53 |
| 7th Grade | 90.2% | 55 |
| 8th Grade | 83.6% | 51 |

Table 32

*Percentages and Frequencies for Students Randomly Assigned to Teams (N=61)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 63.9% | 39 |
| No | 36.1% | 22 |

Table 33

*Percentages and Frequencies for Students Teamed with Same Group of Students Throughout*

*Middle School (N=61)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 26.2% | 16 |
| No | 73.8% | 45 |

Table 34

*Descriptive Statistics for Percentage of Students Fully Teamed (N=61)*

|  | *N* | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fully Teamed | 61 | 33 | 100 | 90.28 | 16.901 |

While the previous five questions focused on the types, grades, and student assignment of teams, the next series of questions examined the teachers' assignment to teams. Table 35 shows that the predominant composition of teams consisted of academic teachers. Table 36 shows that almost half of the teams consisted of four teachers, $\chi^2$ (4, *N*=61)=42.167, *p*<.001). The final question with regard to the type of teaming utilized was in reference to the use of a team facilitator/team leader. Table 37 shows that approximately half of the principals reported that team facilitators/team leaders were utilized in their middle school.

Table 35

*Percentages and Frequencies for Staff Members Assigned to Teams (N=61)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Academic Teachers | 98.4% | 60 |
| Exploratory/Encore Teachers | 24.6% | 15 |
| Remedial Teachers | 21.3% | 13 |
| Special Education Teachers | 80.3% | 49 |
| English Language Learner (ELL) Teachers | 9.8% | 6 |
| Teaching Assistants or Paraprofessionals | 26.2% | 16 |
| Principal or Assistant Principal | 18.0% | 11 |
| Department Chair | 4.9% | 3 |
| School Counselor | 34.4% | 21 |
| Other (please specify) | 3.3% | 2 |

Table 36

*Chi-Square Analysis on Academic Teachers Assigned to Teams (N=61)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency | Observed $N$ | Expected $N$ | Residual | Standardized Residual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 Teachers | 3.3% | 2 | 2 | 12.0 | -10.0 | -2.89 |
| 3 Teachers | 9.8% | 6 | 6 | 12.0 | -6.0 | -1.73 |
| 4 Teachers | 44.3% | 27 | 27 | 12.0 | 15.0 | 4.34 |
| 5 Teachers | 34.4% | 21 | 21 | 12.0 | 9.0 | 2.60 |
| Greater than 5 Teachers | 8.2% | 5 | 4 | 12.0 | -8.0 | -2.31 |

Table 37

*Percentages and Frequencies for Teams That Have a Team Facilitator/Leader (N=61)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 50.8% | 31 |
| No | 49.2% | 30 |

**Teaming History**

Within the teaming section of the survey, there were three questions that addressed the

history of teaming at the respondents' schools. Questions 19 and 20 on the survey asked

respondents if the current teaming structure had been changed or altered, and if they were

looking or not looking to modify it. Tables 38 and 39 show that the majority of respondents had

made changes to the teaming structure, but were not looking to make any additional changes. The last question asked why the principal looked or did not look to modify his or her current structure for teaming. The majority of the responses for not wanting to modify the current teaming structure focused on: cuts to existing budget and staffing, changes recently made, current structure fitting the academic, social and emotional needs of students, lack of support from staff and/or district administration, and declining enrollment.

Table 38

*Percentages and Frequencies for Changes in Teaming Structure (N=61)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 65.6% | 40 |
| No | 34.4% | 21 |

Table 39

*Percentages and Frequencies for Interest in Modifying or Changing Teaming Structure (N=61)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 34.4% | 21 |
| No | 65.6% | 40 |

**Teaming Beliefs**

To collect data regarding teaming beliefs, the respondents were asked to indicate on a Likert-type scale their agreement or disagreement with nine statements. A chi-square analysis, along with a Friedman test, were used to analyze these data. Utilizing a chi-square analysis, all of the following Likert-scale items were statistically significant: Teaming has a positive influence on the way classroom instruction is carried out and taught $\chi^2$ (2, $N$=63)=34.667, $p$<.001), Teaming has a positive influence on the culture of learning within the school $\chi^2$ (2, $N$=63)=48.667, $p$<.001), Teaming has a positive influence on student learning $\chi^2$ (1, $N$=62)=7.806, $p$<.005), Teaming has a positive influence on student behavior

$\chi^2$ (2, $N$=63)=32.000, $p$<.001), Teaming provides students with a greater sense of identity and belonging $\chi^2$ (2, $N$=63)=22.952, $p$<.001), Teachers are prepared with the collaboration and communication skills needed to be an effective team $\chi^2$ (2, $N$=62)=17.452, $p$<.001), Teachers would benefit from receiving professional development on teaming $\chi^2$ (2, $N$=63)=38.381, $p$<.001), Teams have the ability to function in a leadership capacity" $\chi^2$ (2, $N$=63)=21.238, $p$<.001), and Team facilitators/leaders have the ability to function in a leadership capacity $\chi^2$ (2, $N$=63)=24.000, $p$<.001).  Table 40 shows the chi-square frequencies for teaming beliefs.

Table 40

*Chi-Square Analysis on Teaming Beliefs Per Question (4-Strongly Agree; 3-Somewhat Agree; 2-Somewhat Disagree; 1-Strongly Disagree)*

| Teaming has a positive influence on the way classroom instruction is carried out and taught | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed $N$ | Expected $N$ | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 2 | 1 | 21.0 | -20.0 | -4.37 |
| 3 | 23 | 21.0 | 2.0 | 0.44 |
| 4 | 39 | 21.0 | 18.0 | 3.93 |
| Total | 63 | | | |

| Teaming has a positive influence on the culture of learning within the school | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed $N$ | Expected $N$ | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 2 | 2 | 21.0 | -19.0 | -4.15 |
| 3 | 15 | 21.0 | -6.0 | -1.31 |
| 4 | 46 | 21.0 | 25.0 | 5.46 |
| Total | 63 | | | |

| Teaming has a positive influence on student learning | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed $N$ | Expected $N$ | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 3 | 20 | 31.0 | -11.0 | -1.97 |
| 4 | 42 | 31.0 | 11.0 | 1.97 |
| Total | 62 | | | |

| Teaming has a positive influence on student behavior | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed $N$ | Expected $N$ | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 2 | 1 | 21.0 | -20.0 | -4.37 |
| 3 | 25 | 21.0 | 4.0 | 0.87 |
| 4 | 37 | 21.0 | 16.0 | 3.49 |
| Total | 63 | | | |

| Teaming provides students with a greater sense of identity and belonging | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 2 | 6 | 21.0 | -15.0 | -3.28 |
| 3 | 20 | 21.0 | -1.0 | -0.22 |
| 4 | 37 | 21.0 | 16.0 | 3.49 |
| Total | 63 | | | |

| Teachers are prepared with the collaboration and communication skills needed to be an effective team | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 2 | 11 | 20.7 | -9.7 | -2.13 |
| 3 | 36 | 20.7 | 15.3 | 3.36 |
| 4 | 15 | 20.7 | -5.7 | -1.25 |
| Total | 62 | | | |

| Teachers would benefit from receiving professional development on teaming | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 2 | 2 | 21.0 | -19.0 | -4.15 |
| 3 | 19 | 21.0 | -2.0 | -0.44 |
| 4 | 42 | 21.0 | 21.0 | 4.59 |
| Total | 63 | | | |

| Teams have the ability to function in a leadership capacity | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 2 | 4 | 21.0 | -17.0 | -3.71 |
| 3 | 32 | 21.0 | 11.0 | 2.40 |
| 4 | 27 | 21.0 | 6.0 | 1.31 |
| Total | 63 | | | |

| Team facilitators/leaders have the ability to function in a leadership capacity | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 2 | 3 | 21.0 | -18.0 | -3.93 |
| 3 | 33 | 21.0 | 12.0 | 2.62 |
| 4 | 27 | 21.0 | 6.0 | 1.31 |
| Total | 63 | | | |

In addition to the chi-square analysis, a Friedman test was used to analyze how the respondents' answers ranked with regard to agreement or disagreement with the nine statements. Table 41 shows the means, mean ranks, and standard deviations. The Likert scale items are sorted in mean rank order. They were all found to be statistically significant and the chi-square associated with this Friedman test was $\chi^2$ (8, *N*=62)=92.472, *p*<.001). The mean ranks of

Teaming has a positive influence on the culture of learning within the school (5.86) and Teachers

would benefit from receiving professional development on teaming (5.49) had the strongest

agreement while the strongest disagreement was regarding Teachers are prepared with the

collaboration and communication skills needed to be an effective team (3.23) and Teams have

the ability to function in a leadership capacity (4.35).

Table 41

*Friedman Test on Instructional Scheduling Beliefs (N=62)*

|  | *N* | Mean | Standard Deviation | Mean Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teaming has a positive influence on the culture of learning within the school | 62 | 3.71 | .524 | 5.86 |
| Teaming has a positive influence on student learning | 62 | 3.68 | .471 | 5.74 |
| Teachers would benefit from receiving professional development on teaming | 62 | 3.65 | .546 | 5.49 |
| Teaming has a positive influence on the way classroom instruction is carried out and taught | 62 | 3.61 | .523 | 5.48 |
| Teaming has a positive influence on student behavior | 62 | 3.58 | .529 | 5.32 |
| Teaming provides students with a greater sense of identity and belonging | 62 | 3.50 | .671 | 5.02 |
| Team facilitators/leaders have the ability to function in a leadership capacity | 62 | 3.39 | .583 | 4.50 |
| Teams have the ability to function in a leadership capacity | 62 | 3.37 | .607 | 4.35 |
| Teachers are prepared with the collaboration and communication skills needed to be an effective team | 62 | 3.06 | .650 | 3.23 |

Further analysis was conducted to determine if there were any statistically significant

differences when comparing survey demographic items to the principals' teaming beliefs.  The

four demographic items analyzed were grade configuration, student population, school location,

and years of principal experience at current school.  The analysis was conducted using a Kruskal-

Wallis test, which indicated a statistically significant difference by the category of school

location at the .05 level of significance.  The mean rank of, Teaming has a positive influence on

student learning for rural (23.17) and suburban (30.86) were lower than the mean rank for urban

(39.00).  Table 42 indicates how the principals' teaming beliefs were ranked by school location.

Table 42

*Kruskal-Wallis Test on Teaming Beliefs Ranked by School Location*

|  | School Location | N | Mean Rank | Asymptotic Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teaming has a positive influence on the way classroom instruction is carried out and taught. | Urban | 4 | 34.38 | .716 |
|  | Rural | 19 | 28.00 |  |
|  | Suburban | 35 | 29.76 |  |
|  | Total | 58 |  |  |
| Teaming has a positive influence on the culture of learning within the school. | Urban | 4 | 31.00 | .117 |
|  | Rural | 19 | 24.29 |  |
|  | Suburban | 35 | 32.16 |  |
|  | Total | 58 |  |  |
| Teaming has a positive influence on student learning. | Urban | 4 | 39.00 | .049 |
|  | Rural | 18 | 23.17 |  |
|  | Suburban | 35 | 30.86 |  |
|  | Total | 57 |  |  |
| Teaming has a positive influence on student behavior. | Urban | 4 | 42.50 | .060 |
|  | Rural | 19 | 24.50 |  |
|  | Suburban | 35 | 30.73 |  |
|  | Total | 58 |  |  |
| Teaming provides students with a greater sense of identity and belonging. | Urban | 4 | 35.50 | .326 |
|  | Rural | 19 | 25.63 |  |
|  | Suburban | 35 | 30.91 |  |
|  | Total | 58 |  |  |
| Teachers are prepared with the collaboration and communication skills needed to be an effective leader. | Urban | 4 | 28.50 | .570 |
|  | Rural | 18 | 26.08 |  |
|  | Suburban | 35 | 30.56 |  |
|  | Total | 57 |  |  |
| Teachers would benefit from receiving professional development on teaming. | Urban | 4 | 25.50 | .242 |
|  | Rural | 19 | 25.71 |  |
|  | Suburban | 35 | 32.01 |  |
|  | Total | 58 |  |  |
| Teams have the ability to function in a leadership capacity. | Urban | 4 | 33.50 | .838 |
|  | Rural | 19 | 28.61 |  |
|  | Suburban | 35 | 29.53 |  |
|  | Total | 58 |  |  |
| Team facilitators/leaders have the ability to function in a leadership capacity. | Urban | 4 | 40.63 | .289 |
|  | Rural | 19 | 29.18 |  |
|  | Suburban | 35 | 28.40 |  |
|  | Total | 58 |  |  |

The data indicated that the sample of principals predominantly utilized interdisciplinary and/or single-graded teaming across all grades with students randomly assigned and mostly scheduled on team. In addition, the teams were comprised of mostly four academic teachers, and approximately half of the teams had a designated team facilitator or leader. With regard to teaming history, the data showed that the principals who made changes to their existing teaming structure were not looking to make any additional changes or modifications. This is in part due to the principal being content with the current teaming structure or reductions to staffing and budget. Lastly, regarding teaming beliefs, the majority of principals indicated that teaming can have a positive influence on the culture of learning and student learning, and that teachers would benefit from receiving professional development on teaming.

## Research Question 3

Research question 3: To what extent, if any, is common planning time present or absent in New York State middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity?

The third part of the survey collected data on the presence or absence of any common planning that occurred within New York State middle schools that were categorized as having an average need/resource capacity. Similar to both the instructional scheduling and teaming sections of the survey, the common planning section of the survey was divided into two parts. The first part focused on common planning information and the second part asked about common planning beliefs. This section of Chapter IV is divided into the following three groups to analyze the common planning data: types of common planning currently utilized, common planning history, and common planning beliefs.

