

A COMPARISON OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE QUALITY OF PEPS
IN TITLE I SCHOOLS

by

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ABSTRACT

CONNIE JEAN WILLIAMS. A comparison of factors that influence the quality of PEPs in Title I schools (Under the direction of DR. ROBERT H. AUDETTE).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between school-based organizational structures that support teachers' development of Personalized Education Plans (PEPs) and their quality as written for third through fifth grade students in each of two Title I schools. A causal comparative design was implemented. Teachers' responses on a survey and the quality of PEPs gathered in each of the two schools were compared to address the following research questions: a) What are the differences in teachers' perceptions of school-based factors that support their PEP development when comparing teachers in the two Title I schools? b) What differences in the quality of PEPs exist when comparing PEP samples collected at each of the Title I schools? c) Are teachers' perceptions regarding the level of support they receive toward developing PEPs a predictor of the quality of PEPs written?

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated primarily to one man who has consistently been a champion of my work as a researcher, student and practitioner; my dissertation chair, Dr. Robert H. Audette. His unwavering support and educational guidance for more than ten years has been both inspirational and instrumental in promoting my professional growth.

Dr. Audette is a true visionary who has consistently challenged me to see the possibilities, but even more importantly, to be proactive when implementing change. His voice encouraged me to think “outside the box” particularly when addressing educational issues significant enough to matter. His wisdom offers a cognitive depth while encompassing a level of practicality that taught me the difference between worthwhile endeavors and those which (at first glance) may appear significant, but in fact, are merely “window dressing” intended to look good. His consistent eye on maintaining total quality challenges me to resist engaging in tasks he so aptly defines as consisting of “form over substance.” Dr. Audette has taught me to keep asking the tough questions - even when others may seek to silence them.

I would also like to thank Dr. Robert Algozzine, who willingly stepped in to serve on my committee when a vacancy occurred in mid-stream. I am truly humbled by the level of wisdom, talent and patience he offered as my research coach. Finally, special thanks goes to Dr. Kelly Anderson, an educator of talent, who has served as a long-time inspiration to me as an educator, because of her giftedness and educational leadership in both regular education and Special Education. My dissertation committee’s assistance has provided me with the guidance and support that every Ph.D. candidate seeks.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Teachers in North Carolina's public schools face increasingly complex challenges as they strive to meet the needs of a growing population of students falling below grade level expectations. In the beginning, legislative mandate spearheaded the effort to guarantee that children in North Carolina's public schools who were falling behind would be given additional help. The initiative, known as the Personalized Education Plan (PEP) requires teachers to develop specific, individualized goals and an instructional plan to address the needs of each student performing below grade level. Today, teachers throughout the state continue to write PEPs for thousands of students at-risk of failing each year. High concentrations of those students-at-risk are clustered in our most troubled schools – many of which qualify as Title I schools.

This urgency to address the learning needs of an increasingly diverse population of students has become the focal point of many educational reform initiatives. To effectively address the complex issues affecting their most struggling students, teachers often need support within their school and/or district. It was this awareness from the perspective of a classroom teacher that led to my research. I wanted to investigate the extent to which the support provided to teachers at the school level—especially in their efforts to develop and implement meaningful interventions-- might be related to the quality of the intervention plans they create. My investigation focused on this one

very specific intervention strategy required of all public school teachers serving in the state of North Carolina, the PEP.

Research studies indicate that these challenges are not unique to North Carolina. Across the nation teachers face overwhelming pressure to address the learning needs of their students, most especially those who are not performing at expected levels. As the population of children currently served in our nation's public schools continues to become more diverse, schools face greater challenges. (Saravia-Shore & Garcia, 1995; Krongberg et. al, 1997; Riehl, 2000; Troxclair, 2000; NCES, 2007; WICHE, 2008; Fairbairn & Fox, 2009).

Statistics gathered from governmental resources such as The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) indicate that the total minority enrollment in our nation's public schools increased from 29.6% in 1986 to 42.9% in 2006, with the number of Hispanic students doubling from 9.9% to 19.8% (NCES, 2007, preface p. *iv*). The National Council on Measurement in Education stated, "Recent significant growth in the immigrant populations in the United States and Canada has had considerable impact on the educational systems of both countries. In the United States, the number of immigrant children enrolled in pre-K-12 schools rose slightly more than 57% from 1995-1996 to 2005-2006 (Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students, [2007], with the total number of English language learners (ELLs) exceeding 5 million or 10% of total school enrollments in 2005-2006" (Fairbairn & Fox 2009, p.10).

According to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), "The racial/ethnic composition of North Carolina's public high school graduating classes

will begin to show more diversification over the coming decade and beyond. In 1994-95, white non-Hispanics accounted for 69 percent of the graduates from North Carolina's public high schools. A decade later, that proportion had dropped slightly to 64.6 percent. By 2014-15, the proportion of White non-Hispanics will have fallen to under 55 percent. The state's public high school graduating class is projected to become "majority-minority" when minority graduates outnumber White non-Hispanic graduates) in 2017-18. These changes are roughly comparable to the experience of states all over the country, though the magnitude may differ substantially, as the nation as a whole is undergoing sweeping changes in the racial/ethnic composition of its population (WICHE, 2008, preface p.*xiv*).

With the growing changes among student population, teachers feel challenged to broaden their repertoire of teaching strategies in an effort to meet their students' needs, especially those identified as being at-risk of failure. In many cases, children at risk are victims of poverty. According to NCES, "Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native students were more likely to be eligible for the free and reduced-price lunch program than were their White and Asian/Pacific Islander peers...(and) the majority of Black and Hispanic students attended schools with high minority enrollment (75 percent or more), while Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native students were more evenly distributed across schools with different levels of minority enrollment" (NCES, 2007, preface p. *iii*).

According to figures released by the National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics, "About one-fourth of the newborns in our country are now Hispanic." Their publication also notes,

“Between 1960 and 2000, the number of Hispanics in the United States grew fivefold—from 7 million to 35 million people. In the process, they tripled their share of the nation’s population, growing from less than 4% to 12.5%. By mid-2001, Hispanics numbered 37 million and had become the country’s largest minority group. By mid-2005, they had reached nearly 43 million (14.4% of the population) and accounted for half the nation’s population growth in the previous year. This rapid expansion is expected to continue for decades to come. By 2050, Hispanics are projected to number about 100 million and constitute about one-quarter of the nation’s population” (2007, p.7).

This remarkable change in our nation’s population is forcing our public schools to find new, innovative ways to meet the needs of these children. In North Carolina, the PEP was the first step toward implementing large scale changes to address these challenges. The concept of developing an intervention plan that addresses the needs of students not making adequate progress is educationally sound. The use of personalized, individualized goals and objectives has been in place for students with exceptional needs since the inception of The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA or P.L. 94-142) enacted in 1975. This federal disabilities act required that public schools provide a free and appropriate public education to all children with handicapping conditions regardless of the severity of their disability. This legislation led to the creation of the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), a legally binding written proposal required of schools that includes specific details about the educational interventions to be implemented for every student identified as having an exceptional need.

I suspect that the PEP was developed using the IEP as its model as evidenced by their similarities. By law, the IEP must include personal/descriptive information, objective diagnostic data, a list of student strengths and weaknesses, specific interventions being selected to address those weaknesses, a systematic way for educators to monitor student progress, all developed by an IEP team that includes classroom teachers, special education teachers, other educational professions (such as school psychologists, speech/language specialist, etc.) and parents (Wrightslaw, 2009).

In similar fashion, North Carolina requires a “diagnostic evaluation, intervention strategies, (and) monitoring strategies on a PEP.... strategies may include modified instructional programs, parental involvement, and/or retention” (PEP Training Manual, 2001 p. 9). The parallel between the IEP and the PEP is even highlighted in North Carolina’s own set of training materials developed for initial PEP implementation. In a comparison of the two types of interventions, the state identifies both the IEP and the PEP as “individualized, focused on a student’s identified needs, developed by a team that includes parents, ...(that must also) report progress” (PEP Manual, 2007 p.28). It is my assumption that by designing a state-wide intervention for students struggling in the regular classroom who were not identified as eligible for special education services, the state hoped to address the learning needs of any and all other students who were performing below grade level expectations.

Although these two legislative mandates (the IEP and the PEP) have similarities there are clear differences between them. At the federal level, the most important difference is the funding provided to schools and districts to support IEP implementation. Federal dollars are allocated to states, districts, and ultimately individual schools based

on specific numbers of students with exceptional needs. “When IDEA was enacted in 1975, Congress made a commitment that the federal government would fund 40% of the educational costs for disabled children” (American Speech Language Hearing Association, 2009, p.1). Once children have been identified as having a disability, an IEP is required, and federal funding is (ultimately) provided. As with any federal program, the allocation of funding requires federal “oversight.” In this case, federal regulations were intended to ensure that students with disabilities are served appropriately in public school. At the state level, North Carolina does not allocate state funds specifically earmarked for students needing a Personalized Education Plan. And, the “oversight” of PEP implementation is the responsibility of each Local Education Agencies (LEA).

As an experienced educator, I have shared the perception with other classroom teachers that federal oversight guaranteed that IEP implementation was in compliance with federal law. However, according to recent reports by the National Council on Disability (NCD) that perception is inaccurate as summarized below.

“Back to School on Civil Rights looks at more than two decades of federal monitoring and enforcement of compliance with Part B of IDEA. Overall, NCD finds that federal efforts to enforce the law over several Administrations have been inconsistent and ineffective. Despite the important efforts...to be more aggressive...in addressing these compliance problems, failures to ensure local compliance with Part B requirements continue to be widespread and persist over many years.... In the past 25 years, states have not met their general supervisory obligations to ensure compliance with the civil rights requirements of IDEA at the local level . . . The Federal Government has frequently failed to take effective action to enforce the civil rights protections of IDEA when federal officials determine that states have failed to ensure

compliance with the law... As a result of 25 years of non-enforcement by the Federal Government, parents are still a main enforcement vehicle for ensuring compliance with IDEA” (NCD, 2005, p. 11).

This fact seemed pertinent to my research because at first, when I learned there was no governmental enforcement of PEP legislation from the state level, I believed that the federal government’s enforcement of laws specific to the IEP might provide evidence that when monitored and enforced, a large-scale intervention could ensure compliance of its rules and requirements. Learning that the federal government had *not* effectively enforced IEP legislation weakened the argument that governmental oversight could improve the implementation of the PEP. After reading the NCD’s reports on the ineffectiveness of federal monitoring, it became clear that such an assumption may be invalid. My review of literature did identify differences in the number of regulatory policies enacted to guide the enforcement of each of these initiatives, with the federal government’s role being much more active however; it is still unclear as to whether or not such governmental oversight and its accompanied funding actually could be identified as having contributed to the successful implementation of the IEP.

Another important contrast between these two initiatives is visible in the level of structural support provided at the local level for implementation of the IEP and the PEP. In most districts, an entire Special Education department exists to oversee federal funding and manage the implementation of Special Education services. Implementation of the IEP in the district of focus is more consistent from pre-school classes through high school as a result of the structures of support provided. The forms used are standardized across the district and the district level effort to “audit” IEP implementation is scheduled on a regular basis. In this same district, the oversight of PEPs was split between the

Elementary, Middle School and High School departments. Having three different directors oversee the development and use of PEPs has yielded substantial differences - including the actual forms being used for PEPs at each of the three levels within the district. And unlike IEP monitoring, no district-level effort is made to audit the quality of PEPs or the level of PEP implementation. My initial reason for comparing structures that support the development of IEPs to those of PEPs was in response to the state's published set of PEP training materials that compared the two in a Power Point Slide (Department of Public Instruction, slide 28). Ultimately, this line of literature review raised a number of questions in my own mind surrounding the IEP, but since my study focused exclusively on the PEP, no further investigation to compare the two seemed necessary.

Once the PEP was implemented state-wide the need for North Carolina's teachers to develop strategies to help their low-performing students became a mandate. At the federal level, IEP implementation for identified exceptional needs students was in place, while at the state level, the PEP mandate for all other students performing below grade level began. Together, they required North Carolina's teachers to develop individualized written plans to address the needs of all students performing below grade level – which was no small challenge. “This heightened focus on accountability also calls on educators to form a stronger linkage between student assessment data and instructional decision making. The recent Response to Intervention (RTI) initiative, designed to help educators develop a connection between student performance data and classroom instruction, is a striking example of such a framework” (Smith, et al. 2009, p. 17). It is my belief that the emergence of the RTI process as an intervention approach to education precisely matches the N.C. legislators' intent when they created the mandate for PEP development. The

development of an IEP, a PEP, or other intervention plans (such as the RTI) requires educators to look more closely at the connection between instruction and assessment data gathered on their students at risk of failure. Research supports the need for educators to “explicitly link student assessment data with instructional decision making” (Smith et al., 2009, p.17).

In a larger context, developing instructional strategies to address the needs of students at risk is critical to this nation’s future and reaches far beyond the walls of today’s classrooms. At stake is the very survival of our democracy that relies upon maintaining a citizenry of informed and literate participants in this process. Becoming informed and literate can only be achieved through continuation of policies that offer a free education to all children. A free education for all – regardless of race, color, culture, or levels of ability, achievement or wealth – is at the heart of the challenges now being faced by classroom teachers in today’s public schools. Teachers’ ability to address the educational needs of today’s children is the critical element to the success of our public schools and the nation itself.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As a curriculum and literacy leader for more than ten years, my work in support of teachers has changed dramatically because of their changing roles. Initially, I was simply a resource providing curriculum materials and classroom teaching ideas. But as the student population changed so did my support of teachers. I estimate that at least twenty percent of my time is now devoted to remediation or intervention assistance. Responsibilities range from serving as a member of grade level intervention teams to working one-to-one with teachers as they develop their PEP or RTI intervention plans for struggling students. I realized that many regular classroom teachers had been given limited training in how to approach this problem and had received little (if any) support with this process. As my investigation into existing state, district, and school-based training for teachers in developing PEPs progressed, I found that the in-service and follow-up support for PEPs was informal, unstructured, and varied greatly between schools and districts.

The need for this study became clear once I learned that in spite of the PEPs more than eight year implementation history; no effort had been made to gather information regarding the use of PEPs or the effectiveness of the PEP as an intervention strategy for North Carolina's public school students at risk. I also discovered North Carolina lacked any formal process for reviewing or monitoring the content and/or quality of PEPs. The search for support documents related to PEP development and support yielded only the

original, eight-year-old set of handouts and Power Point slides provided for district participants in the initial PEP training events of 2000. The search for additional “outside” research studies specific to PEPs also yielded nothing. Once it was determined that no studies could be found that specifically focused on the development or implementation of PEPs, I decided that such a study was warranted. As an experienced educator, I knew that my own effective implementation of any new instructional intervention strategy was dependent on the support given to me at the school level for its implementation. As an experienced Special Education teacher, I also understood that like the IEP, any educational intervention strategy must begin with the setting of clear, measurable goals that are then linked to a well-defined instructional sequence that matches those goals. My experience in monitoring the success of IEPs written also taught me the importance of administering meaningful assessments to determine the extent to which students had achieved mastery of the goals that had been set. More importantly, IEPs required that we use those results to develop new goals. An examination of this parallel intervention strategy (the use of a PEP) so widely used among regular classroom teachers seemed warranted.

