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A Description of the Influence of NCLB Accountability Mandates on Administrator Job Satisfaction of a Combined Middle-High Principal in Rural Georgia

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A DESCRIPTION OF THE INFLUENCE OF NCLB ACCOUNTABILITY MANDATES ON ADMINISTRATOR JOB SATISFACTION OF COMBINED MIDDLE-HIGH PRINCIPAL IN RURAL GEORGIA

by

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(Under the Direction of Charles A. Reavis)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe the influence of No Child Left Behind accountability mandates on administrator job satisfaction of a rural combined middle-high principal. The researcher identified a gap in research associated with the influence of accountability mandates on the job satisfaction of a combined middle-high principal. Therefore, the focus on a combined middle-high principal in rural Georgia allowed the researcher to conduct a qualitative case study to address the gap in current educational research. The overarching question and sub-questions guided the case study and provided the necessary framework essential in describing the influence of accountability on job satisfaction of a combination school principal in rural Georgia. Components of job satisfaction included stress, workload, and burnout. Findings had a direct impact on the leadership roles and strategies adopted by the researcher to comply with current accountability mandates. From the onset, prescribed steps ensured a quality study. The case study provided the following findings contributing to the wealth of knowledge in the realm of educational leadership: 1) Overview of No Child Left Behind; 2) Review of Literature; 3) Methodology; 4) Data Reporting; and 5) Findings and Recommendations

The initial research provided an overview of No Child Left Behind. The review of

literature represented an examination of accountability mandates and a synopsis of federal involvement in public education. The researcher described research methods utilized in the study providing triangulation to increase trustworthiness. The first three phases created the necessary framework for the researcher to conduct a qualitative study that described the perspectives of a combined middle- high principal.

The researcher reported data from multiple methods used in the case study. Needs assessment surveys, school council minutes, and in-depth interviews provided rich data for the researcher. Data supported findings reported that accountability mandates influence the focus and leadership strategies of the principal at a combined middle-high school in Georgia. Results also supported findings that recognized a significant increase in workload of the principal of a combined middle-high school as a result of accountability mandates. Additionally, data supported the finding that principals at combination schools encounter unique challenges that contrast sharply with principals of traditional public schools. The implications and recommendations from the case study provide future researchers with the framework needed to develop quantitative and qualitative research proposals to understand the influence of federal education legislation on educational leaders in Georgia public schools.

INDEX WORDS: No Child Left Behind, Accountability mandates, Administrator job satisfaction, Stress, Workload, Burnout, Case study

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DEDICATION

In recognition to her love, patience, support, and encouragement, I hereby dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Sunshine G. English. My wife and daughters, Maci and Abbi, have provided the inspiration and motivation that I needed to forge ahead through the dissertation process. The three of you are my world and I thank you for your support. With your love and support, I have been able to persevere and fulfill a life-long professional goal.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Education reform has transformed public schools and affected all stakeholders directly involved with K-12 education. Federal, state, and local education agencies and bureaucracies have traditionally ushered in periodic reform eras in public education. Federal reform legislation has caused local and state education officials to respond directly to comply with reform mandates that often shift focus of educational leaders responsible for initiating change at the local level. Students, teachers, and administrators have been impacted by increased accountability mandates established by No Child Left Behind and state responses to the federal legislation. Many studies have focused on the influence of accountability mandates on students, teachers, and administrators in America's public schools. Additional studies have examined the influence of No Child Left Behind mandates on schools throughout the nation. Critics and proponents of the legislation have discussed positive and negative outcomes of accountability. A comprehensive review of the outcomes of accountability mandates and the effect of mandates on specific stakeholders could provide essential insights for current and future administrators in the new age of accountability in public schools. In this proposal, a principal from a combined middle-high school in the state of Georgia will be the subject of a study to examine the effect of accountability on job satisfaction of the rural school administrator.

Background

Implementation of No Child Left Behind

Since 1965, federal accountability mandates have been the core of federal programs and education legislation. Federal educational agencies have altered federal policy and used the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to inject revolutionary changes in pubic education throughout America's schools. Local school systems have adopted initiatives and crafted policies to comply with federal mandates. Federal accountability mandates have transformed public education and morphed national curriculum standards into state educational policy. High-stakes testing, annual objectives, curriculum initiatives, and programs earmarked by federal funding all characterize accountability mandates (Egley and Jones, 2005). Federal education agencies serve to reinforce accountability mandates by implementing rewards and sanctions. Rewards include recognizing some schools as "Schools of Excellence" and distinguishing high-performing schools (Webb, 2005). Sanctions are levied by placing schools on "academic alert" or "needs improvement" status for failing to meet specific benchmarks intended to measure school success.

President George W. Bush signed No Child Left Behind into law in 2002. According to Packer (2001), No Child Left Behind is the current reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which President Lyndon B. Johnson enacted in 1965. The president introduced The Elementary and Secondary Education Act with the goal to reduce the achievement gap between subgroups in public schools. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 followed the same foundational approach and established similar

goals. The federal legislation linked federal education funding with specific goals from educational bureaucracies that often serve political purposes for presidential administrations. The primary purpose of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was to eliminate disparities between poor and economically advantaged students. Similarly, reducing the achievement gap between minority and low socio-economic students in America's public schools was a primary goal with the passing of No Child Left Behind (Packer, 2001).

Wilkins (2008) indicates, similar to all federal legislation, states were required to comply with the No Child Left Behind accountability legislation. According to the Georgia Department of Education (2008), No Child Left Behind directs states to implement state academic standards and state testing systems to comply with accountability components included in the federal mandate. The state of Georgia restructured curriculum initiatives, state department roles, and state standards to assist school systems throughout the state. In 2003, the Georgia Department of Education created the School Improvement Division to assist school systems and administrators in schools that fail to meet measurable objectives. The following serve as cornerstones to the No Child Left Behind Act and guide education reform: 1) Adequate Yearly Progress, 2) Public School Choice, 3) Supplemental Services, 4) Unsafe School Options, 5) Special Education Services and Support, 6) School Improvement, and 7) Limited English Proficiency Students (Georgia Department of Education, 2008).

Since 2002, states across the nation have implemented education curricula and accountability measures in compliance with No Child Left Behind legislation (Center on Education Policy, 2007). States have developed curriculum initiatives, student academic

standards, and aligned promotion and retention policies to promote student success on standardized exams (McNeil, Coppola, Radigan, and Heilig, 2008). As a result, school administrators feel extrinsic pressure to implement multiple federal, state, and local initiatives at the school level (Marks and Nance, 2007).

Honors and sanctions are clearly a part of public education in the 21st century, especially as influenced by both subtle and direct involvement of the federal government to guide the direction of America's public schools (Superfine, 2005). The honors and sanctions formulate philosophical ideologies associated with accountability. According to Packer (2007), educators have developed perceptions of No Child Left Behind mandates based on personal experiences associated with accountability measures at the school level. Packer (2007) stated many professional organizations, such as the National Education Association, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the National Parent Teacher Association, advocate the repeal or overhaul of No Child Left Behind. However, other organizations underscore the benefits of the No Child Left Behind accountability mandates. Educators, researchers, and organizations have created alliances to advocate and criticize the school reform legislation (Packer, 2007).

The researcher identified a clear gap in research related to the influence of accountability mandates on educational leaders. There are limited research studies on the impact that No Child Left Behind accountability mandates have on specific stakeholders in public education. Research has provided a review of proponent and opponent positions in regards to the current federal accountability mandate. The volatile positions of educational leaders underscore the significance role of the federal accountability legislation in public education. The researcher included the following viewpoints to

provide a synopsis of varying viewpoints related to the implementation of the No Child Left Behind legislation. Contrasting viewpoints underscore the polarizing and direct influence that the federal educational legislation has on all stakeholders in public education. A comprehensive review of the contrasting philosophical ideologies associated with No Child Left Behind and the influence of accountability mandates on public school stakeholders will provide the necessary framework for an enhanced study on the influence of accountability on administrators.

Opposition to No Child Left Behind Legislation

Critics of No Child Left Behind mandates have increased significantly since 2004. According to Zhao (2006), the current accountability mandates associated with No Child Left Behind pose a significant challenge to providing a competitive education to students entering a global market. Federal reform mandates are characterized by centralized curriculum, standardized testing, accountability, and a required course of study. Many critics argue the regimented prescription for education reform that accompanies No Child Left Behind poses a threat to student creativity and innovation (Zhao, 2006).

According to McNeil et al. (2008), dropout rates have increased due to federal accountability mandates intended to increase student retention rates. Packer (2007) indicates No Child Left Behind has failed to lower the achievement gaps that the legislation had intended to address. In 2007, the National Education Association reported results of a 2006 NEA survey analyzing the success and future of No Child Left Behind. The results of the survey of NEA members suggested that No Child Left Behind has narrowed the school curriculum, provided inadequate funding, and established benchmarks that ensure 99 percent of schools will fail to meet AYP status at some point

by 2014 (Packer, 2007). Opponents of the legislation also claim the expectation of the 100 percent student proficiency requirement by 2014 is unrealistic and unreachable (McNeil et al., 2008). According to the Center on Education Policy (2008), 69 percent of school districts rate their local and district programs as the true catalyst for school improvement.

Opponents to No Child Left Behind have argued against various elements of the accountability legislation. Critics have examined testing mandates, student achievement, compliance, and politicization of educational accountability mandates. According to Hess and Petrilli (2004), No Child Left Behind legislation was a bipartisan effort to reform education. McKim (2007) indicates that subsequently the bipartisanship eroded and many political forces in Washington became vocal critics of No Child Left Behind. By 2004, Democrats argued against No Child Left Behind by attacking the legislation for lack of funding and support for the federal accountability mandates (Hess and Petrilli, 2004). Hess and Petrilli (2004) underscored the sentiment among Democrats by quoting Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts. Kerry portrayed No Child Left Behind as a failing policy full of empty promises. "Resources-without-reform is a waste of money, and reform-without-resources is a waste of time." (p. 13)

The high-stakes testing mandates associated with No Child Left Behind have also received criticism. According to Noddings (2005), high-stakes testing associated with No Child Left Behind demoralizes all stakeholders and is highly inaccurate in measuring student achievement. The accountability testing mandates, associated with No Child Left Behind, were created to motivate students to perform well on proficiency tests. However, many critics question the construct of tests and the ability of students to perform well in a

high-stakes testing environment. Many educators insist that high-stakes proficiency tests used to determine graduation or promotion ultimately increase dropout rates for subgroup populations such as minority students (Orfield and Wald, 2000).

Reformers, responsible for developing proficiency tests, constructed accountability measures that use threats of retention and sanctions to motivate students. Popham (2007) argues that current accountability tests are instructionally insensitive. The instructional sensitivity of a test is measured by the degree to which a student's performance on tests reflects the quality of instruction received on material tested. According to Popham (2007), instructionally insensitive tests are unsuitable for use in educational programs and reform movements. Corrupt reporting and threats of school sanctions have skewed the results of high-stakes testing (Hess and Petrilli, 2004; Noddings, 2004; Popham, 2007).

Since 2002, compliance difficulties and mixed results have plagued No Child Left Behind. According to the Center on Education Policy (2007), federal mandates associated with No Child Left Behind have achieved mixed results. Findings indicate that the complexity of state compliance has made it difficult to attribute achievement gains to No Child Left Behind mandates. The simultaneous implementation of state initiatives, in an attempt to adhere to No Child Left Behind requirements, has made it virtually impossible to determine success of No Child Left Behind goals (Center of Educational Policy, 2007). O'Shea (2006) states that No Child Left Behind compliance demands continued improvement on test scores at the school level. However, states continue to struggle to implement critical elements of No Child Left Behind at the state level (Center of Educational Policy, 2005). According to Elmore (2002), curriculum initiatives tend to meet temporary goals for school systems. However, full compliance is

often difficult at the system level. Pundits also argue that the legislation represents a failure of the federal government to understand the relationship between test accountability mandates, school accountability, and intrusion of federal education policy on state departments of education (Elmore, 2002; O'Shea, 2006).

Support for No Child Left Behind Legislation

A report from the Center on Educational Policy underscores positive outcomes of No Child Left Behind federal legislation. According to the Center on Educational Policy (2005), states and districts reported students' scores on standardized increased significantly in 2004. According to Guskey (2007), the No Child Left Behind act of 2001 brought education accountability to the forefront in public education. The intent of No Child Left Behind was to improve education by identifying schools that need improvement and implement corrective action plans to stimulate school improvement in low performing schools (Egley and Jones, 2005). According to the Center on Education Policy (2007), No Child Left Behind mandates have narrowed the achievement gap between specific groups of students. Minority students and students from low socio-economic groups have also performed better on standardized tests since 2002. According to the Center on Education Policy (2007), African- American students reportedly narrowed achievement gaps in 14 of the 38 states with significant data related to the achievement gap of student subgroups. Other reported gains include increased math and reading scores in states with three or more years of test data (Center on Education Policy, 2007).

The job demands on public school administrators have directed many educators and psychologists to recommend strategies to ensure success under difficult circumstances.

No Child Left Behind and the increase of accountability mandates by the federal government have also resulted in state and local education agencies across the nation adopting measures to improve public schools (Reasoner, 1995; Zehr, 2007). Many states across the nation have responded to the demands of No Child Left Behind and accountability mandates by implementing preparatory strategies for novice administrators. For example, the Georgia Standards Commission has implemented measures to prepare administrators for principalships in Georgia's public schools. According to Zehr (2007), the state of Georgia will require all principals to complete an educational specialist degree within five years of becoming a principal in a public school. After the onset of No Child Left Behind, the Georgia Standards Commission has also cooperated with the University System of Georgia to revise the leadership certification programs to reflect the changing demands placed on administrators (Zehr, 2007).

According to Ediger (2000), accountability mandates have required administrators to focus on quality in-service activities for teachers in an effort to meet goals influenced by meeting Adequate Yearly Progress. Accountability mandates also require all stakeholders to work together to meet organizational goals and show continued school improvement. Accountability mandates have required all stakeholders to become actively involved in student success at the local school level. According to Ediger (2000), parents, teachers, and students have become more accountable for academic success in educational settings due to accountability mandates. High-stakes testing has also increased parental involvement and forged a cooperative effort with teachers to drive student success (Ediger, 2000).

Furthermore, accountability mandates are typically implemented with positive

intentions. According to Packer (2007), No Child Left Behind was created to close the achievement gaps between specific groups of students, increase student achievement, and ensure all students are taught by highly qualified educators. No Child Left Behind has also highlighted academic deficiencies by requiring school leaders to disaggregate student data to remediate students and provide programs to meet organizational goals related to school improvement (Packer, 2007).

Candid communication with all stakeholders fosters a cordial and collaborative working environment. Guskey (2007) encourages administrators to have the courage to ask difficult questions related to accountability and to seek the honest answers needed to solve problems identified by data related to Annual Measurable Objectives. According to Guskey (2007), administrators should use the mandated reporting of test results as an opportunity to share positive results with constituents. Promoting the positives of accountability mandates will promote a positive climate conducive to success (Guskey, 2007). Administrators are responsible for promoting a positive culture that is conducive to academic excellence and celebrating success with the school community creates a climate that fosters student achievement (Kelehear, 2004).

According to Bloom (2004), the district office should support administrators and provide appropriate resources to meet the challenges presented by accountability mandates. Scott (2002) identifies lack of support as a major reason for administrators leaving the profession. Bloom (2004) encourages better coordination from the superintendent's office and realistic expectations for administrators. Urban and rural systems around the country are beginning to include measures to attract qualified candidates for administrator positions and retain current administrators. Barton (2003)

states the American Association of School Administrators encourages rural districts to support principals by providing training in interpreting student data and test scores. According to Farkus, Johnson, and Duffett (2003), New York City School Chancellor Joel Klein has made recruiting and supporting principals the fundamental centerpiece of the system's improvement initiative. Coordination and specific goals associated with student achievement provide the framework of support for principals challenged to balance multiple roles. Involving all stakeholders to meet the challenges of accountability mandates and establishing a culture of achievement for students and educators provides principals the opportunity to cope with the increasing demands of accountability (O'Shea, 2006). According to Kelehear (2004), a trusting and caring atmosphere is essential element to build the supportive framework needed for administrators to be successful. Successful and supportive school systems provide principals with the supportive mechanisms needed to allow administrators to become instructional leaders in America's public schools (Bloom, 2004).

NCLB Influence - Prior Research

No Child Left Behind accountability mandates have affected students, teachers, and administrators. Students must take proficiency tests in pivotal grades to determine promotion or graduation (Ediger, 2000). Performance standards aligned to No Child Left Behind changed expectations of classroom teachers. A pedagogical paradigm shift altered the science of teaching. Due to the standards movement, student focused activities and student discovery rendered traditional teaching methods obsolete (Petress, 2005). Accountability mandates intended to measure sustained school improvement place additional expectations on school administrators. Systems expect principals to

stimulate school improvement and achieve Adequate Yearly Progress annually. According to Gehring (2003), adherence to No Child Left Behind creates a pressure-cooker environment for all stakeholders in public schools. Various studies and reports have focused on the physical and psychological effect that high-stakes tests associated with accountability have on stakeholders in school systems across the nation (Kersting, 2003; Wolf and Smith, 1995).

Students

The first group of stakeholders impacted by accountability mandates is the students. Students take high-stakes tests and must demonstrate mastery in domains linked to standardized exams. According to Skybo and Buck (2007), public disclosure of proficiency test scores is a critical component of No Child Left Behind. Accountability measures have pressured students to perform on standardized tests for promotion and overall school performance (Petress, 2005). Ediger (2000) states that high stakes testing penalizes students who often are poor test takers or have succumbed to test anxiety. Typically, failing high stakes tests result in student retention or certificates of attendance to recognize school attendance. Researchers and theorists have noted the anxiety that exists throughout the high-stakes testing process. The prior worry of possible failure on high stakes testing creates distress and excessive hours of anxiety for students (Ediger, 2000).

Teachers

Teachers have also felt the pressure from increased accountability. Accountability tests serve to evaluate teachers by student performance on standardized tests and have directly influenced classroom instruction (Popham, 2007). School administrators, guided

by state and district efforts to comply with accountability mandates, increase requirements in teacher evaluations to reflect standards movements and accountability testing. Webb (2005) indicates accountability mandates have ushered in an era of surveillance by administrators and colleagues to ensure teachers comply with the organizational goals created by federal, state, and local mandates. According to Skybo and Buck (2007), the standards movement associated with accountability mandates has often caused a decrease of enthusiasm for many teachers and contributes to teacher burnout. Other factors associated with accountability mandates that continue to have an impact on teachers are the expectation from administrators for improved test scores and restrictive teacher autonomy associated with instruction in the confines of the classroom (Center on Education Policy, 2007). Many high-quality teachers have chosen to leave the teaching profession due to unreasonable goals for student performance and increased pressure to narrow achievement gaps (Kersting, 2003).

Administrators

Administrators are also experiencing the effect of accountability. According to Cushing, Kerrins and Johnstone (2003), principals from urban and rural areas are balancing the requirements associated with No Child Left Behind with multiple administrative responsibilities expected of principals in public schools. Administrators from secondary and elementary levels balance job demands that continue to evolve in the 21st century. However, secondary administrators find themselves working 60 – 70 hours a week to meet job demands. According to Yerkes and Gauglianone (1998), many potential secondary principal candidates choose elementary positions to avoid the demands of extracurricular activities at the high school level. Cushing et al. (2003) states

that innovative school calendars, modified to meet demands of accountability mandates, impact state elementary and secondary administrators who must develop curriculum initiatives that drive reform measures at the local level. Principals must develop initiatives to coincide with alternative schedules. Extended school calendars, resulting from standardized testing mandates associated with No Child Left Behind, have affected the personal lives of administrators attempting to balance work with family time (Cushing et al., 2003).

Factors Influencing Principal Job Satisfaction

Attempts to multi-task and perform at optimal levels often contribute to administrative work load, stress, and burnout for administrators during the age of accountability (Okah, 2007). These factors are directly associated with principal job satisfaction and continue to present a challenge for administrators expected to lead schools to measurable academic excellence. Principals find they must develop various interpersonal skills to address demands from students, faculty, parents, county officials, and state/federal mandates in order to be successful in a reform environment (Rooney, 2008). Johnson (2002) described the challenge of one principal coping with the multiple responsibilities of a school principal in the age of accountability. "My desk is never clear of obligation; there are constant interruptions from parents and teachers; principals do not have a lunch hour." (p. 2).

Workload

The evolving job description of the school principal, because of No Child Left Behind, continues to increase the complexity of the position and administrator workload. According to Hess (2004), principals are responsible for leading teachers, instilling

accountability, supporting achievement, and fostering a positive culture conducive to academic excellence. The demands of the principalship are continuing to grow during the age of accountability. Winter (2001) indicates that current accountability mandates hold principals accountable for sustaining ongoing school improvement. No Child Left Behind mandates have increased accountability at all levels of local, state, and federal education agencies. As a result, school systems are requiring more of principals and assessing academic growth at the school level. According to Hess (2004), "successful administrators establish accountability systems, build a culture of excellence, deal firmly with unproductive personnel, manage information, improve business practices, recruit good supporting personnel, cultivate a strong leadership team, and negotiate political and parental pressures" (p. 33). Current reform mandates measure student achievement by standardized tests that are required by No Child Left Behind legislation (Winter, 2001). The demands and expectations placed on administrators by internal and external sources have a direct impact on administration as a profession. The demands and expectations placed on administrators, accelerated by accountability mandates, have contributed to a global shortage of school leaders (Olson, 2008).

According to Howley and Pendarvis (2002), the pressures associated with principalships have also contributed to the challenge that many school systems encounter attracting and retaining administrators at all school levels. Marks and Nance (2007) indicate No Child Left Behind mandates have restricted local autonomy of instruction and curriculum initiatives. Federal and state accountability mandates have altered the role of administrators at the local school level and the preparation potential principal candidates need to become successful school leaders. Research has indicated that many

approaches from state and local agencies are not effective in preparing potential administrators for the demands of the job (Johnson, 20002). Johnson (2002) reported results of a survey of 853 superintendents and 909 public school principals. The focus of the survey was to identify challenges for principals and strategies to improve job performance. The survey revealed 44 percent of principals stated administrators are leaving the profession due to accountability mandates and unreasonable standards (Johnson, 2002).

School status, federal funding, and maintaining Annual Measurable Objectives are the direct responsibility of the school principal. School systems expect the building principal to be an agent of change and assume the role as the instructional leader of the school. Hunt (2008) indicates that No Child Left Behind has narrowed the focus of school administrators by emphasizing the importance of meeting specific achievable goals related to school improvement. Accountability mandates under No Child Left Behind have increased the pressure on school administrators to perform and deliver positive indicators of school improvement. According to Cushing et al. (2003), job stability, reduced autonomy at the local school level and demands of maintaining Adequate Yearly Progress have been direct effects of accountability on administrators. Three aforementioned elements define job satisfaction and directly influence administrators. The three elements that define job satisfaction are workload, stress, and burnout (Kelehear, 2004). A thorough examination of these three elements will provide an essential review of the critical research that correlates to leadership during the age of accountability.

Expectations and responsibilities continue to increase for administrators. However,

support and incentives are typically not present in most school systems. The lack of support is a major contributor that causes many educators to become reluctant to embark on an administrative career (Olson, 2008). Administrators are required to adjust their roles to adapt to demands of the accountability movement characterized by a high-stakes testing environment (Egley and Jones, 2005). According to Marks and Nance (2007), the accountability reform movement has resulted in state education departments and local districts tightening control over curriculum initiatives at the school level. States continue to monitor supervisory and instructional domains relative to the public school administrator (Marks and Nance, 2007; Webb, 2005). As a result of increased federal and state involvement on local educational policy initiatives, principals must adapt and evolve with the changing landscape within the public school to be successful. Accountability requires administrators to implement initiatives and ensure teachers are teaching standards that are alignment with state and local mandates (Webb, 2005). According to Webb (2005), No Child Left Behind requires that principals collect and monitor data related to Annual Measurable Objectives. Reform strategies during the current age of accountability have increased the complexity and the demanding nature of principal positions throughout the nation (Marks and Nance, 2007; Webb, 2005; Hess, 2004).

Stress

The current age of accountability also provides an environment for increased administrative stress. According to Egley and Jones (2005), accountability mandates have transformed the principalship into an extremely demanding job. School reform requires administrators to increase student test scores and contribute to extrinsic pressure

for the school administrator. Increasing resignation and retirement rates among administrators are being reported by national media outlets (O'Shea, 2006). The impact of administrator stress and resulting stressful environments influence all stakeholders within the educational organization. Schools that function in an atmosphere of unmanaged stress begin to be dysfunctional and unhealthy (Keleher, 2004).

According to the Center on Education Policy (2007), No Child Left Behind created accountability mandates with the goal of stimulating student achievement for all children. Schools failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress are required to develop school improvement plans and corrective action plans to address deficiencies within school programs. According to the No Child Left Behind Act, schools must show sustained school improvement or state departments of education restructure schools and administrative teams at the local school level (Center on Education Policy, 2007). The increasing demands associated with accountability mandates and the threat of sanctions are contributing to elevated stress for administrators (O'Shea, 2006).

According to Gehring (2003), No Child Left Behind accountability mandates have caused many principals in the state of Texas to become fearful of losing their positions due to failure to meet Annual Measurable Objectives. The Houston School District served as the model for the No Child Left Behind legislation. Rod Paige, U.S. Secretary of Education at the time of No Child Left Behind implementation, served as the Houston school superintendent from 1994-2000. Improved scores on accountability tests earned financial incentives and job security. Gehring (2003) reported many principals committed academic fraud by changing data to maintain their positions and receive financial incentives. Petress (2005) indicates there have been escalated reports of altering

dropout data, falsified retention data of students, and manipulation of test achievement records since the implementation of accountability mandates associated with No Child Left Behind. According to O'Shea (2006), No Child Left Behind mandates have required accountability testing, revisions to class schedules, disclosures of inadequate performance, disclosure of teachers who do not meet highly qualified status, and supplemental services for students in low performing schools. Escalating expectations for accountability and the political environment created by intrusion of state and federal agencies have created an immensely stressful environment for administrators (O'Shea, 2006; Adams, 1999).