Before examining the types of common planning, data regarding the overall utilization of common planning is presented. Table 43 shows that approximately 90% of the principals who

responded reported that their middle schools utilized common planning, $\chi^2$ (1, *N*=63)=35.063, *p*<.001).  Table 44 shows that approximately 90% of the principals who responded to the survey reported that their middle schools utilized common planning in all grades, $\chi^2$ (1, *N*=54)=32.667, *p*<.001).  Table 45 shows that less than half of the principals were provided with agendas for common planning from teachers and staff, $\chi^2$ (1, *N*=54)=.667, *p*<.414).

Table 43

*Chi-Square Analysis on Common Planning in Middle Schools (N=63)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 87.3% | 55 | 55 | 31.5 | 23.5 | 4.19 |
| No | 12.7% | 8 | 8 | 31.5 | -23.5 | -4.19 |

Table 44

*Chi-Square Analysis on Common Planning in All Grade Levels (N=54)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 88.9% | 48 | 48 | 27.0 | 21.0 | 4.04 |
| No | 11.1% | 6 | 6 | 27.0 | -21.0 | -4.04 |

Table 45

*Chi-Square Analysis on Principal Provided with Agenda for Common Planning*

|  | Percentage | Frequency | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 44.4% | 24 | 24 | 27.0 | -3.0 | -0.58 |
| No | 55.6% | 30 | 30 | 27.0 | 3.0 | 0.58 |

**Types of Common Planning**

For each type of common planning a series of four questions were asked of principals.  Regarding team common planning, Table 46 shows that the principals reported that it occurs in over 96% of their schools, $\chi^2$ (1, *N*=54)=46.296, *p*<.001).  Table 47 shows that, for the majority of the schools, common planning occurred on a daily basis, $\chi^2$ (3, *N*=52)=37.392, *p*<.001), while Table 48 shows that it occurred for, on average, 45 minutes.  Table 49 shows that the two

predominant uses of team common planning were coordinating instruction and discussing students. In addition, there were five principals who selected the *Other* option, and their responses focused on planning and parent meetings for additional uses of team common planning.

Table 46

*Chi-Square Analysis on Team Common Planning (N=54)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 96.3% | 52 | 52 | 27.0 | 25.0 | 4.81 |
| No | 3.7% | 2 | 2 | 27.0 | -25.0 | -4.81 |

Table 47

*Chi-Square Analysis on Frequency of Team Common Planning (N=51)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Daily | 60.8% | 31 | 31 | 12.8 | 18.3 | 5.08 |
| Every other day | 21.6% | 11 | 11 | 12.8 | -1.8 | -0.50 |
| Once a week | 11.8% | 6 | 6 | 12.8 | -6.8 | -1.90 |
| Once a month | 0.0% | 0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.00 |
| Other (please specify) | 5.9% | 3 | 3 | 12.8 | -9.8 | -2.74 |

Table 48

*Descriptive Statistics for Length of Team Common Planning (N=52)*

|  | *N* | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Length of Team Common Planning Time | 52 | 39 | 80 | 45.73 | 10.677 |

Table 49

*Percentages and Frequencies for Usage of Team Common Planning (N=52)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Teacher preparation | 65.4% | 34 |
| Coordinating instruction | 92.3% | 48 |
| Creating assessments | 57.7% | 30 |
| Revising schedules | 23.1% | 12 |
| Discussing students | 88.5% | 46 |
| Conducting conferences | 84.6% | 44 |
| Planning special events/trips | 61.5% | 32 |
| IEP/504 meetings | 53.8% | 28 |
| Other (please specify) | 9.6% | 5 |

The next type of common planning for which data were collected was grade level common planning. Table 50 shows that the principals reported that it occurred in approximately 75% of their schools, $\chi^2$ (1, $N$=55)=13.255, $p$<.001). Table 51 shows that the two most popular formats were *Daily* or *Other*, $\chi^2$ (4, $N$=40)=9.000, $p$<.061), while Table 52 shows that it occurred for an average of 47 minutes. Table 53 shows that the three predominant uses of grade level common planning were coordinating instruction, creating assessments, and teacher preparation. In addition, there were six principals who selected the *Other* option and their responses ranged from professional development activities to meetings with administration.

Table 50

*Chi-Square Analysis on Grade Level Common Planning (N=55)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency | Observed $N$ | Expected $N$ | Residual | Standardized Residual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 74.5% | 41 | 41 | 27.5 | 13.5 | 2.58 |
| No | 25.5% | 14 | 14 | 27.5 | -13.5 | -2.58 |

Table 51

*Chi-Square Analysis on Frequency of Grade Level Common Planning (N=40)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency | Observed $N$ | Expected $N$ | Residual | Standardized Residual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Daily | 35.0% | 14 | 14 | 8.0 | 6.0 | 2.12 |
| Every other day | 12.5% | 5 | 5 | 8.0 | -3.0 | -1.06 |
| Once a week | 12.5% | 5 | 5 | 8.0 | -3.0 | -1.06 |
| Once a month | 12.5% | 5 | 5 | 8.0 | -3.0 | -1.06 |
| Other (please specify) | 27.5% | 11 | 11 | 8.0 | 3.0 | 1.06 |

Table 52

*Descriptive Statistics for Length of Grade Level Common Planning (N=38)*

|  | $N$ | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Length of Grade Level Common Planning Time | 38 | 30 | 90 | 47.05 | 14.161 |

Table 53

*Percentages and Frequencies for Usage of Grade Level Common Planning (N=40)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Teacher preparation | 55.0% | 22 |
| Coordinating instruction | 80.0% | 32 |
| Creating assessments | 75.0% | 30 |
| Revising schedules | 17.5% | 7 |
| Discussing students | 52.5% | 21 |
| Conducting conferences | 35.0% | 14 |
| Planning special events/trips | 52.5% | 21 |
| IEP/504 meetings | 20.0% | 8 |
| Other (please specify) | 15.0% | 6 |

The final type of common planning for which data were collected was departmental common planning. Table 54 show that the principals reported that it occurred in approximately 74% of their schools, $\chi^2$ (1, $N=54$)=12.519, $p<.001$). Table 55 shows that the most popular format was monthly, $\chi^2$ (4, $N=40$)=33.000, $p<.001$), while Table 56 shows that it occurred for an average of 49 minutes. Table 57 shows that the three predominant uses of grade level common planning were coordinating instruction, creating assessments, and teacher preparation. In addition, there were six principals who selected the *Other* option and their responses ranged from analyzing and discussing data to writing and revising unit plans.

Table 54

*Chi-Square Analysis on Departmental Common Planning (N=54)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency | Observed $N$ | Expected $N$ | Residual | Standardized Residual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 74.1% | 40 | 40 | 27.0 | 13.0 | 2.50 |
| No | 25.9% | 14 | 14 | 27.0 | -13.0 | -2.50 |

Table 55

*Chi-Square Analysis on Frequency of Departmental Common Planning (N=40)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency | Observed $N$ | Expected $N$ | Residual | Standardized Residual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Daily | 10.0% | 4 | 4 | 8.0 | -4.0 | -1.41 |
| Every other day | 10.0% | 4 | 4 | 8.0 | -4.0 | -1.41 |
| Once a week | 20.0% | 8 | 8 | 8.0 | .0 | 0.00 |
| Once a month | 55.0% | 22 | 22 | 8.0 | 14.0 | 4.95 |
| Other (please specify) | 5.0% | 2 | 2 | 8.0 | -6.0 | -2.12 |

Table 56

*Descriptive Statistics for Length of Departmental Common Planning (N=39)*

|  | $N$ | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Length of Departmental Common Planning Time | 39 | 30 | 90 | 49.36 | 14.251 |

Table 57

*Percentages and Frequencies for Usage of Departmental Common Planning (N=40)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Teacher preparation | 57.5% | 23 |
| Coordinating instruction | 92.5% | 37 |
| Creating assessments | 92.5% | 37 |
| Revising schedules | 7.5% | 3 |
| Discussing students | 25.0% | 10 |
| Conducting conferences | 10.0% | 4 |
| Planning special events/trips | 22.5% | 9 |
| IEP/504 meetings | 10.0% | 4 |
| Other (please specify) | 15.0% | 6 |

**Common Planning History**

Within the common planning section of the survey there were three questions that addressed the history of common planning within the respondents' schools. Questions 42 and 43 on the survey asked respondents if the current common planning structure had been changed or altered and if they were looking or not looking to modify it. Tables 58 and 59 show that approximately half of the respondents had made changes to the teaming structure, but the majority of respondents were not looking to make any additional changes. The last question

regarding the history of the principals' common planning structure asked why they were either looking or not looking to modify their current structure for teaming. The majority of the responses for modifying their current common planning structure focused on more time for data analysis and implementing the Common Core State Standards, while the reasons for not modifying focused on contractual issues with the teachers union and the belief that the existing departmental common planning was meeting the needs of students.

Table 58

*Percentages and Frequencies for Changes in Common Planning Structure (N=54)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 48.1% | 26 |
| No | 51.9% | 28 |

Table 59

*Percentages and Frequencies for Interest in Modifying Common Planning Structure (N=53)*

|  | Percentage | Frequency |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 35.8% | 19 |
| No | 64.2% | 34 |

**Common Planning Beliefs**

To collect data regarding common planning beliefs, the respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with four statements on a Likert-based scale. A chi-square analysis, along with a Friedman test, was utilized to analyze these data. Utilizing a chi-square analysis, all of the following Likert scale items were statistically significant: Common planning time has a positive influence on the way instruction is carried out and taught, $\chi^2$ (21, $N=60$)=11.267, $p<.001$), Common planning time has a positive influence on the culture of learning within the school, $\chi^2$ (1, $N=60$)=8.067, $p<.005$), Common planning time has a positive influence on student learning, $\chi^2$ (2, $N=60$)=42.700, $p<.001$), and Teachers would benefit from

receiving professional development on how to effectively utilize common planning time, $\chi^2$ (2, N=60)=57.700, p<.001).  Table 60 shows the chi-square frequencies for common planning beliefs.

Table 60

*Chi-Square Analysis on Common Planning Beliefs (4-Strongly Agree; 3-Somewhat Agree; 2-Somewhat Disagree; 1-Strongly Disagree)*

| Common planning time has a positive influence on the way instruction is carried out and taught | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 3 | 17 | 30.0 | -13.0 | -2.37 |
| 4 | 43 | 30.0 | 13.0 | 2.37 |
| Total | 60 | | | |

| Common planning time has a positive influence on the culture of learning within the school | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 3 | 19 | 30.0 | -11.0 | -2.01 |
| 4 | 41 | 30.0 | 11.0 | 2.01 |
| Total | 60 | | | |

| Common planning time has a positive influence on student learning | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 1 | 1 | 20.0 | -19.0 | -4.25 |
| 3 | 17 | 20.0 | -3.0 | -0.67 |
| 4 | 42 | 20.0 | 22.0 | 4.92 |
| Total | 60 | | | |

| Teachers would benefit from receiving professional development on how to effectively utilize common planning time | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 2 | 1 | 20.0 | -19.0 | -4.25 |
| 3 | 12 | 20.0 | -8.0 | -1.79 |
| 4 | 47 | 20.0 | 27.0 | 6.04 |
| Total | 60 | | | |

In addition to the chi-square analysis, a Friedman test was used to analyze how the respondents' answers ranked with regard to their agreement or disagreement with the four statements.  Table 61 shows the means, mean ranks, and standard deviations.  The Likert scale items were sorted in mean rank order.  They were not found to be statistically significant, and the

chi-square associated with the Friedman test was $\chi^2$ (3, $N=60$)=2.471, $p<.481$).  The mean rank

of Teachers would benefit from receiving professional development on how to effectively utilize

common planning time (2.60) had the strongest agreement while the strongest disagreement was

regarding Common planning time has a positive influence on the culture of learning within the

school (2.43).

Table 61

*Friedman Test on Common Planning Beliefs (N=60)*

| | *N* | Mean | Standard Deviation | Mean Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teachers would benefit from receiving professional development on how to effectively utilize common planning time | 60 | 3.77 | .465 | 2.60 |
| Common planning time has a positive influence on the way instruction is carried out and taught | 60 | 3.72 | .454 | 2.50 |
| Common planning time has a positive influence on student learning | 60 | 3.67 | .572 | 2.47 |
| Common planning time has a positive influence on the culture of learning within the school | 60 | 3.68 | .469 | 2.43 |

Further analysis was conducted to determine if there were any statistically significant

differences when comparing survey demographic items to the principals' common planning

beliefs.  The four demographic items analyzed were grade configuration, student population,

school location, and years of principal experience at current school.  The analysis was conducted

using a Kruskal-Wallis test, and the results indicated a statistically significant difference by the

category of school location at the .05 level of significance.  The mean rank of Common planning

time has a positive influence on the way instruction is carried out and taught, for rural (22.74)

and suburban (32.20) were lower than the mean rank for urban (38.00).  Table 62 indicates how

the principals' common planning beliefs were ranked by school location.

Table 62

*Kruskal-Wallis Test on Common Planning Beliefs Ranked by School Location*

| | School Location | *N* | Mean Rank | Asymptotic Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Common planning time has a positive influence on the way instruction is carried out and taught. | Urban | 4 | 38.00 | .019 |
| | Rural | 19 | 22.74 | |
| | Suburban | 35 | 32.20 | |
| | Total | 58 | | |
| Common planning time has a positive influence on the culture of learning within the school. | Urban | 4 | 39.00 | .135 |
| | Rural | 19 | 25.26 | |
| | Suburban | 35 | 30.71 | |
| | Total | 58 | | |
| Common planning time has a positive influence on student learning. | Urban | 4 | 38.50 | .121 |
| | Rural | 19 | 25.00 | |
| | Suburban | 35 | 30.91 | |
| | Total | 58 | | |
| Teachers would benefit from receiving professional development on how to effectively utilize common planning time. | Urban | 4 | 28.88 | .151 |
| | Rural | 19 | 25.16 | |
| | Suburban | 35 | 31.93 | |
| | Total | 58 | | |

In addition to indicating their agreement or disagreement with common planning statements, the respondents were asked to rank the three types of common planning in order of importance. A Friedman test was used to analyze how the respondents ranked the three types of common planning. Table 63 shows the means, mean ranks, and standard deviations. The Likert scale items are sorted in mean rank order. All three types of common planning were found to be statistically significant, $\chi^2$ (2, *N*=60)=22.800, *p*<.001). The most popular type of common planning was team (1.50) followed by grade level (2.20) and departmental (2.30).