The ultimate research question most educators would probably want to ask is whether or not PEPs are *effective* in addressing the learning and achievement needs of students performing below grade level. However, before the impact on student achievement of an intervention strategy (such as the PEP) could be studied, it was important to first determine the quality of PEPs being developed and used. Therefore, it was decided that rather than focus upon the *result* of PEP implementation (inferred perhaps from student achievement results), I would assess school-based support of

teachers' development of PEPs and examine the overall quality of the PEPs developed, knowing that effective teaching must be based on quality instructional plans (such as those written for a PEP).

To follow this line of investigation, I first reviewed current research and literature specific to the history of the PEP. My plan was to review North Carolina's legislative policies and procedures for designing and implementing PEPs with the intention of developing an evaluative tool (specifically, a scoring rubric) for assessing the *quality* of PEPs including elements needed to meet the legal requirements for PEP development.

My decision to collect and evaluate the quality of PEPs led me to consider which schools might best serve my purposes. As a district level curriculum and literacy coach, I knew that a greater number of PEPs were written by teachers at Title I schools due to the student population assigned to them so I obtained district and school level permission to collect data at two Title I locations. Once the decision was made to gather data from Title I schools, it seemed important to investigate federal regulations that impact Title I schools to identify whether Title status influenced school-based initiatives that could influence PEP quality. I knew little about the criteria used to qualify as school for Title I status or whether Title I funds might impact teachers' development of PEPs with their struggling students.

During this phase of investigation, I read the work of experts on school success who identified school culture as being a critical element of a schools' success or failure (Langford, 1995; Payne 1996; Marzano, 2003; and New et.al., 2005). Discussions about school culture noted influences on culture such as how schools were organized, how roles and responsibilities of staff members were defined, and whether or not the school leader

or leadership team established a community that worked together. At that point, I realized my literature review would benefit from investigating the elements of both organizational *and* leadership theory because of educational leaders' influence over school culture. My goal was to identify the qualities and conditions found within the structure of organizations that contribute to its performance; including the influence of the school leaders.

As a final step toward investigating current literature that might influence my thinking as I sought to evaluate the quality of a PEP, I expanded my review to include instructional design theory. The purpose in reviewing instructional design theory was to identify key elements that should be included in high-quality instructional plans (such as a PEP) and to bring clarity to my own understanding of the instructional design process and its potential influence on the development of an intervention plan.

The purpose of a PEP is to address the learning needs of students performing below grade level. The first step in writing a PEP requires the teacher to identify a student's strengths and areas of need within each curriculum area where his or her level of performance falls below grade level expectations. Teachers are then expected to use data identifying each student's areas of strength and need to develop an intervention plan (PEP) to address their needs. The development and faithful implementation of such a complex process encompasses both learning theory and instructional design theory. However, since my research focus for this investigation was specific to the support structures that assist elementary teachers' in their *development* of PEPs within a school (rather than their implementation of that plan), the theoretical framework that informed my work came from instructional design theory as well as organizational and leadership

theory pertinent to education. My review of literature was conducted in the following sequence: 1) History of the PEP, 2) Title I Legislation and Implementation, 3) Organizational and Leadership Theory, and finally, 4) Instructional Design Theory.

History of the Personalized Education Plan (PEP)

In North Carolina, a strategy for addressing the needs of low performing students emerged with the statewide implementation of an educational intervention called the Personalized Education Plan (PEP). The PEP met a requirement of the state's Student Accountability Standards and was adopted by the State Board of Education on April 1, 1999" (PEP Training Materials, 2001 p.1). This educational reform initiative promoted the use of PEPs as an instructional tool to ensure that; "Every child in North Carolina, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity or socio-economic status has the right to a sound basic education" (p.9). PEP documentation also stated,

For purposes of our Constitution, a "sound basic education "is one that will provide the student with at least the:

- a) Sufficient ability to read, write, and speak the English language and a sufficient knowledge of fundamental mathematics and physical science to enable the student to function in a complex and rapidly changing society;
- b) Sufficient fundamental knowledge of geography, history and basic economic and political systems to enable the student to make informed choices with regard to issues that affect the student personally or affect the student's community state and nation (p.9).

The use of PEPs increased the level of accountability in North Carolina's classrooms by requiring that a PEP be developed for all students who "do not pass the

End-of-Grade tests at grade 3, 5, or 8, or... do not pass the Exit Exam. (PEP Training Manual, 2001 p.10). The school district used in this research investigation also required that PEPs be developed for any student identified as performing below grade level expectations. And although the NC End-of-Grade test that is administered to third through fifth grade students was used as one indicator for developing a PEP, teachers at earlier grade levels were also expected to develop an intervention plan for any student who is not progressing at the expected rate of learning for that age or grade level.

The PEP mandate was created in response to concerns raised by parents, educators and legislators about the “percent of students who are performing at grade level” noting that there were “still too many...below grade level” (PEP Training Materials, 2001 p.8). Although this statute was designed to address the increasing number of students not meeting state standards on end of year tests, it goes beyond the use of a single measure as the criteria for writing a PEP. Also mandated was the expectation that teachers identify all students at risk of academic failure in their classroom through the application of a variety of appropriate educational measures. For example, the decision for determining a student’s level of success could be based on their grades, a teacher’s or administrator’s observations, required state assessments, and/or the student’s current level of performance within the classroom.

This urgency to address the needs of a growing number of students falling below grade level was not specific to North Carolina. The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996) reported findings from a two year study that identified “low expectations for student performance” and “schools that are structured for failure rather than success” as being two of the most important unresolved issues that continue to place

“formidable barriers” in the way of achieving the nation’s goal for increasing academic achievement, especially among our nation’s poor (The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996). North Carolina legislators responded to the Commission’s data and initiated legislation for implementing PEPs as their plan for improving test scores among their lowest performing students.

When PEP implementation began, the dissemination plan created by the Division of School Improvement included having district representatives select one PEP training session to attend being offered in each of the eight regions of the state. This workshop was offered in the year 2000 with no additional follow-up. And in the following year (2001), the use of PEPs as an intervention strategy was mandated. At the end of that single training session, the expectation (as defined by the Division of School Improvement) was that each LEA and/or charter school should “provide training in their home area without having to rely on future trainings sponsored by the Department of Public Instruction” (PEP Training Manual, 2001, p.i).

Teachers in North Carolina have been required to develop and implement PEPs for all students identified as being below grade level since that time and are expected to adhere to rules found in the state PEP mandate. In the two NC school districts where I have worked, teacher training and support specific to the use of PEPs was included as one small part of an overall “orientation” provided for new hires. In one district, a fifteen minute explanation of the PEP was all teachers were given and they were told to see their “Mentor” teacher in their home school for additional help. One huge problem with that assignment, especially in Title I schools, was that a shortage of Mentor teachers meant that not all teachers were assigned a Mentor. For example, in one Title I school there

were only five teachers among a staff of 48 teachers that had more than three years of teaching experience. And at that time, Mentors were supposed to be assigned to teachers in both their first and second year of teaching! So, the “Mentor” approach to helping teachers develop their PEPs was problematic at schools that had a high percentage of inexperienced teachers. In designing the research study, I included a question on the teacher survey that asked teachers about the amount of support or training they received specific to PEPs. I anticipated that if my own personal data was representative of what is still being offered that information would surface as I analyzed teachers’ survey responses.

Additional requirements were that, “Personalized Education Plans (PEPs) for academic improvement must be developed at the beginning of the school year for any student not performing at grade level” (PEP Training Materials, 2001 p.24) and must also include a “focused intervention” that may include (but is not limited to) accelerated activities. All interventions should rely upon research-based best practices such as coaching, mentoring, tutoring, summer school, Saturday school, and extended days, and the services selected must be provided by the LEA free of charge and should involve parents in the decision-making process. In a legislative update (Summary of 16 N.C.A.C. 6D.0505 Local Accountability Procedures section c) the law says:

”This intervention shall involve extended instructional opportunities that are *different* and *supplemental* and that are specifically designed to improve these students’ performance to grade level proficiency. Students who do not meet promotion standards shall each have a Personalized Education Plan that includes: diagnostic evaluation, intervention strategies, and monitoring strategies. These

strategies may include: alternative learning models, special homework considerations, enrollment in smaller classes, tutorial sessions, extended school day, Saturday school, modified instructional programs, parental involvement, summer school instruction, and/or retention“(p.9).

This requirement that PEP interventions be different from strategies normally provided to students was news to me as a former classroom teacher. Once I understood its implications I realized how challenging that would be. Basically, to be in compliance, classroom teachers would need to create or choose interventions that involve teaching strategies completely different from anything currently being used in their classroom without being given any additional resources.

Of even greater concern is the requirement that the interventions provided may not supplant (meaning replace) existing services provided in a regular classroom. What this would mean to classroom teachers is that they could not use any resources during the school day to satisfy the goals of a PEP. The use of any activity that might pull the student from class or assign them to another adult for help would place the teacher out of compliance (legally) since the student would miss some aspect of regular instruction available to other students (supplanting) classroom instruction. I know from direct experience that schools sometimes pull students for tutoring during instructional time as a PEP intervention.

The legal requirement specific to PEP interventions is that they must be “different and supplement” (rather than supplant) regular instruction was a detail never made clear to me as a classroom teacher. It is my assumption teachers across the state most likely have similar gaps in their understanding of PEPs legal requirements.

If implemented well, the PEP has the potential to make a difference in the lives of teachers and struggling students. The time for teachers to intervene and provide all of their low performing students with the appropriate tools for improving their skills is long overdue. Providing meaningful, individualized support for the most struggling students may just provide them with the renewed sense of hope they need to keep going.

Tomlinson asserts, “Though today’s teachers generally work with single classes of students of nearly the same age, these children have an array of needs as great as those among the children of the one-room school. Thus a teacher’s question remains much the same as it was 100 years ago: How do I divide time, resources, and myself so that I am an effective catalyst for maximizing talent in all my students?”(Tomlinson,1999, p1).

A clear understanding of PEP requirements became the foundation for comparison as I reviewed the literature in each of the other areas selected for investigation. My review of Title I legislation and conditions inherent in Title I schools was compared to what was known about PEP requirements. I wanted to identify common elements and/or differences between the two legislative initiatives and identify conditions specific to Title I schools that might contribute to teachers’ perceptions of their school culture or their writing of PEPs.

Title I Legislation and Implementation

Federal Level

To investigate Title I legislation and implementation, my research began with the federal requirements for Title I. Historically, federal funding to support public education began in 1965 with the inception of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Included in ESEA were a number of federal “Title” programs – including Title

I funds for schools of poverty. The ESEA guided federal regulations and funding for education until it was reauthorized in 2001 under a new title, the “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) Act. This Act continued the work of ESEA with a focus on four areas of education: a) accountability of schools to guarantee results, b) flexibility so that local challenges could be addressed through local control, c) research-based reform initiatives, and d) parent options that allow them to select other public schools or take advantage of free tutoring if their child attends a school that needs improvement. Also, parents can choose another public school if the school their child attends is unsafe (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

The high level of accountability in today’s public schools is a direct result of NCLB legislation. The expectation is that all children can learn. Accordingly, every state department of education, every local school district and each individual school (including Title I schools) must shoulder the responsibility of developing programs and interventions to guarantee the success of all their students. Title I schools face even greater levels of accountability because of the federal funding provided to address this goal.

As one part of the NCLB Act, Title I programs provide additional funds to high poverty schools for additional resources needed to support their most struggling students. The Federal government allocates these funds through four “statutory formulas based primarily on poverty census estimates and the cost of education in each state” (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2006, p.2). The formulas include: (1) Basic Grants that provide funds to LEAs where the number of children counted in the formula have a minimum enrollment of at least 10 and exceeds two percent of an LEA’s school-

age population. (2) Concentration Grants provided to LEAs where the number of formula children exceeds 6,500 or 15 percent of the total school-age population. (3) Targeted Grants which are based on the same data used for Basic and Concentration Grants (except the data is weighted so that LEAs with higher numbers or higher percentages of children living in poverty receive a larger share of the funds). Targeted Grants are awarded to LEAs where the number of school aged children counted in the formula (without application of the formula weights) equals at least 10 and exceeds five percent of the whole district's school-age population. (U.S. Department of Education, 2009, p.3).

LEAs are then required to target schools with the highest percentages of children from low-income families as they distribute the Title I funds they receive. Unless a participating school is already operating a Title I school-wide program, then it is required to focus Title I services on supporting the students who are failing, or at risk of failing. Schools in which the number of students from poverty equals or exceeds 40 percent of its enrollment are eligible to use Title I funds for school-wide programs that serve all children in the school. LEAs must also use Title I funds to provide academic enrichment services to eligible children enrolled in private schools that fall within the geographic boundaries of their district.

Title I funding also includes guidelines specific to parents. The NCLB Act says that parents at Title I schools must be invited to participate in the planning and development of policies and programs that affect them. Title I schools are also required to provide opportunities for parents to “jointly develop, with school staff, a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the

responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state's high standards” (U.S. Department of Education, 2009, section 2). And although this fact does not specifically contribute to my research agenda, it provides a link to an important legal requirement of the PEP, involvement of parents. The inclusion of parents as decision-makers in the educational process was found in organizational and leadership theory as well. Developing partnerships with parents to address student learning needs is a key component to any successful educational plan or intervention.

According to federal regulations, services that can be provided include (but are not limited to) the use of Title I funding to: hire additional teachers to reduce class size, provide tutoring, invest in computer technology, provide activities that focus on parental involvement, engage teachers and staff in professional development to promote effective instruction, purchase materials and supplies that are used to enhance curriculum and instruction, implement pre-kindergarten programs, and/or to provide additional staff such as teacher assistants or other support staff.

Currently, about one-third of schools eligible for Title I monies are funded nationwide. There are many schools in North Carolina that are eligible but do not receive funding. Districts are required to rank their schools by poverty and then serve them appropriately in rank order until Title I federal funds are fully expended. Schools with 75 percent or more of their students on free or reduced-price lunch must be served, and it is the responsibility of each district to provide sufficient funding and support for each school to ensure that there is a reasonable chance their reform initiative will be successful.