According to Bloom (2004), principalships have lost appeal for many potential administrators due to the lack of support from supervisors or government entities. Studies related to efficacy and job satisfaction of administrators often seem biased due to the negative perceptions of accountability mandates. Hess (2004) likens the principalship to a linchpin of district, state and federal reform efforts. These perceptions and descriptions have often depicted a negative connotation for public school administration as a profession. However, there are limited studies that have underscored the positive outcomes of accountability mandates (Ediger, 2000; Packer 2007).

Increased stress levels have a direct impact on administrator performance and personal health. According to Okoroma (2007), many principals experience an increase in stress levels due to poor organizational climate, demand, burnout, and occupational strain. The characterization of the principalship is of a lonely and stressful position (Kelehear, 2004). A 1998 survey conducted by the Educational Research Service also reported 46 percent of respondents with administrative certification indicated they were not interested in

administrative positions due to the political environment and stress associated with increased accountability demands (Adams, 1999).

Schmidt, Kosmoski, and Pollack (1998) conducted a study to determine the level of stress for novice principals. The study focused on answering the following questions:

1) Is the stress experienced by novice administrators manageable or out of control?
2) Does the job put novice principals at risk?
3) Are school administrators experiencing debilitating stress and threatened by premature death?

The researchers conducted a three year study on 43 beginning principals to determine if there were significant changes in blood pressure. Initial readings were taken to give a base-line blood pressure reading. Researchers took three blood pressure readings over the three year period of the study. Two participants in the study did not participate in follow-up blood pressure readings due to medical prescriptions the participants given to the participants to lower blood pressure. Participants in the study were all administrators from a large Midwestern school district. Approximately one-half of the participants held positions in sub-urban schools and rural schools. Positions included assistant principals, principals and central office position. Data indicated that the diastolic blood pressure of the participants increased significantly during the three year period. The researchers concluded that administrators suffered negative physical effects during the first three years in their roles as educational leaders (Schmidt, Kosmoski, and Pollack, 1998).

Burnout

According to DaMarto (2004), long hours and increasing demands associated with accountability are factors that lead to principal burnout. Friedman (1995) defines burnout

as physical or emotional exhaustion that creates negative attitudes and a strong sense of depersonalization within the work place. Administrator burnout is a significant problem for schools in desperate need of qualified candidates to fill principal positions. According to Adams (1999), states are experiencing difficulty encouraging teachers with certification in educational leadership to apply for administrator positions. The concern of recruitment and retention has ignited discussions related to attracting potential leaders to fill principal vacancies created by burnout associated with increased job demands. According to Farkus, Johnson, and Duffett (2003), 74 percent of the 925 administrators surveyed stated their demands associated with accountability mandates prevent maximum time needed in teacher classrooms or essential focus on student instruction.

Sixty hour work weeks, anxiety associated with increasing accountability demands, few rewards and low pay are all reasons for the difficulty in retaining and recruiting qualified applicants for principal positions (Cushing et al., 2003; Winter, 2001; Howley and Pendarvis, 2002). Hess (2004) indicates principals lack adequate preparation to handle accountability demands. Increased certification requirements have also limited the pool of qualified applicants for vacant administrative positions. According to Cushing et al. (2003), principalships are also becoming less attractive positions due to the lack of adequate funding for instructional programs and increased assessments linked with high-stakes testing mandates. Farkus, et al. (2003) reported 58 percent of 925 principals surveyed stated funding was inadequate to meet organizational goals aligned with accountability mandates and 23 percent believed minimal progress could be made in the realm of school improvement.

Accountability Movements

Influence on Georgia Principals

The state of Georgia and public school administrators continue to implement reform measures to comply with No Child Left Behind. However, two important state reform movements ushered in the current age of accountability in Georgia's public schools. According to Eady and Zepeda (2007), reform measures in the state of Georgia have played a major role in the state's education movement over the last 25 years. The state has implemented initiatives that impacted all stakeholders and influenced curriculum components that directly affected teacher instructional autonomy in the classroom. In 1985, Governor Joe Frank Harris responded to the call for reform movements in Washington and legislators passed the Quality Basic Education Act. According to Leisey (1990), curriculum initiatives and political pressures associated with the Quality Basic Education Act forced many schools to consolidate. School consolidation and curriculum initiatives transformed the educational landscape in the state of Georgia by the 1990s. The Quality Basic Education Act on 1985 placed pressure on school administrators yearning to maintain community schools and retain autonomy at the local school level (Eady and Zepeda, 2007; Leisey, 1990).

In 2000, Georgia Governor Roy Barnes supported legislation that acted as a precursor to the accountability mandates that are associated with No Child Left Behind. According to Jacobson (2000), Georgia implemented the A-Plus Education Reform Act with the intent to hold schools accountable by using test results from proficiency exams in grades three, five, and eight to help evaluate teacher performance and school improvement. Teachers and administrators who opposed accountability mandates from state or federal

bureaucratic agencies criticized the governor's education reform measure. Eady and Zepeda (2007) indicate that the majority of the legislation relied on principals to implement the measures of educational reform and to monitor for success. According to Jacobson (2000), the state accountability mandate was so entrenched with bureaucratic oversight that the state of Georgia responded by creating the Office of Educational Accountability. Administrators are responsible for supervision, evaluation, and staff development in classical educational settings. However, the A-Plus Education Reform Act of 2000 implemented sanctions for teachers who did not meet satisfactory evaluation from principal evaluations. According to Eady and Zepeday (2007), teachers would not receive salary increases if they received poor teacher evaluations. The A-Plus Education Reform Act of 2000 utilized administrator roles to achieve goals outlined by state agencies and continued to place increased demands on administrators throughout the state (Eady and Zepeday, 2007; Jacobson, 2000).

No Child Left Behind federal mandates have fundamental similarities to the A-Plus Education Reform Act of 2000 introduced by Georgia Governor Roy Barnes. The primary difference is the No Child Left Behind Act represented federal influence on education policy. Historically, state school policy and funding has been a function of state governments. According to Lips (2007), No Child Left Behind has increased the annual compliance burden of federal education programs by 7 million hours nationwide and universally distorted state testing policies.

Challenges of Rural Principals

Urban and rural principals have struggled to comply with all aspects of the No Child Left Behind mandates. However, rural principals have greater challenges as reform

mandates continue to guide educational policy. According to Salazar (2007), rural principals face different challenges in comparison with urban principals under No Child Left Behind mandates. Eady and Zepaday (2007) state that mandated reform initiatives are also more costly to rural school districts than non-rural districts. Rural school systems operate from limited budgets and often have difficulty in implementing costly reform efforts to meet the demands of No Child Left Behind.

Eady and Zephaday (2007) conducted a qualitative study of three rural school principals in the state of Georgia to examine the perspectives and practices of administrators. The study focused on supervision, evaluation, and staff development strategies of the administrators during the onset of accountability mandates. Eady and Zephaday (2007) concluded evaluative and supervisory provisions provide difficulty for many rural middle school principals. A similar study was conducted in rural schools from five states with predominate rural school systems to determine challenges of compliance to No Child Left Behind (Barton, 2003). A triangulated research approach revealed that stakeholders indicated that achieving Adequate Yearly Progress presented a substantial challenge for rural schools and principals across the nation. Rural school principals' challenges are often compounded by community issues and geographic isolation (Barton, 2003; Eady and Zephaday, 2007; and Salazar, 2007).

Statement of Problem

Accountability mandates created by No Child Left Behind are clearly recognizable by reports of test data, school sanctions, school awards, and federal funding earmarked for school improvement initiatives. Administrators feel pressure to implement and monitor curriculum initiatives associated with federal mandates. School systems across the state

of Georgia continuously strive to comply with increasing demands of benchmarks signifying excellence and continuous school improvement. Administrators in urban and rural districts face increased pressure to demonstrate excellence by raising student test scores at the school level. Principals must also adjust goals to meet increasing demands associated with accountability mandates. No Child Left Behind legislation increases minimum required scores each year until 2014. The federal legislation requires that all students reach 100 percent proficiency in all content areas by 2014. Principals are responsible for disaggregating data and implementing initiatives to meet the Annual Measurable Objectives established by No Child Left Behind.

Studies have been conducted on the effects of accountability on students, teachers, and administrators. Researchers have studied the impact of high-stakes testing associated with accountability on students. The research has focused on test anxiety and pressures to perform on proficiency tests that determine promotion or graduation status of student test takers. Research has also focused on the impact that accountability has on teachers. The research typically focuses on the effect of accountability on teacher job satisfaction, turnover, and anxiety. Research by Mulvenon, Stegman, and Ritter (2005) focused on the perceptions of test anxiety from all stakeholders in school settings. Surveys were analyzed from 251 fifth-grade students and parents, 141 teachers, 7 principals, and 8 counselors. Data indicate school climate and pressure to perform well on proficiency exams as the major contributors to test anxiety (Mulvenon et al., 2005). There have been studies that focused on various elements related to accountability and the impact that specific elements have on principals. A study was conducted by the Public Agenda (2001) that revealed that superintendents and principals identified bureaucracy and

workload as challenges for administrators during the era of school accountability. Fifty-seven percent of principals surveyed indicated workload as a major obstacle to academic excellence and administrators as being seen as instructional leaders. Similarly, 81 percent of superintendents attribute administrator attrition to federal intrusion and politicization of accountability measures (Public Agenda, 2001). The study underscores the influence of accountability on administrators leading schools during the No Child Left Behind era. However, there have been limited comprehensive studies on the influence of accountability on rural school administrators and the impact that accountability mandates have on administrator job satisfaction.

Various researchers (Okoroma, 2007; Kelehear, 2004; Reasoner, 1995) have identified the three elements that influence and determine the degree of success attained by most administrators. Administrative workload, stress, and burnout associated with accountability have been studied to examine the effect of each element on administrators in urban and rural school districts across the nation. Research has focused on individual elements associated with accountability that present challenges for administrators. However, there is limited research that examines the influence that all three elements associated with accountability have on administrator job satisfaction in specific areas. Research focused on all elements could prove beneficial to current and future administrators during the onset of accountability mandates. A comprehensive study on a rural administrator could also prepare rural administrators for the multiple leadership roles at the school level during the current era of accountability. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand the influence of accountability on administrator job satisfaction of a rural combined middle-high school principal.

Research Questions

The following question represented the overarching question: How do accountability mandates influence administrator job satisfaction of a combined middle-high principal in rural Georgia? The following sub-questions were used to formulate specific interview questions designed to answer the overarching question during the interview process:

Sub-question 1: How does workload associated with accountability mandates related to No Child Left Behind influence job satisfaction of a combined middle-high principal in rural Georgia?

Sub-question 2: How does stress associated with accountability mandates related to No Child Left Behind influence job satisfaction of a combined middle-high principal in rural Georgia?

Sub-question 3: How does burnout associated with accountability mandates related to No Child Left Behind influence job satisfaction of a combined middle-high principal in rural Georgia?

Significance of the Study

There has been extensive research conducted to identify the impact of accountability mandates on students and teachers within public schools. The researcher included significant studies conducted on the influence of accountability mandates on teachers and students. Limited research has also focused on factors of influence associated with accountability measures and their impact on administrator responsibilities. There have been significant studies designed to describe the influence of stress, workload, and burnout among practitioners during accountability. However, there has been limited research describing the influence of accountability mandates, which contribute to stress,

increased workload, and burnout, on administrator job satisfaction. Researchers typically focus on elementary, middle, and high school administrators in both rural and urban settings. Much of the research has also focused on specific elements and the influence of the element on stakeholders. Therefore, a study examining the relationship between accountability mandates and administrator job satisfaction of a rural combined middle-high school principal could enhance the professional literature for administrators by providing insight of a rural principal leading during the age of accountability.

Results of this qualitative study have implications for current and future educational leaders. Interviews, observations and a triangulated approach were utilized to validate and ensure trustworthiness of the study. Interview questions from the combined middle-high principal accurately described any negative perceptions associated with accountability and could prove beneficial in removing potential barriers that prevent retention and recruitment of prospective principals. Describing administrator insights associated with stress, workload, and burnout related to accountability mandates could also allow principals to develop strategies to cope with leading schools during the age of accountability. Furthermore, identifying pitfalls and opportunities associated with accountability mandates should prepare novice principals to align organizational goals to achieve sustained school improvement. The results of the qualitative case study could provide school superintendents with relevant understanding of the challenges that school administrators face during the onset of current federal accountability mandates.

The study could also improve the fundamental framework needed for administrator success in public schools. No administrator is successful in maintaining sustained school improvement and providing an optimal environment for academic excellence without

support from various levels. The study could provide significant insights that underscore the importance of fiscal and professional support from government entities and superintendents. Support includes professional development for administrators; principal mentorship programs; and adequate funding of academic programs needed to sustain ongoing school improvement. The results of this study could emphasize the importance of similar support mechanisms for principals at the school level. Study outcomes could also underscore the importance of appropriate responses to accountability mandates by local and state educational agencies to support administrator initiatives. Additionally, the implications of the study could provide insight on administrator job satisfaction as it relates to policies associated with accountability.

As principal of a combined middle-high school, accountability mandates have personally influenced the researcher. The study provided insights by increasing the understanding of a fellow administrator serving as a combined middle-high principal of a rural public school in Georgia. The study also produced rich information of coping strategies utilized by the principal with increased accountability due to No Child Left Behind. All stakeholders in an educational setting share school improvement goals. However, the principal is the instructional leader of the school and must shoulder the burden of ensuring the school achieves Adequate Yearly Progress. Therefore, the researcher had personal and professional interest in the outcomes of the study.

Research Procedures

Research Design

There has been limited research on the influence of accountability on administrator job satisfaction. The focus of this study was to describe the influence of accountability

on elements closely associated with administrator job satisfaction of one combined middle-high school principal in rural Georgia. The researcher also received insight from a current administrator coping with accountability mandates. According to Lichtman (2006), qualitative research is appropriate when the purpose of the study is to gain understanding or interpret social interactions. Creswell (2003) supports the use of qualitative research when the researcher has a central role within the context of the study and the researcher has experience related to the research topic. Therefore, a qualitative approach was used to record experiences of the principal during the age of accountability.

The research design was a qualitative case study. Qualitative research principles advocated by Creswell (2003) were used to guide the data collection, interpretation, analysis, and development of the research study. The researcher collected, coded, categorized, and analyzed data to determine concepts or themes that emerged from the research. Creswell (2003) advocates case studies for a researcher to explore a program in-depth. Merriam (2002) refers to a case study as a study focusing on a single entity around which there are specific boundaries. Gall et al. (2007) define a case study as an in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in a real-life setting and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon.

Participants

The participants for this study included four stakeholders that had vested interests in the public combined middle-high school. The participants in the study included the middle-high combination principal from a rural public school in Georgia, two representatives from the school council, and the former school testing coordinator. The primary focus for the study was the principal of the middle-high combination public

school. However, the researcher interviewed the principal, one teacher representative on the school council, one parent representative on the school council, and the former school testing coordinator to gather multiple viewpoints.

These interviews provided multiple viewpoints from vested stakeholders to establish the triangulation necessary to improve the trustworthiness of the case study. The participants shared insights of how accountability mandates have influenced job demands that are made evident by increased workload, stress, and burnout. The researcher analyzed data from the interviews to determine if patterns exist to support or nullify the premise that the added accountability mandates characterized by increased high stakes assessments contributes to elevated stress, workload, and burnout of the principal. Consistent interview responses contributed to the body of data necessary to be coded and identified as emergent themes from the research. Themes contributed to the body of knowledge related to educational leadership and paradigm shifts that have occurred in public education. The insights could also provide understanding for novice and veteran principals who find themselves balancing increased duties and responsibilities as building level administrators.

The two representatives of the school council consisted of one parent and one teacher representative to ensure the participants of the study have both knowledge and understanding on No Child Left Behind accountability mandates. The participants shared insights of how accountability mandates have influenced job demands of the middle-high school principal at the center of this qualitative case study. Influence of accountability on administrator job satisfaction was made evident by increased workload, stress, and burnout. The insights provided understanding for novice and veteran principals who find

themselves balancing increased duties and responsibilities as building level administrators.

The researcher also interviewed the former testing coordinator of the combined middle-high school to capture the unique setting created by the multiple, high-stakes assessments in combination public schools in rural Georgia. The former testing coordinator possessed a general level of expertise in the area of assessments at the local level. Again, standardized assessments are administered to students to comply with No Child Left Behind testing mandates and measure school improvement. The former testing coordinator also provided valuable insight related to the levels of stress, burnout, and workload that have been placed on the combined middle-high school principal. The valuable experience allowed the former school testing coordinator the ability to describe the influence of multiple assessments on the aforementioned factors of job satisfaction. The qualitative data from the interview conducted with the testing coordinator provided critical insight related to the time, pressure, and workload that are often associated with multiple assessments present at combined middle-high public schools.

Data Collection Protocol

Use of interviews to record lived experiences of a combined middle-high principal since the onset of recent accountability mandates provided the researcher with the essential data in the study. In-depth interviews were also conducted to address the overarching question and sub-questions that guide the study. The researcher also conducted in-depth interviews with one parent representatives of the school council, one teacher representative of the school council, and the former school testing coordinator to contribute the triangulation necessary to increase the trustworthiness of the case study.

The interview questions were formulated to gather information framed by the overarching question and sub-questions of the study. The interviews consisted of questions related to the elements of stress, burnout, and workload that are associated with the recent accountability mandates. The structure of the interviews included elaborative, probing, and non-directive questioning strategies advocated by Lichtman (2006). The researcher went to the work-site of the participants to conduct the interviews to accommodate participant schedules and to capture the natural setting. Conducting interviews on-site also increased the validity of results from the case study by establishing a rapport with the participants. The researcher also bracketed personal experiences to identify biases and assumptions associated with accountability mandates. Bracketing allowed the researcher to understand the described experiences of the participants and categorize coded data.

The researcher also observed a meeting involving participants during a session of the school council. The researcher supplanted the observation with minutes from previous school council meetings. The school council discusses critical accountability issues. Topics generally include discussion of assessment mandates, a critical element to the accountability movement, intended to monitor student achievement. Proficiency exams also serve as primary indicators that determine Adequate Yearly Progress for schools across the nation. Observation of a school council meeting allowed the researcher to capture participants of the research study in their natural environment. Minutes from school council meetings provided the researcher with raw data that served to suggest the emphasis of school council meetings on accountability or assessment issues. Observations of participants in natural environments were conducive to collecting

rich data that contributed to the wealth of knowledge in the area of educational leadership during the current era of accountability. The researcher scripted the meeting and used an additional source to determine the amount of emphasis on accountability, No Child Left Behind and proficiency exams from the school council. The review of school council minutes and scripted observation data provided data that indicated the emphasis that high stakes assessment and compliance to No Child left behind requires of administrators within the system. The researcher used the information from school council minutes and school council observation data to answer the overarching and sub-questions that guide the study.

Data Collection

Permission was requested from the Institutional Review Board at Georgia Southern University (IRB). Following approval from the IRB, selected participants were notified by mail and contacted by the researcher personally. All participants were informed of their rights as participants and were notified of the process of withdrawal at any time during the study. Interview schedules were set to coincide with deadlines and convenience for participants. The researcher conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews in the office of participants. Interviews, observations and relevant artifacts provided by participants were considered essential forms of data. All interviews were taped, transcribed, and coded for data analysis.

The researcher also reviewed staff assessment surveys to collect data to determine if patterns emerged that identified themes that were be reported as findings. Staff assessment surveys provide school officials specific data that indicate areas of weakness within the schools and system. The researcher conducted a qualitative analysis of coded

data from needs assessment surveys to identify themes from multiple components associated with federal education legislation addressed in the survey. The needs assessment surveys identify school weaknesses in an area of curriculum, instruction, administration, staff development, and other areas within the schools or school systems that the surveys are conducted.

Data Analysis

Data collected from interviews, observations and relevant documents were used to analyze principal descriptions of experiences associated with accountability mandates. Data was prepared by coding, categorizing, and identifying themes. The descriptions of principal responses and relevant documents were analyzed for tone, patterns of information, and general themes identified as significant in the study. Horizontalization, described by Merriam (2002) as the process of disaggregating data and treating the data equally, will be used prior to categorizing data to ensure objectivity of the study. The overarching research question and sub-questions guided the study and provided the framework for data collection and analysis.

Delimitations

- This study is delimited to one public school principal in the state of Georgia. Considering the accountability mandates public school administrators have endured due to No Child Left Behind and federal mandates, the study is restricted to public school administrators.
- This study is delimited to a rural public school principal in the state of Georgia. Considering the accountability mandates rural school administrators have endured as evidenced by elevated retention and attrition rates, the study in restricted to one rural

school administrator.

- This study in delimited to a combined middle-high public school principal. Considering the accountability mandates public school administrators in middle, high school levels have endured as evidenced by multiple high-stakes testing, and other federal mandates, the study is restricted to principals in grades 6-12.

Limitations

- This study does not consider accountability mandates implemented in private schools by local boards or public schools in grade levels P-2. The omission of these segments could limit descriptive insight from principals in these educational subgroups.

Definition of Terms

1. A Nation at Risk – Report released in 1983 revealing the state of the nation's public education system.
2. Accountability Mandates – Measures taken by federal, state, and local agencies to hold schools and school systems accountable for sustained student achievement.
3. Adequate Yearly Progress Indicators – Factors determining the status of schools. Factors include student performance on proficiency tests created by state departments of education. Target date of 2014 for 100 percent student proficiency. The state of Georgia has targeted math and reading to comply with No Child Left Behind mandates.
4. Annual Measurable Objectives – Progression outlined by states to meet Adequate Yearly Progress as school systems target for 100 percent

proficiency by 2014.

5. Burnout – Process of professional reaching professed level of job dissatisfaction. Characterized by personal/professional isolation, disassociation, and alternative career opportunities of educator or administrator. The degree that intrinsic and extrinsic stimuli influence a professional from one period of time to another.
6. Categorizing – Grouping coded data into specific topics that become subsets of specific data. (Lichtman, 2006)
7. Coding – Technique of data analysis in which text is sorted and organized to identify recurrent themes and concepts. Coding is the process; codes are the terms used to describe portions of data. (Lichtman, 2006)
8. Combined School – School that embodies multi-level schools under one school population. Example of combination schools include middle-high schools or elementary-middle schools.
9. Concepts – (Themes of Significance) In qualitative data analysis, an idea that builds on coding and categorizing of raw data. (Lichtman, 2006)
10. Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 - Education act passed to provide education opportunities for impoverished students.
11. Goals 2000 – Clinton Administration Act that provided the foundation for No Child Left Behind. Accountability measures tied to use of standardized assessments to measure student achievement and school improvement.
12. Improvement of America's Schools Act of 1994 – Clinton Administration reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

13. Job Satisfaction – The determined level that exists when professionals reach a optimal level of content with his/her profession or role within an organization. This case study will study the influence of stress, workload, and burnout attributed to accountability mandates on job satisfaction of principal of combined middle-high school.
14. Methods to Avoid Misclassifying Schools – Scales, such as confidence intervals and "safe harbor", provided to schools that show data in critical Adequate Yearly Progress indicators that allow schools to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress status for full academic years.
15. National Defense Education Act of 1958 – Federal response to the Soviet launch of Sputnik in 1957. Mandated the increase of science and mathematics in public schools.
16. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 – Current reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Sets standards, assessments, and curriculum initiatives to align with national accountability mandates. Initiates rewards and sanctions to schools systems throughout the nation that comply or fail to meet annual objectives.
17. Proficiency Tests (High-Stakes Tests) – Tests that measure student achievement, determine promotion, and assesses school improvement and status under accountability mandates associated with No Child Left Behind.
18. Sanctions – Status identification (Needs Improvement), school choice, supplemental services and corrective action for schools that fail to meet Adequate Yearly Progress.

19. Stress – Indicator of administrator job satisfaction for this study. Physiological and psychological impact of role of administrator during current age of school accountability. Evident by behavioral and/or physical complications of individuals.
20. Traditional schools – Schools that are designed to aligned with elementary, middle, and high school settings. Examples include K-2; 3-5; 6-8; and 9-12 schools.
21. Workload – Indicator of administrator job satisfaction for this study. Amount of time devoted to successful job performance and demands placed on public school administrators.

Summary

Accountability mandates are the result of a recent emphasis on school reform. Political leaders, government officials, and community leaders have advocated increased accountability in public schools in an effort to sustain student achievement. No Child Left Behind, the most recent federal mandate characterized by accountability measures, has ushered in the current emphasis on accountability. There are proponents and critics who currently debate the effectiveness of the legislation. The debate will likely continue until future reform measures replace the legislation. However, few could deny the effect of accountability mandates on public schools across the nation.

Schools across the nation use student test scores on standardized assessments to measure student achievement and comply with Annual Measurable Objectives defined under No Child Left Behind. Traditional elementary, middle, and high schools rely on standardized proficiency exams to comply with accountability mandates of No Child Left

Behind. Traditional schools align curriculum and instruction to ensure that students master standards that are aligned to the high stakes exams. Ensuring that content taught within the classroom aligns with material being assessed is a challenge for all public school administrators. However, rural combination schools rely on multiple standardized tests from various grade levels. The combination schools must meet baseline achievement goals and benchmarks from dual grade levels. In comparison, combination schools have two times as many standardized assessments as traditional schools. The high-stakes environment created by multiple proficiency exams underscores the need for research at the combined middle-high school level to understand the influence of accountability on the principal as a stakeholder.

School curriculums, testing, instruction, school improvement goals, and initiatives have changed to align with mandates associated with No Child Left Behind. The federal mandates have affected students, teachers, and administrators so they struggle to adapt to accountability measures at the local school level. However, limited research exists related to the influence of accountability on administrator job satisfaction, particularly at the combined middle-high school level.

