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## The Preliminary Effects of *Colorado Senate Bill 10-191: Educator Effectiveness on Secondary Education Preservice Teachers*

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**Abstract:** Presently, teacher retention rates are exceedingly low in the United States with one-third of teachers leaving the field after three years. More significantly, half of all teachers in underperforming schools quit within three years. In November of 2011, Colorado passed Senate Bill 10-191, which mandates an annual evaluation for all teachers in the State of Colorado. If preservice teachers are increasingly worried about potential job loss partially due to uncontrollable factors, such as the standardized test scores of traditionally low performing students, many might choose to leave the field before even entering the classroom, exacerbating teacher shortages particularly in low-income school districts. In order to investigate whether Senate Bill 10-191 is already affecting preservice teacher decisions with regards to teaching in Colorado, three major research questions were asked: What is the level of knowledge of preservice teachers on Colorado Senate Bill 10-191? Does Bill 10-191 impact teacher decisions regarding where to teach? How does Bill 10-191 impact a preservice teacher's goals to teach? Drawing on a pool of preservice teachers ready to enter the field at a Colorado state-supported institution known nationally for its teacher education program, this presentation examines potential effects that legislation may have on preservice teacher job satisfaction and retention. Preservice teachers in a secondary education teaching program were surveyed and interviewed in a focus group to determine their professional aspirations as teachers, their willingness to teach in diverse school settings, and how they felt Bill 10-191 might affect their roles as educators. The findings in this research indicate a correlation between length of time spent in the teacher education program and knowledge of Bill 10-191, as well as the idea that, while the bill may decrease the amount of opportunities for student teaching, it may increase the amount of job openings for preservice teachers upon graduation. These results have the potential to redefine teacher education programs to include more education of the bill and the way it will shape the teaching profession at earlier stages of their program, as well as the potential for the State of Colorado to redefine the implementation of the bill to match high teacher expectations with high teacher retention rates in all school districts.

**Keywords:** *education, preservice teachers, Senate Bill 10-191, teacher assessment*

As education in the United States moves further into a trend of data and accountability for both students and teachers, multiple states are implementing new evaluation systems to determine whether their teachers are effective. In Colorado, *Senate Bill 10-191: Educator Effectiveness* was passed in November of 2011. The bill defines teacher effectiveness through a series of teacher observations, glimpses at student work, and data from student test scores (Colorado Department of Education, 2013). Because *Senate Bill 10-191* is multifaceted and has many stipulations and regulations for teachers and administrators to follow, two major themes stand out that will drastically affect the way preservice teachers teach upon graduating and entering the field. The first theme is that 50% of their teaching

will be evaluated on teacher effectiveness through observations. The other 50% will be evaluated through multiple measures of student success, such as test scores and student portfolios. As teachers, policy makers, principals, and other education officials are asked to comply with this new state law, no research has been published to gauge the attitudes that preservice teachers have on how this new bill may affect their teaching practices.

Preservice and in-service teachers' attitudes toward *Colorado Senate Bill 10-191* and toward the teaching field in general are of extreme importance. Preservice teachers, when exposed to the field of teaching in their undergraduate career, already have many tools of the trade to learn. As

both students and teacher candidates, preservice teachers must learn the theory and practice of teaching as well as classroom management and how to balance teaching time and mentoring for students. For preservice teachers who choose to remain in the field, stress is added with the pressures of high stakes testing and teacher evaluation. Before *Senate Bill 10-191* was even created, there have been strikingly high numbers of teachers who leave the field after the first three or four years of teaching. According to the United States Department of Education (2006), "After 3 years, 1/3 of new teachers leave the field; after 5 years, almost half of those new teachers have left. In inner city schools, 1/2 of the teachers quit within 3 years." (para. 1).

*Colorado Senate Bill 10-191* assesses the overall quality of all teachers on the basis of teacher observations and multiple measures of student success, such as high stakes testing. Because of the already high numbers of teachers leaving the field, it is important to study whether *Senate Bill 10-191* could further exacerbate this flight from the teaching field in general. Moreover, if preservice teachers do choose the field of teaching, there is a chance that these teachers will not want to teach in high-risk schools in Colorado for fear that their job will be in jeopardy due to the new evaluation system the bill brings. It is important to investigate whether this is already in the minds of preservice teachers before they enter the field. In doing so something may be done to reduce the risk of teacher shortages in high-need areas.