Since federal law looks at poverty by whole school, there are often poor students in some schools who don't receive Title I services because they do not represent a significant percentage of students attending that school. Understandably, this fact does not make them less of a risk, but rather, places additional burdens on some schools expected to address their needs without being given additional support or funding. Even though funds go to a school based on poverty, there is somewhat of a “mismatch” since Title I funds are used to serve students who are at-risk academically. It is possible that those two conditions are not necessarily in sync. Also, since the number of schools a district serves with Title I funds is based on the level of poverty in schools and the amount of funds available, this system of support may not always reach some students who would most benefit from the services the funding might provide. Lastly, when considering the issue of funding, it seems apparent that even the choice regarding which schools will be designated for Title I funds can vary widely among districts. The selection of a school is dependent upon the district’s method for prioritizing the disbursement of Title I funds (LEA Title I Director Interview, July 22, 2009).

In addition to the funding challenges inherent in addressing the needs of students living in poverty, Title I schools often include a high turnover of teachers and staff because of the difficulties they face in their own classrooms. Teachers in title I schools are still expected to move all of their students toward the required “benchmark” level of achievement. To achieve that goal, they would need to facilitate academic growth of their most struggling students at a pace that exceeds the normal growth curve because of the fact that they are already significantly behind. This high turnover rate among teachers

and staff in Title I schools often increases the challenge by placing the least experienced and sometimes lowest performing teachers in the worst schools.

Lack of experience also impacts a teacher's ability to develop effective interventions, such as the PEP. As a literacy coach, I saw first-hand how the least experienced teachers in my own school (which was not Title I) had trouble developing intervention plans simply because they were still learning the curriculum and state standards while also struggling to develop their basic skills as a classroom teacher. I observed that before reaching a level of competency that would allow them to differentiate their instruction; they first had to learn methods for managing everyday instruction in their classroom.

This national concern over teacher quality, especially within struggling schools, was addressed within the NCLB Act. It included a requirement that by June 30, 2006, every teacher hired to teach a core academic subject would have to meet the criteria for being "Highly Qualified." So the question might be asked is why have Title I schools continue to be staffed with the least experienced teachers? Is it due to a teacher shortage? Linda Darling Hammond's work on teacher quality answered that question and dispelled some popular "myths" about teacher issues. First, she claims it is a misnomer that the hiring of unqualified teachers is a result of an overall shortage of qualified individuals. Her statement, especially now with current economic cutback in educational funding in our state, would hold true.

Darling-Hammond says this phenomenon is "a result of distributional inequities." She continues, "To turn the 'No Child Left Behind' mandate into a reality, however, the nation will have to overcome serious labor market obstacles" (Darling-Hammond &

Sykes, 2003, p. 2-3). The issues related to teacher quality are at the heart of Title I school failures. The concern is that the “quick fix” approach to hiring non-licensed teachers and placing them in a “lateral entry” program to obtain a teaching license as quickly as possible hurts our schools. Darling-Hammond notes, “the evidence is clear that shortcut versions-those providing the training and meager support for new teachers- fail to prepare teachers to succeed or stay, thus adding to the revolving door of ill-prepared individuals who cycle through the classrooms of disadvantages schools, wasting district resources and valuable learning time for their students” (p.5).

State Level

In North Carolina, current data indicated that 29% of the state’s schools are considered to be at the “priority school” level, with 4.2% identified as “low-performing” (North Carolina Public Schools, 2009, p.3). By definition, “low performing schools are those that failed to meet their expected growth standards and have significantly less than 50% of their students’ scores at or above Achievement Level III” (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2007, p.5). The reference to “Achievement Level III” indicates a range of student achievement scores that fall within the state’s defined level of “expected growth.” Schools considered to be a “priority school” are those with “less than 50 percent of their students’ test scores at the proficient level or better and making expected or high growth” (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2009, p.3).

In North Carolina, “The percent of schools identified as low performing or priority has more than doubled in the last two years” (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, February 2009, p.3). Within those schools, all students whose test scores fell below a Level III were required to have a PEP. Overall, “about half of North

Carolina's traditional and charter public schools are Title I schools and all 115 of the state's school districts receive Title I funding" (Public Schools of North Carolina 2008, p.1) making it clear that the development of PEPs continues to be a focus among classroom teachers state-wide.

The use of federal title I funds to support struggling schools continues to be managed at the local level. "The U.S. Department of Education distributes these funds to State Education Agencies (SEAs) that in turn, distribute the funds to Local Education Agencies (LEAs). NC Department of Public Instruction holds about 1 percent of the funds for state administration and 4 percent of the funds for school improvement purposes. Local school districts must then allocate Title I funds to qualifying schools based on the number of low-income children in each school" (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2008, p.1) in one of two ways. Monies may be used to implement school-wide programs that impact every student, or secondly, Title funds may be allocated as part of a "targeted assistance" program, depending on the level of poverty in the school and how the school functions. School-wide programs are used when at least 40 percent of a school's population qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch. School-wide programs provide flexibility in using Title I funds, since these schools must also consider how additional funds allocated to the school contribute to their plans for whole-school reform.

Targeted Assistance Schools use Title I funds to focus on helping specific populations of students who have been identified as being at risk of academic failure on state assessments. Title I funds are allocated to students and schools who meet state and federal standards for low-income or poverty levels. Low-income students are defined by the state of North Carolina as being those who meet free or reduced-price lunch criteria.

The number of low-income students enrolled in their school defines schools of poverty. According to NC state guidelines, “a Title I school must have: 1) a percentage of low-income students that is at least as high as the district's overall percentage; or 2) have at least 35 percent low-income students (whichever is the lower of the two figures)” (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2009, p.3).

Once schools become eligible for Title I funding, there is pressure to obtain student achievement results in the form of “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP). AYP is defined as “the minimum level of progress in reading/language arts and mathematics proficiency made by students in a year” (North Carolina Public Schools, 2009, p.2). “Title I schools not making AYP in the same subject (reading/language arts or mathematics) for two years in a row are identified for Title I School Improvement” (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2008, p.1) which leads to a number of required steps intended to rectify the situation. First, schools must offer a transfer choice for students, allowing them to attend a different school and must also provide transportation to the second school. If schools continue to be identified for school improvement, the second year requires them to offer additional tutoring services to students not making AYP. For schools not making AYP in year three and beyond, more serious “corrective actions” are required that may include “replacing school staff, implementing new curriculum, or changing the school’s internal organizational structure” (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2008, p.1). The pressure on teachers to address the needs of their struggling students is heightened when they work in a Title I school by virtue of sheer numbers and the level of accountability they face. Although my research was intended to evaluate the

quality of PEPs, analysis of school climate at Title I schools was also a focus due to its potential influence on both teaching and learning.

Beginning in 2008, the NC Department of Public Instruction “developed a Statewide System of Support (SSOS) to help struggling schools and districts improve student achievement.” Currently, the “SSOS is supporting 165 schools and six school districts” in the state. (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2009, p.1). The state’s role in supporting struggling schools and districts goes beyond simple distribution of federal funds such as those available for Title I. The effort to increase their support of schools and students at-risk is a critical “next step” toward state-wide reform aimed at school improvement. This ongoing focus on developing ways to address struggling students (and schools) is directly linked to the quality of the intervention plans (like the PEP) teachers choose for their students. The results of this study specific to PEP quality may also contribute to the body of knowledge needed by classroom teachers as they seek to impact student achievement through effective intervention strategies.

District Level

In the district chosen for this study, student achievement in Title I schools was improving. For example, in 2005-2006, students in fifteen out of forty schools (37.5%) did not make AYP under the NCLB guidelines, while 2008 data indicated that only nine of the district’s (now) forty-nine schools (18.3%) did not make AYP. Furthermore, of those nine schools not making AYP in 2008, only one was a Title I school. All other Title I schools in the district made AYP. At the elementary school level, seven schools earned Title I status during the past two years with eight schools having been named as eligible for Title I funding in 2009-2010. Overall (as a district) though, this LEA was

identified as being an “improvement” district since overall scores (K-12) have not met AYP standards for the past two years. As a result, steps had to be taken to address “improvement” status and the Title I Director indicated those plans were already underway. (LEA Title I Director Interview, July 22, 2009).

Locally, funding decisions that determine which schools received Title I monies were made by the local Board of Education. The first step was for the Federal Programs (Title I) Director to make Title I recommendations to a local “cabinet staff” consisting of the Superintendent and all of his Assistant Superintendents. If approved by the cabinet staff, the recommendations were submitted to the Board of Education for final approval. In this district, the decision was made to place all Title I money in the elementary program (K-5) to address the need for early intervention among struggling students. (LEA Title I Director Interview, July 22, 2009).

Once the decision was made to focus upon K-5 needs, the district had to make decisions regarding how funds would be allocated. Each LEA sets a “threshold” that determines which schools will receive Title I money. This district chose a threshold of 40% which meant that all elementary schools having at least 40% of their students eligible for free or reduced lunch would receive Title I funding. (LEA Title I Director Interview, July 22, 2009).

To determine AYP within the district, schools compared student achievement scores to specific achievement goals given to them for each of its student population “sub-groups.” Sub-groups included student groups at each grade level defined by race, language of origin, and educational performance levels such as giftedness and other areas of exceptionality. “Missing one target goal meant the school itself could not make AYP.

Having schools that did not make AYP meant the district didn't make AYP either. Title I schools and districts were especially affected if they did not make AYP repeatedly as they faced serious state-mandated sanctions" (LEA Title I Director Interview, July 22, 2009).

It became clear that the number of students not making AYP influenced the number of PEPs needing to be written at both the school and district levels. After speaking with the Title I director however, I learned that becoming a Title I school did not necessarily mean that students in that school would fail to achieve AYP. Last year's data from the district confirmed that fact since six out of its seven elementary Title I schools *did* make AYP. However, what I also learned is that making AYP did not necessarily mean that students were performing at (or above) grade level expectations. Rather, it meant that students had made growth – certainly an important step toward reaching grade level expectations – but was not a guarantee that such a goal had been met. In both schools selected for study, there were students who did not meet grade level expectations but had made AYP. In school "B" where AYP was not achieved at the whole school level, the number of students below grade level equaled 58.9%. Even in school "A" that was successful in making AYP overall, 26.7% of its students were still performing below grade level.

Title I schools were selected as the location for study on the assumption that there would be access to a greater number of PEPs that could be used for assessing PEP quality since students performing below grade level were required to have a PEP. Clarifying the difference between AYP (the measure for evaluating Title I schools) and "on grade level" performance (the measure for deciding if a student needs a PEP) was informative but did

not change the decision to focus on Title I schools. Overall achievement levels at Title I schools consistently ranked at the low end of the spectrum as compared to non Title I schools in the district chosen for study which meant that more PEPs would be written by the teachers in these schools.

The purpose for reviewing literature specific to Title I programs was to examine Title I funding regulations and issues, particularly funds that could support teachers' development of intervention strategies, such as the PEP. By considering the use of Title I funds from all perspectives, I learned that although federal guidelines include choices that *could* be used to support teachers in their development of PEPs, there is no clear requirement for doing so, as schools and districts are given a great deal of latitude when it comes to spending decisions. I also recognized that the implementation of PEPs is an intervention strategy that Title I schools may use to satisfy both state and federal regulations specific to meeting the needs of student at risk enrolled in their school.

Information learned about Title I schools added to my understanding of the potential influences on school culture that may exist in schools of poverty. The high number of students performing below grade level continues to be a problem in many schools with high poverty levels. Even though Title I funds are intended to address issues of poverty, it is clear that both poverty and low achievement scores contribute to the problems that many schools face, including schools identified as Title I. By studying Title I schools, PEPs collected would not only fulfill the requirement for gathering samples from students performing below grade level but could very likely represent students of poverty as well.

My next focus was to consider the influence on a school's culture that a school leader might have through his or her leadership and organizational style. My review of the literature specific to organizational and leadership theory follows.

Organizational and Leadership Theory

Historically, organizational theory was first applied to industrial businesses and their systemized structures. It began with classical organization theory that was often referred to as "Taylorism" so named for Frederick Taylor whose work in scientific management theory most aptly influenced industrialized companies at the turn of the century. As it emerged, it drew from a number of other disciplines including economics, psychology, sociology, and systems theory. Such work during these early years fell under "classical" management theory, which only "attempted to explain peoples' motivation to work strictly as a function of economic reward" (Walonick, 2000, p. 14).

In today's world of education, teachers' reasons for both joining and leaving the teaching force is not merely influenced by economic reward. The exodus of recently hired teachers occurs at a rate of losing "more than 30% within the first five years... hurts low income schools, which suffer turnover rates as much as 50% higher than affluent schools" Linda Darling-Hammond also notes, "Such churning...is caused largely by insufficient preparation and support of new teachers, poor working conditions and uncompetitive salaries." Her reference to poor working conditions can often be linked to the leadership skills and qualities of the school's principal and the support structures that he or she develops for the teaching staff (Darling-Hammond & Sikes, 2003, p. 4).

Classical organizational theory "evolved during the first half of this century" (Walonick, 2000, p.14) beginning with "Taylorism" – a scientific management theory

that, according to Walonick, evolved into “Administrative theory (i.e. principles of management). Administrative theory was formalized in the 1930’s by Mooney and Reiley who emphasized establishing a universal set of management principles that could be applied to all organizations. Walonick says “classical management theory was rigid and mechanistic” and although this concept of organization may have had its shortcomings, it provided the foundation upon which modern day principles that apply to organizations such as our schools were built (Walonick, 2000, p. 14).

Traditional or classical organization theory definitely influenced contemporary educational structures and practice. Classical theory was often divided into one of two approaches – one that relied upon a scientific perspective and another that focused on administrative management. It was Taylor’s work that theorized an organization “could become efficient by identifying the ‘one best way’ of performing a task...using scientific principles” (Green, 2001, p. 52). The administrative management approach addressed the structures and function of the entire organization by identifying specific principles related to specialization (whereby each member of the organization developed a set of skills in one area), the delegation of responsibility among its members, and the span of control and authority. Most school districts today “currently use some form of the classical model in the operation of their schools’ (Green, 2001, p. 53-54). Green goes on to say that a “leader who administers a school from a classical perspective would talk about ‘going by the book’ or ‘running a tight ship’ and would assume to have ultimate authority and responsibility over everything that goes on in the school (Green, 2001, p. 54). There would be little regard for the opinions or feelings of staff and students as members of the organization by an organizational leader who took this approach.