This qualitative case study provided a description of principals coping with the changes, challenges, and opportunities presented by the implementation of No Child Left Behind mandates and the impact on the area of job satisfaction: stress, burnout, and workload. Data collection relied on direct interviews with participants, observations, and relative documents in the study. The interpretations and analysis derived from the principal insights could prove beneficial for current and prospective administrators during the accountability era. Current administrators could use the findings to implement coping

strategies or initiatives to manage accountability mandates effectively. Potential administrators could perhaps use the findings to prepare for principalships. These potential outcomes of the study underscored the necessity of the research. The researcher assumed a central role in the research. Furthermore, accountability mandates have directly impacted the researcher in his current position as principal of a combined middle-high public school in rural Georgia. However, triangulation and multiple data collection research-based models were used to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings found in this case study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to gather a description of the influence of accountability mandates on the job satisfaction of a combined middle-high public school principal in rural Georgia. The researcher identified stress, workload, and burnout as essential components of administrator job satisfaction. There have been multiple studies related to accountability mandates and the influence that federal education mandates have on various stakeholders. However, there are limited studies of how accountability mandates impact job satisfaction of rural school administrators who must balance various roles as educational leaders. Therefore, a comprehensive qualitative study of the experiences of a rural school principal was conducted to describe the influence accountability mandates have on job satisfaction of one educational leader at a combined middle-high public school.

Prior to conducting the qualitative case study, the researcher conducted a review of literature that included a comprehensive examination of critical elements associated with the accountability movement and the influence that mandates have on job satisfaction of school administrators. The review of literature focused on the following elements associated with school accountability and this qualitative study: (1) History of accountability movements by federal education agencies; (2) The No Child Left Behind Act; (3) The state of Georgia's implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act; (4) Studies examining the impact of the No Child Left Behind on rural public school principals; and 5) Positive and negative factors influencing administrator job satisfaction.

Accountability Movements

Throughout the recent history of America's public schools, accountability mandates have provided the foundation for federal programs and educational legislation. Accountability mandates are characterized by high-stakes testing, annual objectives, curriculum initiatives, and programs earmarked by federal funding. Rewards and sanctions from federal education agencies reinforce these accountability mandates. Rewards include honors of distinction and recognition for schools attaining academic excellence. Additional funding for accelerated programs and innovative initiatives serve as rewards for schools of excellence. Sanctions include placing schools on academic alert or needs improvement status for failing to meet specific benchmarks intended to measure school success. States have constructed curriculum initiatives, student academic standards, and aligned promotion and retention policies to correspond with student success on standardized tests (McNeil, L., et al., 2008).

Honors and sanctions are clearly a part of public education in the 21st century. However, one must examine the subtle and direct involvement of the federal government to guide the direction of America's public schools. The examination of federal government intervention in public school reform provides the necessary framework needed to study the impact of current accountability mandates on job satisfaction of school administrators as they strive to achieve rewards and avoid sanctions from federal education agencies.

According to Superfine (2005), accountability mandates were not invented with the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. There have been various executive and federal acts that contributed to the current age of accountability. Five

critical periods of federal legislation changed the direction of public schools and the measure of accountability that was placed on school systems across the nation. The National Defense Education Act of 1958, Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, A Nation at Risk report of 1983, President Bill Clinton's Goals 2000 of 1994, and No Child Left Behind of 2001 have increased the involvement of the federal government by implementing program initiatives and federal mandates that have directed local school district policies (Superfine, 2005).

The National Defense Education Act of 1958

According to Hunt (2008), the launch of the Russian satellite Sputnik in 1957 changed the role of the federal government and the amount of federal involvement in American public education. The federal government enacted legislation that created a precedent of federal involvement in public education and increased federal influence in curriculum initiatives in America's public schools. The National Defense Education Act (NDEA) was passed in 1958 in response to the launch of Sputnik. Western Standard Publishing (2001) recorded the following statement made by President Dwight D. Eisenhower on September 2, 1958 ushering in a new era of federal involvement in K-12 public education: "I have today signed into law H.R. 13247, the National Defense Education Act. This Act, which is an emergency undertaking to be terminated after four years, will in that time do much to strengthen our American system of education so that it can meet the broad and increasing demands imposed upon it by considerations of basic national security. While the Congress did not see fit to provide a limited number of National Defense scholarships, which I recommended as an incentive to our most promising youth, I consider this Act to be a sound and constructive piece of legislation. Much remains to

be done to bring American education to levels consistent with the needs of our society. The federal government having done its share, the people of the country, working through their local and State governments and through private agencies, must now redouble their efforts toward this end" (p. 1).

According to Superfine (2005), the NDEA implemented increased math, science, and foreign language for students in public schools across the nation. Federal components of the legislation did not increase accountability mandates monitored by federal education bureaucracies. NDEA represented an indirect response by the federal government to influence public education (Robelen, 2005). However, NDEA did set an important precedent related to the direct involvement of the federal government on education policy. Prior to NDEA, federal involvement was virtually non-existent. Public education policy provided state departments of education complete autonomy over schools and local boards exercised considerable influence. According to Lips (2008), NDEA also thrust education into the platforms of political parties and politicized education reform for presidential candidates for future national elections. As a result of NDEA, future presidents would develop educational policy and reform mandates in an effort to gain support from professional education organizations. Eisenhower provided the springboard for all future presidents to mold educational policy during the term in office and attempt to influence education reform throughout the nation. Federal legislation pressured schools to alter curriculums to become compliant. The core elements of NDEA continue to influence federal reform measures today. The influence of NDEA and an increased emphasis on math, science and foreign language continues to guide core curriculum initiatives in today's public schools (Superfine, 2005; Lips, 2008).

According to Hunt (2008), the federal response to the launch of Sputnik was viewed as an appropriate intervention by most Americans. Following the mandated increase of math, science, and foreign language by NDEA, public education continued to be guided primarily by state departments of education and policy developed by local boards of education. However, federal involvement in public education would continue to increase under future presidential administrations.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed legislation that would serve as the cornerstone of federal education mandates. The landmark education act served as a critical component to the president's executive platform known as the Great Society (Popham, 2007). On April 11, 1965, President Johnson signed into law the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) with the purpose of bringing equity in public education. According to Robelen (2005), President Johnson stood on the steps of the one-room school house that he once attended and announced education legislation that would change the approach the federal government would take in providing funding for public education. Robelen (2005) quoted President Johnson's message to an audience in Stonewall, Texas gathered for the signing of the landmark legislation: "By passing this bill, we bridge the gap between hopelessness and hope for more than 5 million educationally deprived children. I believe deeply no law I have signed or will ever sign means more to the future of America" (p. 2).

Hoff (2007) indicates that ESEA was created to provide public schools with an additional source of funding for K-12 education. ESEA established various measures that earmarked federal funding for public schools. According to Aud (2007), Title I and

federal grants are essential components of ESEA designed to provide equitable educational opportunities for disadvantaged students living in poverty. ESEA was developed to ensure equity for minority and low socio-economic children by requiring state and local education agencies to provide equitable funding for students in impoverished school districts (Podesta and Brown, 2008). The passage of ESEA represented the greatest increase of federal involvement in public education; the stipulations placed on public schools were unprecedented. Federal K-12 spending tripled during the mid 1960s and ESEA represented the first direct involvement in the development of policy and mandates linked to education funding. ESEA required public schools across the nation to comply with federal education guidelines to receive federal funding (Robelen, 2005).

ESEA was a substantial act of legislation that served as the cornerstone of the Johnson Administration's War on Poverty (Robelen, 2005). The legislation has continued to provide K-12 public schools with funding earmarked to provide economically deprived public school districts equitable resources to educate students in poverty-stricken areas. According to Aud (2007), ESEA was also designed to transfer funding through state governments, thereby resulting in substantial increases in education bureaucracy at the state level. The ESEA has served as the basis for modern federal executive platforms and has become a catalyst for a broader role for the federal government in policy development public education. Since 1965, the federal government has reauthorized ESEA eight times by presidential administrations and congress (Aud, 2007; Robelen, 2005; Lips, 2008; Popham, 2007).

ESEA has been altered in various ways in the 40 years since the passage in 1965.

According to Robelen (2005), the eight changes that occurred since the enactment of the legislation has spanned five presidential administrations. Presidents Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Bush, and Clinton all amended the law to better serve the students in poverty-stricken areas. Changes included programs for bilingual children and requirements for states to provide equitable funding for Title I schools (Robelen, 2005). Since 1994, the reauthorization of ESEA has been recognized by names that are more familiar and presidential administrations have been closely associated with the reauthorizations. President Bill Clinton's "Improving America's Schools Act" of 1994 and President George W. Bush's "No Child Left Behind Act" of 2001 are also reauthorizations of ESEA (McKim, 2007). Both acts have enhanced federal involvement and accelerated school reform since the mid 1990s. However, a report released in 1983 during the Reagan administration served as the precursor to current federal accountability mandates that shape school curriculums and influence instructional goals (Lips, 2008; Hunt, 2008).

A Nation at Risk Report of 1983

In 1981, President Reagan created the National Commission on Excellence in Education. According to Holton (2003), President Reagan had specific goals for the commission and sought to influence the commission to accomplish directives that closely aligned with the president. President Reagan established five specific goals for the commission. The fundamental elements or desired outcomes from the Reagan Administration were: 1) Bring God back in the classroom; 2) Encourage tuition tax credits for families using private schools; 3) Support voucher education ; 4) Leave the primary responsibility for education to parents; and 5) and Abolish the Department of Education (Holton, 2003). The goals and desired outcomes of the report by the Reagan

Administration, prior to the completion of the report, did not reflect the final consensus of the commission. The commission's report dramatically changed the approach administrators would take to leadership in public schools and how educators viewed instruction within the classroom (Hunt, 2008).

According to Guthrie and Springer (2004), the commission described educational achievement was on a downward trajectory and the lack of emphasis on technology continued to create an educational system that could not compete in the new global market. To emphasize the dire status of public schools, the commission released an influential report on the status of America's schools that described an enormous achievement gap between public schools in the United States and schools in nations around the world. According to Holton (2003), the opening statement of the report emphasizes the significance of the dire condition of our nation's public schools at the dawn of the 21st century. Gerald Holton served on the commission and began with the following statement: "America is at risk. If a hostile and wily foreign power had somehow imposed on America the pervasively mediocre educational performance that exists today, we would have declared war on it" (p. 3).

A Nation at Risk strengthened federal government involvement in public education by alarming the country of lagging academic achievement of America's students in comparison to students from other countries. Zhao (2006) states the writers of the report feared that the United States would fall behind countries that invest in science and technology. The commission specifically identified South Korea and Japan as countries surging ahead of the United States in the new global economy. A Nation at Risk sounded the call for school improvement and provided recommendations for school systems to

accomplish school improvement goals (Seed, 2008).

According to Holton (2003), A Nation at Risk recommended a rigorous high school curriculum focusing on core subjects of math, social studies and science. The commission also underscored the importance of high expectations for student performance and behavior demonstrated by effective school leaders. Hunt (2008) states that A Nation at Risk pressed principals to recognize the difference between management and leadership. The commission focused on school leadership and emphasized the importance of developing authentic school reform by ensuring the role of administrators include setting goals, developing consensus, and persuading all practitioners to achieve sustained school improvement (Hunt, 2008). Members of the commission also understood to achieve sustainable school reform, policy-makers should be committed to supporting and funding reform efforts with the ultimate goal being to promote the national interest in education (Holton, 2003).

After the National Commission on Excellence in Education released A Nation at Risk in 1983, political leaders rallied to develop educational policy that would stimulate school improvement during a global economic environment and establish educational platforms that would improve their chances to secure elections. According to Lips (2008), the Reagan administration argued for an increase on parental school choice and strengthening state and local control of public K-12 schools. Political and government leaders emphasized the threat that poor education and poor school leadership would pose to the United States in a competitive global economy. A Nation at Risk stimulated the modern excellence, restructuring, and standards movements by federal education agencies (Hunt, 2008).

President George H. W. Bush followed the Reagan administration and advocated for increased state and local control over the local public school systems. However, the last decade of the 20th century would prove to be a pivotal decade in the federal involvement in educational policy and accountability of public schools. President Bill Clinton broadened the scope of federal involvement in public education and defended the increased federal role based on a changing world economy (Hunt, 2008).

According to Lips (2008), globalization is a concept recognized by educational reformers at the dawn of the 21st century and provided the merit needed for the current foundation for federal accountability in public schools. Educators and politicians used the concept of globalization to justify federal involvement in public education. Flynn (1995) explained that globalization gave credence to the accountability movement. Due to globalization, the competitive world market demands that teachers prepare students to compete against students internationally. Many leaders in education and government entities compare globalization with the Soviet launch of Sputnik. According to many, globalization is the primary factor for the current focus on science, mathematics, and a move toward national standards in K-12 education (Lip, 2008; Flynn; 1995).

According to Lips (2008), author Thomas Friedman provided federal educational reformers the evidence they needed to support federal involvement in public education. In 2005, the release of Friedman's book *The World Is Flat* described a world that was flattening economically. Friedman described a changing world where Americans must compete internationally with workers from other nations in a global job market (Lips, 2008).

According to Lips (2008), many educational reformers lauded Friedman's book as

validating previous federal participation in public education and provided the premise for future federal education mandates created with the intention to prepare students for an ever-changing world. Zhao (2006) describes a global economy that requires the United States to avoid an approach of isolationism and expresses the need to reform education to meet the demands of a changing world. However, the type of school reform needed to produce sustained achievement continues to be debated. As a result of A Nation at Risk, many educational leaders advocated the implementation of national standards. Since 1983, the achievement, restructuring, and standards movements have dominated public school reform in the United States in an effort to be competitive in the global market (Hunt, 2008). In sharp contrast, the national standards movement is vastly different from the approach to educational reform adopted by many of the nation's global competitors. China, Singapore, Japan, and South Korea adopted reform measures to focus on innovation and creativity to create an edge in the global economy that emerged in the last decade of the 20th century (Zhao, 2006).

Goals 2000 of 1994

President Clinton's support for school reform which focused on nationalization of education standards was evident in his speech commemorating the signing of the Goals 2000 legislation on March 31, 1994. President Clinton spoke to a crowd at Zamorano Fine Arts AcademyElementary School in San Diego, CA and defended the federal action of strengthening core standards by the following statement: "Besides these academic standards, this bill will set national skills standards to ensure that our workers are better trained for the high-skill, high-wage jobs we want for America and better to compete in the world (Clinton, 2003).

According to Lips (2008), three federal education acts created the current educational accountability environment that the nation's public schools exist. All of the federal mandates were developed upon deep ideological insight supported by the globalization and competitive nature of the world economy. The Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) broadened the role of federal influence in public education. IASA served as a precursor to Goals 2000 that would further federalize public education in our nation and No Child Left Behind that increased federal accountability mandates on public schools across America (Schlafly, 1997; Lips, 2008; Hess and Petrilli, 2004).

President Clinton, similar to previous presidents, used the reauthorization of ESEA to advance his education agenda. In 1994, the Clinton Administration passed the IASA reauthorizing ESEA (McKim, 2007). Five basic elements describe the new direction of Title I after the 1994 reauthorization of ESEA (Plunkett, 1997). The five critical changes to Title I, as a result of the 1994 reauthorization, include the following: 1) Increased performance and content standards at the state and local level; 2) Focus on teaching and learning with enhanced professional development opportunities related to accelerated curriculums and continuous assessments; 3) Flexibility for local initiatives aimed at enhancing student performance; 4) Links among stakeholders and community schools systems/services; and 5) Resources targeted to meet the greatest student need at the local school level (Plunkett, 1997).

Fox (1999) stated the Clinton Administration used the reauthorization to alter the critical elements that create the fundamental framework of the ESEA of 1965. At the core of the 1994 reauthorization was revisiting and revamping Title I allocations to public school systems. According to Cradler and Bridgforth (1995), IASA provided more than

7 billion dollars for education programs in America's public schools. The reauthorization of ESEA also allowed more flexibility for local school leaders to support school initiatives and provided school systems with funding earmarked for professional development opportunities for educators. In 1994, President Clinton and congress allocated 1 billion dollars of the annual Title I federal educational funding to hire paraprofessionals to assist in classrooms throughout America's public schools (Fox, 1999; Plunkett, 1997).

The shift in funding ignited a debate on the merit of paraprofessionals in public schools and educational reformers aligned themselves to advocate or oppose the federalization of public education. According to Plunkett (1997), proponents of the reauthorization supported IASA and embraced the legislation for representing a paradigm shift in educational policy and ideology. The critics of IASA argued that the legislation was enacted to provide relief to the impoverished middle-aged women who represented a growing number of disadvantaged in the American population searching for work. According to Fox (1999), opposition underscored the failure to hire qualified paraprofessionals, misuse of vital federal education funding, and an inability of the United States Department of Education to show that classroom relationships between students and paraprofessionals improve student achievement. Opponents insisted that the implementation of IASA and the authorization of paraprofessional compensation included in Title I funding did little to help the schoolchildren the legislation intended to target (Fox, 1999).

According to Plunkett (1997), IASA required that states develop challenging state standards and assessments for core subjects such as math, reading, and language arts.

The reauthorization of ESEA implemented standardized assessments in specific content areas as the essential element of the legislation that established accountability among school leaders, teachers, and school officials. IASA also provided an innovative approach that included parental and community involvement as a requirement under Title I of the legislation. Johnson and Ginsberg (1996) state that high-poverty schools receiving Title I funding would also receive sustained support from school support teams. School support teams where comprised of external groups of teachers, pupil services personnel, and other persons with expertise in school reform. The sole purpose of these teams was to plan, implement, and achieve sustainable school improvement (Johnson and Ginsberg, 1996; Plunkett, 1997).

IASA worked in conjunction with Goals 2000. According to Cradler and Bridgeforth (1995), IASA reauthorized the ESEA of 1965 and pushed for systemic reform for America's public schools. President Clinton passed Goals 2000 legislation to provide national standards for public education. Cradler and Bridgeforth (1995) indicate that Goals 2000 set specific standards for schools to meet by 2000 and ushered in the current age of accountability. President Clinton signed the Goals 2000 legislation setting specific achievement benchmarks for schools to accomplish by the year 2000 and created the standards movement for public education (Superfine, 2005; Cradler and Bridgeforth, 1995).

President Clinton set lofty goals for the legislation from the onset of the enactment of Goals 2000 and adopted six goals for America's public schools. According to Donohoe (1994), the six goals were: 1) All children in America will start school ready to learn. 2) The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent. 3) American

students will leave grades 4, 8, 12, having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics, science, history and geography. 4) U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement. 5) Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. 6) Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning (p. 1).

Critics and proponents of federal involvement in public education trace the current age of accountability to the Goals 2000 legislation passed by the Clinton administration in 1994. According to Holland (1999), the Goals 2000: Educate America Act established standards, set specific goals, and established a federal grant program that would stimulate and encourage school reform at the local level. Goals 2000 also implemented high-stakes testing, measurable objectives, and benchmarks for schools to reach in specific content areas. According to Schlafly (1997), Goals 2000 required states to submit improvement plans to the federal government, establish a strategy for meeting national education goals, and establish state standards in alignment with national professional standards.

According to Superfine (2005), Goals 2000 represented direct involvement of the federal government in educational policy reserved for state control by the United Stated Constitution. Goals 2000 was primarily a mandate that caused state departments of education to restructure state curriculum goals and program initiatives to meet national curriculum goals. The legislation provided a preview of many current NCLB mandates that influence public schools today. Goals 2000 provided financial flexibility, accountability measures, achievement standards, and assessments to measure student

academic success (Superfine, 2005).

No Child Left Behind of 2001

The move toward federal accountability began with the launch of Sputnik and the National Defense Education Act. According to Kafelnikov (2007), the paradigm shift by the federal government and federal involvement in public education was a direct result of the National Defense Education Act. The act and federal legislation that followed ensured the involvement of the federal government in public education policy, curriculum, assessment, and national standards. However, the No Child Left Behind Act has ushered in the current accountability movement in public education by implementing accountability systems that require high-stakes state standardized assessments that measure student mastery of content standards (Superfine, 2005).

President George W. Bush signed No Child Left Behind into law on January 8, 2002. President Bush introduced No Child Left Behind as the reauthorization of the ESEA. President Bush's remarks given at DAR Constitution Hall provided an indication of the purpose and goal of No Child Left Behind. The president stated, "Yesterday, I had the high honor of signing H.R. 1—the No Child Left Behind Act—which begins a new and hopeful era for American education. We are bringing new resources and higher standards to struggling schools. We are placing greater emphasis on the basics of reading and math. And we are giving parents better information and more say in how their sons and daughters are educated. Two decades ago, experts looked at public education and saw 'A Nation at Risk'. A nation described at risk is now a nation on the road to reform" (Bush, 2002, p. 36).

According to Skybo and Buck (2007), the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has

increased the emphasis on proficiency testing to measure school performance, evaluate teacher performance, and quantify educational outcomes of students. No Child Left Behind implements sanctions in the form of school choice for students attending schools that fail to meet Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO); required tutorial options for schools that fail to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP); and federal funding tied to specific initiatives in order for schools to stimulate school improvement. The president underscored the premise of the legislation in his remarks the day after his signing reauthorizing ESEA. President Bush remarked, "We are putting more resources into the classroom. This year, the Federal Government will spend more than $22 billion on elementary and secondary education, an increase of more than 25 percent over last year. Because of our commitment to assist low-income students, we will increase spending on Title I by 18 percent. Because teachers are so important, we will increase spending on teacher training by 33 percent. And because reading is the gateway to all learning, we will more than triple Federal funding for early reading programs. We are willing to spend more for education, and we will spend it on what works. In return for this commitment, my administration and the American people expect results. We expect every child to learn basic skills. We expect failing schools to be turned around. We expect teachers and principals to do their jobs well, to have a firm grasp on their subject matter and to welcome measurement and accountability" (Bush, 2002, p.37).

No Child Left Behind is a comprehensive approach by the federal government to reform public education. However, the reauthorization of ESEA under the Bush Administration can be described by three distinctive categories influencing public education. According to Seed (2008), No Child Left Behind provides public education

with a prescriptive approach to stimulate school improvement. The prescriptive approach provided by No Child Left Behind encompasses three distinctive categories intended to reform public education and improve low performing schools. The three distinctive categories of the No Child Left Behind Act are: 1) Accountability mandates driven by high-stakes that measure Adequate Yearly Progress of school systems. 2) Sanctions dominated by school choice, school restructuring, and supplemental services provided to students of needs improvement schools. 3) Federal funding sources that direct school initiatives, create performance standards, and guide professional development training of teachers (Lips, 2008; Ohanian and Kovacs, 2007; Superfine, 2000).

Accountability mandates associated with No Child Left Behind interrelate to high-stakes indicators influencing school improvement. Popham (2007) reports No Child Left Behind has set the year 2014 as the year that all students to reach proficiency in all content areas. In order to reach this goal, the federal government has legislated specific requirements for state departments of education to ensure school systems meet testing benchmarks and achievement goals annually. Boswell (2004) provided an overview of the No Child Left Behind Act and identified the basic state accountability measures required by the federal reauthorization of ESEA. The indicators include testing benchmarks, proficiency testing in specified grades, minimum graduation rates, attendance benchmarks, assessment of special needs students, and assessment of students with limited English proficiency. These annual requirements that schools must meet comprise the accountability mandates that determine if schools make Adequate Yearly Progress (Popham, 2007; Wong, 2008; Boswell, 2004).

According to Kersting (2003), the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 utilizes

proficiency testing as an essential factor in determining the level of school achievement and progress. Again, Adequate Yearly Progress defines and assesses progress in public education. Muvenon, Stegman, and Ritter (2005) indicate the primary tool for holding schools accountable under No Child Left Behind are proficiency tests in grades 3 – 8 and high school graduation exams. States must comply with the federal legislation by implementing standardized tests that determine promotion to specified grades and graduation from high school. States across the nation use standardized tests to measure student achievement and mean scores as major indicators for determining Adequate Yearly Progress. For example, the state of South Carolina uses standardized tests called Palmetto Achievement Challenging Tests to measure student achievement in grades 3 – 8 and to determine status of Adequate Yearly Progress (Zhang and Cowen, 2009).

The high-stakes testing environment has driven many schools across the nation to develop curriculum and instruction initiatives that focus on teaching to the standardized assessments. Proficiency tests are used to quantify educational outcomes of students, evaluate teacher performance, and rate school performance (Skybo and Buck, 2007). As stated previously, No Child Left Behind was implemented with the intent to reduce the achievement gap between students in low-socioeconomic environments and students in affluent areas. However, studies have provided data that indicates the achievement gap remains virtually unchanged under federal mandates associated with No Child Left Behind. Zhang and Cowen (2009) conducted a study in South Carolina to identify common characteristics of failing and choice schools. Prior to the study, Zhang and Cowen (2009) hypothesized that there was a strong correlation between failing and choice schools and geographic locale, school attributes and neighborhood characteristics.

The investigation revealed that high minority student populations and poverty characterized failing schools. Therefore, data indicated that No Child Left Behind had provided minimal reduction in the achievement gap between minority and white students in South Carolina's public schools (Zhanag and Cowen, 2009).

Proficiency tests often foster stressful and restrictive learning environments within public school systems. Critics and proponents both recognize the impact that high-stakes tests have on stakeholders within school settings. Critics and supporters of the proficiency tests are definitive on their beliefs (Kersting, 2003). Supporters of No Child Left Behind and proficiency tests laud the ease of accountability assessments by disaggregating and analyzing data. Kersting (2003) reported positive outcomes of proficiency testing and quoted experts who advocated accountability testing. Janet Wall, co-chairman of the Joint Committee on Testing Practice (JCTP), strongly advocates high-stakes testing and attributes school improvement to accountability associated with testing mandates (Kersting, 2003).

Sack-Min (2009) identifies the broad-brush approach of high-stakes testing as the primary accountability measure that No Child Left Behind critics oppose. Standardized tests have been the primary form of assessment measuring student achievement and determining Adequate Yearly Progress. Educators and government officials opposing No Child Left Behind advocate multiple forms of assessment to determine school status (Sack-Min, 2009). Performance indicators associated with proficiency tests effect the status of public schools across the nation. Many argue reliance on testing mandates to measure school performance or success is deeply flawed and skewed. No Child Left Behind has used high-stakes testing to threaten, punish, and broadly compare America's

public schools (Noddings, 2005). Opponents of the legislation also allude to the target of 2014 for 100 percent proficiency for all students as unattainable and impractical. Critics contend that most public schools will fail to reach Adequate Yearly Progress and become schools identified as Needs Improvement schools. Schools from across the nation risk receiving this status with such an unrealistic benchmark for student success on proficiency tests (Popham, 2007).