Table 63

*Friedman Test on Common Planning Types (N=60)*

| | *N* | Mean | Standard Deviation | Mean Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Team Common Planning | 60 | 1.50 | .748 | 1.50 |
| Grade Level Common Planning | 60 | 2.20 | .684 | 2.20 |
| Departmental Common Planning | 60 | 2.30 | .788 | 2.30 |

Further analysis was conducted to determine if there were any statistically significant differences when comparing survey demographic items to the principals ranking of types of common planning. The four demographic items analyzed were grade configuration, student population, school location, and years of principal experience at current school. The analysis was conducted using a Kruskal-Wallis test, and the results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences at the .05 level of confidence. The results of this analysis are further discussed in Chapter V.

The data indicate that the sample of principals predominantly utilized team, grade level and departmental common planning for coordinating instruction, creating assessments and teacher preparation. Although the majority of principals who responded to the survey utilized these three forms of common planning, the duration and frequency varied depending on the type of common planning. With regard to common planning history, the data indicate that approximately half of the sample of principals made changes to the existing common planning structure and the majority of principals were not looking to make any additional changes or modifications. Not looking at making changes to the structure of common planning was, in part, due to the principal being content with common planning structure or contractual concerns. Lastly, regarding common planning beliefs, the majority of principals indicated that they agreed with the statements that common planning had a positive influence on the way instruction is carried out and taught, the culture of learning within the school, and with student learning.

### Research Question 4

Research question 4: To what extent, if any, are all three school supports (instructional schedules, teaming, and common planning time) found to exist simultaneously in New York State middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity?

The fourth part of the survey gathered data regarding the simultaneous existence of all three school supports by New York State middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity. To examine this fourth research question, the data collected regarding the first three research questions were analyzed. This section of Chapter IV is divided into four sections: instructional scheduling and teaming, instructional scheduling and common planning, teaming and common planning, and beliefs regarding all three middle school supports.

**Instructional Scheduling and Teaming**

With regard to comparing instructional scheduling and teaming, Table 64 shows that, regardless of the type of instructional schedule in existence, all but three of the respondents indicated that teaming was utilized. Furthermore, Table 65 shows that the traditional departmentalized schedule with interdisciplinary and/or single grade level teaming was the most common combination.

Table 64

*Percentages and Frequencies for Instructional Schedule and Teaming (N=63)*

|  |  | Does your school use teaming? | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | No | Yes |
| How would you best describe the type of instructional schedule in existence in your school? | Alternate Day Block Schedule | 0 (0%) | 3 (4.8%) |
|  | Flexible Interdisciplinary Block Schedule | 0 (0%) | 1 (1.5%) |
|  | Modular Schedule | 0 (0%) | 1 (1.5%) |
|  | Other | 0 (0%) | 7 (11.1%) |
|  | Rotating Dropped Schedule | 0 (0%) | 5 (7.9%) |
|  | Rotating Schedule | 0 (0%) | 2 (3.2%) |
|  | Traditional Departmentalized Schedule | 3 (4.8%) | 41 (65.1%) |

Table 65

*Percentages and Frequencies for Instructional Schedule and Type of Teaming (N=63)*

|  |  | Interdisciplinary | Single Grade Level | Multiple Grade Levels |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How would you best describe the type of instructional schedule in existence in your school? | Alternate Day Block Schedule | 2 (5.7%) | 2 (4.5%) | 0 (0%) |
|  | Flexible Interdisciplinary Block Schedule | 1 (2.8%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
|  | Modular Schedule | 0 (0%) | 1 (2.3%) | 0 (0%) |
|  | Other | 3 (8.6%) | 4 (9.1%) | 3 (37.5%) |
|  | Rotating Dropped Schedule | 3 (8.6%) | 2 (4.5%) | 3 (37.5%) |
|  | Rotating Schedule | 2 (5.7%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
|  | Traditional Departmentalized Schedule | 24 (68.6%) | 35 (79.5%) | 2 (25.0%) |

**Instructional Scheduling and Common Planning**

With regard to comparing instructional scheduling and common planning, Table 66 shows that regardless of the type of instructional schedule in existence, all but eight of the respondents indicated that common planning was utilized.  Furthermore, Table 67 shows that the traditional departmentalized schedule with team common planning was the most common.  In addition, the majority of the principals reported having both grade level and departmental teaming within the traditional departmentalized schedule.

Table 66

*Percentages and Frequencies for Instructional Schedule and Common Planning (N=63)*

| | | Does your school have common planning time? | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | No | Yes |
| How would you best describe the type of instructional schedule in existence in your school? | Alternate Day Block Schedule | 0 (0%) | 3 (4.8%) |
| | Flexible Interdisciplinary Block Schedule | 0 (0%) | 1 (1.5%) |
| | Modular Schedule | 0 (0%) | 1 (1.5%) |
| | Other | 1 (1.5%) | 6 (9.5%) |
| | Rotating Dropped Schedule | 0 (0%) | 6 (9.5%) |
| | Rotating Schedule | 0 (0%) | 2 (3.2%) |
| | Traditional Departmentalized Schedule | 7 (11.1%) | 36 (57.1%) |

Table 67

*Percentages and Frequencies for Instructional Schedule and Type of Common Planning*

| | | Team ($N$=51) | Grade Level ($N$=40) | Departmental ($N$=39) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How would you best describe the type of instructional schedule in existence in your school? | Alternate Day Block Schedule | 3 (5.9%) | 1 (2.5%) | 1 (2.3%) |
| | Flexible Interdisciplinary Block Schedule | 1 (2.0%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (2.3%) |
| | Modular Schedule | 1 (2.0%) | 1 (2.5%) | 0 (0%) |
| | Other | 6 (11.8%) | 5 (12.5%) | 5 (12.8%) |
| | Rotating Dropped Schedule | 4 (7.8%) | 5 (12.5%) | 4 (10.3%) |
| | Rotating Schedule | 2 (4.0%) | 2 (5.0%) | 2 (5.1%) |
| | Traditional Departmentalized Schedule | 34 (66.7%) | 26 (65%) | 26 (66.7%) |

**Teaming and Common Planning**

With regard to comparing teaming and common planning, Table 68 shows that the respondents' schools utilized both teaming and common planning. Furthermore, Table 69 shows that team common planning was the most common with interdisciplinary and/or single grade level teaming. In addition, grade level and departmental common planning was also utilized the majority of time with interdisciplinary and/or single grade level teaming.

Table 68

*Percentages and Frequencies for Teaming and Common Planning*

| | | Does your school have common planning time? | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | No | Yes |
| Does your school use teaming? | No | 1 (1.5%) | 2 (3.2%) |
| | Yes | 7 (11.1%) | 53 (84.1%) |

Table 69

*Percentages and Frequencies for Type of Teaming and Type of Common Planning*

| | Team Common Planning | Grade Level Common Planning | Departmental Common Planning |
|---|---|---|---|
| Interdisciplinary Teaming | 31 (40.3%) | 25 (42.4%) | 25 (43.9%) |
| Single Grade Level Teaming | 39 (50.6%) | 28 (47.5%) | 27 (47.4%) |
| Multiple Grade Level Teaming | 7 (9.1%) | 6 (10.2%) | 5 (8.8%) |

**Middle School Supports Beliefs**

To collect data regarding beliefs about all three middle school supports, the respondents were asked to indicate on a Likert scale their agreement or disagreement with three statements. A chi-square analysis and a Friedman test were utilized to analyze these data. Utilizing a chi-square analysis, all of the following Likert scale items were statistically significant: The instructional schedule should support the organization of teams, $\chi^2$ (2, $N$=60)=43.900, $p$<.001), The instructional schedule should support the structure for common planning,

$\chi^2$ (1, $N$=60)=17.067, $p$<.001), and Common planning is an important component of teaming, $\chi^2$ (2, $N$=60)=65.100, $p$<.001). Table 70 shows the chi-square frequencies for middle school support beliefs.

Table 70

*Chi-Square Analysis Middle School Support Beliefs (4-Strongly Agree; 3-Somewhat Agree; 2-Somewhat Disagree; 1-Strongly Disagree*

| The instructional schedule should support the organization of teams | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 2 | 2 | 20.0 | -18.0 | -4.03 |
| 3 | 15 | 20.0 | -5.0 | -1.12 |
| 4 | 43 | 20.0 | 23.0 | 5.15 |
| Total | 60 | | | |

| The instructional schedule should support the structure for common planning | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 3 | 14 | 30.0 | -16.0 | -2.92 |
| 4 | 46 | 30.0 | 16.0 | 2.92 |
| Total | 60 | | | |

| Common planning is an important component of teaming | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Observed *N* | Expected *N* | Residual | Standardized Residual |
| 2 | 1 | 20.0 | -19.0 | -4.25 |
| 3 | 10 | 20.0 | -10.0 | -2.24 |
| 4 | 49 | 20.0 | 29.0 | 6.49 |
| Total | 60 | | | |

In addition to the chi-square analysis, a Friedman test was used to analyze how the respondents' answers ranked with regard to their agreement or disagreement with the three statements. Table 71 shows the means, mean ranks, and standard deviations. The Likert scale items are sorted in mean rank order. They were not found to be statistically significant and the chi-square associated with this Friedman test was $\chi^2$ (2, *N*=60)=4.478, *p*<.107). The mean rank of Common planning is an important component of teaming (2.08) had the strongest agreement followed by The instructional scheduling should support the structure for common planning (2.02) and The instructional schedule should support the organization of teams (1.91).

Table 71

*Friedman Test on Middle School Support Beliefs (N=60)*

|  | *N* | Mean | Standard Deviation | Mean Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The instructional schedule should support the organization of teams | 60 | 3.68 | .537 | 1.91 |
| The instructional schedule should support the structure for common planning | 60 | 3.77 | .427 | 2.02 |
| Common planning is an important component of teaming | 60 | 3.80 | .443 | 2.08 |

Further analysis was completed to determine if there were any statistically significant differences when comparing survey demographic items to the principals' school support beliefs. The four demographic items analyzed were grade configuration, student population, school location, and years of principal experience at current school. The analysis was conducted using a Kruskal-Wallis test, and the results indicated a statistically significant difference by the category of, Years of principal experience at current school, at the .05 level of significance. The mean rank of, The instructional schedule should support the structure for common planning, for 0 to 1 year of principal experience at current school (32.39) and 2 to 4 years of principal experience at current school (32.70) were higher than the mean rank for 5 to 10 years (20.76) and eleven or more years (32.00) of principal experience at current school. Table 72 shows how the principals' school support beliefs were ranked by years of principal experience at current school.

Table 72

*Kruskal-Wallis Test on Teaming Beliefs Ranked by Years of Principal Experience at Current School*

| | Years of Principal Experience at Current School | N | Mean Rank | Asymptotic Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The instructional schedule should support the organization of teams | 0-1 Year | 9 | 33.00 | .240 |
| | 2-4 Years | 20 | 28.88 | |
| | 5-10 Years | 19 | 24.24 | |
| | 11 or More Years | 8 | 32.63 | |
| | Total | 56 | | |
| The instructional schedule should support the structure of teaming | 0-1 Year | 9 | 32.39 | .009 |
| | 2-4 Years | 20 | 32.70 | |
| | 5-10 Years | 19 | 20.76 | |
| | 11 or More Years | 8 | 32.00 | |
| | Total | 56 | | |
| Common planning is an important component of teaming | 0-1 Year | 9 | 27.89 | .465 |
| | 2-4 Years | 20 | 28.50 | |
| | 5-10 Years | 19 | 26.47 | |
| | 11 or More Years | 8 | 34.00 | |
| | Total | 56 | | |

In addition to indicating their agreement or disagreement with common planning statements, the respondents were asked to rank the three school supports in order of importance. A Friedman test was used to analyze how the respondents' answers ranked the three types of middle school supports. Table 73 shows the means, mean ranks, and standard deviations. The Likert scale items are sorted in the order listed on the survey. All three types of common planning were not found to be statistically significant, $\chi^2$ (2, $N$=57)=2.000, $p$<.368). The most popular school support was common planning (2.14) followed by teaming (1.98) and instructional scheduling (1.88).

Table 73

*Friedman Test on Middle School Supports (N=57)*

|                          | *N* | Mean | Standard Deviation | Mean Rank |
|--------------------------|-----|------|--------------------|-----------|
| Instructional Scheduling | 57  | 1.88 | .867               | 1.88      |
| Teaming                  | 57  | 1.98 | .813               | 1.98      |
| Common Planning          | 57  | 2.14 | .766               | 2.14      |

Further analysis was conducted to determine if there were any statistically significant differences when comparing survey demographic items to the principals' ranking of school supports. The four demographic items analyzed were grade configuration, student population, school location, and years of principal experience at current school. The analysis was conducted using a Kruskal-Wallis test, and the results indicated that there were no statistical significant differences at the .05 level of confidence. The results of this analysis are further discussed in Chapter V.

**Summary**

This chapter presented the findings of the four research questions in this study. The first research question asked about the current instructional scheduling practices of NYS middle schools categorized with an average need/resource capacity. The second research question asked to what extent, if any, teaming was present or absent in New York State middle schools categorized with an average need/resource capacity. The third research question asked about the extent, if any, that common planning was present or absent in New York State middle schools categorized with an average need/resource capacity. The final research question asked the extent to which, if any, all three school supports existed simultaneously in New York State middle schools categorized with an average need/resource capacity.