Another approach that also influenced today's educational leaders was the social systems theory, an approach that sees an organization as consisting of a set of interrelated elements that function in a particular manner to achieve a specific purpose. This approach also considered the elements of an organization to be cohesively connected; an integrated whole rather than a set of individual parts. A school principal with a social systems approach to managing a school would be sensitive to the feelings and ideas of others and would seek to problem-solve through discussion, support, and communication. He or she would seek to develop the capacity of the human resources found in the organization and would tend to be proactive rather than reactive to concerns expressed by members of the organization. Of greatest importance would be the development, care and nurturing of staff and students. This approach offers an "emotion-based view of organizational commitment emphasizes the employee's sense of unity and shared values with the organization" (Eisenberger et al. 1990, p.51). Etzioni said that "culture is not something a school has, it is something it *is*" (Etzioni, 1961, p.5).

Schools and the manner in which they are organized have also been greatly influenced by "systems theory." Originally, systems theory was "proposed by Hungarian biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1928, although it was not applied to schools as organizations until more recently" (Walton, 2000, p. 16). The school environment strongly influences what happens in classrooms and effective schools share common characteristics (Coburn, 2004, p.224). One theorist, Barnard, defined an organization as being a system of "consciously coordinated activities" and stressed the idea that it was the responsibility of the executive in charge (such as the principal in a school) to create

an environment conducive to the work of the organization so that the organization could successfully meet its goals (Walonick, 2000, p.15).

At the school level this would mean that the principal is responsible for making sure that the school environment supports both teaching and learning in a manner that leads to student achievement. Also discussed was this important leadership principle: a leader's authority is not guaranteed simply because he or she holds a named position within the structure or hierarchy of the organization. Rather, whether or not the leader is able to operate from a position of authority occurs if (and only if) their subordinates accept them as leaders and respects their positions of power. Before an organizational "team" is able to achieve a set of common goals (such as improved student achievement), members of the organization must first accept their leader (Walonick, 2000, p.15).

According to Green, "an organization can be viewed in a number of ways" and defined an organization as "the rational coordination of the activities of a number of people for the achievement of some common goal, through division of labor and function, and through a hierarchy of authority and responsibility" (Green, 2001, p. 51). In a school it would mean that clear assignments specific to the roles and responsibilities required of each member of the organization were given.

Peter Senge, author of both *The Fifth Discipline* and *Schools That Learn*, proposed that to be effective, the members of an organization must develop strategies that allow them to work together, and that this common understanding leads to "systems thinking." Senge believes that systems' thinking offers just such an "understanding (of) how our actions shape our reality" He notes that systems' thinking allows us to experience a shift of mind, from seeing ourselves as separate from the world to that of

being connected to the world. Senge believes that systems thinking can lead to a common understanding that “our own actions create the problems we experience” (Senge, 1990, p. 13). Senge also purports that complex organizations (like a school) experiencing the greatest success are able to see the larger, organizational whole as being meaningfully interconnected; reliant upon one another and dynamic in the sense that they are ever changing as a result of their interdependence. Principals who adopt this approach establish a school environment that embraces change and perceives challenges as opportunities rather than barriers to success, believing that the problems faced are both created and resolved from within the system.

Senge warns however, that there are levels of systems thinking and for educational systems to really benefit from this approach; they need to advance their understanding and go beyond the competitive-based social system that currently exists in most schools. To accomplish this, a principal must help all members of the organization learn to work past their individual differences and establish a spirit of team learning that advances everyone’s thinking and promotes greater effectiveness within the organization. According to Senge, “Team learning is vital because teams, not individuals are the fundamental learning unit in modern organizations. This is where the ‘rubber meets the road’; (and) unless teams can learn the organization cannot learn” (Senge, 1990, p. 10). I believe it is this principle that defines a learning organization and has led to my desire to identify the factors within a school that (perhaps) might influence the quality of what teachers develop on their PEPs.

Once organizations are successful in developing a “systems thinking” approach to teaching, learning, and working collaboratively in a school, they should also seek to

design the most effective instruction possible. The goal would be to meet the needs of every student as a learner in the school. And so it stands to reason that this investigation warranted an analysis of the kinds of “systems” that already exist in schools to determine their impact on the development of PEPs. Also of interest because of its level of influence on teacher functions within the school, were the conditions that exist within each school as a result of the principals’ leadership style and policies. I set out to analyze the critical elements of a school’s culture as defined by teachers’ perceptions of their school culture.

From a whole-school perspective, it is the principal who is responsible for the success of the school. It is the principal’s leadership style and decisions that determine the extent to which school staff evolve into Senge’s description of a learning organization. Senge notes that “schools can be re-created, made vital, and sustainably renewed not by fiat or command, and not by regulation, but by taking a learning orientation. Senge further states that, “a person in authority...can’t dictate that people will become inspired or engaged” (Senge, 2000, p. 273). It is true that although the principal can mandate change, he or she cannot mandate the level of enthusiasm or engagement of the staff members in response to that change. It therefore stands to reason that an understanding of leadership theory will assist in understanding the ways in which a principal might influence the instructional goals (such as those included on PEPs) in a school.

It is clear that “the challenges in today’s schools are increasing in frequency, complexity, and intensity, requiring school leaders to enter the schoolhouse with practical experience that prepares them to take immediate and definitive action regarding

multifaceted issues” (Green, 2001, p. v). In addition, “the research points out that school leadership is a key part of school change and turnaround” (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

In *School Leadership That Works*, the authors “conducted a meta-analysis of the research on school leadership spanning 35 years” to develop both “practical advice” and a “solid research base” for what they have identified as “21 principal leadership responsibilities” they describe in their book (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005, preface).

Their research captures key concepts found in leadership theories including transformational and transactional leadership, Total Quality Management, servant and situational leadership, as well as instructional leadership – which they describe as “the most popular theme in educational leadership” for the past twenty years. Each of these approaches to leadership was reviewed and analyzed as the authors examined 69 studies to identify specific behaviors related to principal leadership that they call “responsibilities” (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005, p. 41). Their work has been influential in promoting greater understanding of what past research tells us about educational leadership. There were 21 responsibilities of a leader listed in their work. Greater detail of their work is found in chapter 4 of *School Leadership that Works, From Research to Results*.

To summarize, they noted that principals should provide affirmation of successes, be a change agent, establish strong lines of communication, create a culture of community, handle discipline that interferes with teaching, be flexible, have a clear focus and belief system, promote intellectual growth of themselves and others, know

curriculum, evaluate what is working, maintain order, develop strong relationships within and without the school, provide the right materials, be “visible” to all and, yes, provide inspiration to others. The responsibilities of the school principal are critically important! In today’s climate that promotes self-determination, school principals face the challenge of trying to create environments where everyone works together!

Margaret Wheatley (2000) discusses how “organizations that have learned how to think together and that know themselves are filled with action” She states, “Most of us were raised in a culture that told us that the way to manage for excellence was to tell people exactly what they had to do and then make sure they did it.” But in the long run, she is convinced that “Self-organization is a long-term exploration requiring enormous self-awareness and support... (and) meaningful change is at least a three-to-five-year process” (Wheatley, 2000 p.344-345). And although much attention has been given to the need for educational reform at the organizational level, I have observed that efforts to initiate large-scale changes rarely survive that three to five year window. The challenge to such change is due to a rapidly changing political climate where legislators and school board members seek immediate results with an “either/or” mentality. (If dramatic results are not seen right away, the funding for reform initiatives gets cut.)

The PEP was introduced as an agent of change, intended to address the learning needs of the state’s most struggling students. Implementing such large-scale, sweeping change is a challenge in any organization. And in schools, the instructional leader or principal may be versed in knowing what needs changing without having a clear idea of the process needed to implement change. Douglas Reeves notes that, “The knowing-doing” gap persisted in organizations long before Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) popularized

the term” (Reeves, 2009, p. 85). In his book, Reeves discusses how schools “must decide if the essential planning is to develop a tool to improve student achievement...or if the process is an end in itself” (p.84). All too often it seems that the planning process intended to facilitate change in schools does become an end in itself. A case in point was when the writing and filing of PEPs became the end itself rather than the tool for implementing change as described by some teachers during a focus group discussion.

“Newly published research on closing the implementation gap...suggests we must redefine in a radical new way the concept of ‘critical mass.’ We know what has not worked: the traditional practice of a change initiative led by the enthusiastic 3 percent who attended a conference and return to their school full of missionary zeal, and if they are enormously persuasive, double their effect to 6 percent of the faculty” (Reeves, 2009, p.85-86). Reeves insight into the “knowing-doing” gap helps to explain at least one contributor to the vast differences in the way PEPs are being developed and the misinformation that exists in schools across the state when considering PEP implementation as well. It helps to explain the inefficiency with which PEPs were “rolled out” by the state of North Carolina in year one. A representative number of participants from across the state were gathered together, provided with an in-service and given a notebook to take back to their respective districts. To date, that has been the only state training or support provided. It fits the ineffective model Reeves describes, with perhaps even the “missionary zeal” portion of his example missing since this initiative was mandated by the state and it is likely that participants from each district represented were assigned to attend.

When considering principles of leadership, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), a program of the Council of Chief State School Officers offers a set of standards for school leaders that was “forged from research on productive educational leadership and the wisdom of colleagues” (ISLLC, 1996, p. 97). These six standards are considered a framework for designing schools that focus upon “matters of learning and teaching and the creation of a powerful learning environment” (ISLLC, 1996, p. 102). The standards say that a school administrator can be an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by:

- 1: Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community
- 2: Advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
- 3: Ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
- 4: Collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
- 5: Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
- 6: Understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context (ISLLC, 1996, p.103).

My review of literature specific to the impact a principal has on school culture, made it seem plausible that the manner in which he or she implements policies and procedures specific to development of PEPs could influence their quality. A Principal’s influence might occur directly by the rules and procedures they create for how PEPs will

be developed and how they communicate and enforce those procedures, or indirectly by ways in which teachers are supported and/or “supervised” during PEP development. I also anticipated that the results of the investigation into the quality of PEPs being developed might be impacted by the level of accountability at the district level, and the number of PEPs required in each school.

I also anticipated that the lack of policy or procedure at the state level for holding districts accountable for the content and quality of PEPs might also reveal that districts or perhaps schools themselves had developed their own procedures for PEP completion. If that were the case, independent decision-making at the school level might also contribute to variations in PEP quality and implementation from school to school.

As I developed my research proposal, the qualities of an effective organizational leader, such as those listed in the ISLLC Standards for School Leaders guided my thinking of the research design. I began to understand the need to include the voice of each principal in the investigation. Attempting to understand their goals, their perceptions and their intentions might help to explain the policies, practices and conditions found in each school and the extent to which the school environment had an impact on teachers’ perceptions of the school climate.

Instructional Design Theory

As my research plan to study the quality of PEPs evolved, I decided that an investigation of instructional design theory would assist me in identifying critical elements of design that contribute to the quality of any instructional plan. Before developing a measure for assessing PEP quality I needed to know what would be worthy of assessing.

Previous discussion of increases in student diversity focused mainly on the changing population of students due to differences in culture and language of origin. As my review of literature shifted its focus to the elements of instructional design, the educational differences among students' became more important to me as well. I knew that the quality of any intervention, including a PEP, would (in part) be dependent upon its ability to address the needs of the individual learner. Amazingly, research evidence indicated that the range of instructional levels among students in any given classroom today could vary as much as five grade level equivalents (Jenkins et. al, 1994, p.344).

Johnson noted that, "Change is not simply about doing what we do better, changing everything we do, switching those involved in implementing the change, or modifying how the change is implemented. Rather, it is about rethinking how the goals, programs, and services fit together so as to keep pace with the changing world" (Johnson, 2005, p. 8). To address a wide range of students' needs, teachers must "re-think" their instructional approaches and begin to adopt practices more responsive to each individual student's learning needs. Howard Gardner said, "The biggest mistake in past centuries in teaching has been to treat all children as if they were variants of the same individual, and thus to feel justified in teaching them the same subjects in the same ways" (Gardner, 1997, p.31).

In her book on differentiation, Carol Ann Tomlinson (1999) notes, "Though today's teachers generally work with single classes with students nearly the same age, these children have an array of needs as great as those among the children of a one-room school (p.1). What educators are beginning to understand is that a more traditional "one size fits all" approach to teaching that sees students at each grade level as being the same

and having the same learning needs no longer works. “There is increasing variability among students who populate our classrooms as a result of differing experiences, cultures, native languages, and socioeconomic conditions. Those schools and/or classroom teachers applying a differentiated approach are making progress” (Tomlinson, 2006, p.1).

Addressing the challenge of developing differentiated instruction to meet the needs of a variety of learners must begin with an understanding of instructional design principles. Equally as important to teachers’ growth in this area, is the need for professional support – especially among newly licensed and developing teachers. In general though, I have found that teachers don’t see the need for, or the power behind, delivering instruction that is well-designed. As a part-time university faculty member responsible for teaching Master’s Degree methods courses to educators, I find it necessary to include instructional design principles in my courses. And as a researcher, I began reviewing the literature in this area to gain a deeper and perhaps broader perspective of the historic background and to become enlightened about where current thinking might be specific to instructional design theory.

Historically, there was great confusion about the difference between instructional design theory and the instructional design *process*. The work of Charles M. Reigeluth provided the clarity that distinguishes the difference. His work informed educators about how instructional design theory differs from learning theory and curriculum theory although each of these is closely related to the others. He defines an instructional design theory as being, “a theory that offers explicit guidance on how to better help people learn and develop” (Reigeluth, 1999, p.5).

Reigeluth further clarifies design theory by identifying four major characteristics that all instructional-design theories have in common. He notes that each is “design oriented (focusing on means to attain given goals for learning or development) rather than description oriented (focusing on the results of given events)...and identifies methods of instruction...and the situations in which those methods should and should not be used.”

The third characteristic of “all instructional design theories, (is that) the methods of instruction can be broken into more detailed component methods that provide more guidance to educators. Finally, he says, “the methods are probabilistic, rather than deterministic, which means they increase the chances of attaining the goals rather than ensuring attainment of the goals” (Reigeluth, 1999, p. 6-7). He also writes, “To understand what instructional-design theory is, it is helpful to contrast it with what it is not” (Reigeluth, 1999, p. 12), noting that learning theories “describe how learning occurs” (whereas) “instructional design theories are more directly and easily applied to educational problems, for they describe specific events outside of the learner that facilitate learning (i.e. methods of instruction), rather than describing what goes on in a learner’s head when learning occurs” (Reigeluth, 1999, p. 13).

To differentiate between instructional design theory and curriculum theory, Reigeluth discusses the distinction between what to teach and how to teach, noting, “The decisions about what to teach have been viewed as the province of curriculum theories, whereas decisions about how to teach have been the province of instructional-design theories.” To summarize, he says that instructional design theory “isn’t the same as learning theory, an ISD (instructional systems development) process model, or a curriculum theory, but is closely related to all three” (Reigeluth, 1999, p. 14-15).