No Child Left Behind also links accountability mandates required by the legislation with federal funding. The funding formula is flawed at the core of the accountability legislation changes (Schlafer, 2009). The federal mandate links funding to needs improvement schools and requires schools to adhere to the specific guidelines outlined in the reform measure. School systems must implement school improvement initiatives and provide fiscal resources for students in schools in needs improvement status. Wong (2008) underscores that No Child Left Behind, similar to other reauthorizations of ESEA, utilizes Title I to provide funding for schools. Title I funds, under No Child Left Behind, are intended to reduce the achievement gap between students in impoverished areas and economically advantaged school districts. Funding sources consist of direct and indirect sources of federal funding. The federal government provides federal assistance directly by providing funding at the school level for school improvement initiatives and indirectly by funding supplemental services such as tutoring from educational services for low-income students from schools that fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress for three consecutive years (Boswell, 2004).

Funding tied to Adequate Yearly Progress fails to provide schools with the vital resources needed to remain schools of Excellence (Zhang and Cowen, 2009). Title I

funding is available for school systems that have high percentages of low-socioeconomic students. ESEA was signed in 1965 with the intent to provide federal funding needed to reduce achievement gaps that were created by conditions of poverty in under funded school systems. According to Hoff (2007), No Child Left Behind had a budget of $23.6 billion for fiscal year 2007 and clearly accounted for significant financial growth to adequately fund the federal education mandate. Opponents of No Child Left Behind argue the funding component of the legislation is fundamentally flawed. Wong (2008) emphatically argues for redistribution of the fiscal capacity of funding measures defined by No Child Left Behind. Reformers advocate adequate funding for resources, teacher development, and program initiatives for high performing schools (Wong, 2008; Zhang and Cowen 2009; Schlafer, 2009).

No Child Left Behind has moved America's public schools closer to national education standards and created sanctions to hold schools accountable for sustainable school improvement (Sack-Min, 2009). The 2001 reauthorization of ESEA has also opened the door for federal programs that would broaden the scope of public education in the future and provided current challenges for the same low-socioeconomic school systems that the legislation intended to help by narrowing the achievement gap. A study of 55 failing elementary schools in South Carolina revealed that schools in needs improvement status had common characteristics. The study showed that No Child Left Behind affected all schools in rural, suburban, and urban areas. Furthermore, schools with high minority populations, high poverty rates, and high teacher turnover continued to struggle to reduce the achievement gap. The factors of demographics, socioeconomic status, and teacher retention rates continued to be strong indicators of academic success

under No Child Left Behind (Zhang and Cowen, 2009).

Schlafer (2009) indicates that No Child Left Behind could lead to privatization of public schools by including vouchers and charter schools. Since 2001, the debate related to the role of school vouchers and charter schools in public education have escalated. The debate is closely associated with school choice. According to Zhang and Cowen (2009), rural schools systems often lack school choice options. Politicians and advocates of privatization have used the issue to push vouchers to provide low and middle-income families the opportunity to enroll in private schools as a means to fulfill school choice requirements identified under No Child Left Behind. According to Schlafer (2009), proponents of school choice options and vouchers have advocated school choice as a positive result in motivating poor performing schools to implement innovative methods to achieve sustained school improvement. However, No Child Left Behind is also identified by harsh sanctions that are levied on schools that fail to meet the standards of the federal accountability legislation. These sanctions include needs improvement status labeled for schools that fail to meet adequate yearly progress; supplemental services provided for students in needs improvement status; and providing parents school choice options in school systems with failing schools (Zhang and Cowen, 2009; Sack-Min, 2009; and Schlafer, 2009).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 required teachers to be highly qualified and implemented indicators to hold schools accountable for ensuring teachers would meet the requirements. According to Kaplan (2007), No Child Left Behind defines a highly qualified teacher as one who has obtained full state certification, passed a state teacher examination, or holds a teachers license to teach in the specified state. No Child Left

Behind changed the core requirements for teacher qualifications and set minimum requirements for teacher certification. As a result, school systems are required to report highly qualified percentages as an indicator for Adequate Yearly Progress. Kennedy (2008) indicates that the premise behind highly qualified requirements is to ensure that schools in impoverished areas have teachers with the same credentials in comparison to schools in affluent areas. According to a report from the American School Board Journal (2007), 80 percent of school systems reported they were continuing to take measures to be fully compliant and only 67 percent of school systems reported to be fully compliant. Schools are required to send notification to parents when teachers who do not meet highly qualified status teach students. Since 2001, school systems have scrambled to comply by requiring teachers to enroll in college preparatory classes or providing incentives for teachers to complete National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification. According to the Center on Education Policy (2005), school systems discover difficulty in finding special education teachers, middle school teachers and rural teachers to comply with highly qualified mandates under No Child Left Behind. Teacher quality, under No Child Left Behind, focuses on credentials to determine highly qualified status and does not emphasize staff development to sustain professional growth (Seed, 2008; Kennedy, 2008; Henig, 2006).

The highly qualified requirement has stirred a debate among political leaders and educators over the issue of teacher quality. Highly qualified, as defined by No Child Left Behind, focuses on certification and not quality argues Kennedy (2008). Critics argue that the requirements do not have a direct impact on student achievement and constitutes a political move. Viadero (2007) reported results of a 2007 survey indicating that two-

thirds of the 349 districts polled nation-wide felt that the highly qualified requirement had little to no effect on school improvement. However, the requirement did transform training programs for teachers. The highly qualified requirement has restructured the teacher preparation programs in colleges to ensure that new teacher candidates meet the criteria for employment in public schools. Copenvavere-Johnson (2007) describes the restructuring of teacher education programs as an effort to ensure compliance with No Child Left Behind and increase teacher quality during the current accountability era. The teacher quality debate created by No Child Left Behind highly qualified requirements have created a national criteria for teacher certification, restructured teacher preparatory programs, and stimulated an increase of qualitative studies describing the components of quality teaching (Kennedy, 2008; Copenvavere-Johnson, 2007; National Education Association, 2003; Kaplan, 2007; Henig, 2006).

Influence of Federal Accountability Mandates

Cross-Sectional Studies

Various critics and supporters (i.e. Grubb and Flessa, 2006; Packer, 2007; and Zhao, 2006) have reported the diverse perceptions of No Child Left Behind from educators and school stakeholders across the nation. Several researchers have conducted studies on the influence of accountability mandates associated with No Child Left Behind on factions within the public schools. Four specific studies cover a broad spectrum of the impact of accountability mandates ushered in by No Child Left Behind on public schools. The following provides a brief synopsis of the four studies associated with the federal accountability mandate:

1) Webb (2005) conducted a study on the influence of accountability on administrator

surveillance of teachers. Data indicated that administrators used extensive surveillance activities, such as standardized scores to assess teacher performance, to coerce teachers to conform to the demands of No Child Left Behind (Webb, 2005).

2) Winter (2001) engaged in a study to determine the impact that accountability and school achievement has on principal recruitment. Results of the study indicated that the state of Kentucky reported fewer quality applicants for secondary principal positions and university enrollment in leadership preparatory courses had dropped significantly. The researcher made recommendations to continue extensive research to determine if the high-stakes environments associated with No Child Left Behind attribute to the enrollment reduction in leadership preparatory classes and administrator shortages (Winter, 2001).

3) Grubb and Flessa (2006) conducted a study to determine the correlation between alternative strategies to meet the demands of accountability and retention of school administrators. The researchers included 10 schools in the study to examine alternative leadership strategies that have been implemented to reduce increased attrition rates. The 10 schools chosen for the study had multiple principals to handle the complex roles of principals during the current high-stakes atmosphere created by federal accountability mandates. The study provided recommendations to increase retention among educational leaders. Recommendations included innovative policies, action plans, and ongoing intervention to improve the stability of leadership during the era of accountability (Grubb and Flessa, 2006).

4) Marks and Nance (2007) conducted a study to determine the influence of accountability agents on the ability for principals to shape instruction and curriculum

initiatives at the school level. Agents of accountability mandates include states, local boards, districts, school councils, parent associations, and teacher organizations. The researchers used survey results from 8,524 respondents of the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey that differentiated responses by low-control, moderate-control, and high-control states. Results indicate that as control increased from outside accountability mandates, principal autonomy and influence on school improvement initiatives decrease (Marks and Nance, 2007).

The four aforementioned studies (Webb, 2005; Winter, 2001; Grubb and Flessa, 2006; and Marks and Nance, 2007) provide a synopsis that represents the broad brush of research associated with accountability mandates and perceptions of influence on principals across the nation. Prior research provides the foundation of critical research that provides federal, state, and local officials with information to equip principals with the necessary tools to be successful during the current accountability age. However, the wide scope of research fails to examine the specificity of the impact that federal involvement into educational policy has on job satisfaction of a combined middle-high school principals.

Georgia Implementation of No Child Left Behind

The enactment of No Child Left Behind required that all fifty state departments of education implement measures to ensure compliance to the federal accountability mandate. According to Elmore (2002), states faced the challenge of compliance while transitioning from one ideological framework to another. No Child Left Behind created a paradigm shift in the approach that schools would take to stimulate student achievement. School systems were expected to shift from teacher friendly curriculums to curriculums

that were student performance based. Describing the development of the state curriculum in Georgia in response to the No Child Left Behind and identifying the impact that the federal legislative mandate has on administrators will help explain the challenges and triumphs experienced as school leaders attempted to adhere to state compliance measures.

No Child Left Behind was created with the intent to provide states with the capacity and incentives to implement assessments to measure the effectiveness that performance standards are taught in America's classrooms (Superfine, 2005). No Child Left Behind allowed states to select state standardized assessments that would measure student achievement in grades 3-12. Under the current accountability structure, the proficiency tests also determine Adequate Yearly Progress of public schools. No Child Left Behind requires states to implement standards, assessments, and accountability provisions of Title I and Title III of the reauthorization of ESEA of 1965. Schmidt (2006) indicates that No Child Left Behind and the current accountability movement have proven to be a tough task for state compliance. State departments of education were required to transform pedagogically by implementing curriculums that reflected core standards. Overhauling state curriculums, implementing state testing systems, and defining accountability outcomes provided a challenge that most state departments across the country were not prepared for after years of local control over curriculum mandates (Elmore, 2002).

Kim (2003) provided detailed information that chronicled the implementation of No Child Left Behind in the state of Georgia. The response from the state of Georgia to comply with No Child Left Behind was met with political and philosophical obstacles that hindered the creation of a successful accountability system. Political conflicts

between the governor and the state superintendent led to increased educational bureaucracy and political infighting. The political unrest created an unclear educational vision for the state and policies laced with contradiction. Governor Roy Barnes and the state of Georgia legislature passed the A-Plus Education Reform Act in 2000. The A-Plus Education Reform Act was implemented in the state of Georgia to hold schools accountable for school improvement (Jacobson, 2000; Kim 2003). Governor Barnes, after continuous disagreements with State School Superintendent Linda Schrenko, created the Office of Educational Accountability. The governor created the Office of Educational Accountability to ensure compliance with federal accountability mandates. However, many state leaders viewed the creation of the Office of Educational Accountability as an attempt to reduce the power of Superintendent Schrenko. Kim (2003) indicated that Superintendent Schrenko traveled the state criticizing the governor's education policy and platform. When No Child Left Behind was enacted in 2001, the state of Georgia relied on three state agencies to ensure compliance: The Office of Educational Accountability, the Education Coordinating Council, and the State Board of Education (Kim, 2003; Jacobson, 2000).

Some suggest that the educational bureaucracies wasted state funds by creating multiple agencies with duplicating roles to accomplish political agendas and contributed to the obstacles that the state of Georgia would encounter while implementing a comprehensive accountability system to comply with current federal mandates (Kim, 2003). Kim (2003) explains that the state of Georgia delayed full compliance to federal accountability by signing a waiver to fulfill requirements outlined by the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 that reauthorized ESEA. The waiver allowed the state of

Georgia to delay Title I compliance and the replacement of the high school graduation exam with end of course tests. According to Superfine (2005), noncompliance and failure to meet No Child Left Behind mandates caused the federal government to withhold over $725 million from the state of Georgia in FY2003.

The political unrest that thwarted the progress of fully complying with No Child Left Behind accountability mandates resulted in the election of a new governor and superintendent in 2002 (Kim, 2003). Governor Sonny Perdue and Superintendent Kathy Cox pledged to work together to rebuild the Georgia Department of Education and create education policy to comply with mandates associated with No Child Left Behind. The collaborative approach proved to be a major catalyst that transformed the state curriculum from reliance on Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) that shaped core content to teaching Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) measured by assessments and benchmarks (Schmidt, 2006). However, the prior political unrest between the governor and state superintendent produced education policies that were fragmented and incoherent. The paradigm shift ushered in by the current accountability movement left a testing system considered cumbersome by many critics (Kim, 2003). The state of Georgia currently uses the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) in grades 3-8, the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT) in grade 11, and End of Course Tests (EOCT) in specific core subject areas in grades 9-12. Elmore (2002) identifies the abuse of standardized testing as a negative outcome of the accountability movement. In 2003, Governor Perdue proposed an educational bill called STARS (Students + Teachers + Accountability + Respect = Success) that was aimed to rescind the bureaucratic agencies that prevented educational reform at the state level and delayed compliance to federal

accountability mandates. STARS authorized the return of the Office of Education Accountability and the Student Data and Research Center to the Department of Education (Kim, 2003). This action aimed to streamline all accountability measures under the guidance of the Georgia Department of Education and gave state leaders a common vision and shared educational objectives. Educational leaders in the state of Georgia have focused their attention on reducing drop-out rates; revamping curriculum initiatives that focus on improvement in the areas of reading, science, and mathematics; and recruitment of quality teaching candidates to improve the quality of education provided to students across the state (Schmidt, 2006). Governor Perdue and Superintendent Cox pledged to support one another to meet the proficiency requirement of 100 percent by 2013-1014. The state of Georgia was given a 12-year window to meet proficiency requirements created by No Child Left Behind (Kim, 2003).

According to Kim (2003), Georgia's political structure and policy instability has caused the state multiple challenges to increase student achievement in public schools across the state. However, the accountability movement ushered in by No Child Left Behind has created some positive outcomes for the state. State officials began to collaborate on strategies to provide consistent education reform in public education that would extend to the colleges and universities (Schmidt, 2006). Educational leaders have met periodically in the state of Georgia to stimulate school improvement that aligns with accountability goals outlined by the No Child Left Behind legislation. The collegial climate provided the atmosphere needed to comply with federal mandates and develop a comprehensive accountability system. Zehr (2007) described the response of the state of Georgia as becoming more proactive to ensure successful implementation of educational

policy. The state of Georgia implemented measures to improve teacher-training, curriculum development and transition, and preparatory strategies for school administrators.

According to Schmidt (2006), the state of Georgia implemented the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement after concluding that the college system within the state did not adequately prepare school leaders to initiate school improvement. The Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement was the result of a collaborative effort from the University System of Georgia, educational agencies, and private business that provided funding and leadership. The institute provides coaching programs and training for school systems in an effort to improve the ability of administrators to use data to guide decisions to improve student achievement. Since 2002, the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement has provided training and professional development for 7000 educators. The institute reports that 9 out of 10 systems participating in the training from the institute indicated significant improvement on student test scores that measure school improvement (Schmidt, 2006). State leaders also raised requirements for prospective principals in 2008 by requiring 6-year degrees and restructured the leadership training programs in graduate schools throughout the University System of Georgia (Zher, 2007; Viadero, 2007; Kim, 2003).

According to the United States Department of Education (2007), findings from two federally funded studies – the Study of State Implementation of Accountability and Teacher Quality under No Child Left Behind (SSI-NCLB) and the National Longitudinal Study of NCLB (NLS-NCLB) – revealed that most states, districts, and schools had met relevant accountability requirements of No Child Left Behind by 2005. During the 2003-

2004 school term, 80 percent of the Georgia's public schools met Annual Measurable Objectives and achieved Adequate Yearly Progress. Data indicate both positive and negative results for Georgia's public schools since 2001. The United States Department of Education (2008) released data reporting the number of schools in the state of Georgia that made Adequate Yearly Progress in comparison to the nation and graduation rates for freshman entering high school in 2004. The state of Georgia had 82.2 percent of public schools throughout the state make Adequate Yearly Progress in 2005. The national average for schools making Adequate Yearly Progress in 2005 was 70 percent. However, Georgia lagged behind the national average in graduation rates in 2008. In 2008, the national average for graduation rate for public school students was 75 percent for students entering ninth grade in 2004. The state of Georgia reported a 61.2 percent graduation rate for students that entered high school in 2004 (United States Department of Education, 2008). Data also indicate that the achievement gap and socioeconomic disparities in school systems continue. Systems and schools that failed to meet AYP had large enrollments of minority students and impoverished students (Kim and Sunderman, 2004). Title I funding, associated with ESEA, and state efforts have been implemented to improve graduation rates, achievement gaps between targeted student groups, and improvement in core content areas. The state of Georgia has implemented a standards based curriculum, recruited minority teachers for public schools, and created a gradual increase of desired achievement gains in state public schools to attain desired proficiency in the area of school improvement by 2014 (Schmidt, 2006; Kim and Sunderman, 2004; Kim, 2003).

Rural Administrators and No Child Left Behind

The evolution of the state of Georgia's education policy as a result of No Child Left Behind and accountability mandates are well chronicled. According to Eady and Zepeda (2007), the state of Georgia implementation of the A Plus Education Act of 2000 placed more responsibility on public school principals to supervise, evaluate, and engage teachers in meaningful staff development. Teachers faced salary freezes and other professional sanctions under the accountability measure that mirrors many of the federal accountability measures mandated by No Child Left Behind (Eady and Zepeda, 2007).

The measures that state officials enacted to comply with federal mandates affected all stakeholders within public education. Eady and Zepeda (2007) emphasize that the "one size fits all" approach that is associated with No Child Left Behind accountability mandates could prove detrimental to rural systems due to enormous deficiencies in funding for students being served in rural systems that are also characterized as low-socioeconomic areas. Despite the noted discrepancies between rural and urban public schools, administrators across the nation were expected to respond to accountability mandates and meet specific benchmarks set to measure school effectiveness for sustaining school improvement. Throughout the state of Georgia principals were given the task of implementing the state curriculum and instructional objectives at the school level to meet benchmarks. According to Guskey (2007), No Child Left Behind has forced the principal to evolve and embrace the accountability era by celebrating positive results with constituents. Principals are now responsible for creating initiatives that ensure schools achieve Adequate Yearly Progress consistently and attain Annual Measurable Objectives to ensure sustained school improvement. The responsibility for

school improvement lies solely on the educational leader that develops the climate that determines success at the school level. Eady and Zepeda (2007) reported the challenges many rural middle school principals face attempting to evaluate teachers on new evaluation instruments aligned to consider student academic success as a critical component in the evaluation of teachers. Administrators throughout the state of Georgia must also develop multiple skills to stimulate school improvement, use data to drive decision-making, and engage in continuous professional development to meet the demands of a changing educational landscape driven by the demand for accountability (Gusky, 2007; Salazar, 2007).

O'Shea (2006) reports that the demands placed on the local school principal are evident and have been studied by various researchers since the onset of the No Child Left Behind Act. Various researchers (i.e. Gusky, 2007; Salazar, 2007; Egley and Jones, 2005) have developed recommendations for administrators who find themselves with multiple challenges leading schools in the twenty-first century. Researchers (i.e. Marks and Nance, 2007; Zhong, 2008; Barton, 2003) have also recorded the perceptions of No Child Left Behind mandates from principals throughout America's public schools. Accountability mandates have stimulated discussions from educators, politicians, theorists, and stakeholders who are poised to laud or criticize the success of the federal accountability legislation. The topic associated with federal educational policy has provided abundant qualitative data from administrators and a variety of recommendations for success from educational theorists who claim to be critics and proponents of the No Child Left Behind Act (Egley and Jones, 2005; Zhong, 2008.)

Various researchers who have reported findings associated with administrator

perceptions of the No Child Left Behind Act and subsequent accountability mandates and have recorded qualitative data. One study provided a comprehensive review of superintendent and principal perceptions about school reform. Farcas, Johnson, and Duffett (2001) surveyed 1,006 and 925 principals to gather the viewpoints from some of the nation's public school administrators in regards to the challenges that exist among public schools across America. Ninety-three percent of superintendents and 88 percent of principals indicated that local districts had seen an increase in mandates and responsibility with inadequate funding to ensure success of initiatives necessary to comply with No Child Left Behind. Furthermore, 79 percent of superintendents described their position as a high-stress and high-visibility job that required leaders to cope with extreme pressure. Likewise, 69 percent of principals described their role in the same context (Farcus, et al., 2001).

Eady and Zepeda (2007) conducted a qualitative case study to understand the supervisory and evaluative perspectives of three rural middle school principals responsible for complying with accountability mandates from the Georgia State Department of Education. The researchers conducted three interviews of principals at three different times over an extended period in the school year. Principals expressed that the goal of supervision and evaluation instruments have moved from formative to summative. Principals in the study underscored that staff development and teacher improvement were absent from the evaluation formula designed to measure teacher effectiveness in a high-stakes environment (Eady and Zepeda, 2007).

According to Marks and Nance (2007), principals are responsible for providing the necessary leadership required to sustain school improvement and must respond to

multiple agents of accountability. Agencies that demand accountability from school leaders include federal and state departments of education, school districts, local boards, school councils, and parent associations. O'Shea (2006) underscores the intense pressure that administrators work under and the stress that accompanies principals complying with No Child Left Behind mandates. Principals are recognized as agents of change and are responsible for implementing curriculum that aligns with accountability mandates. According to Hunt (2008), principals must now defend teachers to multiple stakeholders in an effort to increase staff/faculty morale that often buckles under the intense pressure and professional scrutiny that accompanies accountability movements. The pressure created by the mere threat of sanctions for failing to meet Annual Measurable Objectives creates multiple challenges for educational leaders responsible for providing a climate that is conducive to academic growth. Therefore, it is justified that many of the qualitative research studies focus on perceptions of school administrators. The focus of qualitative research on school principals provides direct assumptions related to the impact of federal accountability mandates on public schools and the influence of No Child Left Behind on multiple stakeholders within the school organization (Hunt, 2008; O'Shea, 2006; Zhang, 2008).

Federal involvement in public education policy and the demand for increased accountability has impacted urban, sub-urban, and rural public school systems across the nation. However, rural districts encounter many challenges that systems in urban and sub-urban areas avoid due to extrinsic factors such as geographic limitations. According to Barton (2003), rural systems confront challenges related to small class size contained within the local school. In rural systems, one student's performance on a high-stakes

exam could determine the AYP status of the school or system. Therefore, student performance on proficiency exams is weighted more heavily for rural systems under No Child Left Behind. The pressure to perform and achieve AYP has caused states and districts to place stringent control on instruction and principal supervision of the educational organization (Marks and Nance, 2007).

School systems have shifted the focus from solid teaching and learning strategies to teaching the test to bubble students (Viadero, 2007). Bubble students are students who are close to passing proficiency exams that contribute heavily to system Adequate Yearly Progress status. Systems in affluent areas utilize strong tax bases and local revenue to supplement federal funding shortfalls for initiatives targeting specific school improvement. In contrast, rural systems struggle to support local school improvement with adequate funding sources at the local level. Barton (2003) identifies industrial tax bases, higher revenue, and large pools of teacher candidates in urban or affluent areas as factors that place sub-urban and urban districts in advantageous positions in responding to No Child Left Behind accountability mandates.

The challenges of rural school systems are multifaceted and are complex in comparison to sub-urban or urban systems. Rural principals face challenges that are unique to rural areas. Due to geographic isolation, rural systems often have difficulty in recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers (Salazar, 2007). School improvement is directly associated with teacher quality and strong leadership. Therefore, rural principals must develop strong interpersonal skills needed to recruit quality teachers and engage in professional development opportunities to broaden knowledge of effective leadership qualities to be successful during the age of accountability. Rural systems must select

quality teachers that conform to the culture of the school and stimulate school improvement by implementing innovative programs with limited funding sources (Barton, 2003; Salazar, 2007).

There have been three regional studies that have examined the influence of accountability mandates on rural principals by acquiring perceptions of administrators from rural public school systems across the United States. There have been limited studies associated with rural Georgia administrators and the effect that No Child Left Behind has on public school administrators across the state. However, comprehensive review of the three regional studies will provide a contextual understanding of principal perceptions of No Child Left Behind and the challenges that persist for rural administrators striving to adhere to reform measures associated with accountability.

Salazar (2007) conducted a seven-state study on professional development needs of rural school principals since the passage of No Child Left Behind in 2001. The states were served by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, which determine the accreditation of colleges and schools. Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington were states included in the study. According to Salazar (2007), the purpose of the study was to determine professional development needs of high school principals to sustain school improvement in the current high-stakes environment. The study examined the professional development needs of rural high school principals that existed due to a lack of attention given to critical elements that influence school improvement (Salazar, 2007).

According to Salazar (2007), 633 principals received the Profile of Principal Professional Development needs for Accreditation survey. A 50 percent return rate was

established to ensure the validity of the study. Three-hundred and sixteen questionnaires were returned by the principals. Sixty-one percent of principals identified themselves as rural principals. Data indicted from the survey that a significant number of principals disclosed the need for research driven professional development activities that provide school leaders the necessary tools to promote the sustained school improvement required by No Child Left Behind. The three areas identified by principals for professional development activities included building a team commitment; creating a learning organization; and sustaining and motivating for continuous improvement (Salazar, 2007).