Chapter IV provided an analysis of the data that was obtained through the use of a self-administered, online survey on instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning. The

results were compiled from a group of New York State middle school principals whose districts were categorized with an average need/resource capacity. The respondents represented both male and female principals between the ages of 32 and 56, with an average of 5 years principal experience. Descriptive and nonparametric statistics were utilized to analyze the data.

It was the intent of this study to be statistically reliable through obtaining a minimum response rate of 35% when examining the absence or presence of these three middle school supports. Although I made a concerted effort (through three different electronic letters of solicitation), a 28% response rate was obtained. I, along with my committee members, believed that this study still provides value to this research field by opening the door to an examination of how middle school principals in New York State utilize these three school supports. Plausible conclusions could be drawn from the analysis of the survey data through the examination of similarities, differences, and contradictions regarding instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning. These are discussed in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to provide a descriptive profile of three school supports (instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning) that could be used to determine whether they were absent or present in New York State middle schools. Collecting data on these three school supports provides administrators and policymakers with a better understanding regarding the use and function of these specific supports among New York State middle schools. In turn, this collection of data was not available previously, so it can potentially point to policies, practices and/or programs that could be needed or modified for increased support to improve student learning in middle schools within an average need/resource capacity district. This chapter summarizes the purpose, methodology and findings of the study. In addition, conclusions along with implications and recommendations for future research are discussed.

**Statement of the Problem**

Data regarding the type of instructional schedule utilized, along with the use of teaming and common planning at the middle school level, has not been collected nor reported on the New York State School Report Card, and therefore it is not known whether and how middle schools are implementing these three school supports. I acknowledge the possibilities that some schools might use only one or two of these school supports while others might use multiple supports in combination. Research focusing on the middle school level has found these three school supports together or separately to have a positive impact on student learning. The present descriptive study examined the current instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning practices of New York State middle schools.

The number of middle schools nationally has continued to increase from less than 5,000 in 1971 to more than 13,000 in 2008 (McEwin & Greene, 2011). It is important to determine

whether these three school supports are present or absent in New York State middle schools in order to provide direction for the continued development of middle school programs and to assist administrators and policymakers in making informed decisions that will positively impact the student learning process.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to provide a descriptive profile of three school supports (instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning) and to determine if they were either absent or present in New York State middle schools. Research has indicated that these three school supports can have a positive impact of student learning. Literature and research that has been conducted, focusing on middle school, has indicated the need for additional research to be conducted (Mertens & Flowers, 2006; National Middle School Association, 2010a; National Middle School Association, 2010b). In particular, Mertens and Flowers (2006) stated that a critical issue facing middle level education is the paucity of good, reliable research studies that have been able to demonstrate the link between components of the middle school philosophy and learning outcomes. This study assists in advancing the research in this field by identifying the presence or absence of one or more of these three school supports and by identifying, when present, any unique features.

In addition, this study was designed to support the research recommendations of the National Middle School Association (2010a). The NMSA identified seven recommendations to expand the middle grades education research base. Three of these seven recommendations were followed in this study. The third recommendation was that middle level education needed additional studies that examined multiple components of the middle school concept and how these components interacted. This study examined three school supports of the middle school concept. The fourth recommendation focused on the need for studies to be replicated. Although

this descriptive study is not an exact replication of a previous study, it does expand upon previous research that examined practices of scheduling and teaming from a statewide perspective. Lastly, the sixth recommendation was the need to establish a national database to address questions related to the middle school concept. The population of middle schools surveyed for this study provided a body of data that can illuminate patterns and trends that further research could confirm.

The population of New York State middle schools sampled included schools that had either a 5-8, 6-8, or 7-8 grade configuration. These three grade configurations were selected because they are the three most common among middle schools in the United States (McEwin & Greene, 2011). The middle schools selected for this study were limited to New York State school districts that were labeled as an average need/resource capacity (N/RC) district by the New York State Education Department for the 2011-2012 school year. This need/resource capacity index is a measure of a district's ability to meet the needs of its student with local resources. More specifically, it is the ratio of the estimated poverty percentage to the combined wealth ratio.

Districts are assigned to one of the following seven categories: High N/RC - New York City, High N/RC - Large City Districts, High N/RC - Urban-Suburban Districts, High N/RC - Rural Districts, Average N/RC Districts, Low N/RC Districts, and Charter Schools (New York State Education Department, 2013). The average need/resource capacity category is defined by the state education department as all school districts between the 20th (0.770) and 70th (1.1835) percentile on the index. The category of average need/resource capacity was selected because, with the exception of the high need/resource capacity - New York City, it contained the largest percentage of middle schools. In addition, this average need/resource capacity category includes

middle schools from approximately two thirds of the counties in the state, and this allowed for a statewide sampling to occur.

It was my intent that the data collected provide administrators and policymakers with an additional layer of information regarding the use of specific school supports among New York State middle schools. This data can serve as a reference to further understand the extent to which middle schools in New York State are implementing these school supports.

## Research Questions

This study was guided by the following four research questions:

1. What are the current instructional scheduling practices of NYS middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity?

2. To what extent, if any, is teaming present or absent in New York State middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity?

3. To what extent, if any, is common planning time present or absent in New York State middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity?

4. To what extent, if any, are all three school supports (instructional schedules, teaming, and common planning time) found to exist simultaneously in New York State middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity?

## Summary of the Procedures

I used a descriptive quantitative survey to identify the presence or absence of three school supports (instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning) in New York State middle schools whose school districts were categorized as having an average need/resource capacity. Data was collected from middle school principals using closed-ended questions, partially open-ended questions, or Likert rating scale questions and statements.

The population for this study included 232 middle school principals from school districts that were categorized as having an average need/resource capacity during the 2011-2012 school year.  For the purposes of this study, the middle schools that were included had grades 5 through 8, 6 through 8, and 7 through 8.  These three grade configurations were selected because they accounted for approximately 89% of all separately organized public middle schools in the country (McEwin & Greene, 2011).

After receiving approval from the Seton Hall University IRB to conduct the study, a letter of solicitation was sent electronically through my Seton Hall University email account to 232 potential participants.  This letter explained the study and asked for their participation by responding to an online survey.  In addition, this electronic communication explained my affiliation with Seton Hall University, the purpose of the research, the anticipated time required to complete the survey, a description of procedures for completing the survey, that participation was completely voluntary, and how anonymity would be preserved and data securely stored.  An overall 28% response rate was obtained.

The survey was administered through an online survey company called SurveyMonkey.com and this company stored the data as well.  The data were collected and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).  The analysis began by calculating descriptive statistics for the survey items.  Based on either the research questions or a specific survey item, additional analyses were conducted.  These additional nonparametric statistical analyses included: chi-square tests, Friedman tests, and Kruskal-Wallis tests.

## Demographic Data

The survey questions in this study collected demographic data regarding the principals and their schools.  The principal demographic data that was gathered included: gender, age, years of principal experience in current school, years of administrative experience, and education level.

School demographic data that was gathered included: enrollment, location, racial/ethnicity populations, free or reduced lunch percentages, attendance rates, suspension rates, and adequate yearly progress (AYP) status.

The demographic data revealed a sample of predominantly male respondents, in their mid-40's with masters degrees, who had been principals of their respective schools for an average of 5 years. The demographic data regarding the respondents' schools revealed a sample of predominantly suburban middle schools, with grades 6, 7, and 8 that had an average population of 700 students, with a majority of the students being White in terms of race/ethnicity. In addition, these middle schools had high attendance rates, low suspension rates, low free/reduced lunch percentages, and regularly maintained AYP in ELA and math.

### Summary of the Findings in Relationship to the Research Questions

This section of Chapter V provides a summary of the findings as it pertains to each of the four research questions. Each research question is examined in a separate section. An overview of the data collected is discussed first by discussing the current practices of the specific school support followed by a summary of the principals' beliefs regarding that support. Following the overview of the data collected, conclusions that were drawn from the examination of similarities, differences, and contradictions are discussed.

**Research Question 1**

The first research question asked, what are the current instructional scheduling practices of NYS middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity? Regarding instructional scheduling practices, the data indicated that the sample of principals predominantly utilized a traditional departmentalized instructional schedule that offered a contingency of encore/exploratory courses including: physical education, music, technology, art, health, and home and careers. In addition, the scheduling structure for remedial, special education, and ELL

students took the form of smaller student/teacher ratio classes, inclusion in mainstream classes, and pullout programs.

With regard to instructional scheduling history, the data indicated that the sample of principals predominately utilized an instructional schedule that was in existence for an average of 10 years.  The majority of principals indicated that they had either changed or were looking to modify the current instructional schedule.  When examining instructional scheduling models, the majority of respondents believed that the flexible interdisciplinary block schedule best fit the needs of their students, followed by the traditional departmentalized schedule and the alternating day schedule.  Last, regarding instructional scheduling beliefs, the majority of principals indicated that an instructional schedule could have a positive influence on student learning along with longer class periods.

Three conclusions were drawn regarding the first research question.  The first conclusion developed from the differences that emerged from the data regarding the type of instructional schedule in existence, as compared to the type of instructional scheduling model that principals believe would best fit the needs of the students.  Using a chi-square analysis [$\chi^2$ (6, $N=65)=164.277$, $p<.001$)], approximately 70% of the principals who responded utilized a traditional departmentalized instructional schedule.  While previous survey research by McEwin and Greene (2011) confirmed that the majority of middle schools utilize a traditional departmentalized instructional schedule, the results of my study showed that this type of instructional schedule was not the ideal type for the majority of the respondents.  Using a Friedman Test [$\chi^2$ (6, $N=65)=219.105$, $p<.001$], the data indicated that responding principals believe the flexible interdisciplinary block schedule best fit the need of their students.  The belief that instructional scheduling models other than traditional departmentalized could better meet the needs of students is consistent with the findings from other studies (Mattox et al., 2005 and Gill,

2012).  Additionally, in this study almost half of the responding principals (43.8%) were not interested in modifying or changing their current instructional scheduling model.  This apparent disconnect between the type of instructional schedule in practice, prior research findings, and principal beliefs is discussed later in this chapter during the presentation of recommendations for future research.

Upon further examination of the data concerning which scheduling model principals believed best met the needs of their students, a second conclusion was drawn regarding the difference in the principals' ranking of instructional scheduling models when compared to the grade configuration of their middle schools.  The analysis was conducted using a Kruskal-Wallis test and the results indicated a statistical significant difference by the category of Grade Configuration at the .05 level of significance.  The mean rank of rotating dropped schedule for grades 5-8 (38.04) and grades 6-8 (34.48) were higher than the mean rank for grades 7-8 (20.00). This higher ranking of the rotating dropped schedule by principals whose middle school was composed of solely seventh and eighth grade students is important because it indicates that principals' beliefs regarding instructional scheduling can be influenced by the grade configuration of their middle schools.  Furthermore, I was unable to locate any research that indicated a potential difference in principals' beliefs in instructional scheduling models based upon the grade configuration of their school.

The third conclusion drawn was in regard to the similarities in the beliefs of principals and the research regarding the influence an instructional schedule can have on student learning. Using a Friedman test [$\chi^2$ (6, $N$=65)=219.105, $p$<.001], the data indicated that responding principals believed that an instructional schedule could have a positive influence on student learning.  This indicates to me that although the sample size and demographic population was different than those in previous studies (McEwin & Greene, 2011), there appears to be a

consistent belief among middle school principals that an instructional schedule can have a positive influence on student learning. This is important because it not only supports conclusions drawn from previous research, but it provides administrators and policymakers with an additional layer of information regarding the instructional scheduling beliefs of middle school principals in New York State whose districts are categorized as having an average need/resource capacity. I performed additional analyses to further understand the principals' instructional scheduling beliefs, but these analyses yielded no statistically significant differences. This attempt to further analyze the data is discussed later in this chapter in the discussion of recommendations for future research.

**Research Question 2**

The second research question examined to what extent, if any, teaming is present or absent in New York State middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity. Regarding teaming practices, the data indicated that the sample of principals predominantly utilized interdisciplinary and/or single-graded teaming across all grades with students randomly assigned and mostly scheduled on team. In addition, the teams were comprised of mostly four academic teachers, and approximately half of the teams had a designated team facilitator or leader. With regard to teaming history, the data indicated that the sample of principals who made changes to the existing teaming structure were not looking to make any additional changes or modifications at this time. This is due in part to the principals being content with the current teaming structure or due to reductions in staffing and budget. Lastly, regarding teaming beliefs, the majority of principals indicated that teaming can have a positive influence on the culture of learning and student learning, as well as on teachers who benefit from receiving professional development regarding teaming.

Three conclusions were drawn relative to the second research question.  The first

conclusion drawn regards the similarities in the beliefs of principals and the research regarding

the positive influence teaming can have on both the culture of learning within the school and

student learning.  Using a Friedman test [$\chi^2$ (8, *N*=62)=92.472, *p*<.001], it was found that the

mean ranks of, Teaming has a positive influence on the culture of the learning within the school

and Teaming has a positive influence on student learning, had the strongest agreement among the

responding principals.  This indicates to me that although the sample size and demographic

population differed from those in previous studies (Boyer & Bishop, 2004; Kiefer & Ellerbrock,

2007; Wallace, 2007), there appears to be a consistent belief among middle school principals that

teaming can have a positive influence on the culture of learning within a school and on student

learning.  This is important because it not only supports conclusions drawn from previous

research but it also provides administrators and policymakers with an additional layer of

information regarding the teaming beliefs of middle school principals in New York State whose

districts are categorized as having an average need/resource capacity.