## Literature Review

Before preservice teachers enter the field and begin teaching, they are faced with an immense career decision—if they even want to pursue the field of teaching, and if so, where they would like to teach. Cannata (2007), using Bourdieu's cultural reproduction model, indicated that a teacher's preference to teach in certain districts can be determined mainly by three features of the teaching job: economic decisions (such as pay rate and benefits), organizational components and functionality of the school, and

specifics of the position offered (i.e., what classes the teacher is offered to teach). In her research of both elementary and secondary preservice teacher candidates, Cannata indicated that the main factor in preservice teachers' decisions of what school to teach in was their idea of where they would fit best. Factors influencing respondents' ideas of where they would best fit included, but were not limited to, similarities in personality between the teacher candidate and principal, similarities between the teacher candidate and students, and a familiarity of the school type (largely based on if the school was similar to an area in which they had worked a lot in or grew up) (Cannata, 2007). What this research lacks, however, is the link between preservice teacher occupational decisions and the ways in which teachers will be evaluated at their first teaching job.

The accountability movement has also become a deciding factor in the geographic locations that preservice teachers would like to teach in (Ng, 2006). As *No Child Left Behind* came into effect in 2001, demands for higher student test scores immediately became added pressure for teachers within the field, particularly for teachers in high-risk districts. Researchers have noted that teachers show a reluctance to teach in areas that are high-risk because they are faced with more stress as a teacher (Despain, 2011). A national survey of over 4,000 teachers in 2001 found that 85% of teachers who work in high-risk districts felt extreme pressure to have their students produce high test scores and spent much of the school year teaching to the test, whereas only 56% of teachers in higher end school districts felt this way (Madaus, Russell, & Higgins, 2009). Even more striking was that more than 80% of respondents who were teaching in high-risk areas reported that student test scores did not reflect a quality education of their students (Madaus et al., 2009). Without teacher support of standardized testing in high-risk schools, there is high potential for job turnover and loss of the district's best teachers.

Like teachers who are already in the field, preservice teachers' attitudes on where to teach are also influenced by standardization. Ng's (2006) study on the attitudes of preservice teacher

occupational choices following the passage of *No Child Left Behind* highlights a trend that more preservice teachers are choosing to teach in suburban schools with higher test scores so that they have a greater chance of retaining their jobs. Ng found that preservice teachers were more reluctant to teach in areas that were dissimilar to where they grew up, and areas where students were diverse in ethnicity, socioeconomic status, first language, and many other categories. Not only did preservice teachers at both the elementary and secondary education level indicate a reluctance toward standardization and the new accountability movement, but most also thought the demands to teach in a lower-income or urban school district would be much harsher with standardization, causing most preservice teachers not to want to teach there (Ng, 2006). With increasing legislation that requires test scores as a measure in whether teachers are allowed to keep their jobs, the tendency for many teachers to want to teach only in areas of higher affluence could mean that the best teachers do not even step foot into lower-income schools.

Contributing to preservice teachers' concerns about teaching in low-income schools, Siwatu (2011) found that preservice teachers felt wholly unprepared to teach students from lower socioeconomic status backgrounds and students who were English Language Learners. Although this study partially explains a reluctance to teach in lower-income districts, it does not take into consideration the pressures of testing in these locations. To elaborate on the pressures preservice teachers thought they would come across in low-income districts, Gerwin (2004) reported that in conversations with mentees at Queens College in New York, preservice teachers were unwilling to teach in districts where test scores characterized job retention. Hence, this could lead research in the direction of studying the effects of test scores as measurements for both job interest as well as job preparedness. A job that a teacher is well prepared for and finds interesting fosters an environment of job retention. For preservice and in-service teachers in Colorado, *Senate Bill 10-191* will do just this: test scores will characterize

job retention. Thus, it is imperative to measure whether preservice teachers still feel a reluctance to teach in areas where test scores may be low in order to combat low numbers of new teachers willing to teach in these areas.