Early work published by Robert Gagne and Walter Dick & Lou Carey also greatly contributed to educators' understanding of the instructional design process. More recently the works of Tomlinson, Wiggins & McTighe and Marzano have contributed to this understanding by developing tools and strategies that educators can apply to their work in designing effective instruction. The field of instructional design is replete with approaches referred to as instructional systems design (ISD) models. These ISD models are the result of more than forty years of research into instructional processes that can be used to guide, evaluate, and/or explain the components and the processes embodied in instructional design systems. The structure of a "systems approach" model includes a methodical approach to identifying, developing and analyzing instructional goals that are fundamental to the development of specific, measurable performance objectives. Despite the current focus upon a systems approach model to designing instruction, it should be emphasized that most experts agree, "there is no single systems approach model for designing instruction" (Dick & Carey, 1990, p. 4). Again, a systems approach model for instructional design should not be confused with a model for designing curriculum. Although curriculum development contains within itself systems of design, it is different from instructional design. Curriculum is designed to provide a framework upon which instructional goals are built and has a much broader focus, while instructional design focuses on individual learning needs at the point when teachers are preparing to teach. Instructional design is what teachers need to attend to as they develop their PEPs.

The work of Dick and Carey offers a well-defined process for instructional design. Their instructional design model begins with the identification of instructional goals based on a needs assessment of students and ends with a summative evaluation

designed to assess the extent to which the intended goals have been met. Their model identifies nine clearly defined stages in the design process. They include having the designer: 1) identify an instructional goal, 2) conduct an instructional analysis, 3) identify entry behaviors & characteristics, 4) write performance objectives, 5) develop criterion-referenced test items, 6) develop an instructional strategy, 7) develop and/or select instruction, 8) design and conduct the formative evaluation, 9) revise instruction. Once the design process is complete it is then recommended the designer conduct a summative evaluation (Dick & Carey, 1990, p. 6). This sequence of instructional events can be directly applied to the process that is intended when developing PEPs for students at risk. Dick and Carey's work helped to establish "A more contemporary view of instruction" (with the understanding that) every component (i.e. teacher, students, materials, and learning environment) is crucial to successful learning" (Dick & Carey, 1990, p. 7).

Reigeluth defined instructional design as, "a discipline that is concerned with the understanding and improving one aspect of education; the process of instruction" and "the process of deciding what methods of instruction are best for bringing about desired changes in student knowledge and skills for a specific course content and a specific student population" (Reigeluth, 1983, p. 7). He also added to our understanding of instruction by identifying five distinctly different disciplines related to instruction defined below. He writes,

"In summary, instructional design is concerned with optimizing the process of instruction. Instructional development is concerned with optimizing the process of developing the instruction. Instructional implementation is concerned with optimizing the process of implementing the instruction. Instructional management

is concerned with optimizing the process of managing the instruction. And instructional evaluation is concerned with optimizing the process of evaluating the instruction” (Reigeluth, 1983, p. 7).

As teachers develop their PEPs the task requires consideration of the best methods for designing instruction. Students at risk of failure who are already behind the expected level of achievement require additional learning support and it is critical that they receive instruction that is well designed and effective. High quality instruction must be based upon instructional design theory and instructional development processes that are sound. There are two main schools of thought regarding instructional design. Some theorists believe that instruction should be designed to teach knowledge while others believe in a constructivist approach that sees knowledge as being constructed by the learner. These two approaches represent polar opposites, leaving educators asking, which approach is best for students at risk? Clearly, when considering students already behind and at risk of failure in today’s classrooms, teachers must address students’ learning needs in ways that will be engaging. Instructional design theory aligns with the belief that knowledge must now be “constructed” by the individual learner and not simply “taught.”

The work of Wiggins, McTighe and Charlotte Danielson also contributed to educational understandings of effective instructional design. In their book, *Understanding by Design*, Wiggins and McTighe noted that, “Historically, U.S. education has minimized the role of planning and design in teaching. The frenetic pace of daily school schedules, the demands of non-teaching duties, and the general lack of time reserved for planning (within and beyond the teaching day) make it difficult for educators to engage in substantive curricular planning and design work, especially with

colleagues” (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998 p.17). It is this very issue that clarified the importance of encouraging teachers to develop their skills in effective lesson design.

Wiggins’ model for designing instruction begins with identifying the desired results (hence the name “backward design”). His model offers teachers a strategy for effective instructional design. Also significant to the understanding of designing quality instruction is the work of Charlotte Danielson. In her book, *Enhancing Professional Practice, a Framework for Teaching*, she identified critical aspects of teaching that are linked to the instructional design process. Her work was instrumental in focusing on the deeper understandings and practices of effective teaching. The need for teachers to understand key elements of effective instructional design is critical, especially in cases where children have already been identified as being at risk simply because their needs are so great. I anticipated gathering data that might help determine the extent to which most teachers were given the training and support needed to develop their skills in effectively designing instruction.

One specific approach considered to be a model for addressing the needs of diverse learners is the use of differentiation strategies, sometimes referred to as “responsive” teaching. Differentiation is one form of individualization identified as effective in addressing the diverse and varying needs of learners found in a heterogeneous classroom (Tomlinson, 1999; Carr & Harris, 2001; Hock, 2000, Cunningham, 2007).

For this study, differentiation is defined as an instructional approach that builds upon the needs of “individual learners at their varied points of readiness, interest, and learning preference” through systematic modification of the instructional content, processes or outcomes (products) expected of each student (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 3).

Teachers who provide differentiated instruction “strive to do whatever it takes to ensure that struggling and advanced learners, students with varied cultural heritages, and children with different background experiences all grow as much as they possibly can each day, each week, and throughout the year” Tomlinson, 1999, p. 2).

In differentiated classrooms, teachers implement modifications specific to their use of instructional strategies, their application of content and curriculum standards, and/or their use of assessments. Each of these adjustments to teaching is designed to address the specific learning needs of individual students. One researcher noted, “To differentiate instruction is to recognize students’ varying background knowledge, readiness, language, preferences in learning, interests and to react responsively” (Hall, 2002, p. 2).

Tomlinson views differentiation as a philosophy of teaching rather than a specific educational methodology. She said that if educators believe that every child can learn, then they automatically begin to adapt their instruction and do whatever is needed to address the individual student as a learner. Tomlinson notes that differentiation can be used to: 1) modify curriculum content, 2) adapt processes that help students meet desired goals and objectives, 3) allow choices in products or methods of assessment used to demonstrate mastery (both outcome measures) and 4) adapt learning environments to create conditions that are conducive to the learning needs of students. If teachers were to adopt this kind of “philosophy” in their day-to-day instruction, their implementation of intervention strategies, such as those required on a PEP would have already begun to address the learning needs of the most struggling students. Also, according to Tomlinson,

“Teachers in differentiated classrooms begin with a clear and solid sense of what constitutes powerful curriculum and engaging instruction. Then they ask what it will take to modify that instruction so that each learner comes away with understandings and skills that offer guidance to the next phase of learning. Essentially, they...accept, embrace and plan for the fact that learners bring...essential differences that make them individuals (Tomlinson 1999, p. 2).

If classroom teachers could develop this kind of an instructional approach towards all of the learners in their classroom the intervention process would be seamlessly integrated into every lesson. A senior research scientist in the U.S. Department of Special Education Programs explains that Tomlinson’s approach “identifies three elements of the curriculum that can be differentiated: Content, Process and Products” (Hall, 2002, p. 3). And as teachers develop PEPs for their struggling learners, the tasks they design and implement for their students can adapt and meet their individual needs by changing either the content of what is being taught, the manner with which it is being presented (process) and/or the method in which students can exhibit mastery of their learning (product). As teachers develop PEPs for their students at risk, the use of differentiation strategies would allow them to build upon individual student’s strengths and effectively address their areas of need.

The National Center on Accessing the General Curriculum published their findings on the studies and use of differentiated instruction in an article that states, “Differentiation is recognized to be a compilation of many theories and practices. Based on this review of the literature of differentiated instruction, the “package” itself is lacking empirical validation... future research is warranted” (Hall, 2002, p. 5).

Despite limited research that validates the impact differentiation strategies have on student achievement; there is ongoing anecdotal evidence that differentiation is being heavily utilized in classrooms across the nation. There is mounting evidence however, that the quality of the teacher (and hence the quality of the instruction) is the single most influencing factor in successful student achievement (Sanders & Rivers, 1966; Darling-Hammond, 1999, Johnson, 2005). In addition, research studies on the effectiveness of individualization strategies used specifically with students diagnosed with disabilities confirm that, “of the aspects of teacher quality, classroom practices will have the greatest effect” upon student performance (Wenglinsky, 2002, p. 3).

Wenglinsky continues, “Students whose teachers received professional development in learning how to teach different groups of students substantially outperformed other students” (p. 4). Therefore, in spite of specific studies on the effects of “differentiation” in the classroom, there is empirical evidence that individualization is an effective intervention tool that can be used to provide alternative learning paths for our most struggling students.

The author of *Qualities of Effective Teachers* writes, “Effective teachers recognize that no single instructional strategy can be used in all situations. Rather, they develop and call on a broad repertoire of approaches that have proven successful for them with students of varying abilities, backgrounds, and interests” (Stronge, 2002, p.45). He further indicated that existing conditions in today’s schools substantiate the need for employing a wide variety of instructional strategies in classrooms, especially when addressing the needs of students at risk. To support the need for differentiation or individualization, Stronge notes,

“Teachers who successfully employ a range of strategies reach more students because they tap into more learning styles and student interests. They also can use different strategies to ensure that concepts are well understood. Effective teachers routinely combine instructional techniques that involve individual, small group, and whole-class instruction. This allows them to monitor and pace instruction based on the individual needs of the student” (Stronge, 2002, p.44).

Stronge’s work also included the development of a variety of teacher checklists for evaluating instructional effectiveness that uses a variety of grouping strategies for meeting the diverse needs of students (p.70-76).

Another aspect of differentiation research emerged from Jensen’s work. Jensen has enlightened educators about the influences of the brain on learning and his work has helped to clarify the need for differentiation by teachers. Jensen notes, a “mental challenge can come about with new material, adding degrees of difficulty, or through limiting the resources. Differentiation then, may include varying the time, materials, access, expectations, or support in the learning process” (Jensen, 1998 p.5).

Regardless of the specific strategies selected by classroom teachers, the effort to provide individualized, differentiated instruction to address the needs of students at risk when developing their PEPs remains critical. “Simply put, quality classrooms evolve around powerful knowledge that works for each student” (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006, p.12). The powerful knowledge they speak of can only originate from well-informed, well-planned, reflective teachers who demonstrate a commitment to students and learning on a daily basis and possess the skills to design and develop instruction that addresses the needs of individual students, especially those in need of a PEP.

Summary

Once the review of the literature was completed I made a comparison between elements of the PEP, legislative requirements of Title I funding, principles of organizational and leadership theory, and the principles of instructional design theory to determine the extent to which they aligned with my research goals. Although Title I funding requirements focused on addressing the needs of schools with high numbers of students in poverty, the criteria used to evaluate a school's success under Title I rules contained the elements required of a PEP. Both initiatives are intended to address the needs of low performing students. The effective use of a PEP would actually support the goals found in the federal guidelines for supporting students in title I schools. The difference between them includes monetary support (PEPs haven't any) and where the two interventions originate. (Title I is federal while the PEP is a state initiative.)

Principles of leadership and organizational theory clearly support each of the criteria that must be included when developing an effective, high quality PEP. For teachers to be successful in their efforts to assist low performing students in making achievement gains, the principal must provide the leadership and structural organization within the school that supports teaching and learning.

Instructional design theory is at the heart of all effective teaching and is especially pertinent when considering low performing students. The instructional design of the intervention strategies selected by the teacher will impact its success. Teachers must be capable of developing an instructional flow and sequence that fits the needs of the learner and using elements of effective instruction (setting goals that match the learner for example) as measured in the quality of the PEP is appropriate.

A visual summary of the comparisons made is featured in Table #1 below:

Table 1: Comparison of PEP Criteria to Theoretical Frameworks Reviewed

	N.C. PEP Mandate	Leadership & Organizational Structures	Instructional Design	Title I Federal Legislation
Purpose is to:	Address the learning needs of students performing below grade level	Provide a framework for organizing schools that meet the needs of all learners	Provide a framework for designing classroom instruction that meets the needs of all learners	Provide funding for schools that serve students in poverty & performing below grade level
PEP Criteria:	Connections to PEP Criteria Found in the Literature:			
Considers Student Performance (Strengths & Needs)	Requires diagnostic assessments to determine students' strengths and needs	ISLLC Standard 2 – Creates a culture & programs conducive to learning (student needs)	Bases instruction on current levels of student understanding or knowledge	Funding is linked to AYP as measured by student performance on state achievement tests
Is Standards-Based	Student interventions selected must link to N.C. Standard Course of Study Goals and Objectives	ISLLC Standard 3: Provides resources for an effective learning environment (standards-based)	Design principles require a connection to quality goals & standards upon which to build instruction	AYP is measured by performance on state testing based on N.C. curriculum standards
Involves Parents	Parent meetings and signature required when PEP written and reviewed (3 times/year.)	ISLLC Standard 4: Collaborates with families and community	Weakly linked through student background knowledge which influences instruction	Parent involvement is required in planning and decision-making.
Is Research-Based	Interventions selected for PEP must rely upon research-based practices	ISLLC Standard 6: Understands and responds to the larger context that affects learning (research)	Researchers have identified elements of instructional design	The federal government relies upon research data to inform its decisions and policies

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between school-based organizational structures that support teachers' development of Personalized Education Plans (PEPs) and their quality as written for third through fifth grade students. A causal comparative method of investigation was used to address the three research questions posed: a) What are the differences in teachers' perceptions of school-based factors that support their PEP development when comparing teachers in the two Title I schools? b) What differences in the quality of PEPs exist when comparing PEP samples collected at each of the Title I schools? c) Are teachers' perceptions regarding the level of support they receive toward developing PEPs a predictor of the quality of PEPs written?

Research was conducted at two Title I elementary schools because of the high number of students performing below grade level in this setting and the concentration of PEPs that would be available for collection. Participants selected for the study included the principal and literacy coach in each school and the third through fifth grade classroom teachers who develop PEPs who volunteered to participate.

Before developing the sequence of events to address each research question, I identified underlying assumptions inherent in the questions themselves. To address the first question posed, "What are the differences in teachers' perceptions of school-based factors that support their PEP development when comparing teachers in the two Title I schools?" the following assumptions were made: a) school-based factors that support

teachers' development of PEPs exist in the two schools and b) teachers' perceptions regarding the school-based factors that support PEP development can be measured.