Upon further examination of the teaming beliefs of these middle school principals, a

second conclusion was in regard to the differences in the principals' teaming beliefs when

compared to the locations of their middle schools.  The analysis was conducted using a Kruskal-

Wallis test and the results indicated a statistically significant difference by the category of school

location at the .05 level of significance.  The mean rank of, Teaming has a positive influence on

student learning for rural (23.17) and suburban (30.86) were lower than the mean rank for urban

(39.00). This higher ranking of teaming by principals who classified their school location as

urban suggests that principals' beliefs regarding teaming could be influenced by their school

location and the diversity of their student body.  Although this analysis indicated a statistically

significant difference at the .05 level of significance by the category of school location, the

sample for the category of urban (*N*=4) was lower than rural (*N*=19) and suburban (*N*=35). This difference in the urban sample is most likely due to the sample population being principals of middle schools within an average need/resource capacity district.

The third conclusion focuses on the differences that emerged with regard to teachers and teams having the ability to function in leadership capacities when comparing teaming beliefs of middle school principals and previous research in this field. Using a Friedman test [$\chi^2$ (8, *N*=62)=92.472, *p*<.001], the mean ranks for Team facilitators/leaders have the ability to function in a leadership capacity and Teams have the ability to function in a leadership capacity, had the strongest disagreement among the responding principals. Previous research (Grenda & Hackmann, 2014; Wahlstrom et al., 2010) has examined the concept of collective leadership and concluded that higher-performing schools give greater influence to teacher teams, and that professional communities (teams) are a strong indicator of successful instructional practices. In addition, the findings of this study were that half of the responding principals' schools had a team facilitator/leader. This apparent disconnect between the value of teams being able to function in a leadership capacity and principal beliefs is discussed in the recommendations for future research.

**Research Question 3**

The third research question asked to what extent, if any, common planning was present or absent in New York State middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity. Regarding common planning practices, the data indicated that the sample of principals predominantly utilized team, grade level, and departmental common planning for coordinating instruction, creating assessments and teacher preparation. Although the majority of principals who responded utilized these three forms of common planning, the duration and frequency varied depending on the type of common planning. With regard to common planning history,

the data indicated that approximately half of the principals made changes to the existing common planning structure and the majority of principals were not looking to make any additional changes or modifications. This finding, that the principals were not looking to make changes to the structure of common planning was due, in part, to their being content with common planning structure or contractual concerns. Lastly regarding common planning beliefs, the majority of principals indicated that they agreed with the statements that common planning has a positive influence on the way instruction is carried out and taught, the culture of learning within the school, and with student learning.

Two conclusions were drawn regarding the third research question. The first conclusion is with regard to the similarities in the beliefs of the principals and the research regarding the positive influence common planning has on instruction, student learning, and the culture of learning within the school. Using a Friedman test [$\chi^2$ (8, $N$=60)=2.471, $p<.481$], the four mean ranks for common planning beliefs were all within .17 of each other. Although the four Likert scale items about common planning were found not to be statistically significant, it is important to note that there was a trend toward the middle school principals having similar beliefs regarding common planning. This is important because it not only supports conclusions drawn from previous research (Cook & Faulkner, 2010; Mertens, 2013), but it also provides administrators and policymakers with an additional layer of information regarding the common planning beliefs of middle school principals in New York State whose districts are categorized as having an average need/resource capacity. The suggestion that additional research needs to be conducted to support this trend is further discussed in the recommendations for future research.

Upon further examination of the common planning beliefs of these middle school principals, a second conclusion drawn was regarding the difference in the principals' common planning beliefs when compared to the location of their middle school. This analysis was

conducted using a Kruskal-Wallis test and the results indicated a statistically significant difference by the category of school location at the .05 level of significance.  The mean rank of, Common planning time has a positive influence on the way instruction is carried out and taught, for rural (22.74) and suburban (32.20) were lower than the mean rank for urban (38.00). This higher ranking of Common planning has a positive influence on the way instruction is carried out and taught, by principals who classified their school location as urban is important because it indicates that principals' beliefs regarding common planning can be influenced by their school location.  Although this analysis indicated a statistically significant difference by the category of school location at the .05 level of significance, the sample for the category of urban (*N*=4) was lower than rural (*N*=19) and suburban (*N*=35).  This difference in the urban sample is most likely due in part to the sample population being principals of middle schools within an average need/resource capacity district.  To further understand what this study has indicated with regard to the influence school location has on principals' common planning beliefs will be discussed later in this chapter when examining recommendations for future research.

**Research Question 4**

The fourth research question asked to what extent, if any, all three school supports were present or absent in New York State middle schools categorized as having an average need/resource capacity.  Regarding all three school supports, the data indicates that the sample of principals predominantly utilized a traditional departmentalized instructional schedule and either interdisciplinary and/or single grade level teaming with team, grade level, and departmental common planning. When examining school support beliefs, the majority of principals indicated the importance of having instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning simultaneously in existence at their middle school.

Two conclusions were drawn regarding the fourth research question. The first conclusion is that the principals believe that all three school supports are important in middle schools. Using a Friedman test [$\chi^2$ (2, *N*=60)=4.478, *p*<.107], the three mean ranks of middle school support beliefs were all within .17 of each other. In addition, using another Friedman test [$\chi^2$ (2, *N*=57)=2.000, *p*<.368], the mean ranks of middle school supports were all within .26 of each other. Although these two findings were not statistically significant, it is important to note the trend in the middle school principals' beliefs that all three supports are critical and should exist simultaneously. The findings of this study support the literature regarding the importance of these three schools supports. In both *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century* (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989) and *Turning Points 2000: Educating Adolescents in the 21st Century* (Jackson et al., 2000) the authors examined the scheduling of instructional periods to maximize learning, the creation of small communities for learning, and the provision of time for teachers to plan and prepare together.

Upon further examination of the middle school support beliefs of these principals, a second conclusion was drawn regarding the differences in the principals' middle school support beliefs when compared to years of principal experience at current school. This analysis was conducted using a Kruskal-Wallis test and the results indicated a statistically significant difference by the category of years of principal experience at current school at the .05 level of significance. The mean rank of, The instructional schedule should support the structure for common planning, for 0 to 1 year of principal experience at current school (32.39) and 2 to 4 years of principal experience at current school (32.70) were higher than the mean rank for 5 to 10 years (20.76) and 11 or more years (32.00) of principal experience at current school. Additional research is needed to understand why there is a difference of 12 in the mean rank for principals

with 5 to 10 years of experience at current school.  This is discussed later in the
recommendations for future research.

<div align="center">**Implications for Practice**</div>

While the previous section summarized the findings in relationship to the research
questions, this section examines the implications of this study for practice.  The results of this
study have important implications for stakeholders that include teachers, school administrators,
school districts, and boards of education who are interested in further understanding the practices
and beliefs of middle school principals in New York State with an average need/resource
capacity district regarding these three supports.  For the purposes of this study, three implications
for practice are discussed.

The first implication for practice focuses on the beliefs of principals regarding teaming;
particularly on the principals' beliefs regarding teams and team leaders having the abilities to
function in leadership capacities.  Two of the three Likert-scale items to which principals
demonstrated their strongest disagreement were the items that focused on teams and team leaders
functioning in a leadership capacity.  Previous research studies (Grenda & Hackmann, 2014;
Wahlstrom et al., 2010) have examined collective leadership and concluded that higher-
performing schools give greater influence to teacher teams and that professional communities
(teams) are strong indicators of successful instructional practices.  These conclusions, drawn
from previous research, are not in alignment with the beliefs of the sample in this study.
Therefore, an implication for practice could be to examine principal preparation programs.  In
particular, such an analysis could include the program curriculum to determine how and to what
extent the notion of school support of teaming is taught and discussed in their preparation
program.

A second implication for practice focuses on the beliefs of principals regarding teacher preparation; particularly, the principals' beliefs regarding teachers being prepared to work effectively in a team environment. The Likert-scale item to which principals demonstrated the strongest disagreement was that which stated that teachers were prepared with the collaboration and communications skills needed to be members of an effective team. Previous research (Wilson, 2007) examined teaming from a preservice training perspective and concluded that by simulating interdisciplinary teaming for a semester, preservice teachers can develop the skills (collaboration, compromise, and interpersonal communication) necessary for working on effective teams. These conclusions are not in alignment with the beliefs of the sample in this study. Therefore, an implication for practice could be to examine teacher preparation programs; in particular, to examine the program's curriculum to determine how and to what extent the notion of school support of teaming is taught and discussed in their preparation program.

A third implication for practice focuses on the beliefs of principals regarding instructional scheduling. In particular, this implication focuses on the principals' belief regarding the type of instructional schedule that best meets the needs of their students. As previously discussed, the most popular instructional scheduling model among principals in this sample was flexible interdisciplinary block. Although flexible interdisciplinary block was the most popular in terms of ideal scheduling model, approximately 70% of the respondents utilized a traditional departmentalized schedule. Previous research studies (Mattox et al., 2005; Gill 2012) have examined instructional scheduling and concluded that the type of instruction schedule at the middle school level can have an influence on student learning. These conclusions are in alignment with the beliefs of principals' ideal instructional scheduling model but not in alignment with their current instructional scheduling model. Furthermore, additional analysis of the data indicated a statistical significant difference by the category of grade configuration within

the rotating dropped scheduling model.  Therefore, an implication for practice is to examine middle level schooling by specific grade configuration.  In particular, an examination of middle level school configurations could include the analysis of how middle level schools are grouped, reported, and recognized at the state and national level.

<div align="center">**Recommendations for Future Research**</div>

The next section focuses on recommendations for future research.  One of the intents of this study was to collect and provide data that was not previously available regarding the utilization of three middle school supports (instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning).  While this study added an additional layer of information to this field of study, it is important that additional research be conducted to further understand both how and why these school supports are utilized.

One recommendation for future research is to conduct similar studies with a larger sample size to yield more statistically significant results.  It was the intent of this study to be statistically reliable through obtaining a minimum response rate of 35% when examining the absence or presence of these three middle school supports.  Although this study provided value to this research field by opening the door to examine how middle school principals in New York State utilized these three school supports, it would be of interest to compare these results with a similar study with a larger sample.  While this study did yield some statistically significant findings, the majority of them were regarding the entire sample.  Replicating my study with a larger sample size could provide additional statistically significant findings among the variables utilized (grade configuration, population, school location, and years of principal experience in current school).  Furthermore, additional research should be conducted on the impact of school structures – such as variations in school schedules, teams of teachers teaching groups of students,

and teachers' use of common planning time – on student achievement on both state assessments and various types of local assessments.

An additional recommendation for future research is to replicate this study using a different need/resource capacity category of districts in New York State. There are currently seven different need/resource categories within New York State. It would be interesting to examine both the differences and similarities in practices and beliefs of instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning among principals from different need/resource capacities. It was clear from analyzing this data that principals from an average need/resource capacity district equally valued the importance of having an instructional schedule with teaming and common planning. It would add to the field of research if this study was replicated using a sample that contained high need/resource category, large city districts.

An additional area of future research is the exploration of the reasons for some of the discrepancies in the findings. Another area could examine the apparent disconnect between the type of instructional schedule in practice, compared to research findings and principal beliefs. Although this area was discussed with regard to an implication for practice by examining principal preparation programs, further examination of why this apparent disconnect surfaced within the findings of this study would also be important and add value. Possible individual or group follow-up interviews could be conducted with a smaller sampling of principals to further understand this finding.

The previous suggestions for future research examine middle school supports from the perspective of principals. Additional value could be added to the field of research by examining the practices and beliefs regarding these three school supports of other stakeholders. For example, instead of surveying principals, a future study could use a sample that included teachers, district administrators, or students. More specifically, a study that surveys teachers

might focus on examining their levels of satisfaction with different school supports. Expanding research to include different perspectives would provide a more comprehensive depiction of the practices and beliefs of instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning in middle schools.

While all of the previous suggestions for future research focused on either increasing or changing the sample size, a final recommendation for future research is changing the design of the study. For example, conducting a qualitative or mixed-method design study would add an additional layer of information regarding the practices and beliefs of these three school supports. Conducting a case study would provide an in-depth description and analysis of how and why these middle school supports are implemented. In particular, a case study could be conducted utilizing a cross-section of principals from different need/resource capacity districts to allow for a more encompassing perspective on school support practices and principals' beliefs.

## Recommendations for Policy and Practice

This study was intended to collect and provide data that was not previously available regarding instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning. It was also the intent of this study, through collecting and analyzing the data, to examine policies and practices that could be either needed or modified for increased support to improve student learning in all middle schools in an average need/resource capacity district. For the purposes of this study, three recommendations for policy and practice will be discussed.

The first recommendation for policy and practice is that the data regarding the utilization of these middle school supports be collected annually on a statewide level. One of the reasons for conducting this study was the fact that data regarding the type of instructional scheduling utilized, along with the use of teaming and common planning at the middle school level, had not been collected nor reported on the New York State School Report Card. Therefore, it was not

known whether and how middle schools were implementing these three school supports. The structure for collecting district and school data on a yearly basis in New York State is already in existence. Each year New York State districts and schools file with the state a Basic Educational Data System (BEDS) report. Three of the categories of data included in this report are profile, assessment, and accountability data. Regarding the profile data, the specific areas include: enrollment, average class size, free and reduced-price lunch, attendance and suspensions, teacher qualifications, teacher turnover rate, and staff counts.

The recommendation for policy is for additional profile data to be requested regarding instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning at the middle school level. Since the New York State School Report Card is published annually and publicly available online, the structure for obtaining this information is already in existence. Having a dataset available from New York State middle schools that includes information regarding these three middle school supports would allow additional research to be conducted to determine the extent to which they are in practice. Furthermore, obtaining the data on these three school supports could be part of a research study that seeks to identify statistically significant influences on student achievement when these supports are in place for multiple years while controlling for socio-economic status and other potentially influential variables.