Barton (2003) provided a topical summary from an investigation conducted by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. The research data were gathered by utilizing surveys and interviews returned by principals, teachers, trustees, and curriculum directors. States included in the study consisted of rural geographical settings. They included the states of Alaska, Oregon, Idaho, Washington, and Montana. The surveys were intended to provide innovative solutions for rural systems in order to meet the challenging mandates associated with No Child Left Behind. Barton (2003) summarizes the results of the study in a three-prong summary topical summary. The summary focuses on the challenges rural districts encounter in a high-stakes environment, innovative solutions to the challenges and opportunities that are unique to rural systems in a high-stakes environment.

Results of the survey underscored three specific challenges affecting for schools in the 21st century (Barton, 2003). Respondents identified the challenge of meeting the demands of making Adequate Yearly Progress as the major obstacle facing rural school systems. Principals and school officials also indicated that teacher recruitment and

requirements for paraprofessionals, as a result of accountability mandates, made it difficult for rural systems to meet guidelines associated with the highly qualified requirement of No Child Left Behind. The identification of critical elements associated with school improvement that represented challenges for the rural school systems generated initiatives to increase the revenue and training to meet the goals related to sustained school improvement (Barton, 2003).

Zhong (2008) reported results of a survey conducted by the Center On Education Policy from 2006-2007. Three-hundred and forty-nine districts from school systems across the nation participated in the study. The study focused on the impact of No Child Left Behind on student achievement and teacher quality in rural districts across the nation. Interviews were conducted with eight rural administrators from districts representing a cross section of the United States and rural America. According to Zhong (2008), rural administrators must develop innovative plans to attract quality teacher applicants and effectively recruit qualified teachers in the area of science and mathematics. Data from the study also indicated that systems in rural regions identified local school improvement policies as the catalyst for school improvement and viewed No Child Left Behind requirements as irrelevant in stimulating positive reform. The study also indicated that No Child Left Behind has encouraged rural districts to focus on curriculum alignment and individualized instruction in as effort to initiate marginal gains in the area of school improvement (Zhao, 2008).

Factors That Influence Job Satisfaction

Negative Factors of Influence

According to Adams (1999), a specific set of factors have a negative impact on administrator job satisfaction. The school principal must balance multiple roles as the leader of an educational organization, instructional leader of the school, chief financial officer, and political leader in the community. Norton (2002) underscores that the demanding roles of the school principal have directly impacted the number of quality applicants for administrator roles. In recent years, scores of educators have received educational leadership degrees but opted to remain in the classroom and only used the degree to receive pay increases (Adams, 1999; Norton, 2002).

Factors exacerbating these patterns of diminished pools of quality principal applicants are increasing demands placed on principals due to accountability mandates (Adams, 1999). Principals must overcome multiple challenges to meet the goals set by No Child Left Behind. These challenges are synonymous with negative factors influencing principal job satisfaction. Challenges include the reduction of principal authority; rising expectations and academic benchmarks associated to accountability; lack of support from local officials; caste systems dictating curriculum and instruction initiatives; compensation that does not reflect the importance of principal roles at the local level; long hours that deprive leaders of time with family; and stressful roles as political agents within the local community (Adams, 1999; Norton 2002). Two studies (Winter et al., 2004; Malone, Sharp, and Walter, 2000) examined the factors that make principalships attractive and influence administrative job satisfaction. Norton (2002) provided a comprehensive review of multiple studies examining factors that influence administrator

job satisfaction. The two studies and review underscored factors that made administrative positions appealing and negative factors that contribute to principal attrition which results in diminished quality applicant pools for principalships.

Norton (2002) provided a review of critical factors that effect principal job satisfaction and determine administrator retention rates. The review cited three studies that examined the importance of school leadership, principal shortages, and the trend of principals resigning their positions school systems across the United States. Taylor and Tashakkori's study (as cited in Norton, 2002) revealed data from 9,987 teachers and 27,994 students surveyed to determine the factors that influence school climate. School leadership was identified as a primary component of school climates that were conducive to sustained school improvement. The National Association of Secondary School Principals also conducted a study (as cited in Norton, 2002) that focused on the threat of principal shortages and administrator turnover. Data indicated that there was a significantly smaller pool of qualified administrator candidates; increasing numbers of principals retiring from leadership positions; and increasing number of interim principals holding principalships temporarily until adequate permanent replacements are found. Additionally, Kennedy's study (as cited in Norton, 2002) focused on principal turnover and revealed specific reasons why administrators are vacating principalships. The study indicated that the changing demands of leadership positions, salary, time, lack of parent and community support, and lack of respect were all factors that have contributed to educational leaders vacating their positions.

Positive Factors of Influence

Winter et al. (2004) reported positive factors that influence principal job satisfaction. Researchers identified specific factors that potential administrators viewed as attractors to vacant principal positions. The ability to serve others and career advancement were recognized as positive factors of influence that make principalships more attractive. Results of the study also identified salary, increased autonomy, and policy development as attractors for educators to consider embarking on an administrative career. Norton (2002) disputes the long-term impact that salary has on job satisfaction. However, salary has been identified as a determining factor in attracting quality leadership applicants for principal positions. Findings from the study also identified the primary reason for the lack of interest of in vacant principal positions were due to accountability mandates and the subsequent demands associated with leadership in a high-pressure environment (Winter et al., 2004).

Malone et al. (2001) conducted a study to determine specific motivators of administrator jobs. The researchers in this study focused only on the positive factors that influence job satisfaction. The purpose of the study was developed after researchers recognized that previous studies and literature had exhausted approaches examining negative factors influencing principal job satisfaction. According to Malone et al. (2001), two-hundred and eighty-three questionnaires were distributed to elementary, middle, and high school principals from public schools in the state of Indiana to gather information related to job satisfaction (Malone et al., 2001). Data derived from the study revealed six factors identified by principals as positive factors influencing job satisfaction:
1) Student-Principal relationships; 2) Influence on students; 3) Influence on instruction;

4) Development of curriculum initiatives; 5) Positive school cultures; and 6) Interaction with diverse people.

Winter et al. (2004) conducted a study that examined negative and positive factors directly influenced administrator job satisfaction. The research sample included 466 educators who held leadership degrees without serving as principals. The study surveyed a cross representation of employees from all 176 systems in the state of Kentucky; 41 percent of the 466 educators returned the surveys. The purpose of the study was to determine what factors made principal positions attractive to potential administrators and recognize factors that influence principal job satisfaction (Winter et al., 2004). Data from the study indicated that participants expected to be less satisfied in his or her jobs as principal based on six distinct factors:

1) Vacation time; 2) Time with family; 3) Job security; 4) Hours worked per week; 5) Hours worked per year; and 6) Effect of the principal job on the administrator's spouse (Winter et al., 2004).

Recommendations for Principal Retention

Job satisfaction is a primary factor in the retention of quality principals in public schools. There are specific factors that influence job satisfaction, retention, and recruitment of principals who are capable of transforming schools in high-stakes school climates. According to Adams (1999), the importance of recognizing positive and negative factors that influence job satisfaction for educational leaders increase due to the demands that come with principalships in the 21st century. Many demands that principals face are not associated with instruction and curriculum. The ability of superintendents and school officials to recognize factors that influence administrator job satisfaction will

ensure systems are prepared to staff schools with quality leaders (Norton, 2002; Winter, Keedy, and Bjork, 2004).

A comprehensive review (Norton, 2002) provided a broad analysis of various studies associated with principal job satisfaction and comprised specific recommendations to improve retention rates among principals. The review provided a synopsis of multiple studies examining why administrators were leaving the profession at the turn of the 21st century and provided specific steps needed to curb principal attrition. Norton (2002) used the results of these studies to formulate specific recommendations to improve retention rates for principals and make principal positions more attractive for potential school leaders. The proposed recommendations followed sound research-based decision-making models. The recommendations included the following steps to curb principal attrition:

1) Adopt an official school district policy on personnel retention; 2) Develop an action plan; 3) Monitor principal turnover; 4) Personalize retention strategies; 5) Implement effective retention programs; and 6) Evaluate retention results and revise plans accordingly (Norton, 2002).

Summary

Federal involvement in public education has evolved since the launch of Sputnik in 1957. Presidents have used political unrest and events that present challenges for future generations of Americans to catapult new reform efforts for public schools. The reauthorization of ESEA continues to provide new presidential administrations the platform to implement new federal legislation that will alter public school policy. The current federal mandate, No Child Left Behind, has challenged school principals to

involve all stakeholders and develop a climate of team-work with teachers who are ultimately responsible for engaging students in the learning process.

The principal is responsible for implementing initiatives at the school level to stimulate sustained school improvement. Principals who successfully enact change are essential to school systems being recognized as high performing systems. As a result of No Child Left Behind and the Georgia response to comply with federal education policy, the role of the principal has changed and become multifaceted. A comprehensive study on the influence of accountability mandates on rural combination principals will add to the body of knowledge related to educational leaders. Limited research indicates the need to record the perceptions of a combination principal during increased federal accountability measures and the influence mandates have on principal stress, workload, and burnout.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to describe the influence of No Child Left Behind accountability mandates on administrator job satisfaction of a combined middle-high public school principal in rural Georgia. The researcher focused on one combined middle-high principal leading a public school during the current age of accountability. There are a limited number of combined middle-high public schools in the state of Georgia. Public schools that adopt the combination middle – high school model are typically located in rural communities. Therefore, the findings revealed in this case study provided information that could assist middle – high school principals in rural settings and enable administrators to understand the personal and professional challenges rural principals experience in accountability environments. Administrators from combination public schools could draw from participant perspectives and prepare novice administrators. Furthermore, potential candidates could use information to prepare for challenges unique to the combination principal and system superintendents could use findings to adopt supportive strategies within the system to retain quality educational leaders. Additional findings provided the foundation for further research studies developed to understand the influence of accountability on principals in public schools across the nation.

This chapter outlines the methodology of the study. In order to provide an in-depth outline that guided the research, this chapter includes specific processes related to the methods that the researcher utilized to gather essential data. The outline provided in this chapter includes the following: 1) An overview of the research questions and research

design. 2) An overview of the participants, community, and school. 3) An overview of data collection and research methods. 4) A brief explanation describing the relevance and role of the researcher in the case study. 5) An overview describing the steps to analyze the research data.

Research Questions

The research study was guided by one overarching question and specific sub-questions that described the influence that No Child Left Behind mandates have on administrator job satisfaction of a combined middle-high school principal in rural Georgia. Multiple research methods also assisted the researcher in gathering data to accurately address the overarching question and specific sub-questions that established a foundation for quality research. The overarching question and specific sub-questions also directed the development of interview questions for each participant in the study. This allowed the interview questions to reveal personal perspectives from each participant. The overarching question and sub-questions also created the primary framework that guided researcher observations and qualitative analysis of staff assessment surveys.

The following question represented the overarching question of the case study: How do accountability mandates influence administrator job satisfaction of a combined middle-high school principal? The following sub-questions were used to formulate interview questions specifically designed to answer the overarching question during the research process:

Sub-question 1: How does workload associated with accountability mandates relate to No Child Left Behind influence job satisfaction of a combined middle-high school principal?

Sub-question 2: How does stress associated with accountability mandates relate to No Child Left Behind influence job satisfaction of a combined middle-high school principal?

Sub-question 3: How does burnout associated with accountability mandates relate to No Child Left Behind influence job satisfaction of a combined middle-high school principal?

Research Design

In order to gather specific data related to the overarching questions and sub-questions that guide the research, the researcher used a qualitative approach aligned to a case study. Merriam (2002) advocates case studies in qualitative research when the research study is defined by finite boundaries. Case studies provide the researcher the framework to collect rich data that allows for precise meaning and understanding from multiple data sources. Quality case studies provide researchers meaningful data and enables readers to understand the findings summarized after the research is complete (Merriam, 2002; Gall et al., 2007).

A case study research design was appropriate in this research study due to the framework of the study. The primary participant for this case study was a combined middle-high school principal in rural Georgia. The focus on the rural principal as the primary participant aligned with the utilization of a case study qualitative research design. Individual perspectives from the participants in the study, the principal, two members of the school council, and the former school testing coordinator, were collected using the qualitative case study research design. The case study also allowed the researcher to use strategies to collect data to answer the overarching question and sub-questions developed to guide the research. Utilization of a qualitative case study design provided the researcher the necessary methodology to implement the inductive

investigative strategy advocated by Merriam (2002). Minutes from school council meetings and needs assessment surveys were also used as sources of data collection for this case study.

Case/Site

This case study utilized multiple sources to describe perspectives of a rural principal leading during the current era of accountability and the influence of the accountability mandates on administrator job satisfaction. To describe adequately the essential components associated with this case study, an accurate description of the community, school and participants was necessary. The following provided a detailed synopsis of the participants and integral characteristics that defined the setting of the study:

Demographics

The school is located in a community that is rural. According to the 2000 Census, the per capita income for the town was $14,514 and 14.4 percent of the population was considered as living well below the poverty line. Economic data also indicates that population growth from 2000 – 2009 has decreased .34 percent and housing prices have also depreciated during this period. The public schools in the community spend $5231 per student, approximately $1000 below the national average. Most of the citizens rely on agriculture as the primary occupation or commute to surrounding cities for employment. The town limits has a total area of only 1.7 square miles and a population of approximately 600 people. The school serves students from the town and rural area. The primary areas that the school serves are in remote locations within the county. The population density in the community is sparse and a large percentage of parents with school aged children rely of system buses to transport students to and from school.

School Population

The school is directly influenced by the community and is a mere reflection of the district. Student enrollment is approximately 450 students in grades 6-12. The school has been identified as a Title I school which entitles the school to receive federal funding intended to reduce the achievement gap between low socioeconomic and economically privileged students. Over 50 percent of the student population is considered socio-economically disadvantaged or from rural homes. The racial demographics of the school include approximately a 50 percent minority population. There are approximately 40 teachers on staff. The administrative staff is comprised of four educators. The administration includes the principal, assistant principal, counselor, and graduation coach. The principal is responsible for providing school leadership for the middle and high school student population.

Participants

The participants selected for this study were four stakeholders in a combined middle-high public school in rural Georgia. The primary participant of the study was the principal of the combined middle-high school. Three other participants included in the study to gather multiple viewpoints included: One teacher representative of the school council, one parent representative of the school council and the former school assessment coordinator. All of the participants in this case study have vested interest in the school and a definitive level of expertise. The multiple viewpoints provided triangulation and trustworthiness to the findings of the case study.

Data Collection

Thorough data collection strategies were utilized in this case study to gather rich data to be analyzed to determine themes that will be reported as significant findings and recommendations for further research. Strategies were developed and implemented in alignment with the overarching question and sub-questions that guide the study. In this section, a detailed synopsis of the data collection strategies is included to describe the critical strategies utilized to gather essential data for the case study. The case study relied on interviews, observations, and review of staff assessment surveys. The synopsis in this section provided a detailed account of the sources of data collection and a precise explanation of the role of each source for this case study.

Research Methods

Interviews

The first source selected for data collection for this case study was the in-depth interview. According to Lichtman (2006), in-depth interviews are the most effective source for producing rich data in qualitative research. The interview questions in this study were designed to establish rapport, ease transition from one question to another, and determine prospective from participants in specific content areas that could otherwise be seen as broad. Lichtman (2006) is an advocate of probing questions and designing an interview that has clear introduction, body, and closing questions that influence the direction of the interview and affect the natural flow of the interview. Questions were designed to allow for open discussion between the researcher and the participants in the study.

Four participants were interviewed during the study. All interview protocols were

developed specifically for each participant. The interview protocols are included in the appendixes of this research study. The principal of the combined middle-high school, former testing coordinator from the school, one parent representative of the school council, and one teacher representative from the school council were interviewed on site. All four participants participated in one initial in-depth interview. The researcher utilized follow-up interview and probing questions for clarifying initial interview data. In-depth interview questions, follow-up questions, and probing questions provided depth in the research and clarity for accurate findings.

The researcher followed a precise five-step approach needed to develop an effective in-depth interview. The researcher followed this approach and submitted a copy of the protocols used to develop the semi-structured in-depth interviews to IRB for approval. The researcher used the following steps prescribed by Lichtman (2006) to construct semi-structured in-depth interviews with participants in this case study: 1) Advanced planning to narrow topics associated with No Child Left Behind and the influence on a combined middle-high school principal in the state of Georgia. 2) Provide detailed information to the participants about the purpose and process of this case study. 3) Develop introduction section of the interview that will establish rapport with the four participants in this case study. 4) Construct relevant semi-structured and probing questions directly associated with the overarching question and sub-questions that establish boundaries for the qualitative research study. 5) Conclude the interview in a manner that allows the participants the opportunity to express additional information related to this case-study and promote the rapport needed to convey the relevance of the case-study to the participants of the interviews.

The principal and school council representative interviews were conducted at the school. The former testing coordinator served as testing coordinator from 2007-2009. She has since changed roles and became a principal of a traditional high school. The position change allowed the researcher to compare and contrast the experiences the testing coordinator had with the principal at the combined middle-high school and her own experiences as a novice 9-12 principal. The former testing coordinator's current role as a traditional principal provided contrasting viewpoints from the participant. The researcher recorded the perspective from the former testing coordinator related to the varying responsibilities of the traditional and combination school principal. The former testing coordinator's experience as a integral member of the administration team allowed the researcher to develop interview questions that captured valuable insight from the former testing coordinator associated with the internal operation of the and administration of a combined middle-high principal. The current role as a traditional principal allowed the former testing coordinator to contrast the role of the combined middle-high principal with participant's current role of a traditional high school principal. The researcher conducted the interview at the former testing coordinator's current school.

The researcher captured multifaceted perspectives from all participants and interview protocols tailored to each participant's level of expertise. Experiences, comparisons, and contrasts were captured in semi-structured interviews developed to allow for probing and a natural flow for participant interviews. The researcher captured data by recording and coding information related to the overarching question and the sub-questions that guided the study.

Data gathered from the interviews were separated into categories according to the

overarching question and sub-questions that guided the study. The researcher discussed specific coded data to report findings in Chapter 5. The following sub-headings provide a detailed synopsis of the multiple research methods used for the case study and specific tables that represent data gathered from the multiple methods of research for this qualitative study. The data were used to identify themes of significance or concepts that would support findings, implications, and recommendations for further research.

All interviews followed steps outlined by Lichtman (2006) to create the necessary framework to guide the interview sessions. All interview questions were designed according to the role and expertise of the participant. Questions were also created to ensure the overarching question and sub-questions were embedded in the specific questions. The researcher also used responses from participants in the case study to develop probing questions that allowed the interview to encourage natural dialogue between the researcher and participants. All interviews were conducted on-site to accommodate with participant schedules and responsibilities. Electronic recordings assisted the researcher in collecting and transcription of essential data collected during the case study. Construction of probing questions was essential for the researcher to gather the rich data necessary for a quality case study.

Observation/Meeting Minutes

The second source for gathering data for the research study was observations and data from school council recorded minutes. Merriam (2002) describes observational data as an encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than second hand information gathered by an interview. The observation and recorded minutes from school council meetings in this study were included to allow the researcher to gather specific

information associated with the research study. Three of the participants in this study had an active role in the school council at the school. The principal, parent representative, and teacher representatives remain actively involved with the school council. The former testing coordinator has become a building level principal of a traditional high school. However, the former testing coordinator provided insight on the purpose of the school council at the combined middle-high school and traditional schools across the state. All schools in the state of Georgia are required to meet four times a year with the local school council. The school council consists of two parents, two teachers, two community leaders and the principal of the school. The school council is updated on personnel issues, assessment issues, policy development, curricular initiatives, and other critical school related issues. Therefore, members of the council have a degree of knowledge and understanding on accountability issues associated with No Child Left Behind. The researcher used the observation of the school council meeting and minutes from the school council to determine the degree of emphasis placed on accountability issues associated with No Child Left Behind and to capture rich data that correlates with the research study. Data from the observed school council meeting and minutes from previous school council meetings were recorded. The researcher set data into categories to determine if significant concepts existed between the data and the overarching question that guided the case study. Data was labeled and reported in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Staff Assessment Surveys

The third data source was the review of staff assessment surveys from the school faculty. School systems use standard surveys in order to gather data that will assess professional development needs for the system. Assessment surveys indicate areas of focus for systems and identify broad themes to stimulate school improvement. For example, assessment surveys are designed to measure areas of need in broad themes such as assessment, curriculum, school leadership, professional development, instructional strategies, and program development. The researcher reviewed the content of the surveys to determine if patterns exist associated with demands of No Child Left Behind accountability mandates. The overarching question and sub-questions were used to guide the review of the needs assessment surveys by the researcher. The researcher included needs assessment surveys as an additional research method due to the survey's focus on professional development needs. Faculty survey responses were used to determine the influence of accountability mandates on curricular or academic initiatives.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was increased by including participants with relevant knowledge and understanding of accountability mandates. Selection of participants from the school council helped ensure that all participants in the study had a measurable degree of knowledge and background related to the topic of the research study. Multiple participants and data collection also provided the triangulation needed to determine if there are significant concepts in this case study associated with accountability and the influence of accountability mandates on administrator job satisfaction.

Creswell (2003) discussed eight primary strategies to increase trustworthiness of

qualitative research. The researcher used the eight strategies as a guide to ensure accuracy and validity of the research. The researcher used strategies advocated by Creswell (2003) to improve the trustworthiness of the case study. Initially, the researcher used multiple research methods to provide the triangulation necessary to increase the trustworthiness of the study. The researcher also allowed the participants to review the final results of the study to ensure the validity of the findings. Finally, broad descriptions and rich participant responses were captured from in-depth interviews. These responses and rich data served as the foundation for specific findings in the case study. The eight strategies include the following: 1) Triangulation of various data sources and examining the evidence from each data source. Creswell (2003) advocates building a coherent justification for themes in the research study. 2) Member-checking to ensure the accuracy of the findings. In qualitative research, the researcher should check findings with participants in a final report to ensure accuracy. 3) Use of rich and broad descriptions to report findings of the study. 4) Identify and discuss researcher bias. 5) Presentation of negative or contrary information that contradicts general themes described in the findings. 6) Extensive time in the setting of the study. 7) Use of peer debriefing in the study to increase the accuracy of the study. 8) Use of external auditor to review the entire project.

Researcher Role

The researcher had direct relevance to this case study. As a combined middle-high school principal, the researcher was directly impacted by the findings of this study. The experience of the researcher proved beneficial in the development of semi-structured and probing questions for the participants in this study. The experience of the researcher as a

combined middle-high school principal created an understood set of biases in the research. As principal, the researcher has responded and complied to accountability mandates to ensure the school meets specific goals set by the federal mandates associated with No Child Left Behind. This leadership experience has created preconceived perceptions from the researcher due to the presence of accountability in public education. However, triangulation and following prescribed protocol of data collection neutralized biases of the researcher. The researcher followed the prescribed steps advocated by Creswell (2003) to ensure a case study that provided findings and recommendations after concepts of significance were supported by multiple research methods. The findings and recommendations for further research contributed to the wealth of knowledge related to accountability and the influence the mandates have on administrator job satisfaction.

Creswell (2003) advocated the following disclosure from the researcher from the onset of the study: 1) Statements related to past experiences indicating understanding of research topic. 2) Personal interest in the research topic. 3) Identification of potential biases of the researcher in the study. 4) Identification of the understanding from the researcher due to shared experiences related to the research topic.

Data Analysis

Comprehensive review, coding, and categorizing of qualitative data were essential to recognizing significant concepts in this case study. Lichtman (2006) provides a detailed account of the process for analyzing data in qualitative studies. After receiving raw data from multiple data sources, the researcher organized the data by labeling the interview data according to participant. Data was also coded, bracketed and categorized according to the data source. Participant files were created and raw data was labeled in files for the

principal, testing coordinator, teacher school council representative, and parent school council representative participating in the case study. The transcribed data, school council minutes, and survey data were used as the essential data to be analyzed in the study.

According to Lichtman (2006), researchers conducting qualitative studies must remember the three Cs to qualitative research. Qualitative research requires the researcher to code, categorize and identify the key concepts that indicate themes of significance. The researcher in this case study followed the advocated approach to qualitative case studies.

Coding

The first step in the data analysis used in this case study was coding. Initial coding included identifying elements from the multiple sources of data that related to critical components that correlated with the overarching question and sub-questions of the case study. After coding relevant information derived from the multiple data sets, the codes were grouped and categorized into topics that were linked to accountability and the influence of accountability mandates on administrator job satisfaction. The researcher associated coded data into broad themes that assisted in simplifying data for analysis. Indicators of administrator job satisfaction, identified by data collected from multiple data sources, was coded and separated into themes that aligned to the framework that guided the case study. Coding raw data assisted the researcher with identifying significant patterns that influence administrators during the current accountability era in public education. Coding the data also allowed the researcher to condense the data to reflect narrow elements in lieu of multiple coding strands. The researcher coded data

from all data sources in the case study. Coding allowed the researcher to link raw data representing broad themes with specific data guided by the overarching question and sub-questions of the study. The researcher created a table that represented coded data. Coding also simplified the categorizing of broad themes represented from the raw data collected from multiple research methods.

Categorizing

The second step in data analysis of the case study was to establish specific categories from the coded raw data. The researcher in this case study used the coded data to identify specific categories from the data to allow the researcher to analyze the collected data. Categories included the specific themes provided by the coding of raw data in the case study. Categories represented themes of stress, workload, and burnout associated with accountability mandates related to No Child Left Behind initiatives and the various factors that influence the combined middle-high school principal. The researcher also included additional categories to reflect concepts of significance supported by data. Themes included the influence of accountability mandates on the combined middle-high principal and challenges that are distinctly unique to the principal of the combined middle-high school. The researcher used the overarching question and sub-questions to guide categorizing the coded data. The overarching question and sub-questions also guided the researcher in this case study when creating categories. The information gathered from the multiple data sources was coded and categorized for the researcher to describe perspectives from multiple research methods. Coding and categorizing was also completed prior to reporting findings from the case study.

Concepts

According to Lichtman (2006), the final step of analyzing data in qualitative research is to identify key concepts from the categories that have been created from the coded data. Coding occurred after data collection from observation/school council minutes, staff assessment surveys, and structured interviews with participants involved in the study. The researcher in this case study also identified concepts that were supported by repetitive indicators signifying a specific theme influencing administrator job satisfaction associated with No Child Left Behind mandates. Lichtman (2006) advocates specific concepts that are identified by multiple categories from data derived from study participant interviews and data sources providing the trustworthiness needed in qualitative research. In this case study, the researcher identified only concepts that were considered substantial themes supporting research findings. Recurrent concepts were reported as supportive findings in the case study only if multiple data sources indicate noteworthy trends in specific categories. The researcher used inconsistencies in the data as a guide to recommend further research related to this case study.