As the trend of standardized testing and an increased watch on teacher effectiveness continued with the Obama administration's Race to the Top 2008 initiative, more studies further indicated teacher reluctance to teach in certain schools. For example, O'Donovan (2010) indicated that teachers were unhappy with teacher evaluation and were lobbying against it. O'Donovan pointed to the National Education Association's stance against Race to the Top as means for teachers to outright refuse teaching in districts that require test scores as a measure of effectiveness. Moreover, O'Donovan warned that Race to the Top may have influenced what kinds of students teachers wanted to teach, what subjects they taught, and the schools they considered teaching in. If teachers in 2010 showed an outright refusal to teach in districts that required test scores to be a measurement of teacher evaluation, and *Senate Bill 10-191* now requires that all districts take test scores into consideration, then a more current study is needed to evaluate whether preservice teachers hold similar attitudes toward test scores as a measurement of their evaluation.

In order to partially solve the question of whether preservice teachers felt the pressures of standardization and testing, researchers Chung and Kim (2010) studied preservice teachers' attitudes toward teaching according to a standard. They found that preservice teachers feel increasing pressure to write lessons that teach according to the standard, often debilitating a teacher's freedom to teach students topics not covered by the standards. These topics include but are not limited to social skills, personal skills, and professional skills, which are of extreme importance for children and teenagers alike. Overwhelmingly, Chung and Kim's research displays a tendency for preservice teachers to make sure that they are teaching to the test, and less to what is relative to the students in their

classrooms. Although this does not answer the question of preservice teacher knowledge of and opinions on standardized testing, it determines that there are many factors influencing a preservice teacher's decisions to teach in certain areas. These results also shed light on the diversity of pressures preservice teachers face.

It should also be noted that there is both research and an ideology supporting the growth of standardized testing as a measure of teacher effectiveness, which owes largely to the growth of the accountability movement. This ideology imposes an economic lens on education, with incentives for teachers whose students score higher on tests through merit pay. Studies that support this business model of education report that teachers whose students traditionally score high support merit pay, which gives them a monetary incentive and often job security for high test scores (Albright, 2011).

Ultimately, although multiple studies have been conducted on the attitudes of teachers toward evaluation, high-stakes testing, and overall job satisfaction, there have been no published studies that attempt to measure all three of these and look for a relationship. Moreover, each study on the effects of accountability, standards, and observational evaluation on both preservice and in-service teachers all occurred after a legislative or nation-wide event: *No Child Left Behind*, *Race to the Top*, and the common core movement. Researching the influence of *Senate Bill 10-191* on preservice teachers logically follows this trend. As educational policy decisions such as *Senate Bill 10-191* continue to be passed and more focus is placed on teacher accountability, more research needs to be conducted on the effects that legislation is having on the teaching profession. Furthermore, the majority of these studies only focus on teachers who are already in the teaching field. While this is helpful information, it is important to gauge attitudes of preservice teachers so that highly qualified individuals are not leaving the field before even arriving at their first teaching job. There is little focus in educational research today on the way that legislation affects preservice teacher decisions. Preservice teacher

research needs to be made a priority in order to ensure that highly qualified, educated, and open-minded undergraduate students are pursuing the path of teaching. If preservice teachers are experiencing reluctance to teach in certain schools, certain districts, or in the teaching field in general, this could have devastating effects on the state of education today. If we do not investigate preservice teacher attitudes in this era of increasing accountability for teachers in the state of Colorado, we could be losing a generation of teachers. The purpose of this study is threefold: to assess preservice teachers' level of knowledge regarding *Senate Bill 10-191*, to examine whether *10-191* impacts preservice teacher decisions regarding where to teach, and to examine how *Bill 10-191* impacts preservice teachers' goals to teach.

## METHOD

### Design

This study was approached through a sequential mixed method design, involving a quantitative survey followed by purposeful selection of individuals to participate in a qualitative focus group. The purpose of using a mixed methods design for this research was twofold: it allowed further depth to the survey questions participants responded to, and it also gave a more detailed overview of the thought processes of preservice teachers who were readying themselves for student teaching. These participants were of particular interest to the researcher as they would quickly become a part of the teaching field in the midst of the rollout of *Bill 10-191*.