The second recommendation focuses on literature disseminated by the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) and the New York State Board of Regents regarding middle school supports. The need for this descriptive study was supported by the document developed by both these groups and titled "Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs" (University of the State of New York, 1999). One of the six essential elements focuses on organization and structure, and in particular, discusses teacher teams sharing

responsibility for educating a common group of students, common planning for teachers sharing responsibility for a common group of students, and schedules with flexible time assignments.

A recommendation for policy and practice would be for both the NYSED and the New York State Board of Regents to regularly update and refine this document. From what I could determine this particular document was last updated approximately 10 years ago. Having an updated document regarding the essential elements of middle school programs that is produced by state education stakeholders will provide valuable insight and knowledge to principals who are interested in what middle school supports and practices are best for student learning. Combining this recommendation for policy and practice with the previous one would allow for a comprehensive collection and dissemination of data regarding the extent to which these three school supports are in existence and what practices and programs maximize student learning. Additionally, the type of research suggested in the previous recommendation could strengthen and update of this type of document.

This final recommendation is for a local practice to occur either within the middle school or school district. Given the current financial and political climate regarding public school education in New York State, it is becoming more common for resources that are not of the utmost value to student learning to be removed from school budgets. Therefore, it is important for principals to maximize their utilization of school supports. A recommendation for practice would be for principals to regularly examine and reevaluate their utilization of these three middle school supports to ensure that they are configured in a format that maximizes learning for all students. By using current research and literature, principals can determine if their instructional schedule, teaming organization or common planning format needs adjustments or modifications.

**Conclusion**

This chapter provided a summary of the purpose, methodology, and findings of the study. Plausible conclusions along with implications and recommendations for future research were discussed. Middle level education is critical for the learning, development, and success of young adolescents (National Middle School Association, 2010a). The number of middle schools nationally has continued to increase from less than 5,000 in 1971 to more than 13,000 in 2008 (McEwin & Greene, 2011). A plethora of school supports are put into place at this level to assist and maximize student learning. This study provided a descriptive profile of three school supports (instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning) to determine if they were either absent or present in New York State middle schools categorized with an average need/resource capacity. In addition, principals' beliefs regarding these three school supports were examined.

The importance of these three school supports at the middle level has been discussed and examined by scholars and advocacy organizations. In both *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century* (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989) and *Turning Points 2000: Educating Adolescents in the 21st Century* (Jackson et al., 2000) the authors examined scheduling instructional periods to maximize learning, creating small communities for learning, and providing time for teachers to plan and prepare together. In addition, my study was designed to support the research recommendation of the National Middle School Association (2010a).

The intent of this study was to utilize the collected data to provide administrators and other stakeholders with an additional layer of information regarding the use of three specific school supports among New York State middle school principals whose districts were categorized as having an average need/resource capacity. It is my hope that the analysis of the

data collected points to policies, practices, and/or programs that could increase support to improve student learning. Although the sample of participants did not meet the intended reliability assumption, the sample was considered large enough to justify the exploration of the patterns and trends that emerged from the data collected to provide plausible conclusions that future, statistically reliable studies might confirm.

Lastly, there was much personal learning that occurred for me from conducting this study. It has reaffirmed my belief about the importance of conducting research to further understand how best to improve student learning. This study added one brick to the wall of educational research, as it provided an opportunity to further examine three middle school supports. The complex challenge that researchers have and will continue to face is how to identify and isolate the plethora of variables that impact the student learning process. This study provided an additional layer of information regarding the use of three specific school supports among New York State middle schools. As a middle school educational leader, I have learned the value of developing and implementing a philosophy regarding the utilization of school supports. The learning that has occurred from conducting this study will influence all of my future leadership roles.

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**APPENDIX A**

**SURVEY SAMPLE**

| | Average Need/Resource Capacity Schools | |
|---|---|---|
| **Grades** | **School Name** | **County** |
| 5-8 | A A KINGSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL | SAINT LAWRENCE |
| 6-8 | A D OLIVER MIDDLE SCHOOL | MONROE |
| 6-8 | A M COSGROVE MIDDLE SCHOOL | MONROE |
| 6-8 | ACADIA MIDDLE SCHOOL | SARATOGA |
| 6-8 | AKRON MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | ALBERT LEONARD MIDDLE SCHOOL | WESTCHESTER |
| 6-8 | ALGONQUIN MIDDLE SCHOOL | RENSSELAER |
| 6-8 | ALLEGANY-LIMESTONE MIDDLE SCHOOL | CATTARAUGUS |
| 6-8 | AMHERST MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | ANNE M DORNER MIDDLE SCHOOL | WESTCHESTER |
| 6-8 | APOLLO MIDDLE SCHOOL - ARCADIA MS | MONROE |
| 6-8 | ARCADIA MIDDLE SCHOOL | MONROE |
| 6-8 | ARLINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL | DUTCHESS |
| 6-8 | ATHENA MIDDLE SCHOOL | MONROE |
| 5-8 | ATTICA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL | WYOMING |
| 7-8 | AUSABLE VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL | CLINTON |
| 5-8 | AVON MIDDLE SCHOOL | LIVINGSTON |
| 6-8 | BALLSTON SPA MIDDLE SCHOOL | SARATOGA |
| 6-8 | BAY SHORE MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | BAY TRAIL MIDDLE SCHOOL | MONROE |
| 6-8 | BEEKMANTOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL | CLINTON |
| 6-8 | BELLPORT MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | BEN FRANKLIN MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | BERLIN MIDDLE SCHOOL | RENSSELAER |
| 6-8 | BOYNTON MIDDLE SCHOOL | TOMPKINS |
| 6-8 | BROADALBIN-PERTH MIDDLE SCHOOL | FULTON |
| 5-8 | BYRON-BERGEN MIDDLE SCHOOL | GENESEE |
| 6-8 | C J HOOKER MIDDLE SCHOOL | ORANGE |
| 6-8 | CAIRO-DURHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL | GREENE |
| 6-8 | CALEDONIA-MUMFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL | LIVINGSTON |
| 6-8 | CAMILLUS MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONONDAGA |
| 6-8 | CANANDAIGUA MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONTARIO |
| 5-8 | CASEY MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 5-8 | CATO-MERIDIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL | CAYUGA |
| 6-8 | CATSKILL MIDDLE SCHOOL | GREENE |
| 5-8 | CATTARAUGUS-LITTLE VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL | CATTARAUGUS |
| 6-8 | CENTER MORICHES MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | CENTRAL SQUARE MIDDLE SCHOOL | OSWEGO |
| 6-8 | CHARLES H ROTH MIDDLE SCHOOL | MONROE |
| 5-8 | CHATHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL | COLUMBIA |
| 5-8 | CHEEKTOWAGA MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | CHENANGO FORKS MIDDLE SCHOOL | BROOME |
| 7-8 | CHESTNUT HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONONDAGA |
| 6-8 | CHITTENANGO MIDDLE SCHOOL | MADISON |
| 5-8 | CHURCHVILLE-CHILI MIDDLE SCHOOL 5-8 | MONROE |
| 6-8 | CIRCLEVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL | ORANGE |
| 6-8 | CLARKE MIDDLE SCHOOL | JEFFERSON |
| 6-8 | CLEVELAND HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | CLINTON MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONEIDA |
| 6-8 | COHEN MIDDLE SCHOOL | CHEMUNG |
| 5-8 | CORINTH MIDDLE SCHOOL | SARATOGA |
| 6-8 | CORNING FREE ACADEMY MIDDLE SCHOOL | STEUBEN |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5-8 | CORNWALL MIDDLE SCHOOL | ORANGE |
| 5-8 | COXSACKIE-ATHENS MIDDLE SCHOOL | GREENE |
| 6-8 | CRISPELL MIDDLE SCHOOL | ORANGE |
| 7-8 | DAKE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL | MONROE |
| 6-8 | DALTON-NUNDA MIDDLE SCHOOL | LIVINGSTON |
| 6-8 | DAWNWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | DELHI MIDDLE SCHOOL | DELAWARE |
| 6-8 | DEPEW MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | DEWITT MIDDLE SCHOOL | TOMPKINS |
| 6-8 | DOVER MIDDLE SCHOOL | DUTCHESS |
| 6-8 | DRAPER MIDDLE SCHOOL | SCHENECTADY |
| 6-8 | DRYDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL | TOMPKINS |
| 6-8 | DUANESBURG MIDDLE SCHOOL | SCHENECTADY |
| 6-8 | EAST IRONDEQUOIT MIDDLE SCHOOL | MONROE |
| 6-8 | EAST ISLIP MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 7-8 | EAST MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | EDWARD TOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL | NIAGARA |
| 6-8 | ELWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 5-8 | EMERSON J DILLON MIDDLE SCHOOL | OSWEGO |
| 6-8 | FRANKFORT-SCHUYLER MIDDLE SCHOOL | HERKIMER |
| 5-8 | FREDONIA MIDDLE SCHOOL | CHAUTAUQUA |
| 6-8 | FRONTIER MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | GANANDA MIDDLE SCHOOL | WAYNE |
| 6-8 | GATES-CHILI MIDDLE SCHOOL | MONROE |
| 5-8 | GEORGE FISCHER MIDDLE SCHOOL | PUTNAM |
| 5-8 | GEORGE FISCHER MIDDLE SCHOOL | PUTNAM |
| 6-8 | GOWANA MIDDLE SCHOOL | SARATOGA |
| 6-8 | GREENVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL | GREENE |
| 6-8 | GRIFFITH INSTITUTE MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | GROTON MIDDLE SCHOOL | TOMPKINS |
| 6-8 | HAMBURG MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 5-8 | HAMPTON BAYS MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | HAVILAND MIDDLE SCHOOL | DUTCHESS |
| 5-8 | HEIM MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 7-8 | HENRY L STIMSON MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | HENRY V BURGER MIDDLE SCHOOL | MONROE |
| 6-8 | HERBERT HOOVER MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | HICKSVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL | NASSAU |
| 6-8 | HIGHLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL | ULSTER |
| 5-8 | HOLLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | HOLLAND PATENT MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONEIDA |
| 7-8 | HOMER JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL | CORTLAND |
| 6-8 | HONEOYE FALLS-LIMA MIDDLE SCHOOL | MONROE |
| 5-8 | HOOSIC VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL | RENSSELAER |
| 5-8 | HOOSIC VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL | RENSSELAER |
| 7-8 | HORSEHEADS MIDDLE SCHOOL | CHEMUNG |
| 6-8 | HOWARD L GOFF SCHOOL | RENSSELAER |
| 5-8 | HOWARD T HERBER MIDDLE SCHOOL | NASSAU |
| 6-8 | ICHABOD CRANE MIDDLE SCHOOL | COLUMBIA |
| 6-8 | IROQUOIS MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | ISAAC E YOUNG MIDDLE SCHOOL | WESTCHESTER |
| 5-8 | ISLAND PARK LINCOLN ORENS MIDDLE SCHOOL | NASSAU |
| 5-8 | ISLAND TREES MIDDLE SCHOOL | NASSAU |
| 6-8 | ISLIP MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 7-8 | J TAYLOR FINLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | J WATSON BAILEY MIDDLE SCHOOL | ULSTER |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5-8 | JAMESVILLE-DEWITT MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONONDAGA |
| 6-8 | JENNIE F SNAPP MIDDLE SCHOOL | BROOME |
| 6-8 | JOHANNA PERRIN MIDDLE SCHOOL | MONROE |
| 6-8 | JOHN F KENNEDY MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 7-8 | JOHN G BORDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL | ULSTER |
| 6-8 | JONAS E SALK MIDDLE SCHOOL | NASSAU |
| 6-8 | JORDAN-ELBRIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONONDAGA |
| 6-8 | KENMORE MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | KNOX JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL | FULTON |
| 6-8 | KODA MIDDLE SCHOOL | SARATOGA |
| 6-8 | LAGRANGE MIDDLE SCHOOL | DUTCHESS |
| 6-8 | LAKE SHORE MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | LAKELAND-COPPER BEECH MIDDLE SCHOOL | WESTCHESTER |
| 7-8 | LANCASTER MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 5-8 | LANSING MIDDLE SCHOOL | TOMPKINS |
| 5-8 | LAWRENCE MIDDLE SCHOOL | NASSAU |
| 5-8 | LETCHWORTH MIDDLE SCHOOL | WYOMING |
| 6-8 | LEWISTON PORTER MIDDLE SCHOOL | NIAGARA |
| 6-8 | LINDEN AVENUE MIDDLE SCHOOL | DUTCHESS |
| 6-8 | LINDENHURST MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 5-8 | LISHA KILL MIDDLE SCHOOL | ALBANY |
| 7-8 | LIVERPOOL MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONONDAGA |
| 6-8 | LIVONIA MIDDLE SCHOOL | LIVINGSTON |
| 6-8 | LONG BEACH MIDDLE SCHOOL | NASSAU |
| 7-8 | LONGWOOD JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | M CLIFFORD MILLER MIDDLE SCHOOL | ULSTER |
| 6-8 | MAINE-ENDWELL MIDDLE SCHOOL | BROOME |
| 6-8 | MAPLE AVENUE MIDDLE SCHOOL | SARATOGA |
| 6-8 | MAPLE HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL | RENSSELAER |
| 6-8 | MARCUS WHITMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONTARIO |
| 6-8 | MARLBORO MIDDLE SCHOOL | ULSTER |
| 6-8 | MARTHA BROWN MIDDLE SCHOOL | MONROE |
| 6-8 | MARYVALE MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 7-8 | MERTON WILLIAMS MIDDLE SCHOOL | MONROE |
| 5-8 | MEXICO MIDDLE SCHOOL | OSWEGO |
| 6-8 | MIDDLEBURGH MIDDLE SCHOOL | SCHOHARIE |
| 7-8 | MIDLAKES MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONTARIO |
| 5-8 | MILL MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | MINISINK VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL | ORANGE |
| 6-8 | MONROE WOODBURY MIDDLE SCHOOL | ORANGE |
| 6-8 | NEW PALTZ MIDDLE SCHOOL | ULSTER |
| 5-8 | NEWFANE MIDDLE SCHOOL | NIAGARA |
| 6-8 | NORTH PARK JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL | NIAGARA |
| 7-8 | NORTH TONAWANDA MIDDLE SCHOOL | NIAGARA |
| 6-8 | NORTHEASTERN CLINTON MIDDLE SCHOOL | CLINTON |
| 6-8 | NORTHSIDE BLODGETT MIDDLE SCHOOL | STEUBEN |
| 6-8 | NYACK MIDDLE SCHOOL | ROCKLAND |
| 6-8 | OAKDALE-BOHEMIA MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | OLIVER W WINCH MIDDLE SCHOOL | SARATOGA |
| 7-8 | ONEONTA MIDDLE SCHOOL | OTSEGO |
| 5-8 | ONONDAGA HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONONDAGA |
| 7-8 | ONTEORA MIDDLE SCHOOL | ULSTER |
| 6-8 | OREGON MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | ORVILLE A TODD MIDDLE SCHOOL | DUTCHESS |
| 7-8 | OSWEGO MIDDLE SCHOOL | OSWEGO |
| 6-8 | OTTO L SHORTELL MIDDLE SCHOOL | MADISON |