As I considered the second research question, "What differences in the quality of PEPs exist when comparing PEP samples collected at each of the Title I schools?" assumptions made were that: a) the quality of a PEP was measurable and b) a tool for evaluating PEP quality could be located or created. This research plan required that I either identify or develop two research instruments. A survey was needed to investigate teachers' perceptions of school culture in their school and a rubric to measure the quality of a PEP would also need to be located or developed. A detailed accounting of the research activities used in this study will be discussed including:

- Hypotheses
- Selection of the setting and participants for this study
- The step-by-step process used to develop & administer the teacher survey
- PEP collection procedures to maintain student and teacher anonymity
- Procedures to identify PEP elements and develop a PEP rubric
- Statistical methods to record and compare data

Hypotheses

For this study, I established the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of school-based factors that support their development of PEPs when comparing the two Title I schools studied.
2. There is no significant difference in the quality of PEPs when comparing groups of teachers at the two Title I schools.

3. Teachers' perceptions regarding the level of support they receive in developing PEPs are not a predictor of the quality of PEPs written.

Participants and Setting

Geographically, the district selected for this study is located in the southwestern region of North Carolina and includes a mix of rural and suburban schools. The district consists of 53 schools, 30 of which are elementary schools and have approximately 35,000 students enrolled during the year of this study, with approximately 17,000 of them attending schools at the elementary level.

Title I schools were selected for this study because of the large number of struggling students enrolled in these schools. Since state guidelines for developing PEPs are linked to students' performance on end-of-year assessments and a large number of students in Title I schools are identified as performing below expected levels of achievement, the assumption could be made that a large sampling of PEPs would be available in a Title I school.

Both schools selected for this study were also designated as "Priority" schools due to school conditions that placed their students at risk of failing. In School A, 73.3% of their third through fifth grade students were identified as performing "at or above grade level" on state-designed end of year assessments leaving 26.7 % of that population performing below expectations. In school B, 41.1% of their third through fifth grade students met grade level expectation leaving 58.9% of them performing below expectations. At the district level, the overall data identified 62.5 % of its students as performing "at or above grade level" in both Reading and Math.

The two schools selected for this study were from my own district and were chosen for convenience and anticipated ease in obtaining the data. Neither school represented a location where I was currently employed or had previously worked on a day-to-day basis. However; I was acquainted with both school principals and many of the teachers in each school setting since I served as a district level literacy and professional development trainer for teachers throughout the county during the previous five years. The demographics of the two schools as compared to the district overall are as follows:

Table 2: School and District Demographics

Population	Third -Fifth Grade Enrollment	Total School Enrollment	African- American	Caucasian	Hispanic	OTHER
School A	285	649	37.32%	9.62%	50.15%	2.92%
School B	296	693	29.36%	18.44%	51.21%	.99%
School District		35,000+	14.52%	70.8%	10.81%	3.86%

Once the schools were selected and approved for study, I decided to narrow the grade level range of PEP samples gathered for analysis by focusing on only those written for third through fifth graders in each school for two reasons. First, by limiting PEP samples to intermediate (3-5) grade levels, the task of collecting and scoring PEPs became more manageable, considering the fact that I was solely responsible for organizing, recording, and analyzing data from the PEP samples and teacher survey. If the sampling of PEPs had also included Kindergarten through second grade, the numbers would have increased significantly. As it was, the total number of third through fifth grade PEPs gathered in school “A” was 77 and in school “B” the total was 164. More importantly, by selecting only PEPs written for third through fifth graders I knew that the samples I gathered were developed using a uniform, state-mandated set of criteria

increasing the possibility that the samples would be comparable. At first, it may appear that the number of PEP samples gathered is not proportional since both schools are similar in size. The difference occurred because of the number of students who did not pass the end of year achievement tests required by the state. In school “A” 26.7% of the 310 third through fifth grade students (or 83 students) required a PEP because of low test scores. In school “B” 58.9% of the 292 students (or 171 students) required a PEP as a result of low performance on state tests.

Although primary teachers also wrote PEPs, the criteria for determining a K-2 student was performing below grade level often involved less formal assessments, making the decision to write a PEP much more subjective.

Participants in this study included the principal and literacy coach at each school and voluntary participants from each school’s group of full-time, certified, third through fifth grade classroom teachers directly responsible for the development and implementation of PEPs. Although students were not directly involved in this study, the PEP samples gathered from each school were copies of authentic PEPs that teachers had written for their students.

Procedures

Events during data collection occurred in three phases, each guided by one of the three research questions. The first phase included a multiple step process for developing and administering the teacher survey. Activities included interviews with the principal and literacy coach at each school, a focus group discussion with teachers from the two schools, a research investigation into published teacher surveys, and finally, the

adaptation of an existing teacher survey most closely aligned with this study and its subsequent administration to teachers in both schools.

The second phase of research included the gathering of PEP samples from the two schools and a series of events leading to the development of a PEP rubric. A field test was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the first draft made of a PEP rubric. The result of the field test led to substantial revisions and the creation of a new rubric. Eventually, a revised version of the PEP rubric was applied to PEP samples collected to assess their quality.

The third phase of research utilized the data gathered in the first two phases of the study to conduct a statistical comparison of teacher's survey responses to their PEP scores. The purpose was to answer the third research question by determining whether or not a relationship existed between the two sets of data, more specifically, whether teachers' perceptions regarding the school-based support they received while developing their PEPs could be used as a predictor of their PEP quality.

Principal and Literacy Coach Interviews

An interview was conducted individually with each principal and literacy coach to begin the process of identifying school-based teacher support structures that existed in each school. Since a survey was planned to identify *teachers'* perceptions of regarding the school-based support given to them as they developed their PEPs, I wanted to obtain the perspectives of the principal and literacy coach too, as the educational leaders of the school. I designed a series of questions that were used for all four conversations (See Appendix A: Interview Questions for Principal and Literacy Coach). Discussions were then held with each principal and literacy coach.

A summary of their collective responses was created by reviewing each recorded interview to identify common, key elements or “themes” that emerged during discussion (See Table 3).

Table 3: Principal and Literacy Coach Interview Response

	Number of PEPs known?	School guidelines used for developing PEPs?	When/where learned about PEP?	School oversight and/or support?	How new teachers trained and supported?	Overall rate of effectiveness (0 to5)
Principal “A	No, but can be found easily w/ school data	Use only county requirements	“Years ago” when in classroom	Have a system of “checks and balances”	County provides training	5
Literacy Coach “A”	No, but teachers have data	“	“	Teachers check each others twice/year	“	5
Principal “B”	(accurately) Estimated	“	“	School counselor checks them	“	3
Literacy Coach “B”	(accurately) Estimated	“	“	Teachers don’t get the help they need	“	2

All four educational leaders indicated they had been trained in the use of a PEP “years earlier” and confirmed that it was during a time when they served as classroom teachers. Overall, both principals and literacy coaches indicated that their school simply followed district guidelines for PEP completion including the use of district PEP forms, suggested dates for initiating and reviewing PEPs, with site-based follow up to confirm that the forms were filled out correctly. Both leaders at school “A” mentioned additional accountability support initiatives in their school where teams of teachers periodically exchanged PEP folders as a review for accuracy and compliance. It was Principal “A”’s idea that providing an ongoing, supportive, grade level-specific team environment for teachers to plan and collaboratively problem-solve concerns they had with students, their

school would be able to address the needs of struggling students more effectively. He described how teachers reviewed and discussed one another's PEPs during that time as well. Both the principal and literacy coach at school "A" felt as if the support given teachers would ensure their success in writing PEP intervention strategies.

The perceptions specific to the effectiveness of a PEP varied. The Literacy Coach and Principal at school "A" rated it as highly effective ("5"), while both leaders at school "B" rated it much lower. The Literacy Coach rated it a "2" and the Principal rated it a "3." It appeared to me that even though one school rated the PEP as "highly effective" there was little emphasis on supporting teachers' *use* of PEPs as an effective tool for educational intervention in either school setting. Finally, in the discussion with all four leaders there was no mention of the need to provide services that do not "supplant" existing services, which left me wondering if their teachers have knowledge of this legal requirement.

Focus Group Discussion

Once the one-to-one interviews were completed, I scheduled a focus group discussion and invited teachers from both schools to participate via e-mail and an invitational flyer describing the focus group event. Interested parties were asked to contact me directly to sign up for this event. Eleven teachers responded: four from school "A" and seven from school "B". On the day of the discussion, nine teachers attended: two from school "A" and seven from school "B". In planning the meeting, I tried to create an atmosphere for the meeting that was informal. Light refreshments were served to help teachers feel welcomed and teachers were given a brief period of time to socialize before sitting down for the discussion.

To prepare for the focus group discussion, guiding questions were created and posed to facilitate discussion around the intended topic and to promote interaction (See Appendix B: Focus Group Discussion Questions). Questions related to how PEPs were developed at each school were posed to “tease out” specific themes that emerged within the context of the teachers’ perceptions. I was particularly interested in identifying any themes that might be compared to those found within the school culture of highly effective schools read about in the research of the literature. One author mentioned professional development, collaboration, effective use of time and meetings that support teaching and student learning (Reeves, 2009, p.61). As the focus group discussion began, teachers seemed relaxed and willing to talk openly about PEP initiatives within their perspective schools. In reviewing their responses it was clear that every teacher in the room felt as if the development of PEPs was little more than an exercise on paper and they saw little practical use for it. All eleven participants confirmed that their instructional practices were not influenced by what they had written on their PEPs.

While discussing the purpose for writing a PEP, answers varied, but overall comments indicated that teachers write PEPs because they are told to do so and did not name the purpose. One participant did say, “They’re supposed to target what the student’s strengths and weaknesses are” but no-one connected the purpose of a PEP to teaching. Some teachers thought they wrote PEPs as a state requirement while others thought it was a district initiative. The teachers were unable to list any specific requirements of a PEP. One teacher said, “You just fill in each section and include what it asks for.” Further prompting had one teacher comment that the PEP form she used did include a place to list student’s strengths, areas of need and a goal for them. And when

one teacher from school “B” mentioned that her PEPs each year were basically copied from “sample” PEP she was given two or three years ago, others nodded in agreement.

In discussing what kind of support was provided at each school that assisted them with writing or learning about how to write your PEPs one group of teachers from school “B” re-emphasized they were given a sample PEP, while another mentioned “Effective Practices” (a district level training for new hires) again.

One teacher from school “A” mentioned, “At our school, our grade level team gets the ‘Big Red Book’ (that’s what we call it anyway) that has ideas in it.” Another teacher from school “B” said, “Really? What is that? Where’d you get it? We need one!” Final comments on this topic included, “We pretty much just do them each year” and “We just do them ourselves” and “Sometimes we help each other if somebody needs an idea for theirs.” Two participants from School “A” noted that their grade level teams worked together to develop and review PEPs and that their Literacy Coach also participated in those discussions. Everyone in the group agreed that they received no “outside” support for writing their PEPs. And when discussing whether or not they received adequate support for developing PEPs, teachers responded with such comments as, “PEPs are really confusing, especially in the beginning” and, “No one really knew how to write them.” One teacher said, “We really don’t know why we have to write them every year. Sometimes we just copy last year’s because they are still below grade level.” Another teacher noted, “Sometimes we get kids that need a PEP because they didn’t pass the EOG at the end of last year and we don’t know what to write.” It was clear to me that the teachers in both school settings felt as if they were provided some materials for writing their PEPs but were not offered ongoing support.

Teacher Survey Development

The selection of a teacher survey for my own research began with reading and comparing studies about existing surveys that focused on measuring school climate, teachers' perceptions and/or professional development support to find one that most closely aligned with my own research goals. I eventually decided the *Perceptions of School Culture* (POSC) would be my first choice (See Appendix C; *Perceptions of School Culture*). It seemed that the POSC relied upon the perceptions of staff members to identify which (if any) elements of school culture supported their work in the classroom, similar to my own study's purpose and design. Both the POSC and my plan utilized the perceptions of school leaders and classroom teachers to identify elements of school culture present in each school.

In order to create an exact match for my research design, the POSC would need to be adapted to more specifically address PEP issues. Before making revisions though, further analysis of its content was warranted. I began by comparing the categories (called subscales) used on the POSC to the "themes" I had identified while conducting school-based interviews and the focus group discussion. Even though at first glance, the instrument appeared to be the best "fit" for adaptation and use in this study, I wanted to look more closely at teachers' perceptions of school-based organizational structures that contribute to (or may hinder) the development of PEPs among representatives of the two schools selected for study.

I reviewed the interview and focus group responses to see if their perceptions seemed to fit the categories or subscales found in the POSC. When comparing responses to the first subscale, focused upon establishing collaborative working relationships within

the school, it appeared that school “A” participants expressed a greater sense of working together – from the Principal’s voice describing the support structures he had in place to the teacher’s statement that they worked on PEPs in teams with their Literacy Coach – efforts to collaborate were mentioned. However, in school “B”, participants expressed a greater sense of isolation, perhaps even frustration, of having to “just get them (meaning PEPs) done on our own” especially among teachers.

As per statements linked to a the second POSC subscale of having a clear, student-centered vision, mission, and policies, I determined that no responses fit this category and that only one respondent, the Literacy Coach in School A, made statements indicating that students were becoming more responsible for their learning at their school (matching the third subscale on the POSC).

In contrast, there were statements made during every discussion that clearly connected to the participants’ sense that teachers were responsible for student learning. Principals, Literacy Coaches and teachers at both schools made comments that align with that fourth subscale found on the POSC. Regarding the sixth POSC subscale that measured the extent to which students and parents are perceived as decision-makers, statements made by the Principal and Literacy Coach at School “A” indicated that such a focus was indeed a part of their school’s function.

As a result of this analysis, I determined that no “new” constructs emerged that would necessarily influence the development of questions on the teacher survey and made the determination that the POSC and its subscales (that is, five of its 6 subscales) represented an appropriate match for this study.

It should also be noted however, that statements regarding teachers' understanding (and misunderstandings) of the policies, procedures and "rules" pertinent to the writing of PEPs that emerged during the focus group discussion *could* be considered a new construct or theme needing to be addressed. However, since the researcher had already decided to replace the five questions on the POSC about the school's physical environment with five questions about the policies that govern PEP development, it was determined that responses in this "new" area had been anticipated and were already included in survey development plans.

By selecting the POSC as a model I knew that the research questions already developed for this study were linked to these research-based factors. Using a reliable and valid instrument (the POSC) as a model also increased the possibility that the survey question stems created would be supported by the POSC study results. However, one difficulty I encountered in considering the POSC, was that although the subscales for the questions on the POSC were defined in the published materials, the specific questions included in the survey were not clearly identified as belonging to a certain subscale. I also learned that since this instrument is currently marketed for sale, the company only releases the answer key (that identifies each question by its subscale) to educators who have purchased their materials. Repeated attempts were made to contact both the company and the researcher named in the POSC research document to obtain their help as a professional courtesy, to no avail.