### Participants

Preservice secondary teachers who were currently enrolled in the Secondary Professional Teacher Education Program (PTEP) at a university in Northern Colorado were surveyed. A total of 125 preservice teachers completed the survey. From this pool, 31 participants were selected to partake in a focus group to gain a better perspective on the degree to which *Bill 10-191* was affecting where preservice teachers



would like to teach. For the focus group, participants were in the third phase of the PTEP program, preparing to student teach the following semester.

### Data Collection

*Survey.* A survey was created with 16 Likert items which asked participants to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with certain statements on a scale of 1-5, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Included in the survey were three major sections: how participants viewed themselves as teachers, the environment they saw themselves teaching in, and their feelings toward and general knowledge of Bill 10-191. Some sample questions from the survey were: “I have a good idea about how *Colorado Senate Bill 10-191* will influence my career” and “There are several districts in the state of Colorado that I would refuse to teach in.” This was followed by a final open-ended prompt that asked the following question: “What are some general concerns you have with the passage of *Colorado Senate Bill 10-191: Educator Effectiveness?*” Also included as a portion of the survey was a set of eight demographic questions, which asked participant gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, the community he or she grew up in, level in the teacher education program, number of hours of field experience, and whether the participant would like to teach in Colorado upon graduation.

*Focus Group.* The focus group took place in one two-hour seminar course in spring 2014. Only participants in the third level of the PTEP program, the level at which preservice teachers complete a practicum experience the semester before student teaching, were invited to participate. Participants were asked a series of questions related to their goals and aspirations as a teacher, with specific questions about *Colorado Senate Bill 10-191* and his or her teaching plans upon graduation. Some sample questions asked during the focus group were: “What do you think the responsibilities of a teacher ensue?” and “What concerns do you have with *Colorado Senate Bill 10-191: Educator Effectiveness* and

the teaching field in general?” The focus group lasted for 45 minutes and notes were recorded during the session by Dr. Boyce using a laptop in the room.

### Data Analysis

For the quantitative analyses, SPSS (version 20) was used to calculate descriptive statistics and to conduct multiple and logistic regressions to answer the research questions. These regressions investigated the relationships between demographics such as a respondent’s age, level of experience, and gender, and his or her responses to items on the survey. The logistic regression was used to analyze the relationship between participants wanting to teach in Colorado (a dichotomous outcome variable) and their knowledge or perceptions of Bill 10-191. The open-ended prompt at the end of the survey and the focus group responses were evaluated through thematic analysis.

## RESULTS

The majority of survey respondents were female, 18-24 years of age, white, and indicated a preference to teach in Colorado upon graduation. The number of respondents was almost evenly split in the three levels of the teacher education program (the first phase, second phase, and third phase) and the amount of respondents’ field experience hours varied accordingly. Complete demographic outcomes from the survey are provided in Table 1. Focus group participants were two-thirds female and all were completing a practicum preparing them to student teach the following semester. Participants varied in their content areas, age, and ethnicity, and no formal demographic data was collected during this portion of the study.

### Assessment of preservice teachers’ level of knowledge regarding Senate Bill 10-191

Participant mean responses to the item measuring their perceived level of knowledge of *Senate Bill 10-191* was 3.202 ( $SD=1.282$ ) on a 5-point scale. Thus, there was about average overall perceived knowledge of the bill for all participants. A regression analysis measured the

relationship of STEP level and level of experience with perceived knowledge of Bill 10-191 (see Table 2). Based on this model, length of time in the STEP program was significantly related to perceived knowledge of Bill 10-191 ( $p < .001$ ), but level of experience was not significantly related to perceived knowledge of the bill ( $p =$

.137) and was removed in Model 2. Table 2 and Table 3 show the results for Model 2. A notable result from this analysis showed that STEP level as a single predictor variable accounted for more than 13% of the variance in the participants' perceived knowledge of the bill.

Table 1. Demographic information.