| 6-8 | OWEGO-APALACHIN MIDDLE SCHOOL | TIOGA |
|-----|-------------------------------|-------|
| 5-8 | PERRY MIDDLE SCHOOL | WYOMING |
| 6-8 | PERU MIDDLE SCHOOL | CLINTON |
| 6-8 | PINE GROVE MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONONDAGA |
| 6-8 | QUEENSBURY MIDDLE SCHOOL | WARREN |
| 6-8 | RAVENA-COEYMANS-SELKIRK MIDDLE SCHOOL | ALBANY |
| 6-8 | RED JACKET MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONTARIO |
| 6-8 | RICHARD T STANK MIDDLE SCHOOL | BROOME |
| 7-8 | RIVERHEAD MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | ROBERT FROST MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | ROBERT M FINLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL | NASSAU |
| 6-8 | ROBERT MOSES MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | ROCKY POINT MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | ROMBOUT MIDDLE SCHOOL | DUTCHESS |
| 5-8 | RONDOUT VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL | ULSTER |
| 6-8 | RONKONKOMA MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 5-8 | ROYALTON-HARTLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL | NIAGARA |
| 5-8 | RUSSELL I DOIG MIDDLE SCHOOL | TOMPKINS |
| 6-8 | SAGAMORE MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | SAMOSET MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 5-8 | SAND CREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL | ALBANY |
| 6-8 | SARANAC LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL | FRANKLIN |
| 6-8 | SARANAC MIDDLE SCHOOL | CLINTON |
| 7-8 | SAUGERTIES JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL | ULSTER |
| 5-8 | SAUQUOIT VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONEIDA |
| 6-8 | SAXTON MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 5-8 | SCHALMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL | SCHENECTADY |
| 6-8 | SCOTIA-GLENVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL | SCHENECTADY |
| 6-8 | SELDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | SENECA FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL | SENECA |
| 6-8 | SENECA MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | SEQUOYA MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | SLEEPY HOLLOW MIDDLE SCHOOL | WESTCHESTER |
| 7-8 | SOULE ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONONDAGA |
| 6-8 | SOUTH OCEAN MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 5-8 | SOUTHERN CAYUGA MIDDLE SCHOOL | CAYUGA |
| 6-8 | SOUTHWESTERN MIDDLE SCHOOL | CHAUTAUQUA |
| 6-8 | SPRY MIDDLE SCHOOL | MONROE |
| 6-8 | STARPOINT MIDDLE SCHOOL | NIAGARA |
| 6-8 | STISSING MOUNTAIN MIDDLE SCHOOL | DUTCHESS |
| 6-8 | SWEET HOME MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | TACONIC HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL | COLUMBIA |
| 6-8 | THOUSAND ISLANDS MIDDLE SCHOOL | JEFFERSON |
| 5-8 | TRANSIT MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | UNION VALE MIDDLE SCHOOL | DUTCHESS |
| 6-8 | VALLEY CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL | ORANGE |
| 6-8 | VAN WYCK JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL | DUTCHESS |
| 7-8 | VERNON-VERONA-SHERRILL MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONEIDA |
| 6-8 | VERONICA E CONNOR MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 6-8 | VESTAL MIDDLE SCHOOL | BROOME |
| 7-8 | VICTOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL | ONTARIO |
| 7-8 | WAPPINGERS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL | DUTCHESS |
| 6-8 | WASHINGTONVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL | ORANGE |
| 5-8 | WATKINS GLEN MIDDLE SCHOOL | SCHUYLER |
| 6-8 | WAYNE CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL | WAYNE |
| 6-8 | WEST BABYLON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |

| 6-8 | WEST GENESEE MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONONDAGA |
|---|---|---|
| 6-8 | WEST HEMPSTEAD MIDDLE SCHOOL | NASSAU |
| 6-8 | WEST MIDDLE SCHOOL | ERIE |
| 5-8 | WESTMORELAND MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONEIDA |
| 6-8 | WHITE PLAINS MIDDLE SCHOOL | WESTCHESTER |
| 6-8 | WHITESBORO MIDDLE SCHOOL | ONEIDA |
| 6-8 | WILLIAM FLOYD MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 6-8 | WILLIAM H GOLDING MIDDLE SCHOOL | SCHOHARIE |
| 6-8 | WILLIAM PACA MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUFFOLK |
| 5-8 | WILLIAMSON MIDDLE SCHOOL | WAYNE |
| 6-8 | WILLINK MIDDLE SCHOOL | MONROE |
| 6-8 | WISDOM LANE MIDDLE SCHOOL | NASSAU |
| 7-8 | WOODLANDS MIDDLE SCHOOL | WESTCHESTER |

**APPENDIX B**

**IRB PERMISSIONS**

# REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATION OR RELATED ACTIVITIES INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

**All material must be typed.**

*PROJECT TITLE:*

A study of Instructional Scheduling, Teaming and Common Planning in New York State Middle Schools ; PILOT STUDY

*CERTIFICATION STATEMENT:*

In making **this application,** I(we) certify that I(we) have read and understand the University's policies and procedures governing research, development, and related activities involving human subjects. I (wc) shall comply with the letter and spirit of those policies. I(we) further acknowledge my(our) obligation to (1) obtain written approval of significant deviations from the originally-approved protocol BEFORE making those deviations, and (2) report immediately all adverse effects of the study on the subjects to the Director of the Institutional Review Board, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079.

*Chad M Corey*

_____     4/4/2014
Chad M Corey
RESEARCHER(S) OR PROJECT DIRECTOR(S)                      DATE

**\*\*Please print or type out names of all researchers below signature.
Use separate sheet of paper, if necessary.\*\***

My signature indicates that I have reviewed the attached materials and consider them to meet IRB standards.

*Robert Starratt*

_____     04-08-2014
Robert J. Starratt
RESEARCHER'S ADVISOR OR DEPARTMENTAL SUPERVISOR          DATE

**\*\*Please print or type out name below signature\*\***

The request for approval submitted by the above researcher(s) was considered by the IRB for Research Involving Human Subjects Research at the ___ May 2014 _____meeting.

The application was approved ✓ not approved ___ by the Committee. Special conditions were _____ were not ✓ ___ set by the IRB. (Any special conditions are described on the reverse side.)

*Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.*

_____     5/7/14
DIRECTOR,                                               DATE
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL
REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH

# REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATION OR RELATED ACTIVITIES INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

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*CERTIFICATION STATEMENT:*

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_Chad M. Corey_

_____     _5/29/14_
RESEARCHER(S) OR PROJECT DIRECTOR(S)                              DATE

\*\*Please print or type out names of **all** researchers below signature.
Use separate sheet of paper, if necessary.\*\*

My signature indicates that I have reviewed the attached materials and consider them to meet IRB standards.

_Robert Starratt_

_____     _5/29/14_
RESEARCHER'S ADVISOR OR DEPARTMENTAL SUPERVISOR          DATE
Robert Starratt
\*\*Please print or type out name below signature\*\*

The request for approval submitted by the above researcher(s) was considered by the IRB for Research Involving Human Subjects Research at the ___June 25, 2014___ meeting.

The application was approved ✓ not approved ___ by the Committee. Special conditions were _____ were not ✓ set by the IRB. (Any special conditions are described on the reverse side.)

_Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D_

_____     _6/25/14_
DIRECTOR,                                                                              DATE
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL
REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH

**APPENDIX C**

**PILOT GROUP**

| Low Need/Resource Capacity Schools ||
| --- | --- |
| **Grades** | **School Name** |
| 5-8 | A MACARTHUR BARR MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | ACCOMPSETT MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | ALBERT G PRODELL MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 5-8 | ARDSLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | BALDWIN MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | BARKER ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | BEACH STREET MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 7-8 | BERNER MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | BETHLEHEM CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | BLIND BROOK-RYE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | BLUE MOUNTAIN MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | BRIARCLIFF MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | BRONXVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | BULKELEY MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | CALKINS ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | CANDLEWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | CARRIE PALMER WEBER MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | CLARENCE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | CLARKE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | COMMACK MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | DOBBS FERRY MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 5-8 | EAGLE HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 5-8 | EAST AURORA MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | EAST HAMPTON MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 5-8 | EAST MORICHES SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | EAST NORTHPORT MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | EASTCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | FARNSWORTH MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 5-8 | FARRAGUT MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 7-8 | FELIX FESTA CHARACTER MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 7-8 | FELIX FESTA DETERMINATION MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | FOX LANE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | GARDEN CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 7-8 | GRAND AVENUE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | GREAT HOLLOW MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | GREAT NECK NORTH MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | GREAT NECK SOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 5-8 | H B MATTLIN MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | H B THOMPSON MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | H C CRITTENDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | HAUPPAUGE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | HENRY H WELLS MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | HOMMOCKS SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | IROQUOIS MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | IRVINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | JAMES WILSON YOUNG MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | JERICHO MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | JOHN F KENNEDY MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | JOHN JAY MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | LOCUST VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | LOUIS M KLEIN MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | LYNBROOK NORTH MIDDLE SCHOOL |

| | |
|---|---|
| 6-8 | LYNBROOK SOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | MAHOPAC MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 7-8 | MANHASSET MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 7-8 | MERRICK AVENUE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | MILDRED E STRANG MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | MILLBROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 5-8 | MOUNT SINAI MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | NESAQUAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | NORTH COUNTRY ROAD SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | NORTH SHORE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | NORTHPORT MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | OLDFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | ORCHARD PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | PELHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 5-8 | PIERRE VAN CORTLANDT SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | PLAINEDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 5-8 | PLAINVIEW-OLD BETHPAGE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 5-8 | PLEASANTVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | PORT JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 5-8 | PUTNAM VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | RICHARD H O'ROURKE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 5-8 | ROBERT E BELL SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | RYE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | RYE NECK MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | SAYVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | SCARSDALE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 7-8 | SCHOOL 9M-OCEANSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | SEAFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 5-8 | SEVEN BRIDGES MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 7-8 | SHAKER JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | SKANEATELES MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | SOMERS MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | SOUTH ORANGETOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | SOUTH SIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | SOUTH WOODS MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 5-8 | SOUTHAMPTON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | SUFFERN MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | TUCKAHOE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | TWELVE CORNERS MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | UDALL ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | VALHALLA MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | VAN ANTWERP MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | VOORHEESVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | WANTAGH MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | WARWICK VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 5-8 | WELLWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | WEST HOLLOW MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | WESTHAMPTON MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | WESTLAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | WILLIAM T ROGERS MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | WOODLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| 6-8 | WOODMERE MIDDLE SCHOOL |

**APPENDIX D**

**SURVEY**

# Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

## Part I-A: Instructional Scheduling Information

Directions: For each item, please type or select the answer that most accurately describes the current instructional schedule in your middle school.