Once I realized that no response would be forthcoming - the task of determining the subscales under which each question would fit began independently. To complete the task, I engaged the help of three fellow professionals to assist me in correctly identifying

the correct grouping of questions that fit each POSC subscale. The people who assisted included: 1) an Assistant Principal currently engaged in her own research as part of a Master' Degree program, 2) a National Board Certified classroom teacher familiar with research principles, and 3) a Master's Degree professor. These peers were recruited to help with the task of question stem categorization.

Each person was given a copy of the POSC questions, a description of the six categories used for question development, and a copy of my own attempt to link each question to an appropriate subscale. Their assigned task was to first read each question on the survey and identify under which of the 6 categories they might place the question. Then, they were asked to compare their responses to the researcher's list and provide feedback to the researcher specific to any question which had been categorized differently than the researchers. The POSC survey was divided into the following six areas of school culture (identified as subscales in the POSC study):

Subscale 1: Collaborative Working Relationships (13 survey items). This subscale reflects the extent to which faculty work together, trust and respect each other, have open channels of communication, and share leadership and responsibility for problem solving and decision making.

Subscale 2: Student-Centered Vision, Mission, and Policies (13 survey items). This subscale indicates the degree to which the school's vision, mission, goals, and policies are clear and consistent with each other; incorporate high expectations for all students; and are communicated to staff, students, and parents. It also indicates the extent to which the school uses measurable goals and data-based decision making.

Subscale 3: Student Responsibility for Learning: (13 survey items). This subscale measures faculty perceptions of their students' intrinsic motivation, persistence, awareness of their own learning strengths, and control over their own learning. It also indicates faculty perceptions of the strength of parents' belief in the importance of student effort and parent support.

Subscale 4: Teacher Responsibility for Learning. (13 survey items). This subscale reflects the degree to which faculty strives to improve teaching and learning, at both the individual and collective levels, and share responsibility for high levels of student learning. It also indicates the extent to which teachers accommodate students' different learning styles and encourage student collaboration and self-motivation.

Subscale 5: Inviting Physical Environment (5 survey items). This subscale indicates the extent to which the school's physical environment is perceived as clean, safe, and attractive. It also reflects the degree to which the school makes visitors comfortable by having a welcoming atmosphere.

Subscale 6: Students and parents as decision makers. (5 survey items) This subscale assesses the degree to which students and parents participate in planning and decision-making that impacts the school program. It also reflects the school's efforts to promote students' engagement with their own learning (Cowley, et. al, 2005, 3-4).

Five of these six areas of school culture (subscales) were considered as I looked for patterns in the interview responses of the principal and literacy facilitator at each school and in teachers' responses gathered during the focus group discussion. I planned to leave out category # 5 concerned with cleanliness and safety of the building itself. It seemed to me that the teachers' development of PEPs would not be correlated with the

functions of building maintenance. In addition, I planned to replace those five questions with ones that specifically measured teachers' understanding of PEP components and legal requirements for development so that my teacher survey still resembled the POSC in the quantity of items used.

By utilizing all but one of the subscales and the question stems found in an existing valid and reliable measure of school culture (the POSC) I believed that the set of revised survey questions being developed would be of high quality. The final draft of the teacher survey was given to voluntary participants in each school at a faculty meeting (See Appendix D: Teacher Survey). Again, surveys were only given to third through fifth grade classroom teachers responsible for writing and implementing PEPs in each of the two Title I schools willing to participate.

In school "A" the survey was given out during a required faculty meeting and the researcher had already worked it out with the Principal that the survey would be last on the meeting's agenda and would only occur after a short break that allowed everyone to get additional drinks and snacks (normally provided for them by administrators) and go to the restroom, etc. This event was scheduled so as not to inconvenience teachers or make anyone feel self-conscious. By giving out the survey after the break, teachers that were either ineligible or selected not to participate, could simply leave. Teachers were informed of the date for administering the survey ahead of time through a written invitation to participate that explained the purpose and nature of the research. The invitation to the teachers made it clear that they were not required in any way to participate and that only third through fifth grade teachers responsible for developing PEPs would actually be eligible to participate.

To further protect the anonymity of the teachers, each survey had a label with the teacher's assigned number on the front page of the survey. Each survey was then placed in a sealed envelope. On the outside of the envelope was a label that included the 3-letter identifier the literacy coach had assigned to each teacher. I spoke to participants briefly to introduce the survey, explain the purpose of the study, to answer any questions and to reiterate that the teacher's anonymity would be maintained through the numbering system that had been established. I then withdrew to another area while the literacy coach passed out the surveys to each teacher using her original list that assigned each teacher a 3-letter identifier.

In school "B", the survey was given during a voluntary, after-school meeting that was scheduled ahead of time. Again, teachers received an invitation to participate and the surveys were handed out by the literacy coach who was the only person who knew which teacher should receive each sealed envelope that had the 3-letter identifier on the outside of the envelope. I withdrew from the area, but remained nearby should questions or concerns arise during the process. Once completed, each survey was placed back in the envelope and although the seal was now broken, each envelope has a clasp on it that allowed the teacher to close it and place it in a box by the door as they left. In both schools, the teachers were pleasant and cooperative. Several teachers in school "A" asked questions during the process that were specific to survey items. In school "B", no questions were asked of the researcher

PEP Scoring

Before engaging in the scoring of PEPs and the analysis of their quality, I gathered authentic, current PEP samples from each school in a manner that would

maintain confidentiality. To do so, the literacy coach and I removed the names of the students, teachers and the school from each sample. With the principal's permission, I worked at each school to obtain copies of student PEPs. Protecting the anonymity of participants was critical, but since my third research question dealt with the relationship between teachers' perceptions and the quality of their PEPs, I had to develop a process for gathering data that would allow me to connect each teacher's individual survey data to their own PEP data.

This process began by asking each coach to create a list of their third through fifth grade teachers using only a three-letter identifier rather than actual teacher's names. My suggestion was for the coach to assign each teacher a 3-letter code using either initials or the first three letters of their name. Once the coach gave me their 3-letter coded list, I assigned each teacher a case number for my research. And, since the literacy coach never saw my list that connected teacher initials to my case numbers and I never knew the teachers' actual names, their identities were protected. From that point on, I used only assigned numbers to gather, analyze and summarize data

I went to each school with folders labeled with my research case numbers and a sheet of sequentially-numbered labels for each case number to place on the PEP samples. The coach came with PEPs clipped together by teacher and grouped by grade level. Working together, the literacy coach made a copy of each PEP by first covering up any identifying data, copying them by classroom teacher sets and handing each set to me. As she would hand me a set, she would say something like, "this is 3rd grade teacher R-O-M" (the three-letter identifier) and this set has 12 PEPs." I would then put a case number label at the top of each sample and place it in the corresponding folder. The correct

labeling and placement of student PEP samples was critical to this study since the same teacher-assigned numbers were planned for use in administering teacher surveys later. (NOTE: Although the work of researching and developing the teacher survey came first in the overall sequence of events, the survey itself was not actually administered until after the PEPs had been collected and numbered, which is why the teacher case numbers were “assigned” during this part of the research process.)

Once the PEP samples were in hand, I needed to locate or develop a rubric I could use to measure PEP quality. Efforts to find an existing rubric that could be used were unsuccessful so I began the process of creating my own. From the beginning, my intention was to create a rubric that could measure two important aspects of an effective PEP: a) the requirements listed in the state legislative mandate, and b) the elements of instructional design that were relevant to the function of a PEP. Once these elements were identified, they were listed as “features” on the PEP rubric.

The state mandate required that every PEP include the following four elements: 1) a diagnostic evaluation, 2) an intervention strategy, 3) a monitoring strategy, and 4) evidence of parental involvement. The review of literature specific to instructional design helped me understand the need to also layer into the rubric measures of instructional quality. An example of where I did so is in the PEP feature listed as “Strategies.” I added a qualifier to that element when I included strategies “that address the targeted skill” having learned that the strategies for teaching must be linked to the skill being taught.

In my initial draft of the PEP rubric, I included six “features” of a PEP to be scored, with each feature being measured using a four-point scale. A score of “three” was

the highest score possible and a score of “zero” was the lowest. (See Appendix E: Pilot Study Rubric). The six features included: 1) using diagnostic assessments to write PEP goals, 2) using diagnostic assessment to identify the student’s academic strengths and weaknesses, 3) listing skills to be targeted, 4) selecting strategies to address the targeted skill, 5) reviewing the PEP as required, and 6) including parents in the process.

Within each feature, a level “3” score was awarded if the PEP included information that matched the feature at a high level of inclusion. A score of zero was awarded if the information specific to that PEP feature was not listed or evident. For each feature, the score of “2” or “1” included qualifiers that would differentiate between these two middle scores. For example, in the “Targeted Skill” feature, a “3” included skills *specifically* linked to the subject area, while a “2” included skills *generally* linked to the subject area and a “1” included skills, but the skills listed were *not* linked to the subject area for which the PEP was developed. A zero was given when, in the measuring of this PEP feature, no targeted skills were listed at all.

Once the rubric was drafted for use in evaluating the quality of a PEP, I arranged to have it piloted by a group of graduate students at a nearby university currently studying assessment measures as part of their coursework. These graduate students used my first draft of a PEP rubric to score PEP samples I had gathered for the pilot study. They were gathered from a school that was not included in the study. The same process used for gathering PEP samples used in the study was followed to ensure that no names were associated with the samples collected.

For the piloted use of the rubric, the researcher gathered twelve PEP samples and assigned them each a letter. Then, three copies of each sample were made and the

samples were randomly grouped into sets of three different PEPs, so that each of the twelve students in the graduate class could apply the rubric to three different samples. After each student scored their PEP samples, they provided written feedback on the strengths and difficulties they had during the scoring process. The professor also conducted a class discussion about the use of the rubric and took notes on the teachers' questions, comments and suggestions that were shared with me.

To analyze the extent to which my rubric could be applied with consistency, I charted the three scores obtained from the PEPs scored in this pilot study to determine the extent to which the use of the rubric would yield similar scores (See Appendix F: Pilot Study Data). Graduate student feedback also helped me consider how clear (or in some cases confusing) it was for them to score their PEP samples using each of the features on the PEP Pilot Rubric.

One constructive criticism offered by the graduate students was that some of the features contained too many criteria making it difficult to apply (particularly if a PEP sample being scored included one aspect of the feature listed, but lacked others). For example, in the first feature, "Use of Assessment," student discussion revealed there were actually two criteria being evaluated in that single feature: 1) evidence that a diagnostic assessment was given and 2) evidence that the information (data) from that diagnostic assessment was actually being used to develop the PEP. Students had found PEPs that contained one but not both of these criteria and faced a dilemma as to what score they should assign for that feature. This type of feedback from the students and the professor during the pilot study informed my thinking and led to a number of revisions to the PEP rubric. I proceeded by carefully reviewing each of the features listed and further divided

any each feature that was too complicated. Once each feature focused on a singular measure, the rubric could be applied to the scoring of PEPs with less ambiguity.

Between the first draft of the PEP rubric with six features and the final draft used for this study that included nine features, I methodically reviewed feedback obtained from the university students and professor. Their suggestions and questions provided a detailed analysis of each “feature” listed on the Pilot Rubric. Once revisions were made, I was satisfied that each feature listed could be assessed effectively and developed the PEP rubric used in this study. (See Appendix G: PEP Rubric for Beginning of the Year). This rubric was then used to assess the quality of 164 PEPs collected from School “A” and 77 PEPs collected from School “B.”

Design and Data Analysis

The experimental design included a causal comparative study of two variables – namely, teachers’ perceptions and the description of PEP “quality” – that typically would be reported qualitatively. Converting teacher responses on the survey to numerical data that could be used for statistical analysis was simple since the questions utilized a Likert scale model. The challenge came when trying to quantify the elements of a PEP for statistical analysis. The creation of a rubric required attention to the very specific language describing each “feature” scored so that the criteria were clear to the assessor; while at the same time required consideration of the rubric holistically. When viewed collectively, the range of scores on an effective rubric must represent a full continuum of response possibilities. The scores from zero (not present) to the highest level possible must include gradations of the same quality or “feature” (in the case of the PEP rubric). Since the development of a PEP rubric was completely unique, the technical

considerations for guiding that work could not be come from existing studies or measurement instruments typically used in research. Much of what influenced the rubric design came from my own experiences in developing rubrics for student assignments when I was a classroom teacher.

The procedures used for selecting and adapting the POSC teacher survey were designed to create a survey instrument of high quality. Using a reliable and valid measure as the basis for question development increased the possibility that the instrument I developed might eventually (with further trials) be proven as reliable and valid as well.

Procedures for comparison of both sets of data included calculating measures of central tendency on teacher survey responses and PEP scoring data. The use of an independent t - test was used to determine statistical significance when comparing mean scores on the teacher survey between teachers at school “A” and school “B” and to compare the quality of PEPs between schools.

Finally, the Pearson r correlation coefficient test was used to compare mean scores on the PEP to teachers’ mean scores on the teacher survey to determine the extent to which teacher’s perceptions regarding school-based support of their PEP development can be a predictor of PEP quality.

Summary

The purpose for this study was to investigate the relationship between school-based organizational structures that support teachers’ development of Personalized Education Plans (PEPs) and their quality as written for third through fifth grade students in each of

two Title I schools. Participants selected for this study fit the purpose and design because the work of PEP development occurs in the classroom.

The procedural methods used to collect data fit the purpose of this study and maintained the integrity of the participants and their work. The process for gathering authentic PEPs adhered to expectations of confidentiality and anonymity. The methods used to conduct the focus group discussion and interview of the principal and literacy coach in each school appropriately gathered perceptions of key participants that I included as I considered teacher survey choices for this study.

The null hypotheses addressed each of the research questions. Finally, the data analysis methods used also specifically addressed each of the three research questions posed and provided me with appropriate data from which I could draw a number of conclusions.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Research Question #1

To answer the first research question, “What are the differences in teachers’ perceptions of school-based factors that support their PEP development when comparing teachers in the two Title I schools?” I administered the teacher survey adapted from the POSC questionnaire to seventeen teachers in school “A” and thirteen teachers in school “B” for a total of 30 completed surveys. In school “A” there were seven third grade teachers, six fourth grade teachers and four fifth grade teachers while school “B” included five third grade teachers, five fourth grade teachers and four fifth grade teachers.

Once the surveys were collected and scored, teachers’ responses were organized in a table that grouped their answers by the subscale categories I established for each question. (See Appendix H: Teacher Survey Data). Teachers’ scores within each subscale were then used to calculate central tendency; more specifically, the mean score of each participant’s responses within each subscale category.

To test the first hypothesis that no significant differences in teachers’ perceptions could be found when comparing teachers’ surveys in the two schools, I calculated the mean score of teachers’ survey responses for each school.