N = 125		Total Number	%	Valid Percent
Sex	Male	46	36.8	38.7
	Female	73	58.4	61.3
	Unknown	6	4.8	--
Age	< 18 yrs.	2	1.6	1.7
	18-24 yrs.	99	79.2	83.2
	25-49 yrs.	16	12.8	13.4
	49+ yrs.	2	0.8	0.8
	Unknown	6	4.8	--
Race/Ethnicity	White	99	79.2	83.9
	Non-White	19	15.2	16.1
SES	Upper Class	1	0.8	0.9
	Upper-Middle Class	62	49.6	53.0
	Lower-Middle Class	45	36.0	38.5
	Working Class	9	7.2	7.7
	Unknown	8	6.4	--
STEP Level	161	40	32.0	33.6
	262	41	32.8	34.5
	363	38	30.4	31.9
	Unknown	6	4.8	--
Experience	0-24 hrs.	42	33.6	35.3
	25-49 hrs.	27	21.6	22.7
	50-74 hrs.	20	16.0	16.8
	75+ hrs.	30	24.0	25.2
	Unknown	6	4.8	--
Teach in CO	Yes	66	52.8	55.5
	No	6	4.8	5.0
	Maybe	47	37.6	39.5
	Unknown	6	4.8	--

Table 2. Results from regression analysis of STEP Level and level of experience on knowledge of *Colorado Senate Bill 10-191*.

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of Estimate	F	p	df
1	.389	.151	1.1952	10.353	< .0001	2, 118
2	.368	.135	1.2015	18.274	< .0001	1, 118

Note:  $n = 124$ . Model 1 includes level in the STEP program and number of hours of field experience; Model 2 includes only STEP level.

Table 3. Model 2 coefficient results from regression analysis of STEP level and knowledge of *Colorado Senate Bill 10-191*.

	$\beta$	Std. Error	t	p
Constant	2.023	0.291	9.940	<.0001
STEP	0.582	0.136	4.275	<.0001

As expected, results from the open-prompt section of the survey corresponded with the survey results of their perceived knowledge of the bill. Through thematic analysis, open-prompt sections written by most participants who were at the early stages of the STEP program had one of three general responses to being asked their general concerns about Bill 10-191: a blank response, a response indicating that the participant did not know what the bill was, or fear/uncertainty of the bill's effects on the respondent personally. For example, a participant in the open-prompt section of the survey indicated 2 out of 3 of these themes in their response: "I am not too sure what this is. I believe it deals with teachers jobs/stories depending on student test scores. This concerns me a great deal if that is the case."

Results from the focus group confirmed that preservice teachers who were in the later stages of the teacher education program had at least an average knowledge of the bill and its immediate effects. This knowledge was determined through thematic analysis of notes taken during the focus group that related to questions about concerns of the bill. For example, when asked about the concerns participants had with the bill, one student questioned its ability to actually work. Many participants agreed with this sentiment and said that they questioned whether principals

would actually have enough time and be free from enough bias to evaluate each teacher accurately. This shows an adequate understanding of the bill's regulations for only principals to evaluate teachers.

#### **Does Colorado Senate Bill 10-191 impact preservice teacher decisions regarding where to teach?**

Logistic regression was used to measure whether certain teaching situations significantly related to preservice teacher desires to teach in Colorado. The regression measured five items on the survey, marked in Table 4 as I1-I5. These items, scored using the 5-point Likert scale, included:

- I1: I know what Colorado Senate Bill 10-191 is.
- I2: I have a good idea about how Colorado Senate Bill 10-191 will influence my career.
- I3: Having a portion of my evaluation as a teacher being based on my student's test scores worries me.
- I4: Evaluations by my principal on my performance are something I feel good about.
- I5: I would prefer to teach in a district that uses a large variety of multiple measures (student test scores, portfolios, presentations) to evaluate student growth.



Table 4. Results from logistical regression analysis of statements related to Senate Bill 10-191 and desire to teach in Colorado upon graduation.

Statement	$\beta$	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp( $\beta$ )
I1	.017	.298	.003	1	.955	1.017
I2	-.041	.314	.017	1	.895	.959
I3	.043	.186	.052	1	.819	1.044
I4	.301	.272	1.226	1	.268	1.352
I5	-.226	.327	.477	1	.490	.798

Note: Variables entered were I1, I2, I3, I4, I5.