Summary

The purpose of this case study was to understand the factors of accountability that influence administrator job satisfaction of a combined middle-high principal in a rural public school in the state of Georgia. The researcher developed in-depth interview protocols for each participant in this study. Interviews included questions that were guided by the overarching question and sub-questions that provided the necessary framework for a quality case study. The researcher also relied on probing and follow-up questions to provide depth and genuine responses from participants in the study. The

principal was the primary participant of this case study. However, multiple participants were interviewed to capture diverse perspectives related to the influence of accountability mandates on the combined middle-high principal of this study. The former testing coordinator, parent representative of the school council, and teacher representative of the school council provided the depth necessary in this case study by responding to interview questions developed to describe the influence of accountability ma dates on a combined middle-high principal. The school council minutes and needs assessment surveys provided triangulation and multiple sources to support findings from the case study. The faculty responses from needs assessment surveys and school council were necessary sources of data that allowed the researcher to make specific findings and recommendations that correlated with the overarching question and sub-questions of the study. Multiple sources of data collection provided the triangulation necessary to increase the trustworthiness of the study.

The researcher used the protocol supported by Lichtman (2006) and Creswell (2003) to establish boundaries that guide and direct the study. Protocol outlined by IRB was used throughout the research process. Interviews were conducted after approval was obtained from IRB. Interviews were recorded and data was coded for analysis. The researcher identified concepts that were supported as considerable by multiple participants who identified the indicator as a stimulus of accountability mandates on administrator job satisfaction. The researcher also identified themes that surfaced from in-depth interviews and support additional findings from the case study. Implications on educational leadership were identified and specific recommendations were for further research of accountability issues influencing administrators in public schools across the

nation. Multiple data collection sources were utilized to identify recurrent themes that were considered substantial and substantiated the findings from the research.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS/FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presented the findings and results from the qualitative case study. Findings and results were recorded after analysis of raw data was conducted from multiple research methods used in this case study. Findings were included in this chapter as themes or concepts that emerged after data were collected, coded, and categorized. Concepts or themes emerged to answer the overarching question and sub-questions from the case study after multiple responses from interview participants. This chapter included the following: 1) Review of the overarching question and sub-questions from the case study. 2) Review of the raw data from multiple data sources that were analyzed to report themes that emerged from this case study. 3) Themes that emerged from the overarching question and sub-questions that guide the case study and themes that emerged independently during data analysis. The themes provided the framework necessary to report implications and recommendations from this case study in Chapter 5.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to describe the influence of accountability mandates on administrator job satisfaction of a combined middle-high public school principal in rural Georgia. The case study was guided by an overarching question and sub-questions. The overarching question was: How do accountability mandates influence administrator job satisfaction of a combined middle-high principal in rural Georgia? The following sub-questions were also used to help guide the study:

Sub-question 1: How does workload associated with accountability mandates

related to No Child Left Behind influence job satisfaction of a combined middle-high school principal?

Sub-question 2: How does stress associated with accountability mandates related to No Child Left Behind influence job satisfaction of a combined middle-high school principal?

Sub-question 3: How does burnout associated with accountability mandates related to No Child Left Behind influence job satisfaction of a combined middle-high school principal?

A variety of qualitative methods were used to gather rich data for the case study. Multiple research methods also provided the triangulation necessary to improve trustworthiness that supported the findings from the study. Research methods used for the case study included interviews of participants, staff assessment surveys, and minutes/observation of school council meetings.

Review of Tables

Coded Interview Data

Table 1 provides a frequency table that was included to report coded interview data from the case study. However, the researcher provided the frequency table to present the reader a base-level understanding of the coding and chunking of raw interview data to determine specific themes in the case study. The frequency table presents the frequency of each code recorded from participant interviews. Coded data were used to report specific themes that emerged from interview responses. Coded and categorized data from participant interviews were also essential for the researcher to support the implications and recommendations included in Chapter 5.

A frequency table was included to report coded data from participant interviews. Coded data was condensed into specific themes after categorization. Categorizing the data allowed the researcher to condense the data into specific themes that emerged during the case study. The frequency table represents the condensed coded data that was identified after data analysis was conducted. The condensed coded data was essential in presenting emergent themes from the case study. The responses to interview questions were coded and categorized according to the overarching question and sub-questions developed to guide the study. By providing a frequency table, main themes and patterns that emerged from transcribed interview data were clearly presented. Categories and participants were represented in the frequency table. Included in the frequency table were concepts that aligned to the overarching question and sub-questions from the case study. Additionally, emergent themes were represented in the frequency table and categorized for proper data analysis.

The frequency table that categorized the coded data from participant interviews in the case study is represented in Table 1. Coded data were represented in Table 1 in the following format in relation to the following categories: 1) Stress, 2) Burnout, 3) Workload, 4) Mandates [Influence of Accountability Mandates on Leadership Approach], and 5) Combination [Challenges of Combination Principal Greater in Comparison to Traditional Principal]. A column representing the total responses from participant interviews in specific categories was also included to present the statement frequency under each theme or concept.

Responses were coded based on each transcribed response from interview participants. No interview response was coded twice during data analysis. There were various

interview responses that could have been coded and categorized in multiple areas. Subject coded and contexts were considered individually during the data analysis. Each participant had one interview question linked directly with to burnout, stress, and workload. The critical component of the overarching question was the influence of accountability on the principal of the combined middle-high school. Interview participants consistently responded and confirmed the influence of No Child Left Behind accountability mandates on the principal of the combined middle-high school. The unique challenges encountered by the combined middle-high principal were also consistently described by all participants. Examples of supportive responses were coded under each theme and included in the findings section of this chapter.

Table 1

Frequency of Codes Recorded from Participant Interviews

Participant	Stress	Burnout	Workload	Mandates	Combination
Parent	4	1	3	6	3
Teacher	3	2	1	5	5
Test Coor.	7	1	3	9	2
Principal	1	2	3	6	3
Total Codes	15	6	10	26	13

School Council

The minutes of the school council meetings and the observation were conducted to determine the emphasis that the school council places on accountability issues. The focus of the council meetings aligns to the overarching question of the case study and provided the researcher critical data to report findings and support main themes in the case study. Minutes and agendas support the core element contained in the overarching question that there is a degree of influence on the combined middle-high principal from federal accountability mandates characterized by assessment. A comprehensive table (Table 2) was provided to report minutes from the meetings and provide insight to the amount of time that the council devotes to accountability mandates during school council meetings. Minutes were analyzed, coded, and categorized. Percentages and data were included in Table 2 to present the amount of time devoted to topics during meetings. Coded data from school council minutes were categorized as accountability, assessment, and non-accountability topics.

The creation of the school council from the state of Georgia creates an increase of the workload of principals throughout the state. By design, the principal presides over the school council and sets meeting agendas. The meeting agenda at the local level alludes to the emphasis that is placed on accountability mandates and assessment from the school council at the school. Therefore, the emphasis placed on accountability issues by the local school councils provided critical insight associated with increased workload that is placed on the principal associated with No Child Left Behind accountability mandates. The emphasis on accountability mandates and assessment also supported themes that emerged during data analysis associated with workload and the influence of No Child

Left Behind on the combined middle-high principal at core of this case study.

Table 2

School Council Meeting Topics

Meeting	Accountability Topics	Assessment Topics	Non-Accountability Topics	Accountability Assessment Topics %
School Council Meeting 1 Date: 10-19-09	AYP Status,	Grade (8) Writing Assessment Results, MAP testing	Facility Tour	75%
School Council Meeting 2 Date: 11-16-09	School Improvement Plan, Academic Needs, Funding, Progress Reports	MAP testing, Semester tests, EOCT exams,	Facility Tour, Calendar Proposal, Facility Projection Discussion	70%
School Council Meeting 3 Date: 2-25-10	AYP Status, Graduation Rate, AMO Increase, 2014 proficiency goal of 100%	CRCT, SAT, ACT	Budget, Construction, Redistricting	70%

Needs Assessment Surveys

The needs assessment surveys were also analyzed to determine if teachers at the combined middle-high public school identified areas associated with accountability mandates as specific elements necessary for professional development to meet school improvement goals in compliance with No Child Left Behind. Data were provided on specific responses from staff members at the combined middle-high school. Requested

data included only survey questions related to No Child Left Behind or curriculum/instruction associated with the state of Georgia's response to the federal accountability mandates.

Average scores supported themes that workload increased for the combined middle-high school principal and there is a clear influence from federal accountability mandates on all stakeholders at the local school level. Specific targets recognized by faculty and staff members were included to further emphasize the influence of accountability mandates on the stakeholders at the school. Specific targets were included at the bottom of Table 3. There were four additional categories listed with Table 3 as targets for professional learning and program development at the combination combined middle-high school. Target Group AMO refers to the various subgroups identified by the faculty and staff as subgroups that indicate areas of focus for professional learning and program development. Targeted Content Areas, Professional Development Needs for School Improvement, and Professional Development Needs for Leadership Development were additional areas recognized by faculty and staff at the combined middle-high school to provide focus for professional learning activities. These components and areas of focus supplied additional support to themes that emerged from this case study.

Qualitative analysis of the data was conducted to determine the emphasis placed on specific categories associated with No Child Left Behind and curriculum/instruction interpreted needs from staff members at the combined middle-high public school. Data designated from the needs assessment survey for qualitative analysis included the following topics: 1) Retention of Highly Qualified Educators. 2) Professional Development Programs – Georgia Performance Standards. 3) Retention, Support, and

Professional Development of Effective Leaders. Designated components that directly influence initiatives, school improvement programs, and professional development activities were included in Table 3. Needs assessment surveys were used to determine the influence that the accountability mandates have on curriculum and instruction needs at the school. Table 3 includes columns that represent average scores from faculty/staff responses on specific questions designated as components related to No Child Left Behind. System strategies were to provide schools with average scores. For purposes to complete qualitative analysis, the average score were represented with an "X" under the column that represents the average score relates to the designated area of focus. Scores were recorded on a scale from 1 to 4. The highest recognized need for professional development or emphasis was given a score of 1. The lowest recognized need for professional development or emphasis was given a score of 4. The emphasis on retention of effective leaders and professional development needs at the combination middle-high school support specific themes from the case study. The qualitative analysis of the needs assessment surveys provided a quality research method to support themes that emerged during data analysis.

Table 3

Staff Assessment Survey

Identified Needs Area	1	2	3	4
1a. Retention of HQ Educators – Job Flexibility		x		
1b. Retention of HQ Educators – Mentoring Progam		x		
1c. Retention of HQ Educators – Academic Coaches			x	
1d. Retention of HQ Educators – Collaborative/Common planning			x	
1e. Retention of HQ Educators – Shared Decision Making			x	
1f. Retention of HQ Educators – Professional Learning		x		
1g. Retention of HQ Educators – Classroom Supplies/Resources		x		
2a. Professional Development Program – GPS Math		x		
2b. Professional Development Program – GPS Science		x		
2c. Professional Development Program – GPS Social Studies		x		
2d. Professional Development Program – GPS Reading and L/A		x		
2e. Professional Development Program – PLC		x		
3a. Retention of Effective Leaders Central Office Support	x			
3b. Retention of Effective Leaders Relevant Professional Learning		x		
3c. Retention of Effective Leaders Program Funding		x		

Note. Scale: 1 = Highest Need Level and 4 = Lowest Need Level

* Target Groups AMO – Special Education Students, Socioeconomic Disadvantaged Students, and Minority Students.
* Target Content Areas – Language Arts/Reading
* Professional Development Needs for School Improvement – Assessing Student Achievement, Classroom Use of Technology, Differentiated Instruction Strategies, and Standards Based Classroom
* Professional Development Needs for Leadership Development – Test Score/Data

Analysis, Differentiated Instructional Strategies/Monitoring, Effective Communication with all Stakeholders, and Parent/Community Involvement.

Themes

Themes emerged after coding and analysis of data from all data collected. Raw data collected from participant interviews, school council minutes/observation, and needs assessment results were analyzed and themes were recognized. Recurring interview responses from all participants in the case study or significant support from multiple data sources created patterns in the coded data that were recognized as themes. Themes emerged from consistent responses from participant interviews. Participant interviews gathered rich data that supported multiple themes in this case study. Data collected from interviews provided essential data and responses that supported all major themes described in this case study. Additionally, overwhelming consistent data collected from school council minutes/observations and needs assessment surveys provided support for emerging themes from the research.

Major findings were listed as themes after qualitative analysis revealed patterns that supported concepts related to the sub-questions from the case study and emergent themes from the research. Recurring patterns from multiple research methods were used to provide additional support for emergent themes from the qualitative research study. Patterns that emerged from inveterate concepts were recognized as major themes from the case study. Major themes were used to describe implications that the findings had on educational leadership. Emergent themes that lacked recurring patterns from multiple data sources were used to recommend further research proposals. This chapter will describe themes according to the following components associated with the framework of

this case study: 1) Influence of Accountability on Principal Workload, 2) Influence of Accountability on Principal Stress, 3) Influence of Accountability on Principal Burnout, 4) Influence of Accountability, and 5) Challenges of a Combined Middle-High Principal.

The overarching question of the study provided the foundational framework necessary to conduct the case study. The influence of accountability on administrator job satisfaction of a combined middle-high school principal in rural Georgia represented the overarching research problem addressed by the case study. The core principle in the overarching question was the influence of current accountability mandates on the combined middle-high school principal. This principle was identified by the analysis of prior research studies associated with the topic of educational leadership. It was through the initial analysis of prior studies that the gap in research was identified.

Recognition was established from the onset of the study that job satisfaction would be identified by increase of burnout, workload, and stress attributed to the accountability mandates associated to No Child Left Behind. Prior research (e.g. Adams, 1999; Norton, 2002; Winter et. al., 2004) provided ample support for multiple factors of a positive or negative perception of job satisfaction among principals. Among these factors were stress, burnout, and workload. Factors influencing workload, degrees of stress, and climates that foster patterns of burnout among administrators have a direct impact on the phenomenon of job satisfaction. Sub-questions were used to formulate research strategies for gathering data describing the influence on specific indicators that influence administrator job satisfaction. The researcher analyzed the data holistically and independently to report themes from the case study.

Influence of Accountability on Principal Workload

Theme 1: Workload, as a factor of administrator job satisfaction of a combined middle-high school principal, increased for the principal in this case study. All interview participants specifically attributed increased workload to current accountability mandates. School council meeting requirements and agendas supported this finding in this case study.

Workload was a tangible factor of influence associated with accountability mandates on a principal of a combination middle-high school in rural Georgia. For this case study, workload was defined as a factor influencing administrator job satisfaction. Workload is considered the amount of time devoted to successful job performance and multiple demands placed on public school administrators. The primary focus on this factor of influence was to describe the impact that federal accountability mandates have on the workload of the combined middle-high school principal in this case study. Multiple data sources, including interview responses and school council minutes, utilized for this case study suggest that current administrators have experienced increased workloads due to an acceleration of federal accountability mandates.

Participant interview responses signify that the workload for the combined middle-high school principal in this case study increased as a result of demands associated with current accountability measures. The emphasis of accountability issues during school council meetings indicate increased workload for the combined middle-high principal. School councils were created in the state of Georgia after the implementation of No Child Left Behind. The state department of education requires that principals conduct a minimum of four school council meetings each year. The requirement represents a

minimal increase in workload for principals in public schools across the state. However, the emphasis placed on accountability issues at school council meetings support the findings that workload increased for the combined middle-high principal. The increased workload was attributed to the increase accountability mandates associated with No Child Left Behind mandates that required attention from the principal and school council members.

Participant responses from in-depth interviews provided support for the finding that accountability mandates increase workload for the combined middle-high principal in this case study. All participants responded to specific interview questions related to the workload Sub-question that was used to guide the study. The following participant responses from in-depth interviews support the premise that the combined middle-high school principal in this case study experienced increased workload as a result of federal accountability mandates.

The parent representative was asked a specific interview question to respond to the influence of current accountability mandates on administrator workload. The parent representative was adamant that current federal accountability mandates increased the workload for the combined middle-high school principal. The parent representative stated:

> There is no doubt his workload has increased. The data has increased and there is so much with a combined middle-high principal. That is the thing about a combined middle-high school principal - he can't focus on just one level of assessment. There are so many areas.

The teacher representative participated in an in-depth interview and responded to

multiple questions designed to answer the overarching question and sub-questions from the case study. Specific interview questions were developed to answer the Sub-question associated with increased workload due to current accountability mandates and the influence that the increased workload has on job satisfaction of the middle-high combination principal. The teacher representative on the school council expressed the short term impact that the increased workload has on the combined middle-high school principal and the long term implications of increased administrator workload on the future of educational leadership in her response. The teacher representative provided the following response that supported increased workload from accountability mandates:

> Yes. I have definitely seen an increase in principal workload. You can walk by and see the principal. He has multiple sheets (assessment) on his desk. Score reports for different tests. It goes on and on. It is reflected in the time that he gets here and the time that he leaves. There is such a difference in what is asked of the combined middle-high school principal. Workload, making sure that your school is following the required mandates annually. I don't see how someone (principal) will be able to stay in a principalship for 30 years anymore.

The former testing coordinator provided direct insight into the impact of accountability mandates on the combined middle-high school principal. The response to interview questions related to workload gave a contrasting view of which stakeholders took the blunt of the increase due to current accountability mandates. However, the response did support the finding that the increase of accountability mandates had a direct impact on administrator workload.

During the interview, the former testing coordinator alluded to an event that changed

the administrative approach to assessment at the combined middle-high school. The former testing coordinator described an incident that caused the administrative team to take a hands-on approach with all assessment associated with No Child Left Behind accountability mandates. The shift in approach was significant and a description of the incident is necessary to provide the context of the interview response. A teacher at the school breeched test security and committed test fraud. As a result, the teacher lost her teaching position and teacher certification. Assessment procedures at the school were scrutinized and school official adopted a "hands-on" approach. Administrators adopted this approach to ensure that test security and accuracy were not compromised. Therefore, there was recognition that the incident could have directly influenced the amount of involvement the principal had with assessment. Increased involvement in assessment increased the workload of the combined middle-high school principal during assessment periods throughout the school year. The following response from the former testing coordinator supports the increased workload of the combined middle-high principal:

> I do think that accountability has increased the work load. It has lengthened a combined middle-high principal's school day. I think the workload increased more on the teachers than the administrators. It increased for administrators and teachers. Not only do you have all the tests (middle school and high school), with the CRCT; you have to prepare a container for each testing area. So, oh yeah, assessment has definitely increased the workload. The principal, counselor, and myself did all of the testing at the school. The reason for that is the year or two prior to my arrival at the school there was an incident with a teacher who had all of her students score proficient on a high-stakes test. The teacher lost teacher certification and her job at the school.

> After the incident, the principal wanted the administrative team to administer the exams. Therefore, the entire administration administered the exams. With a traditional high school, you can focus on one test and one level. At the combined middle-high school, you have multiple testing. Testing (MAP) was a nightmare. You had to get all 6th-8th graders tested by grade level in one computer lab. It was rough trying to accommodate all students on different levels.

The principal's interview response to the semi-structured interview questions provided insight on the shift in leadership strategies from the combined middle-high school principal to comply with No Child Left Behind federal mandates. The principal's response revealed workload increases due to the desire to reduce workload on teachers. The following response from the principal supports the theme that workload has increased for the combined middle-high principal since the implementation of No Child Left Behind:

> This morning, I was thinking of a way to involve RESA to deliver professional development to our staff on differentiated instruction. I try to keep the workload off of the teachers. Therefore, my workload increases. The workload has definitely changed. I am thinking of strategies to help teachers and I want to give data to show teachers are doing what they can to impact school improvement. You get out of it what you put into it. Teachers give and give. All they want is to move the child academically.

The qualitative analysis of results from the faculty needs assessment surveys supports the theme that the workload has increased for the combined middle-high school principal since the implementation of No Child Left Behind accountability mandates. Survey

responses indicated the need for educational focus in the following areas to meet school improvement goals to comply with No Child Left Behind: 1) Recruit and Retain Highly Qualified Teachers. 2) Retention and Professional Development of Highly Effective Administrators. 3) Professional Learning in the Area of Standards-Based Curriculum. Need in these areas support the increased workload of the combined middle-high principal. The principal must engage and develop all professional learning and retention initiatives at the local level. Therefore, the principal has an increased work load due to the impact of curriculum initiatives implemented to comply with No Child Left Behind. The three aforementioned areas are all interrelated to No Child Left Behind. Furthermore, the use of needs assessment surveys and the basic composition of the survey instrument indicate increased workload.

According to Pharis, Bass, and Pate (2005), the Georgia General Assembly mandated that schools create school councils to provide advice and recommendations on school matters to principals at the school level. The A-Plus Reform Act of 2000 was enacted in the state of Georgia to hold schools accountable for school improvement and principals accountable for student test scores (Kim, 2003). The formation of school councils was a key component of the legislation and principals were expected to lead school council meetings. After implementation of No Child Left Behind, the state of Georgia continued the requirement that principals in Georgia Public Schools organize a minimum of four school council meetings annually (Pharis, et al., 2005). The school council requirement remains in place as systems across the state meet the challenges encountered by accountability mandates and proficiency exams. Therefore, it is clear that the requirement of active school councils increases the workload for principals across the

state. The combined middle-high school principal in this case study relied heavily on the school council in developing strategies to comply with accountability mandates. Council members were also frequently updated on assessment trends and results from state exam results. The A-Plus Reform Act of 2000 was state accountability legislation that continues to parallel many accountability measures associated with No Child Left Behind (Jacobson, 2000; Kim, 2003; Pharis, et al., 2005).

Influence of Accountability on Principal Stress

Theme 2: Stress, as an indicator of administrator job satisfaction of a combined middle-high school principal, increased for the principal in this case study. There were inconsistent responses attributing increased accountability mandates to elevated levels of stress for the combined middle-high principal.

Stress was identified by the researcher as another critical factor of the influence of accountability mandates on administrator job satisfaction of a principal of a combined middle-high school in rural Georgia. Indicators of stress are both intangible and tangible. Interview questions were developed to capture participant responses that provide an indication of principal stress associated with the increase of federal accountability mandates have on the combined middle-high principal. Interview responses included data that supported both intangible and tangible signs of stress from the demanding responsibilities of the principal at the combined middle-high school.

Data gathered from school council meetings and needs assessment surveys were not used to support findings from participant interviews related to stress. The data from needs assessment surveys and school council meetings were not factors of administrator stress. However, participant interview responses provided rich perspectives related to

elevated stress of the combined middle-high principal in this case study. Participant responses provide intriguing perspectives related to stress associated with increased accountability mandates ushered in by No Child Left Behind Legislation and are noteworthy of mention as a theme directing future research proposals.

Participant responses provided partial support for the finding that accountability mandates increase stress for the combined middle-high principal in this case study. All participants responded to interview questions related to the workload sub-question that was used to guide the study. However, the principal did not respond to elevated stress due to accountability mandates. There were identifiable indicators of stress that were identified during the interview with the principal. The indicators of time and word cues during the interview were recognized as indicators of stress. Word cues and the time constraints on the combined middle-high school principal are included with the principal's response to provide support for this finding as a major theme that emerged from this case study. Word cues were recognized and recorded from the principal's interview response. The following excerpt represents an example of word cues that indicated principal stress: "You wouldn't be here at 5:30 if my day wasn't long. My day starts at 5:00."

The parent representative of the school council indicated evidence of increased stress levels from the combined middle-high principal. Her response suggested increased pressure, anxiety, and stress from principal due to high-stakes assessment associated with federal accountability mandates. The following response supports the conclusion that increased accountability mandates increase stress from the combined middle-high school principals:

I would definitely think so. I know he is stressed out about the MAP scores because of how he discusses it. Not because he discusses it, but the nature of the discussions. I do notice that it changes at certain times of the year and to come to think of it, it does go with the testing schedule. It could be due to closing out semesters and things that go with that but I think that assessment definitely has something to do with it.

The teacher representative participated in an in-depth interview that contributed rich data for the case study. She attributed the increase of stress to increased assessment. Another factor the teacher representative accredited to the increase of anxiety or stress on the combined middle-high principal was the dual Adequate Yearly Progress calculation required of combination schools. The following interview response supported the finding that administrator stress increased due to current accountability mandates:

Let me stop you there. Yes. Prior to 1994, if a student passed a class the child graduated. Now, with the state mandates; it is not going to show up on the teacher and the principal if the student can't pass the test. I can say 100%; yes it is more stressful now for a combined middle-high school principal than it was 15 years ago. The combined middle-high principal has more pressure than traditional principals. The increased stress, pressure and anxiety are present because of the multiple tests, the dual schools or a little bit of both. It is both. There is not a time that we are not testing. One test leads to another. Almost as soon as we start the year, we begin to prepare for standardized exams. The high school students know when we are given the CRCT and the middle school students know when we are giving the GHSGT. Yes, there are differences. However, we must consolidate scores to determine AYP. The former testing coordinator did signify increased stress and anxiety levels from the

principal as a being a result of current federal accountability mandates. She identified a specific department within the school as being influenced by increased accountability mandates and elevated stress levels. The former testing coordinator noted that the mathematics department at the school had felt immense pressure and stress from the state transformation of the math curriculum. The state transformed the traditional mathematics curriculum to a curriculum that aligned with a contemporary curriculum that requires all students to master rigorous standards at the high school level. The principal and the administrative team were responsible for providing the professional development activities and learning opportunities for mathematics department during the curriculum transition. The state departments of education required principals to engage in comprehensive training to effectively implement new mathematics curriculums at the school level. Therefore, the principal at the combined middle-high school was directly impacted by the state response to No Child Left Behind accountability mandates in specific core content areas. Adequate Yearly Progress is met when students meet minimal scores overall. The school must also ensure that students are meeting enhanced math scores in math on the GHSGT and Annual Measurable Objectives on CRCT scores grades 3-8. The former testing coordinator's response emphasized increased anxiety among all stakeholders at the combined middle-high school:

> I did see signs of principal anxiety. However, the one group that had the highest level of stress was the math department. Implementing the new math curriculum was difficult. With the level of the difficulty, teachers were stressed. No matter how much remediation, students were not getting it. Teachers, students and administrators feel the anxiety. I think the two years I was with the principal,

> when those test scores came in it was like "waiting to see who won the academy award". He would stay at the school highlighting and presenting assessment data to the staff. He presented things like "we made an increase here or there, but look at this area – this indicates a problem area. Then he would press on and say, "The science department better get on this!" But, when those test scores would come, it was very nerve-racking for him.