### 1. What grades are included in your middle school?

◯ 5, 6, 7, 8

◯ 6, 7, 8

◯ 7, 8

◯ Other (please specify)

[                              ]

### 2. What is the population of your middle school?

[                              ]

### 3. How would you best describe the type of instructional schedule in existence in your school?

◯ Traditional Departmentalized Schedule (Fixed number of daily periods that are uniform in length with instruction being given within departmental classifications)

◯ Alternate Day Block Schedule (Periods of approximately 90 minutes in length and meet every other day for the entire school year)

◯ Flexible Interdisciplinary Block Schedule (Consists of blocks of time for teaching teams and provides individual teams the flexibility to determine how to best utilize this time for the core academic classes)

◯ Modular Schedule (Allows for the school day to be divided into several modules permitting for classes to occur in varying time allotments)

◯ Rotating Schedule (Consists of classes rotating through different times of the school day)

◯ Dropped Schedule (Dropping of one class period daily)

◯ Rotating Dropped Schedule (Combination of the rotating and dropped schedules)

◯ Other (please specify)

[                              ]

### 4. How long has the current type of instructional schedule been in existence in your school?

[                              ]

### 5. Has the instructional schedule structure been changed or altered during your time as principal?

◯ Yes

◯ No

## Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

**6. Are you looking to modify or change the current instructional schedule structure at your school?**

○ Yes

○ No

**7. Why are you either looking or not looking to modify or change the current instructional schedule structure at your school?**

**8. Please rank the top three instructional scheduling models that would best describe your ideal schedule.**

| | |
|---|---|
| | Traditional Departmentalized Schedule (Fixed number of daily periods that are uniform in length with instruction being given within departmental classifications) |
| | Alternate Day Block Schedule (Periods of approximately 90 minutes in length and meet every other day for the entire school year) |
| | Flexible Interdisciplinary Block Schedule (Consists of blocks of time for teaching teams and provides individual teams the flexibility to determine how to best utilize this time for the core academic classes) |
| | Modular Schedule (Allows for the school day to be divided into several modules, permitting for classes to occur in varying time allotments) |
| | Rotating Schedule (Consists of classes rotating through different times of the school day) |
| | Dropped Schedule (Dropping of one class period daily) |
| | Rotating Dropped Schedule (Combination of the rotating and dropped schedules) |

**9. What exploratory/encore subjects are offered during the instructional day?  Please select all that apply.**

☐ Physical Education

☐ Music

☐ Technology

☐ Art

☐ Health

☐ Home and Careers

☐ Other (please specify)

## Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

**10. How is remedial instruction structured at your school? Please select all that apply.**

☐ Smaller student/teacher ratio classes

☐ Inclusion in mainstream classes

☐ Pull outs

☐ Additional support period

☐ Extended school day programs

☐ Summer programs

☐ Other (please specify)

[                                        ]

**11. How is special education instruction structured at your school? Please select all that apply.**

☐ Smaller student/teacher ratio classes

☐ Inclusion in mainstream classes

☐ Pull outs

☐ Additional support period

☐ Extended school day programs

☐ Summer programs

☐ Other (please specify)

[                                        ]

**12. How is English Language Learner (ELL) instruction structured at your school? Please select all that apply.**

☐ Smaller student/teacher ratio classes

☐ Inclusion in mainstream classes

☐ Pull outs

☐ Additional support period

☐ Extended school day programs

☐ Summer programs

☐ Other (please specify)

[                                        ]

# Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

## Part I-B: Instructional Scheduling Beliefs

Directions: For each item below, select the circle that best reflects your beliefs regarding instructional scheduling. Please use the following rating scale: 4–Strongly Agree, 3–Somewhat Agree, 2–Somewhat Disagree, or 1–Strongly Disagree.

### 13. Please evaluate the following statements.

| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The instructional schedule should allow teachers an opportunity to see the students at different times during the school day. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The instructional schedule should support flexibility for periods to be of different lengths. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| An instructional schedule can have a positive influence on student learning. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Longer class periods can have a positive influence on student learning. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Longer class periods can have a positive influence on student behavior. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Longer class periods can have a positive influence on the relationship between teacher and student. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The current instructional schedule in my school meets the needs of all students. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The current instructional schedule in my school meets the needs of all remedial students. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The current instructional schedule in my school meets the needs of all special education students. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The current instructional schedule in my school meets the needs of all English Lanugage Learner (ELL) students. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

## Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

### Part II-A: Teaming Information

Directions: For each item below, please type or select the answer that most accurately describes the current teaming structure in your middle school. For the purposes of this survey, teaming is defined as a way to organize staff so that a group of teachers share: the same group of students; responsibility for planning, teaching, and evaluating the curriculum and instruction; similar schedules; and the same area of the school building.

### 14. Does your school use teaming?

○ Yes

○ No

# Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

## Part II-A: Teaming Information

### 15. What type(s) of teaming? Please select all that apply.

- [ ] Interdisciplinary
- [ ] Single Grade Level
- [ ] Multiple Grade Levels
- [ ] Other (please specify)

### 16. In what grade level(s) does teaming occur? Please select all that apply.

- [ ] 5th Grade
- [ ] 6th Grade
- [ ] 7th Grade
- [ ] 8th Grade

### 17. Are students randomly assigned to teams?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

### 18. Do students remain teamed with the same group of students throughout middle school?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

### 19. Has the type of teaming structure utilized been changed or altered during your time as principal?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

### 20. Are you looking to modify or change the current teaming structure at your school?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

## Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

**21. Why are you either looking or not looking to modify or change the current teaming structure at your school?**

**22. Which staff members are assigned to a team?  Please select all that apply.**

☐ Academic Teachers

☐ Exploratory/Encore Teachers

☐ Remedial Teachers

☐ Special Education Teachers

☐ English Language Learner (ELL) Teachers

☐ Teaching Assistants or Paraprofessionals

☐ Principal or Assistant Principal

☐ Department Chair

☐ School Counselor

☐ Other (please specify)

**23. On average, how many academic (English, math, science, and social studies) teachers are assigned to a team?**

○ 2 Teachers

○ 3 Teachers

○ 4 Teachers

○ 5 Teachers

○ Greater than 5 Teachers

**24. On average, what percentage of students would be considered fully teamed in your school?**

**25. Does each team have a team facilitator or team leader?**

○ Yes

○ No

# Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

## Part 2-B: Teaming Beliefs

Directions: For each item below, select the circle that best reflects your beliefs regarding teaming. Please use the following rating scale: 4–Strongly Agree, 3–Somewhat Agree, 2–Somewhat Disagree, or 1–Strongly Disagree.

### 26. Please evaluate the following statements.

| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teaming has a positive influence on the way classroom instruction is carried out and taught. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Teaming has a positive influence on the culture of learning within the school. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Teaming has a positive influence on student learning. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Teaming has a positive influence on student behavior. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Teaming provides students with a greater sense of identity and belonging. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Teachers are prepared with the collaboration and communication skills needed to be an effective team. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Teachers would benefit from receiving professional development on teaming. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Teams have the ability to function in a leadership capacity. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Team facilitators/leaders have the ability to function in a leadership capacity. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

# Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

## Part III-A: Common Planning Information

Directions: For each item below, please type or select the answer that most accurately describes the current common planning structure in your middle school. For the purposes of this survey, common planning is defined as a regularly scheduled time during the school day when staff members who teach the same students, subjects, or grades meet for planning, parent conferences, material preparation, and student evaluation.

**27. Does your school have common planning time?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

# Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

## Part III-A: Common Planning Information

**28. Does time for common planning occur in all grade levels?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

**29. Does team common planning occur?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

# Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

## Part III-A: Common Planning Information

**30. How often does team common planning occur?**

◯ Daily

◯ Every other day

◯ Once a week

◯ Once a month

◯ Other (please specify)

> [                                        ]

**31. On average, for what length of time does team common planning occur?**

[                                        ]

**32. What is team common planning used for?  Please select all that apply.**

☐ Teacher preparation

☐ Coordinating instruction

☐ Creating assessments

☐ Revising schedules

☐ Discussing students

☐ Conducting conferences

☐ Planning special events/trips

☐ IEP/504 meetings

☐ Other (please specify)

> [                                        ]

# Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

## Part III-A: Common Planning Information

**33. Does grade level common planning occur?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

## Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

### Part III-A: Common Planning Information

**34. How often does grade level common planning occur?**

○ Daily

○ Every other day

○ Once a week

○ Once a month

○ Other (please specify)

[                    ]

**35. On average, for what length of time does grade level common planning occur?**

[                    ]

**36. What is grade level common planning used for?  Please select all that apply.**

☐ Teacher preparation

☐ Coordinating instruction

☐ Creating assessments

☐ Revising schedules

☐ Discussing students

☐ Conducting conferences

☐ Planning special events/trips

☐ IEP/504 meetings

☐ Other (please specify)

[                    ]

# Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

## Part III-A: Common Planning Information

**37. Does departmental common planning occur?**

○ Yes

○ No

# Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

## Part III-A: Common Planning Information

**38. How often does departmental common planning occur?**

○ Daily

○ Every other day

○ Once a week

○ Once a month

○ Other (please specify)

[                                    ]

**39. On average, for what length of time does departmental common planning occur?**

[                              ]

**40. What is departmental common planning used for?  Please select all that apply.**

☐ Teacher preparation

☐ Coordinating instruction

☐ Creating assessments

☐ Revising schedules

☐ Discussing students

☐ Conducting conferences

☐ Planning special events/trips

☐ IEP/504 meetings

☐ Other (please specify)

[                                    ]

## Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

### Part III-A: Common Planning Information

**41. As principal, are you provided with an agenda and/or minutes from common planning meetings?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

**42. Has the common planning structure been changed or altered during your time as principal?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

**43. Are you looking to modify or change the current common planning structure?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

**44. Why are you either looking or not looking to modify or change the current common planning structure at your school?**

# Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

## Part III-B: Common Planning Beliefs

Directions: For each item below, select the circle that best reflects your beliefs regarding common planning time. Please use the following rating scale: 4–Strongly Agree, 3–Somewhat Agree, 2–Somewhat Disagree, or 1–Strongly Disagree.

### 45. Please evaluate the following statements.

| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Common planning time has a posiitve influence on the way instruction is carried out and taught. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Common planning time has a positive influence on the culture of learning within the school. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Common planning time has a posiitve influence on student learning. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Teachers woud benefit from receiving professional development on how to effectively utilize common planning time. | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

### 46. Please rank these three types of common planning in order of importance with #1 being the most important.

| | |
|---|---|
| [ ] | Team common planning |
| [ ] | Grade level common planning |
| [ ] | Departmental common planning |

# Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

## Part IV: General Reflections

Directions: For each item below, please select the box or circle that best reflects your beliefs regarding common planning time. Please use the following rating scale: 4–Strongly Agree, 3–Somewhat Agree, 2–Somewhat Disagree, or 1–Strongly Disagree.

**47. Please rank these three school supports in order of importance with #1 being the most important.**

| | |
|---|---|
| ☐ | Instructional scheduling |
| ☐ | Teaming |
| ☐ | Common planning |

**48. Please evaluate the following statements.**

| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| The instructional schedule should support the organization of teams. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The instructional schedule should support the structure for common planning. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Common planning is an important component of teaming. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

## Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

### Part V: School and Demographic Information

Directions: For each item below, please type or select the answer that most accurately reflects your school and demographic information.

**49. What is the location of your school considered?**

- ○ Urban
- ○ Rural
- ○ Suburban

**50. What are the three largest populations of racial/ethnic origins in your school?**

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Multiracial
- ☐ White

**51. What was your middle school's approximate attendance percentage for the 2011-2012 school year?**

[                    ]

**52. What was your middle school's approximate student suspension percentage for the 2011-2012 school year?**

[                    ]

**53. What was the approximate percentage of students on either free or reduced lunch for the 2011-2012 school year?**

[                    ]

**54. In the previous three school years, has your middle school made adequate yearly progress (AYP) in English Language Arts (ELA)?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

## Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

**55. Please indicate the approximate percentage of student performance in your school on the 2013 English Language Arts (ELA) assessment.**

Level 2 (Partially Proficient)

Level 3 (Proficient)

Level 4 (Exceeding Proficient)

**56. In the previous three school years, has your middle school made adequate yearly progress (AYP) in Mathematics?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

**57. Please indicate the approximate percentage of student performance in your school on the 2013 Mathematics assessment.**

Level 2 (Partially Proficient)

Level 3 (Proficient)

Level 4 (Exceeding Proficient)

**58. How long have you been principal in your current middle school?**

**59. How long have you been a practicing administrator?**

**60. What is your highest degree earned?**

◯ Bachelor

◯ Master

◯ Doctorate

**61. What is your gender?**

◯ Male

◯ Female

**62. What is your current age?**

**APPENDIX E**

**LETTER OF SOLICITATION**

# Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning

## Survey

Dear Colleague:

I am currently enrolled as a doctoral student at Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey in the Ed. D. program, College of Education and Human Services, Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy. I am writing to invite you to participate in a survey that is being conducted for my dissertation study examining three middle school supports-instructional scheduling, teaming, and common planning time.

The study is titled, "A Study of Instructional Scheduling, Teaming, and Common Planning Time in New York State Middle Schools". The purpose of the research is to explore: 1) what are the current instructional scheduling practices of NYS middle schools categorized with an average need/resource capacity; 2) to what extent, if any, is teaming present or absent in New York State middle schools categorized with an average need/resource capacity; 3) to what extent, if any, is common planning present or absent in New York State middle schools categorized with an average need/resource capacity; and 4) to what extent, if any, are all three school supports (instructional schedules, teaming, and common planning) found to exist simultaneously in New York State middle school categorized with an average need/resource capacity.

The collection of data will be conducted by sending a self-administered online web survey to middle school principals in New York State school districts that have been categorized as an average need/resource capacity district by the New York State Education Department for the 2011-2012 school year. The estimated time to complete the survey is less than 15 minutes.

The survey that you are invited to participate in via this electronic letter will be identical in format for all principals who participate in the study. The survey has five sections. The first section of the survey focuses on the instructional schedule utilized by middle schools while the second section focuses on collecting data regarding the presence or absence of any teaming that is occurring within the middle school. The third section of the survey focuses on collecting data on the presence or absence of any common planning that is occurring within the middle school while the fourth section will provide an opportunity for general reflections by the participants. The final part of the survey will ask for demographic information that will provide data about the principals participating and the school in which they work. For best results, please try and complete all sections of the survey.

Your participation in completing this survey is voluntary and by completing it you are consenting to being a participant in a research study. The inability or refusal to participate or to discontinue your participation at any time will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits that you are entitled. You may choose to discontinue your participation at any time. Your responses to the survey will contribute to the data collected from other middle school principals to be analyzed and reported.

The researcher will maintain complete confidentiality regarding your participation. You will be identified only through a participant number. Your identity and your responses will at no time be revealed.

Data will not be stored electronically on computer desktop or laptop hard drives. The only means of being stored through electronic devices will be on a USB memory key and securely stored in a cabinet. The researcher and the researcher's committee members will have access to the data. No other individuals will have access to it.

If you have any questions pertaining to the use of human subjects in a survey, please contact IRB@shu.edu. Thank your for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Chad Corey
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400 South Orange Avenue
Jubilee Hall – Fourth Floor
South Orange, NJ 07079
Chad.Corey@student.shu.edu