Table 5 shows results from this logistic regression indicating none of these items significantly related to the regression that was run. Similarly, participant responses from the focus group indicated that there were other factors unrelated to Bill 10-191 that determined whether preservice teachers wanted to teach in Colorado and if so, where. For example, one participant indicated that her major motivation for wanting to

teach in certain districts in Colorado was because of a scholarship that not only required her to stay in state, but also to teach in a high needs area. Another respondent who was from a state other than Colorado echoed that the reason he did not want to teach in Colorado was unrelated to the bill, and instead was affected by his choice of returning to the state he originally came from.

Table 5. Model summary from logistic regression.

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	162.036	.013	.017

### How does Bill 10-191 impact preservice teachers' goals to teach?

This question was answered using the focus group responses. Respondents indicated that Bill 10-191 would impact their goals of teaching a lot of content to their students because of the time they would be spending preparing students for standardized tests. Similarly, survey responses on the open-prompt section indicated that many respondents felt as though standardized test scores were an unfair way to judge their performance as a teacher, and that they may be forced to make more of their teaching curriculum to "teach to the test" as opposed to their own teaching methods and preferences.

Respondents of both the open survey prompt and focus group indicated that they felt that a teacher's personal relationship with their principal

could either positively or negatively influence their evaluation score. For instance, a survey respondent in the second phase of the PTEP program, indicating 25-49 hours of prior field experience, voiced, "I fear that relationships between principals and teachers will result in higher/lower scores than the teacher deserves due to favoritism. The possibility that great teachers may get fired after a few hard first years (before they become "great" teachers) [is an additional concern]."

Respondents of both the open survey prompt and focus group also indicated that they felt Bill 10-191 was creating a situation where veteran teachers were refusing to open up their classrooms to preservice teachers for gaining field experience and meeting student teaching requirements. A respondent in the survey indicated that they were

concerned with, “the responsive attitude of veteran teachers toward being so closely evaluated and how it might manifest as bitterness and disengagement [toward student teachers].” Because Bill 10-191 currently places the responsibility of student achievement not on student teachers but on supervising teachers, respondents of both the survey and focus group felt as though their options for student teaching were being closed at a more rapid rate than before Bill 10-191 was passed.

Even though participants largely felt their doors for student teaching were being closed by Bill 10-191, focus group participants also discussed the possibility of Bill 10-191’s ability to create more job opportunities for young teachers. Participants voiced the notion that because the Bill requires current teachers in the state to show both academic growth of students and exceptional teacher quality attributes through observation, teachers who currently do a poor job of helping students achieve academic growth would lose their jobs. This job loss thus opens up the door for novice, more qualified teachers who are entering the field with the expectation of evaluation.

## DISCUSSION

As expected, the length of time a participant was in the teacher education program affected the extent of knowledge participants had about Bill 10-191’s effect on teachers entering the field. This research also found that for preservice teachers at earlier stages of the teacher education program, there was fear and uncertainty related to the bill’s direct effect on preservice teachers. This is some cause for concern. Misconceptions about the bill’s effects, such as the possibility of losing a job due to student test scores, need to be addressed early on in teacher education programs across the state so that preservice teachers are not leaving the teaching field on the basis of inaccurate preconceived notions. In order to track whether preservice teachers who drop the teacher education program do so because of fear of the bill’s implications, an exit survey to the program that asks why the preservice teacher decided to leave the program could provide some answers.

Results of this study also confirmed that Senate Bill 10-191 was not a determining factor in deciding where preservice teachers wanted to teach. This is helpful information for school district recruiters as well as teacher education programs because it shows that other factors that were confirmed in earlier studies (Albright, 2011; Cannata, 2007), such as preference to teach in a district that represents similar values as the teacher candidates, show the most precedence for decision making.