The principal did not specify any increased stress levels due to accountability mandates. Instead, the principal focused on the potential stress and anxiety that comes with being identified as a needs improvement school. He did respond to questions throughout the interview that alluded to signs of stress in association with demands of increased workload and teacher anxiety. The principal emphasized that the demands of a principal of a combined middle-high principal during the current era of accountability has impacted his approach to leadership. This ideological shift and change in workload were included as signs of increased stress. Increased workload and paradigm shifts in education often elevate the stress level of stakeholders within an organization. Therefore, these two factors are included and were recorded during the interview with the principal. The following response from the principal supports the finding that the stress of the combined middle-high principal has been influenced by increased accountability mandates:

> You would not be here this morning at 5:30 if my typical day was not long. My day starts at 5:00. I get in here early so I can shuffle papers, communicate with faculty with emails, and handle items from the previous day that could not handle due to meetings after school. Prior to NCLB, we did not have all of this

> accountability. Teachers could teach and interact with children. Teachers are so focused on what they have to teach that they are so pressured. If students do poorly on the tests, it looks like teachers did not do their job. I think that is unfair to the educator. If you get on the Needs Improvement list, students can go to another school in the county under school choice. That is so insulting to us and the teachers. Teachers are working hard and I am working hard.

Participant interviews did allude to stress that often accompanies principals who are responsible for leading a combined middle-high combination school during the midst of accountability mandates. The parent and teacher representatives of the school council described noticeable increased signs of stress from the principal due to accountability mandates. The testing coordinator supported this theme by emphasizing the impact that local compliance with accountability mandates have on multiple stakeholders within the school. The response from the principal did provide signs or factors of enhanced stress associated with leading a school and meeting school improvement demands defined by No Child Left Behind. Interview responses clearly support this theme that emerged from this case study.

Influence of Accountability on Principal Burnout

Theme 3: Burnout, as a factor of administrator job satisfaction of a combined middle-high school principal, increased for the principal in this case study. There were inconsistent responses to attribute increased accountability mandates to elevated levels of burnout for the combined middle-high principal.

Burnout was identified by the researcher as another critical factor of the influence of accountability mandates on administrator job satisfaction of a principal of a combined

middle-high school in rural Georgia. Burnout is another factor of the influence of accountability on administrator job satisfaction of a principal of a combined middle-high school. For this case study, the researcher was clear from the onset of the study that the term burnout was used to measure changes on how professionals approach roles related to specific responsibilities at the school level. Burnout is characterized by personal/professional isolation, disassociation, and alternative career opportunities of educator or administrator (Friedman, 1995).

Needs assessment surveys and school council data could not be used to support responses from participant interviews. The data from needs assessment surveys and school council meetings were not factors of administrator burnout. Participant responses during in-depth interviews underscore the phenomenon of burnout at the professional level. All participants responded to specific interview questions related to burnout. In-depth interview participant responses provided the researcher intriguing data to determine findings related to the qualitative data gathered for this case study. The responses address a wide-range of factors that could influence burnout or represent outcomes of professional burnout. For example, the following excerpt from the response recorded from the former testing coordinator's interview emphasizes the impact that increased accountability is having on educational leaders:

> I have seen principals in the county and the turnover. When I was in school you were accustomed to seeing the principal in positions for years. Now, the longevity of a principal is 3 years. I think it is the pressure of testing. If a principal sees that they may not make AYP, then they start to find another school that is in good status. I feel that accountability mandates are causing more "jump ship" from principals.

Participant responses supported the finding that the combined middle-high school principal in this case study experienced minimal levels of professional burnout as a result of accountability mandates. However, participant interviews did not produce consistent responses describing similar accounts of principal burnout. Responses ranged from the principal response that contained specific accounts of teacher burnout to the teacher representative response that superficially expressed the challenges of retention of quality educators during accountability. The following excerpt from the principal's interview response provides a specific account of burnout among teachers at the combined middle-high school:

> All of the accountability mandates are driving good teachers away. For example, take one of my most experienced teachers. She is a 32-year veteran in the school system. She still teaches like she did years ago. Her scores are great (93% proficiency rate) and she will tell you…"just leave me alone and let me teach."

The teacher representative was vague in her response in to the interview question related to burnout. She described the challenge that systems encounter in retaining quality personnel for leadership and teaching positions:

> Oh, I definitely have seen an increase in burnout. If you can keep someone past the 8th year, you can keep them there. If you can keep them there, push to 15. After 25, that is about where they are going to leave. Why? Because we have put so much on them (educators) and so much change.

The parent representative discussed all stakeholders in the response to questions on administrator burnout. There was no definitive factor of administrator burnout from accountability mandates associated with No Child Left Behind. The parent representative

did allude to the pressure that leads to burnout among all stakeholders:

> Well, you get it all the time where teachers want to prepare for just one day. From a parent standpoint and I mentioned this to the principal, my child's EOCT scores have dropped. I cannot understand how we put so much pressure on the child to perform on high stakes tests. They may be having a bad day. Lots of students have bad days. I think we are asking too much of students, teachers, and principals. Everyone thinks it is so easy to implement these things, but you know as well as I do that it is not. The principal gets from both sides. He gets it from here and from other places. Principals have to find the balance.

Interview responses to questions related to burnout varied immensely. Responses to the burnout questions during interviews followed multiple approaches and perspectives. The range in responses and inconsistencies did not prevent this finding from being included as a theme. All responses were indications of the presence of burnout. However, the inconsistencies and broad brush of perspectives supported the recommendation for future research in the realm of administrator burnout in public education.

Influence of Accountability

Theme 4: Accountability mandates influence the leadership approach and role of the principal of the combined middle-high public school. All interview participants consistently responded to the influence of current accountability mandates.

The principal, former testing coordinator, teacher representative, and parent representative consistently underscored the impact of accountability mandates on administrators and leadership strategies at the school level during in-depth interviews.

Table 1 was used to report coded data from participant interviews and emphasize interview responses to questions related to specific elements associated with accountability mandates. The influence of accountability on the combined middle-high principal received more coded responses than any reported theme that emerged from the participants of in-depth interviews. All participants accentuated the influence of accountability on the principal in this case study. The influence of accountability on administrators was consistently discussed by all participants in all interview sessions. Questions and answers associated with accountability mandates support a clear indication that accountability mandates have considerably influenced administrators in public schools and the focus of education initiatives at the school level.

Interview participants from this case study provided intriguing responses that represented detailed accounts of the relationship between accountability mandates and the principal of the combined middle-high school. These responses support the finding that accountability mandates have a substantial influence on public school administrators and underscores the emphasis of accountability and assessment at the school level. All data sources strongly support the theme that accountability mandates influence the principal of a combined middle-high public school. The researcher determined a level of influence associated with the overarching question of the study. The influence of No Child Left Behind accountability mandates on the principal of the combined middle-high school principal represents the essential component of the overarching question of this case study. However, sub-questions were used to determine the impact that accountability mandates had on workload, stress, and burnout. Therefore, the influence of the federal accountability mandates on the principal of the combined middle-high school is

considered a major finding from this case study.

The parent representative underscored the importance of assessment during the current accountability mandates and their impact on the direction of the school. The interview response was coded and categorized as an indicator of the influence of accountability on the principal of the combined middle-high school. The researcher recognized that this was an emerging phenomenon in the case study. The existence of federal accountability mandates, the state department of federal legislation, and high stakes assessment at multi-grade levels underscored the influence of No Child Left Behind at the school combined middle-high school. The following response from the parent representative describes the influence of accountability on the community and school:

> I think those (AYP/AMO) are buzz words. I think those are words that the community recognizes. I don't think they understand that if their child misses too many days it will impact if we make AYP or not. I don't think they understand that kind of thing. Testing is so important with CRCT and all. But I think it is becoming even more important. Testing, EOCT and MAPP Testing (That has become a logistical nightmare because having to use the computer lab.) The principal serves so many roles. Ultimately, the principal is completely accountable for what goes on this campus.

The teacher representative described a changing school climate due to assessment mandates established by No Child Left Behind:

> I know this is going to sound strange coming from a teacher, but I didn't like the implementation and presence of NCLB. I do now. We have pushed hard here. As a combined middle-high school, we start working with the kids in 6th grade. Teachers at

> this school, work as a unit of one, take a child in 6th grade and push them through until graduation. We have to have something to set realistic goals for students. Not the unrealistic goal set for 2014. There is not a time that we are not testing. One test leads to another. Almost as soon as we start the year, we begin to prepare for standardized exams. The high school students know when we are given the CRCT and the middle school students know when we are giving the GHSGT. Yes, there are differences. However, we must consolidate scores to determine AYP. Fortunately, we have been able to meet AMO goals so far and have made AYP.

The former testing coordinator provided a perspective related to the influence of the federal accountability mandates on the combined middle-high principal. The former testing coordinator is currently a principal of a traditional high school. The following interview response was coded and categorized as an indicator of the influence of accountability on the combined middle-high principal. This was considered important due to the active role of the principal in administering standardized assessments at the school and multiple assessments that are required due to the combination school model. The two aforementioned factors underscore the influence of high stakes testing and multiple assessments on the combined middle-high school principal. The former testing coordinator alluded to the influence of accountability mandates on the role of the combined middle-high principal with the following response:

> The biggest disadvantage of a combined middle-high school is that one child can keep you from making AYP. Another disadvantage is that in combined middle-high school, it is non-stop testing. The principal, counselor, and myself did all of the testing at the school. There are several exams on the testing calendar every month.

> Two high stakes exams play a major role at the combined middle-high school. Being a combined middle-high school, the CRCT and GHSGT will both have an impact on the whole school in AYP.

The principal provided the researcher with a rich perspective related to the influence of accountability on the combined middle-high administrator. The following interview response was coded and categorized as an indicator of the influence of accountability on the principal. This was considered substantial due to the emphasis on assessment, accountability, and No Child Left Behind. The researcher noted during analysis of interview data that the principal described increased assessment and the impact that current accountability mandates had on the principal of the combined middle-high school. The principal expressed the changing roles of the principal in the current high-stakes environment with the following response:

> It wasn't until four years ago when I became principal that I truly understand what the accountability piece meant in education. I knew about AYP and all that stuff. I would check lesson plans and check to make sure that the plans reflected the standards. Again, we put a lot on the teachers. One of my goals as principal was to take some of the pressure off of the teachers. What that did, is put more on my plate. Government agencies came together with a plan of the direction the state would go in education and mandated that school districts comply with core initiatives. You know we are testing the students to death. There was a time that we gave 6 weeks and 9 weeks exams and that was it. Now, we have GHSGT five times a year. We have the MAP tests two times annually. Then there is the CRCT, 8th grade writing assessment, EOCT, etc. My question is: Are we better off with all of this testing? State

programs and initiatives are all driven with NCLB in my opinion.

Minutes from school council meetings reveal that there is a heavy emphasis on issues associated with No Child left Behind. Data indicate that the primary focus of school council meetings include assessment calendars, test results, and the AYP/AMO status of the school. All school council meetings were opened with an overview of assessment, AYP data, AMO graduated changes, and benchmarks. Over 70% of all three school council meetings were dominated by topics associated with accountability/assessment topics. Table 2 was provided to report the focus of school council meetings at the school. Data was disaggregated to determine the emphasis of accountability and assessment issues at school council meetings. Minutes from school council meetings revealed that the focus of the meetings were on accountability and assessment issues.

A qualitative analysis was conducted on the data from the needs assessment surveys. Results from faculty needs assessment surveys suggest that the primary focus of staff development and continued education programs are related to accountability mandates. The school faculty identified staff development needs and areas of focus for sustained school improvement. Table 3 reveals that the staff indicated retention of Highly Qualified educators, professional development in standards based classroom initiatives and retention of effective leaders as important areas for district focus for the school to meet school improvement benchmarks. These components are directly linked to accountability associated with No Child Left Behind. The results of the needs assessment surveys do not address specific data associated with the sub-questions from the case study. However, the data supports the presence of a systematic focus within the school system on issues associated with accountability mandates. This systematic response to

federal accountability measures supports the finding that accountability mandates influence the leadership strategies and role of the combined middle-high school principal.

Challenges of a Combined Middle-High Principal

Theme 5: Unique challenges exist among principals of combined middle-high schools that do not exist among principals of traditional schools. All interview participants responded consistently to support this additional finding of this case study. The researcher included this finding after consistent responses by participants during semi-structured interviews.

Interview questions were developed for participants to provide insight on differences that exist between principals of combination schools and traditional public school principals. Participant responses support the consensus that combined middle-high school principal roles are in sharp contrast when compared to traditional principal roles. Participant interview responses supplied raw data that allowed the researcher to recognize emergent patterns from the research. Responses consistently supported the finding that combination school principals encounter challenges that vary significantly from the leadership roles of traditional principals.

After the examination of data associated with the overarching question and sub-questions from the case study, the unique challenges of the combined middle-high principal were not included as a major finding. However, data from semi-structured interviews support the importance of this emerging theme. The following responses support the finding that the challenges placed on the combined middle-high school principal are unique in comparison to principals of traditional public schools. All participants in this case study underscored the tremendous challenge that administrative

responsibility in dual levels creates for the combination school principal responsible for complying with current accountability mandates.

The parent representative responded to direct questions related to the role of the combined middle-high principal in comparison to traditional principals. The following interview response was coded and categorized as an indicator of the unique challenges encountered by the combined middle-high principal. This was considered important due to the multiple challenges and roles expected from the principal. The parent representative revealed the difficulty many systems encounter when attempting to fulfill quality applicants for administrator positions. The following response supported the finding that the combination principal encounter challenges that do not exist among traditional principals:

> I think the challenges of the combined middle-high principal are much greater than the traditional principal. When you put everything on paper, it is amazing what a combined middle-high principal has to juggle. I really think they are the ones to catch the heat from both sides. I used to think I wanted to be a principal, but I can honestly say that is the last think I would do. I don't even know what they would have to pay me to want to do it. It would have to be someone that loves it. The other 25 extra days or $25,000.00 extra is not worth it. He has to make everybody happy; no one else is expected to do that. It is a difficult balance and a huge undertaking for anyone.

The teacher representative also alluded to the unique roles that the combined middle-high principal balances as a public school administrator in the midst of No Child Left Behind accountability mandates. The following interview response was coded and categorized as an indicator of the unique challenges encountered by the combined

middle-high school principal. This was considered important due to the acknowledgement of the requirement of a broad knowledge base related to dual curricula and understanding of multiple high stakes assessments. The teacher representative illustrates the challenges that are distinctly unique for the combination school principal. The following interview response supports the finding of the researcher that data from the case study significantly identifies the unique challenges facing the principal of the combined middle-high school:

> He must have a broad knowledge base of curriculum; rapport with teachers (respect); know where we are and how far we need to go; effective in teacher evaluation; well versed in the standards movement (GPS); establish a rapport with administrative team; wear two hats when goes into a meeting with a principal from a traditional school; etc. I know he (the principal of the combined middle-high school) is capable of doing it because I see him walking in different classroom. I see him as he walks into 6th grade in comparison to my classroom on the high school and how he understands the contrasting curriculum. In all respects the principalship of the combined middle-high school is different. He (the middle-high school principal) has to do so much more. You have to understand where the teacher is coming from with the CRCT and where the teacher is coming from with the GHSGT. You have to be able to walk the shoes of both. Discipline is vastly different in middle school settings and high school settings. The principal has to deal with middle and high school students (both).

The former testing coordinator provided personal insight related to the challenges of the combined middle-high school principal. The former testing coordinator is currently a traditional principal. The new role does give the former testing coordinator the expertise

to compare and contrast the two school models. The following interview response is an indicator of the unique challenges encountered by the combined middle-high principal. This was considered considerable due to the acknowledgement of direct involvement of the principal in standardized assessments and multiple assessments. The coordinator's response supports the finding of the researcher that the roles of the principal of the combination school are much more complex in comparison with administrative roles of the combined middle-high school principal:

> As the principal, the principal of the combined middle-high school was able to be more hands-on as an administrative team and handle testing because of school size. Here, I am not able to handle testing (hands-on) because of the school size. You have to involve the teachers here. I mean, when you have enrollment of 800 students vs. 400, it makes it smaller to deal with. But, I feel at the combined middle-high level – there are so many tests – the principal felt we had to be directly involved due to the security. My role here as a traditional high school principal, I have a grad coach and AP to work (counselors). There are more people here to help with the tests. At the combined middle-high public school, I feel the principal felt the need to take a hands-on approach. This was partly due to the previously mentioned situation. As far as my situation (Needs Improvement School), I too feel the pressure. However, the principal of the combined middle-high school was forced to be more hands-on due to the situation that placed assessment under the microscope.

The principal interview response alluded to the complexity of the principalship. The response from the principal gave an accurate description of the challenges of the combined middle-high school principal and the prerequisites of the combination

principalship. The principal response to the question asked by the researcher to differentiate between roles of combination principals and traditional principals also underscored the positive outlook that the principal has with his current role as principal. The response could have been used by the researcher to make an additional finding related to stress associated with federal accountability mandates. However, the following quote supported the finding that the combination school principal role was distinctly different in comparison to the role of a traditional principal:

> What makes a combined middle-high principal unique? We are considered an "other" school by the state. I don't have an administrator over the middle school. All grade levels share the cafeteria and gymnasiums, which creates organizational challenges. For 25 years I have been right here. I am sure it is less stressful because you can focus on one curriculum and specific grade levels. We have two sets of curriculum at a combined middle-high school. It is a challenge. But, do I enjoy it? Oh my God. I coached basketball and I could handle five on five. Football was 11 on 11. As principal, I now have 38 faculty members and 30 staff members. That is not including all of the students I am responsible for at the school. I have always said I will get out of administration when I don't enjoy the challenge anymore.

Responses from faculty need assessment surveys and minutes from school council meetings did not provide strong support for this finding. The researcher did note the specific pattern that exists from school faculty responses on the needs assessment surveys. School faculty identified retention of highly qualified teachers, retention of effective school leaders, and professional development needs to adequately deliver instruction related to Georgia Performance Standards. These indicators of school needs

identify unique challenges encountered by the school in the wake of accountability measures implemented by No Child Left Behind. It is a clear indication of the need for future research studies contrasting the roles of a combination school principal and traditional principals leading schools in the midst of current federal accountability mandates.

Summary

The researcher in this case study used three data collection methods to collect rich data necessary to answer the overarching question and sub-questions that guided the research. The case study included in-depth interviews from participants, school council minutes, and needs assessment surveys. Interviews were constructed to align with participant expertise and roles of those interviewed for the study. All participant interviews were developed for participants to respond to questions that answer the overarching question and sub-questions guiding the study. Data gathered from the interviews provided critical insights that provided the researcher with themes that were discussed and summarized as major findings from the case study. Categories were created to align directly with the overarching question and sub-questions from this case study.

School council meetings were recorded and minutes were coded into categories. Categories included accountability topics, non-accountability topics, assessment topics, and total percentage of the meeting devoted to accountability issues. Accountability topics and assessment topics discussed at the school council meetings provide the researcher valuable information on both the role of the school council and the emphasis required by accountability mandates. Analysis of school council meetings also provided

the researcher insight related to the expertise that participants in the study have in correlation to roles on the council.

Needs assessment surveys provided the researcher data from stakeholders from within the school that supported participant responses. Faculty members at the school identified specific needs for the school to meet local challenges from education policy demands. Survey information identified staff development needs for faculty members to meet school improvement initiatives. Many of the categories listed on surveys are directly related to accountability mandates. The needs assessment surveys provided the researcher an additional data source add validity to the research and interdependently answer the overarching question of the study.

Data from the multiple resource methods provided the triangulation necessary to improve the trustworthiness of the case study. Multiple data sources provided credibility to participant responses during the in-depth interviews that were conducted throughout this case study. The data provided clear insight to support findings from the researcher that were considered concise and themes that correspond to the overarching question and sub-questions that guided the case study. Major themes or patterns of coded/categorized data provided the researcher critical information essential for reporting findings and implications of the case study for educational leaders.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purpose of this case study was to describe the influence of accountability mandates on administrator job satisfaction of a combined middle-high school principal. The case study was guided by an overarching question and specific sub-questions. To provide trustworthiness, the researcher ensured triangulation by involving multiple participants and multiple research methodologies. The researcher also designed participant interview questions to record perceptions that describe differences that exist among principals of traditional public schools and principals from combined middle-high schools in rural Georgia. In this chapter, the researcher provided the recommendations, implications, and conclusions from the case study. The researcher discussed the findings according to the overarching question and sub-questions that guided the case study. After analysis of multiple data sources, the researcher included major themes from the research. Themes were reported after interview responses consistently described the existence of a phenomenon associated with the foundational framework from this case study. Again, the framework for this qualitative research was guided by the overarching question and sub-questions at the core of this case study. The in-depth interviews provided the researcher critical data used to address sub-questions developed for the case study. School council meetings and needs assessment surveys provided the triangulation necessary to add trustworthiness to the findings of the case study. These additional data sources were used in support of the findings aligned to the overarching question of the study. These themes were supported by findings described in Chapter 4. Themes

reported in this case study were categorized by three of the following questions developed from the onset of the case study. Two additional themes emerged to create the five cornerstones necessary to include implications and recommendations in this chapter: 1) How does workload associated with accountability mandates related to No Child Left Behind influence job satisfaction of a combined middle-high school principal? 2) How does stress associated with accountability mandates related to No Child Left Behind influence job satisfaction of a combined middle-high school principal? 3) How does burnout associated with accountability mandates related to No Child Left Behind influence job satisfaction of a combined middle-high school principal? 4) Influence of accountability mandates on principals of a combined middle-high public school. 5) Challenges of principals of combined middle-high schools in comparison with principals of traditional school settings.

The researcher could not determine if federal accountability mandates influenced the job satisfaction of the combined middle-high principal who was the focus of this case study. Data analysis was conducted on coded and categorized data that correlated with each sub-question and the overarching question of the case study. Data was analyzed holistically and individually to determine the implications and recommendations derived from the case study. Coded and categorized data did not support the finding that accountability mandates influence job satisfaction of the combined middle-high school principal. Sub-questions were used as indicators to determine the influence of job satisfaction on the principal of the combined middle-high school. There was strong support to include increased workload as a major theme. However, there was insufficient or inconsistent findings to include increased stress and burnout as major themes after

analysis of data gathered from multiple research methods. Therefore, the researcher could not conclude that accountability mandates influenced the job satisfaction of the combined middle-high principal as a major theme from this case study. The researcher analyzed coded and categorized data related to each sub-question. The data analysis provided essential support for independent implications and themes used to formulate specific recommendations for future research.

After analysis of data collected from multiple data sources was completed, five themes were reported by the researcher. The themes were used to include implications and recommendations from the case study. Major themes and emergent themes were essential in providing implications from the case study findings. Additional concepts that were less consistent in the data were used to develop recommendations for further research.

The theme associated with specific differences between the combination principal and the traditional principal was used to formulate a specific educational implication and recommendation for further research. The theme was used to formulate a recommendation due to the degree of independence that the finding represented. The finding was included after substantial data from interview responses. Further research could contribute to the wealth of knowledge in educational leadership. The case could also be made that the finding was interdependent on the overarching question that helped frame the study. There are basic assumptions that there are challenges unique to the combined middle-high school principal. However, those statements would only be assumptions due to a gap in research related to this phenomenon. Therefore, the researcher considered the finding as an indicator for continued research to contribute to

the wealth of knowledge in this area of educational leadership.

Implications/Findings

The multiple research methods used in this case study did provide significant implications and findings related to the overarching question and sub-questions that guided the study. The researcher also noted that there were consistencies that emerged from participant responses related to challenges that occur at combined middle-high schools that traditional principals do not encounter. Five themes emerged from the analysis of data from the case study. Themes associated with workload, influence of accountability mandates on the combined middle-high principal, and unique challenges encountered by the combination principal were all included as implications to educational research. The three aforementioned themes were supported by participant responses, results of needs assessment surveys, and data from school council meetings. Therefore, the themes were considered as major implications for educational leadership.

Workload increases were consistently chronicled during the case study. Data from multiple research methods support this significant finding. All participants acknowledged that the workload of the combined middle-high school principal increased due to accountability mandates. Needs assessment survey data and school council data underscore the elevation of workload among principals due to accountability mandates and school improvement initiatives. Participant responses distinguish between traditional and combination school principals.

The major theme of increased workload from the combined middle-high principal in this case study aligns with the findings from a study conducted by Winter et al. (2004). Winter et al. (2004) conducted a study in the state of Kentucky determining the factors

that influenced job satisfaction of administrators of the state's public schools. Surveys were distributed to 466 educators from 176 systems in the state. Potential and current administrators identified changing demands on the principal as a result of accountability mandates as a critical factor causing administrative positions to less attractive and results in diminished talent pools for vacant positions. Data from the surveys all relate to workload. The six factors identified by Winter et al. (2004) included: 1) Vacation time; 2) Time with family; 3) Job security; 4) Hours worked per week; 5) Hours worked per year; and 6) Effect of the principal job on the administrator's spouse. Results from this case study align with the findings from the Winter et al. (2004) study.

Data from the case study supported the finding that accountability mandates influenced the role of the principal of the combined middle-high school. The influence of accountability mandates on the combined middle-high school principal represents a core element in the overarching question. There were substantial data that supported the emergent theme that there was a degree of influence from the accountability mandates on the combined middle-high principal. Participant responses also support increased workload and specific challenges encountered by combined middle-high school principals.