Respondents in the focus group and open-prompt section of the survey indicated that they felt personal factors could affect their goals in teaching. One of these key personal factors was a teacher’s relationship with the principal, and how this could affect their job security. These results fall in line with Cannata’s (2007) research that showed teacher’s decisions on where to teach were impacted by the school’s principal. Both Cannata’s research and these results show a need for the State of Colorado to take a second look at the process of teacher evaluation. Currently, evaluations are done only by the principal and there is no clear way to determine a removal of bias for or against a teacher. A placeholder in the law that eliminates this bias would be helpful for both teachers and preservice teachers to quell the fear that personal relationships could get in the way of a professional evaluation.

Respondents also indicated that they felt some of their teaching time and focus would be taken away in order to prepare students for standardized tests. Although it is inevitable that some teaching time will be taken away to teach students test-taking skills, making state standards and objectives the same as what will be tested on standardized tests can alleviate the need to teach to the test. If the curriculum that is taught in class is accurately represented on the test, both what is on the test and the teacher’s planned curriculum can be taught simultaneously. A more effective strategy for teaching content from standardized tests in a more non-descript way is to create lessons and meet objectives creatively. Research by Gregerson, Kaufman, and Snyder (2013) has suggested that teaching content creatively can

increase scores on standardized tests for most students and can even improve and expand brain function. The adoption of common core standards and efforts by the State of Colorado in order to achieve this goal have already been put in place, and each standardized test is coming closer to merging these two concepts.

Another major component of preservice teacher attitudes on *Bill 10-191* that was addressed in this research was the opportunity preservice teachers would have in completing field experience in schools all over Colorado. Participants in this research discussed that they felt many doors were being closed on them when trying to find a veteran teacher who would support them to student teach, because the veteran teacher's job was on the line. In order to minimize tensions between veteran and preservice teachers during student teaching, the State of Colorado should provide a special protection for veteran teachers who take on student teachers and preservice teachers completing field experience. This special protection would still allow veteran teachers to show growth of their students, but the actual teaching practices and effectiveness of the student teacher would not be reflected in a veteran teacher's overall effectiveness.

Finally, participants in this study indicated that they felt they may have more opportunities to obtain a teaching job because of the idea that this bill would remove veteran teachers who were no longer showing effectiveness. Because *Senate Bill 10-191* is in the initial years of this roll-out, it is still too soon to tell whether it will have an impact on available positions. Future research on whether *Bill 10-191* is providing more opportunities for novice teachers would be beneficial for teacher education programs across the state in order to recruit more students.

### Limitations

Some limitations of this study included the overall involvement of focus group participants. While 31 members of the third phase of the teacher education program attended the focus group, only six participants spoke during the entire focus group session. Another limitation was

that this study was conducted at one university. Perceived knowledge and feelings of the bill and decisions to teach in Colorado could vary across the state. Teacher education administrators and faculty at a particular institution could easily influence these findings; therefore, a multi-site study could offer more information about these research questions.

### Conclusion

Overall, this study provides guidelines for improvement in teacher education programs throughout the state of Colorado. This study did show that participants at the later stages of the program felt more prepared and less worried about the bill's effects, likely owing to the fact that they became more knowledgeable about the bill before they went on to student teach. This was to be expected. Introducing the specific effects *Senate Bill 10-191* will have on teachers at earlier stages of the program, however, could potentially reduce the number of students leaving the teacher education program.

Also, this study showed that there is a lively perception that *Senate Bill 10-191* was decreasing the willingness of veteran teachers to welcome preservice teacher candidates into their classrooms. Encouraging the state to provide a provision to protect veteran teachers supervising preservice and student teachers may reduce the anxiety for these veteran teachers, reopening the classroom for more teacher education students.

Recommendations for future research include a longitudinal study of preservice teachers entering the field of teaching, that includes their ability to find a job, their perceptions on the effects the bill had on this process, and if their goals as a preservice teacher changed as an in-service teacher with the realities of teacher evaluations, test scores, and the roll-out of the bill as a whole. Additionally, legislation like *Senate Bill 10-191* is not unique to Colorado. Similar legislation nationwide has taken place in order to ensure that teachers are held accountable for student learning. Are preservice teachers in other states also feeling pressure from their new legislation? Is the legislation in states like

California and New York more effective than in Colorado? Questions like this must be answered in order to gain an accurate assessment of the effects state education legislation is having on teachers as well as if one system is working better than the others.

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