All three data sources used for this case study support the theme that accountability mandates influence the role of the combined middle-high principal. The influence of accountability mandates on administrators provided the foundation of the study. The overarching question of the study was the influence of accountability mandates on administrator job satisfaction. Data from multiple sources did not consistently supply data to answer the overarching question of the study. However, data from all sources

collectively noted the influence of accountability mandates on the combined middle-high principal. Accountability mandates directly impact the focus of administrative approaches at the school level and guided leadership strategies.

Findings from this case study align to findings reported in other studies discussed previously in Chapter 2. The aforementioned emergent theme that is supported by coded and categorized data signified an influence from current accountability mandates on the principal in the case study. The emergent theme is similar to findings reported from a study conducted by Norton (2002). The comprehensive study conducted by Norton (2002) indicated that applicant pools of qualified leadership applicants for vacant administrator positions. The study identified the changing demands of the principal as a factor in causing principal vacancies to become less attractive. However, the research design and results from this case study did vary from the Norton (2002) study. This case study described the influence of the accountability mandates on the combined middle-high school principal and focused on specific indicators of job satisfaction. The study conducted by Norton (2002) was focused on multiple studies reviewed studies focused on causes of principal attrition. Similarities exist in both studies after both studies identified changing demands on principals during current accountability mandates as a major indicator that indicates a substantial influence of federal educational policy on principals in America's public schools.

Webb (2005) findings indicating that administrators were using surveillance strategies to ensure teachers are in compliance with No Child Left Behind accountability mandates. Research findings from the study underscore the influence that current accountability mandates have on administrative leadership strategies and instructional focus at the

school level. Similarly, the findings from this case study support the emergent theme that indicates considerable influence on the principal of the combined middle-high school at the center of this case study. The emergent theme reported in this case study reflects the research findings from the Webb (2005) study. Principals alluded to considering student standardized test scores as a critical component in teacher evaluations. Likewise, findings from this case study reported specific interview responses from multiple participants describing the role of assessment and visibility to ensure teachers are teaching performance standards that are assessed with standardized testing. The research design differentiated between this case study and the Webb (2005) study. Webb (2005) relied on participant surveys as the data source to formulate findings in the study. In contrast, the researcher in this case study relied on multiple research methods to support this concept. Data gathered from school council meeting minutes and observations, needs assessment surveys, and interview responses were essential for the researcher in development of this emergent theme embedded in this case study.

Participant responses clearly described contrasting roles between combination school principals and principals at traditional schools. All participants described the role of the combined middle-high principal as being more challenging as a result of assessment measures associated with accountability mandates. The researcher included this finding as substantial in this case study due to the strong consensus from the interview respondents. Interview participants portrayed the challenges as notable due to the complexity of the assessment calendar. According to participant responses, the combined middle-high school principal is responsible for dual curriculums and multiple assessments. The responses were important in differentiating between the roles of

traditional principals and principals of combination schools. Findings contrast the challenging role of the combined middle-high principal in comparison with traditional principals. The interview responses provide the underpinnings of increased levels of stress, burnout, and workload associated with the accountability mandates linked to No Child Left Behind.

This emergent theme is characterized by the core concept and underlying premise that there are unique contrasting leadership roles among combination and traditional public schools. The researcher found no prior research contrasting the roles of principals in traditional schools and principals in combination schools. However, two important studies provide similar findings among rural administrators and the challenges unique among rural principals. The researcher recognized the commonality that exists among combined middle-high principals and rural principals. It is a basic understanding that combination school principals are primarily rural principals. Therefore, previous studies that focused on the impact of accountability mandates on rural principals provide ample support to the emergent theme reported in this case study related to the unique challenges of the principal of a combined middle-high school.

A cross-sectional survey study conducted by Salazar (2007) examined professional development needs of the rural school principals in seven states since the passage of No Child Left Behind in 2001. Principals taking the survey indicated the need of significant research driven professional development to improve school achievement. School improvement activities identified for professional development included team building, creating a learning organization, and sustaining and motivating for continuous improvement. A significant number of principals in the study recognized the need for

research driven professional development to ensure local rural schools meet cut scores set by No Child Left Behind accountability mandates. Similarly, participants support findings associated with the emergent theme in this case study related to the unique challenges of the combined middle-high principal. The content of the needs assessment surveys were analyzed to determine staff development needs at the school at the center of the case study and to identify patterns that contribute to substantial concepts for the researcher. Needs assessment surveys did underscore the need for research driven professional development to assist school endeavors to meet mandates associated with No Child Left Behind. The researcher and Salazar (2007) recognized the challenges that exist among rural schools to provide quality staff development for staff members due to remote geographic locations of many public schools.

A topical summary was conducted among administrators of five rural states that comprise the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory to determine the challenges encountered by rural administrators in the wake of increased accountability mandates associated with No Child Left Behind. Barton (2003) developed a three prong summary after gathering surveys from multiple participants in the study. Results from the study found that rural school systems encounter challenges meeting Adequately Yearly Progress, highly qualified demands, and lack of adequate revenue to provide quality staff development related to school achievement (Barton, 2003).

The research design developed by Barton (2003) is in sharp contrast in comparison to the research design adopted for this case study. The topical summary spanned a five state area and focused on challenges school systems encounter attempting to comply with accountability mandates (Barton, 2003). In contrast, this case study focused on one

school and principal to determine the influence of accountability mandates on administrator job satisfaction of a combined middle-high principal. Findings in this case study did serve to reveal an emergent theme that signifies the unique challenges encountered by the combined middle-high principal. Multiple assessments, curricula, and leadership roles were predominant indicators of unique challenges of a principal at a combined middle-high school. Results of both studies identify challenges that exist in rural areas that do not exist at the same magnitude among urban school systems.

Implications from this case study are clear for administrators at all levels within the school system. Accountability mandates have an influence on administrators in public schools. This case study emphasizes the impact that accountability mandates have on combination school principals. However, implications reach further than the principal of the combined middle-high school in this case study. Leaders at the district level should examine staff development strategies to adequately prepare administrators of traditional and combination schools to adhere to complying with current accountability measures associated with No Child Left Behind.

Findings from this case study also underscore the need for assistance for administrators facing increased workload levels from accountability requirements. System leaders should provide specific plans for assisting school principals with accountability compliance requirements and assessment support to adhere to multiple standardized testing. Participant responses identify significant workload increases for combination school principals and should provide a framework for additional research proposals of the impact of workload on public school principals since No Child Left Behind was enacted in 2001.

There were specific conclusions made from this case study. Multiple data sources consistently indicated the following findings from this case study: 1) Accountability mandates are influencing the focus of the combined middle-high school principal and the expected role as a school administrator. 2) Principals from combination schools encounter unique challenges in comparison to traditional school principals. 3) Workload increases exist among combined middle-high school principals associated with accountability mandates. The researcher noted that these findings were important indicators of the influence of job satisfaction on the combined middle-high principal in the midst of accountability movements in education. These findings allowed the researcher to develop specific implications related to the influence of accountability mandates on the combined middle-high principal. Additionally, research themes and emergent themes from the case study provided the necessary concepts to formulate three recommendations for future studies on the influence of accountability mandates on specific leadership populations at the public school level.

Recommendations

Three themes were used to recommend further research to expand the body of knowledge in this area of research. The dominant theme that emerged after data analysis and the two themes that lacked consistent patterns from multiple data sources were used to create recommendations for continued research. The following themes were used to provide recommendations for continued research in this area of educational leadership: 1) Unique challenges exist among principals of combined middle-high schools that do not exist among principals of traditional schools. 2) Stress, as a factor of administrator job satisfaction of a combined middle-high principal, increased for the principal in this case

study. 3) Burnout, as a factor of administrator job satisfaction of a combined middle-high principal, increased for the principal in this case study. The researcher included these recommendations to expand the findings and implications included in this case study. The selected themes identified gaps in research associated with this research topic.

First, a detailed study is needed to compare and contrast leadership experiences of traditional and combination principals in public schools. An in-depth qualitative research proposal would provide valuable findings of challenges unique to each educational leader. A qualitative study capturing the perspectives of one combination school principal and one traditional school principal for an extensive period could provide valuable insight associated with the integral challenges of administrators under varying education models. The researcher recommends an extensive study for one year aligned to the grounded theory qualitative approach advocated by Creswell (2003). Creswell (2003) supports qualitative studies aligned with the grounded theory approach to provide constant comparisons of data in emerging categories and theoretical sampling of different groups to maximize similarities and differences.

The researcher recommends that future research focus on administrator stress and the impact that administrator stress has on job performance. Responses from interview participants provided intriguing accounts of stress from the principal of the combined middle-high school. However, data from this case study did not provide conclusive suggestions that stress was a predominant issue influencing the combined middle-high school principal. Quantitative research methods are necessary to determine the influence of stress on a specific population of educational leaders. The researcher recommends a quantitative or mixed study that uses multiple physiological indicators of job related

stress. Previous studies have been conducted by measuring blood pressure and other medical signs of elevated job related stress. Multiple measures taken periodically will provide future researchers the ability to identify specific contributors to administrator stress associated with accountability mandates.

Finally, it is recommended that an extensive study be conducted on the level of burnout that is associated with accountability mandates. The researcher clearly indicated that burnout was both tangible and intangible. Two recommendations for additional research would provide accurate findings associated with burnout. First, an in-depth qualitative study describing the causes for leaving principalships or the profession would provide specific indicators of burnout. Researchers could survey multiple principals leaving the profession to determine causes for the career change. Another qualitative approach could align with narrative research. An extensive study that chronicles the daily experiences of a principal over a three-year period would provide valuable insight into daily perspectives of an educational leader in a specific population. Narrative research will provide rich data describing the challenges and personal feelings of the participant in the study. Both recommendations related to burnout would add to the wealth of knowledge for educational leaders leading during an increased era of accountability.

Conclusions

Since the launch of Sputnik, accountability mandates and federal involvement have dominated public education. Educational leaders have adapted leadership strategies and adopted local instructional initiatives to align with changing political educational ideologies. All stakeholders have been impacted by changes from federal involvement in

public education. Each new program and federal reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act added more accountability measures on public schools. Standardized assessment exams currently measure student achievement and school improvement.

Again, it is noted that all stakeholders have been impacted by the implementation of the current accountability mandates that rely on high stakes assessment to determine success. Students are expected to take proficiency exams for promotion and graduation. Teachers are expected to teach material to students to ensure they master material that is measured by standard assessments. Annual teacher evaluations often depend largely on student success on standardized assessments. Ultimately, it is the principal that is seen as the agent of change and is responsible for ensuring local compliance to accountability mandates. The principal is expected to meet Annual Measurable Objectives and ensure that the school makes Adequate Yearly Progress annually. The multiple responsibilities and roles of principals in public schools during the current accountability mandates served as the motivation for conducting this case study. The purpose of this study was to describe the influence of accountability mandates on a rural combined middle-high school principal in the state of Georgia. The researcher also developed specific sub-questions to determine of the indicators and influence of stress, burnout, and workload influenced job satisfaction.

There are unique differences that exist among principals of traditional schools and combination schools in the state of Georgia. Data collected from this case study indicates significant influence of accountability mandates on the role of the principal of the combined middle-high school. Workload has increased significantly as a result of

accountability mandates and multiple sources support the argument that combination school principal workload is considerably greater due to dual assessment requirements. Additional research methods provided the researcher with significant data that supports the impact that accountability mandates have on stress and burnout. However, it has been recognized that additional research is necessary to determine the influence of stress and burnout associated with increased accountability mandates on a combined middle-high school principal in rural Georgia.

The results of this case study reveal specific information related to the influence of accountability mandates on the principal of a combined middle-high school in rural Georgia. The combined middle-high school principal has been influenced by accountability mandates. Leadership approaches have been altered to meet the challenges that correspond with the federal education policy. This case study provides valuable insight related to the perspectives of a combined middle-high principal balancing multiple roles in a new era of educational leadership. The results of the study support multiple foundational frameworks used to guide the study. While the findings of the case study provide obvious conclusions related to the influence of accountability on a combined middle-high school principal, it is the recommendations for future research that may serve to be the most integral outcome of the study. The researcher would hope that the findings and recommendations made as a result of this case study would serve as the firm foundation of future research on the influence of accountability mandates on educational leaders across the nation.

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Appendix A

Parent Representative Interview Instrument

Interview Questions – Influence of Accountability

***The structure of the interview used in this study was aligned with the Marilyn Lichtman text "*Qualitative Research in Education: A User's Guide*". Lichtman advocates an in-depth interview format that is conducive to rich data needed for a qualitative study. The researcher will use information contained in Chapter 8 (pg. 115-135).

Researcher: Boyd K. English

Subjects: One principal, testing coordinator, teacher, and parent from a combined middle-high school in rural Georgia.
[PARENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL]

Opening: Statement of purpose, confidentiality of information and the expected length of the interview.

Parent Representative Interview

Researcher Opening- The purpose of my dissertation is the influence that accountability mandates have on the combined middle-high principal of a public school. School reform has evolved with consolidation and all sorts of accountability mandates. I appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule. Our focus will be looking at accountability mandates and how they drive (impact) the principal. I know you serve a dual role you are not only a parent representative on the school council, but you are also a teacher. Today, I would like to talk with you as the parent representative of the school council.

1. Researcher (Q1) – Do you have children in the system and have you had a part of shared decision making as a parent… (How do you work with the principal as far as administration is concerned?)

   Researcher (Follow-Up 1) – Why do you think the school consolidated and transformed to a combined middle-high school model?

   Researcher (Follow-Up 2) – It is interesting to see that your school evolved into a combined middle-high school. Do you think the change was made due to increased proficiency exams and GHSGT? Do you think that the BOE changed the philosophy to fit natural transitions for testing or is that a coincidence?

   (Researcher Clarification) - Vertical Teaming?

2. Researcher (Q2) – Describe your role as a parent representative on the school council. As a parent, do you have an active role on the school council and does a large percentage of the council

role include assessment?

3. Researcher (Q3) – Does the community understand the terminology (AYP/AMO) associated with NCLB?

   Researcher (Follow-Up 3) – Does the community understand what it means to be a needs improvement school?

4. Researcher (Q4) – As a parent, do you see the role of a combined middle-high principal unique from an elementary principal?

5. Researcher (Q5) – For the combined middle-high school principal at your school, describe some of the roles that he must fulfill.

   (Researcher Clarifying) Is there a difference between a middle school teacher and a high school teacher at your school?

   Researcher (Follow-Up 4) - I noticed when I interviewed the principal; he had an assessment folder on his desk. Have you noticed assessment data in his office?

6. Researcher (Q6) – Stress level – As a parent, have you seen stress or signs of elevated stress from the principal? How have you seen the principal with increased levels of stress and can you attribute this to assessment mandates?

7. Researcher (Q7) – Do you think that you will ever see principals in positions for long periods of time in this high stakes environment?

8. Researcher (Q8) – Workload - Do you attribute the increase of paperwork to accountability?

   Researcher (Follow-Up 5) As a parent, would you say that the workload of the principal has increased since the increase of accountability mandates?

9. Researcher (Q9) – Burnout --- Have you seen educators (since NCLB) experience levels of burnout? Can you attribute this to accountability mandates?

   (Researcher Clarifying) Another stakeholder caught in the middle is the student?

10. Researcher (Q10) – Again - As a parent representative on the school council, do you see a difference between the roles of combined middle-high principals and traditional principals such as elementary principals?

Appendix B

Teacher Representative Interview Instrument

Interview Questions – Influence of Accountability

***The structure of the interview used in this study was aligned with the Marilyn Lichtman text "*Qualitative Research in Education: A User's Guide*". Lichtman advocates an in-depth interview format that is conducive to rich data needed for a qualitative study. The researcher will use information contained in Chapter 8 (pg. 115-135).

Researcher: Boyd K. English

Subjects: One principal, testing coordinator, teacher, and parent from a combined middle-high school in rural Georgia. [TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL]

Opening: Statement of purpose, confidentiality of information and the expected length of the interview.

Teacher Representative Interview

Researcher Opening – The purpose of my dissertation is to describe the influence of accountability mandates on the combined middle-high public school principal. Job satisfaction is not in the terms of "I hate my job". Job satisfaction for this study is to determine if accountability mandates have increased levels of stress, burnout, and workload which have a negative impact on the principal. You know we are moving to the magical date of 2014 when all students will meet standards.

1. Researcher (Q1) How many years have you been at this school?
2. Researcher (Q2) – How closely does the school council work with the principal on assessment/accountability mandates?

   Researcher (Follow-Up 1) - How has your school evolved since 1994?
3. Researcher (Q3) – What is different between a combined middle-high principal today and the combined middle-high principal when you started?

   Researcher (Follow-Up 2) – One of the things I have asked to look at was the needs assessment surveys of the school to determine the emphasis placed on accountability needs on the needs assessment. Have you seen a need for staff development and have the needs changed as a result of NCLB mandates?
4. Researcher (Q4) – How does a combined middle-high principal differ from a traditional elementary, middle, and high school principal?

   Researcher (Follow-Up 1) – What are the roles of the combined middle-high principal?

5. Researcher (Q5) – Because of accountability, has the level of stress gone up since 1994? Would you say there is more stress on the combined middle-high principal vs. the traditional principal?

   (Researcher Clarifying) Is it because of the multiple tests, the dual schools or a little bit of both?
6. Researcher (Q6) – What about workload? Have you seen an increase in paperwork with the principal due to increased accountability mandates?
7. Researcher (Q7) – That leads to the next phase (burnout). Do you see different levels of burnout or is that something that is not measurable?
8. Researcher (Q8) – How many hours would you say your principal puts in a week?

Appendix C

Testing Coordinator Interview Instrument

Interview Questions – Influence of Accountability

***The structure of the interview used in this study was aligned with the Marilyn Lichtman text "*Qualitative Research in Education: A User's Guide*". Lichtman advocates an in-depth interview format that is conducive to rich data needed for a qualitative study. The researcher will use information contained in Chapter 8 (pg. 115-135).

Researcher: Boyd K. English

Subjects: One principal, testing coordinator, teacher, and parent from a combined middle-high school in rural Georgia. [TESTING COORDINATOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL]

Opening: Statement of purpose, confidentiality of information and the expected length of the interview.

Testing Coordinator Interview

Researcher Opening – I appreciate you taking time allowing me to talk to you about shared experiences working at a combined middle-high school. You currently are serving as a principal of a traditional high school. However, I know in your previous role you served as testing coordinator of a combined middle-high school.

1. Researcher (Q1) Can you briefly discuss your role as testing coordinator and how was the responsibility assigned to you?
2. Researcher (Q2) – What are the biggest differences that exist between your current role as a traditional high school principal and a combined middle-high principal. What are some differences in regards to student assessment in combined middle-high schools when compared with a traditional high school? [Advantages and Disadvantages – Pros and Cons]
3. Researcher (Q3) – I know you felt the pressure of being a testing coordinator. How closely did you work with the principal on accountability issues and was your role as testing coordinator delegated by the combined middle-high principal?

   Researcher (Follow-Up 1) – Did the incident cause the principal to take ownership in student assessment?
4. Researcher (Q4) – I understand that you are currently a principal of a traditional high school. What are the different roles that you currently hold that are vastly different than roles held by a combined middle-high principal?

Researcher (Follow-Up 2) – In your current role, you can focus specifically on one test. With multiple assessment levels and assessments, was it difficult to maintain a consistent focus on specific school improvement initiatives related to standards linked to multi-level proficiency exams?

5. Research (Q5) – As far as pressure and the (trickle-down) effect, the principal and I discussed how accountability mandates often have a reverse impact on all stakeholders. (In reverse order) What impact did accountability (assessment) have on stakeholders? The students that are expected to take multiple exams? The teachers expected for students to understand the material tested? Principals expected to implement and monitor school level initiatives to ensure school improvement occurs?
6. Researcher (Q6) In your role as testing coordinator, do accountability mandates characterized by assessment have a direct impact on the principal's workload?

   Researcher (Follow-Up 3) As far as a combined middle-high principal, does (compliance) to accountability mandates result in increased workload?
7. Researcher (Q7) Stress – I know that stress is often intangible. Working so closely with the combined middle-high principal, did the principal exhibit signs of elevated stress associated with increased accountability mandates?

   Researcher (Follow-Up 4) Was the pressure placed on administrators in the school system more intrinsic or extrinsic?
8. Researcher (Q8) With the combined middle-high principal, I explained that 'burnout' was not "I am sick of my job and I am ready to quit". Burnout is recognized by significant changes since your first year as principal or are you different now than you were when you first became a principal? As you saw the principal of the combined middle-high combination school, did you see him change? Were changes in leadership based on extrinsic pressure and accountability mandates (assessments)?

   Researcher (Follow-Up 5) Do you feel that principals will find it difficult to remain in the same principalship due to the pressures and day-to-day grind that come with accountability mandates?

Appendix D

Principal Interview Instrument

Interview Questions – Influence of Accountability

***The structure of the interview used in this study was aligned with the Marilyn Lichtman text "*Qualitative Research in Education: A User's Guide*". Lichtman advocates an in-depth interview format that is conducive to rich data needed for a qualitative study. The researcher will use information contained in Chapter 8 (pg. 115-135).

Researcher: Boyd K. English

Subjects: One principal, testing coordinator, teacher, and parent from a combined middle-high school in rural Georgia. [PRINCIPAL - PROTOCOL]

Opening: Statement of purpose, confidentiality of information and the expected length of the interview.

Principal Interview

Researcher Opening – I would like to thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with me. I know we talked yesterday about the influence of accountability mandates and enjoyed discussing the unique position that you are in as a principal of combined middle-high school.

1. Researcher (Q1) – How many years have you made education your career?
2. Researcher (Q2) – How has education evolved in 25 years? How have the changes affected the relationship between the principal and the teacher?

   Researcher (Follow-Up 1) – Do you have Professional Learning Communities at your school?

   (Researcher Clarifying) In other words, does your system take a systematic approach to learning?
3. Researcher (Q3) – Why do you feel accountability mandates have driven public education? Is it to reduce the achievement gap? In your opinion, why are we where we are today with accountability mandates linked to student standardized assessment? (EOCT, CRCT, GHSWT, GHSGT, etc.)
4. Researcher (Q4) What is a typical day for a combined middle-high principal? What are the different roles that you have that a traditional principal does not? How is a principal of a combined middle-high school unique in public education?
5. Researcher (Q5) – On average, how many hours do you work each day?

   (Researcher Clarifying) Including ball games, how many hours do you work each day?

   (Researcher Clarifying) Would you say on average you work 60-70 hour weeks?
6. Researcher (Q6) – What has changed the principalship the most today? Prior to NCLB, how could

principals be effective without leaving the principal's office?

Researcher (Follow-up 2) - Would you say that the need for maximized instruction time is greater today than it was prior to the current accountability movement?

7. Researcher (Q7) – How has autonomy changed? Do you feel you still have the same measure of autonomy as you did 10-12 years ago or has leadership been overcome by more of a systematic approach?
8. Researcher (Q8) – How has assessment impacted stakeholder stress?
9. Researcher (Q9) – How has your workload changed as we moved to 2014? Has the workload passed to the teacher or has it stayed the same?
10. Researcher (Q10) – (Stress) Is there more pressure and stress with the current stance that requires your school to perform?
11. Researcher (Q11) – (Burnout) Are you the same administrator today as you were when you first took over the principalship?

    Researcher (Follow-up 3) – How does today's assessment impact your teacher?

    Researcher (Follow-up 4) – How does today's assessment impact you as the principal?

Appendix E

Table 1

Frequency of Codes Recorded from Participant Interviews

Participant	Stress	Burnout	Workload	Mandates	Combination
Parent	4	1	3	6	3
Teacher	3	2	1	5	5
Test Coor.	7	1	3	9	2
Principal	1	2	3	6	3
Total Codes	15	6	10	26	13

Appendix F

Table 2

School Council Meeting Topics

Meeting	Accountability Topics	Assessment Topics	Non-Accountability Topics	Accountability Assessment Topics %
School Council Meeting 1 Date: 10-19-09	AYP Status,	Grade (8) Writing Assessment Results, MAP testing	Facility Tour	75%
School Council Meeting 2 Date: 11-16-09	School Improvement Plan, Academic Needs, Funding, Progress Reports	MAP testing, Semester tests, EOCT exams,	Facility Tour, Calendar Proposal, Facility Projection Discussion	70%
School Council Meeting 3 Date: 2-25-10	AYP Status, Graduation Rate, AMO Increase, 2014 proficiency goal of 100%	CRCT, SAT, ACT	Budget, Construction, Redistricting	70%

Appendix G

Table 3

Staff Assessment Survey

Identified Needs Area	1	2	3	4
1a. Retention of HQ Educators – Job Flexibility		x		
1b. Retention of HQ Educators – Mentoring Progam		x		
1c. Retention of HQ Educators – Academic Coaches			x	
1d. Retention of HQ Educators – Collaborative/Common planning			x	
1e. Retention of HQ Educators – Shared Decision Making			x	
1f. Retention of HQ Educators – Professional Learning		x		
1g. Retention of HQ Educators – Classroom Supplies/Resources		x		
2a. Professional Development Program – GPS Math		x		
2b. Professional Development Program – GPS Science		x		
2c. Professional Development Program – GPS Social Studies		x		
2d. Professional Development Program – GPS Reading and L/A		x		
2e. Professional Development Program – PLC		x		
3a. Retention of Effective Leaders Central Office Support	x			
3b. Retention of Effective Leaders Relevant Professional Learning		x		
3c. Retention of Effective Leaders Program Funding		x		

Note. Scale: 1 = Highest Need Level and 4 = Lowest Need Level

* Target Groups AMO – Special Education Students, Socioeconomic Disadvantaged Students, and Minority Students.
* Target Content Areas – Language Arts/Reading
* Professional Development Needs for School Improvement – Assessing Student Achievement, Classroom Use of Technology, Differentiated Instruction Strategies,

and Standards Based Classroom

* Professional Development Needs for Leadership Development – Test Score/Data Analysis, Differentiated Instructional Strategies/Monitoring, Effective Communication with all Stakeholders, and Parent/Community Involvement.