The *t*-test was applied to compare teachers’ overall perceptions regarding school culture as reported on teacher survey responses at each school. Results of both calculations are listed below:

Table 4: Comparison of Mean Scores on Teacher Surveys

Group Statistics				
	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
School A	17	3.07	.78	.21
School B	13	3.33	.42	.13

The comparison of mean scores on the teacher survey indicated scores were in close agreement ($M = 3.07$ and $M = 3.31$), however the small number of samples in the comparison ($N = 17$ and $N = 13$) limited the assumption that the results could be generalized to larger populations. Results of the independent t -test that determined whether the difference was statistically significant are found in table #5 below.

Table 5: Two Independent Means t Test Comparing Teacher Surveys

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variance		t -test for Equality of Means						
	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i> 2-tailed	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal Variances Assumed	2.44	.13	-.94	22	.36	-.26	.27	-.82	.31
Equal Variances NOT Assumed			-1.04	20.73	.31	-.26	.25	-.77	.26

The comparison of mean scores on teachers' surveys (Table 5) indicated that school "B" ($M = 3.33$) scored slightly higher than school "A" (Mean = 3.07). Further testing for equality of means indicated that since the probability for the F value is greater than .05 ($Sig. = .133$), the variances for the two groups were equal and the homogeneity of

variance was satisfied. The results (using output for equal variances assumed) indicated there was no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of PEP support at their school as measured by overall scores on the teacher when comparing teachers in school "A" and teachers in school "B", $t(22)=.942, p=.312$. With results that indicated $p>.05$ ($p = .312$) I retained the null hypothesis that no significant difference exists between teachers' perceptions (as measured by the average score on the survey) among teachers in school "A" ($M=3.07, SD=.780$) and teachers in school "B" ($M=3.33, SD=.419$).

Research Question #2

To address the second research question as to whether there are differences in PEP quality when comparing the two schools, I scored the PEP samples collected using the revised PEP rubric (See Appendix G: PEP Rubric for Beginning of the Year) to determine their level of quality. The revised rubric was applied to score each of the 77 PEPs collected from school "A" and 165 PEPs collected from school "B". Although the two schools were similar in size, considering total population and the number of teachers per grade level, school "B" ($N = 165$ PEPs) had more than double the number of third through fifth grade PEPs as in school "A" ($N = 77$ PEPs). One reason for this difference is directly related to the state's requirements for PEP development, as determined by student standardized test scores. In school "A" standardized test scores indicated that 54.2% of their student population had "passed" while fewer students in school "B" (42.6%) had achieved a passing score. During the interview and PEP collection process, I also learned that a number of students in school "A" had been tutored, re-tested and had passed the end of year assessment (which is both legal and expected) however, student scores obtained on the re-test are not included in the state-published data used for this

study. This fact is important, because teachers are permitted to use scores obtained on the re-test when deciding which students will need a PEP.

To test the second hypotheses that there would be no significant differences in the quality of PEP when comparing PEP samples from each of the two schools, I first analyzed the PEP scoring data collected using descriptive statistical measures of central tendency, frequency and score distribution. Scores listed were compared to a score of 27 which represented the total number of points possible on the PEP rubric.

Table 6: PEP Measures of Central Tendency by Grade Level and School

Grade	School "A"		School "B"	
Third	Mean	9.69	Mean	10.0
	Median	10.0	Median	10.0
	Mode	10.0	Mode	10.0
Fourth	Mean	9.03	Mean	9.18
	Median	9.0	Median	10.0
	Mode	8.0	Mode	10.0
Fifth	Mean	7.88	Mean	9.13
	Median	7.0	Median	10.0
	Mode	10.0	Mode	10.0
OVERALL	Mean	9.06	Mean	9.46
	Median	9.5	Median	10.0
	Mode	10.0	Mode	10.0

Although the mean, median and mode calculated by scoring PEPs from each school indicated some differences occurred, the scores (when applying central tendency) in both schools hovered below the 50% level (13.5 points) when compared to the total

number of points available (27), providing clear evidence that the overall quality of PEPs written in both settings was poor.

I also compared the results of PEP quality at each school by analyzing the frequency of PEP scores organized by each of the nine features measured by applying the PEP rubric. The definition of each feature is listed below. Scores listed for each feature (3, 2, 1, and 0) represent the extent to which the PEP:

- I. Used diagnostic assessments to determine student's current level of performance
- II. Made use of data that came from diagnostic assessments for identifying student's needs
- III. Listed the student's academic strengths and weaknesses in detail
- IV. Identified targeted skills that were specifically linked to the subject area being addressed
- V. Listed skills that were directly linked to N.C. Standard Course of Study
- VI. Developed instructional strategies that were directly linked to the student's strengths and weaknesses
- VII. Included instructional strategies that were clear, specific and measurable
- VIII. Was completed correctly -including proper signatures and was dated
- IX. Overall, represented a high quality, detailed plan that could be used for effective classroom implementation

Table 7: Frequency of Scores By PEP Feature

School "A"										
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Score	3	0	0	0	62	0	18	5	0	0
Score	2	4	3	3	6	0	41	15	43	10
Score	1	0	74	74	0	0	17	57	1	47
Score	0	73	0	0	9	77	1	0	33	20
School "B"										
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Score	3	0	0	1	140	0	8	0	0	0
Score	2	8	0	23	16	0	101	24	142	2
Score	1	0	3	139	0	0	55	140	0	155
Score	0	156	161	1	8	164	0	0	22	7
Percent of Scores by PEP Feature										
School "A"										
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Score	3	0%	0%	0%	80.50%	0%	23.40%	64.90%	0%	0%
Score	2	5.20%	3.90%	3.90%	7.80%	0%	53.20%	19.50%	55.80%	13%
Score	1	0%	96.10%	96.10%	0%	0%	22.10%	74%	1.30%	61%
Score	0	94.80%	0%	0%	11.70%	100%	1.30%	0%	42.90%	26%
School "B"										
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Score	3	0%	0%	<1%	85.40%	0%	4.90%	0%	0%	0%
Score	2	4.90%	0%	14%	9.80%	0%	61.60%	14.60%	86.60%	1.20%
Score	1	0%	1.80%	85%	0%	0%	33.50%	85.40%	0%	94.50%
Score	0	95.10%	98.20%	<1%	4.80%	100%	0%	0%	13.40%	4.30%

As this data was analyzed, I noted specific trends. For example, when looking at the distribution of scores by their percent under Feature V, which measures the extent to which PEPs were linked to the required state standards, 100% of the PEPs in both schools scored a zero. This represented a significant find. Not a single teacher in either of the Title I schools saw the connection between the state standards and the development of instructional interventions for their students at risk.

A positive statistic was noted when looking at the results in Feature IV which measured the extent to which the targeted skills listed on the PEP are specifically linked to the subject areas being addressed, 80.5% of the PEPs developed in School A and 85.4% of the PEPs developed in School B earned the highest score of “3.”

Another comparison found that scores under Feature X that measures the overall quality of the PEP and extent to which it provides enough detail so as to make it usable for classroom implementation were poor in both schools. In School A, 87% of the PEPs scored a zero or a “1” and in School B, 98.8% of the PEPs scored a zero or “1.

Finally, to determine whether differences in the mean scores of PEPs between schools were statistically significant, an independent samples *t* test was applied. The comparison began with the analysis of the frequency distribution of PEP scores for each school as seen in Tables 8 and 9 below:

Table 8: Frequency Distribution of PEP Scores in School A

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2.00	1	1.3	1.3	1.3
3.00	4	5.2	5.2	6.5
5.00	3	3.9	3.9	10.4
6.00	4	5.2	5.2	15.6
7.00	9	11.7	11.7	27.3
8.00	8	10.4	10.4	37.7
9.00	10	13.0	13.0	50.6
10.00	20	26.0	26.0	76.6
11.00	5	6.5	6.5	83.1
12.00	5	6.5	6.5	89.6
13.00	1	1.3	1.3	90.9
14.00	6	7.8	7.8	98.7
16.00	1	1.3	1.3	100.0
TOTAL	77	100.0	100.0	

Examination of the frequency distribution of scores in School A (Table 8) above confirmed that the highest frequency of scores in School A was 10 (20 PEPs were scored as a “10”) on the PEP rubric. The cumulative percent column showed that 76.6% of the PEPs scored in School A earned a score of 10 points or lower. The calculated percentage on an earned score of 10 points out of the 27 points possible on the PEP rubric was 37%, indicating that overall, the quality of PEPs written in School A was poor. It was also noted that the highest score awarded to a PEP in School A (using the PEP rubric to assess PEP quality) was a 16 and that score was earned by only one PEP. In reviewing the raw data gathered from scoring PEPs in school “A” it was also discovered that 5 of the 6 PEPs that earned a score of 14 were developed by the same classroom teacher.

TABLE 9: Frequency Distribution of PEP Scores in School B

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative Percent
3.00	4	2.4	2.4	2.4
4.00	1	.6	.6	3.0
5.00	1	.6	.6	3.7
6.00	6	3.7	3.7	7.3
7.00	6	3.7	3.7	11.0
8.00	13	7.9	7.9	78.9
9.00	32	19.5	19.5	38.4
10.00	62	37.8	37.8	76.2
11.00	29	17.7	17.7	93.9
12.00	9	5.5	5.5	99.4
14.00	1	.6	.6	100.0
TOTAL	164	100	100	

Examination of the frequency distribution of scores in School B (Table 9) above confirms that the highest frequency of scores in School B was 10 (62 PEPs were scored a “10”) on the PEP rubric. The cumulative percent column shows that 76.2% of the PEPs scored in School B earned a score of 10 points or lower (as compared to 76.6% in School A.). The data obtained from PEPs assessed for their level of quality was quite revealing, with both schools having the same score (10) occur at the highest frequency. Next, I compared PEP mean scores to identify the standard error of the mean.

Table 10: Comparison of Mean Score of PEPs

Group Statistics				
	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
School A	77	9.06	2.86	.336
School B	164	9.46	1.79	.14

Comparison of PEP scores between the two schools indicated the overall mean score on the PEP rubric in School A was 9.06, and in school B, the mean score was 9.46. Initial observation of the data indicated that school B had a greater mean score than school A, but to determine if the difference in means was statistically significant the independent *t*-test was calculated to test for equality of means.

Table 11: Two Independent Means *t* Test Comparing PEPs

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variance		<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means						
	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	df	<i>Sig.</i> 2-tailed	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal Variances Assumed	19.195	0.00	-1.318	239	.189	-.398	.302	-.994	.197
Equal Variances NOT assumed			-1.124	105.059	.264	-.398	.355	-1.101	.304

Since the probability (Sig =.000.) for the *F* value was less than .05 it was determined that the variances of the two groups being compared were not equal, therefore the condition of homogeneity of variance had not been satisfied. Results indicated there was no significant difference in the mean scores on the PEP (as measured by the PEP Rubric) between School "A" and School "B," $t(105) = 1.12, p = .26$.

Research Question #3

To determine whether teachers' perceptions regarding the level of support they receive toward developing PEPs might be a predictor of the quality of PEPs written, I applied the Pearson r correlation coefficient test to compare PEP scores and teacher survey results. I included two specific subscale scores in the comparison as well, to investigate the possibility that teachers' knowledge of PEP requirements (subscale "K") or teachers' sense that they worked in a school that focused on "collaboration" (Subscale "C") might correlate with the quality of PEPs they developed.

Table 12: Correlations among: Survey Mean, PEP Mean, Knowledge of PEP and Collaboration

		Mean Survey	Mean PEP	Sub-K	Sub-C
Mean Survey Score	Pearson Correlation	1	-.274	.690(**)	.800(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.195	.000	.000
	<i>N</i>	26	24	25	26
Mean PEP Score	Pearson Correlation	-.274	1	-.473(*)	-.403
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.195		.023	.051
	<i>N</i>	24	30	23	24
Sub Scale-K Knowledge of PEP Req.	Pearson Correlation	.690(**)	-.473(*)	1	.520(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.023		.008
	<i>N</i>	25	23	25	25
Sub scale –C Sense of Collaboration	Pearson Correlation	.800(**)	-.403	.520(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.051	.008	
	<i>N</i>	26	24	25	26

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation data (Table 12) indicated a strong, positive correlation existed between teachers' overall mean score on the survey and one of the subscale measures of teachers' knowledge of PEP requirements on the survey, labeled "Sub-K" ($r = .690$, $p = 0.00$). These results cannot determine causality, as either factor might influence the other and the possibility also exists that an undetermined third factor may have impacted both scores. Regardless, a strong correlation between the two measures clearly existed.

Similarly, a strong, positive correlation existed ($r = .520$, $p = .008$) at the .01 level between the teachers' responses on the survey when comparing subscale "C" (teacher's sense that their school culture promoted collaboration) and subscale "K" (teacher's knowledge of the PEP requirements).

Also observed was the negative (moderate) correlation ($r = -.473$, $p=.023$) when the mean score of teachers' PEPs was compared to their mean score on subscale "K" (teachers' knowledge of PEP requirements). This data indicated that when teacher's PEP scores were strongest, their mean scores specific to their knowledge of PEP requirements were the lowest. ”

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

Research Question #1

As I considered the data used to answer the first research question, “What are the differences in teachers’ perceptions of school-based factors that support their PEP development when comparing teachers in the two Title I schools?” it became clear that in this study, no significant difference in teachers’ perceptions of PEP support at their school was found when comparing teachers responses on the survey from the two schools. Results of statistical calculations were also inconclusive in determining the extent to which organizational structures actually supported PEP development in either school.

The strong, positive correlation between the overall mean scores calculated on the teacher survey and the subscale scores specific to the teachers’ knowledge of PEP requirements may be attributed to the fact that the survey itself focused on PEP implementation and it stands to reason that the subscale measuring knowledge of PEPs would be correlated. It is not conclusive, however that the relationship is causal from either direction. In fact, it is quite possible that the relationship is bi-directional.

The strong positive correlation between teachers’ sense that their school establishes a collaborative work environment and their knowledge of PEPs might be attributed to the fact that growth in all areas of team functioning can occur when teachers and teams do work together. Although the correlation was strong, no statistical evidence

was found that the relationship is causal. Even though it seemed logical to conclude that one condition (collaboration) had influenced the other once again, research evidence does not support this claim.

In examining the feedback obtained during the focus group discussion, I found that for the most part, teachers in both settings felt as if they were basically on their own in developing PEPs. Given the fact that in the schools that were studied, the teachers perceived their school as providing limited to no support for their PEP development, the was not surprising that no relationship between teachers' perceptions of school culture and the quality of PEPs developed could be identified.

The interviews conducted with two Title I Principals provided valuable insight into their perceptions of school-based support provided in their buildings. Responses to interview questions showed the researcher that the Principals in both schools had limited involvement in the ongoing support and level of accountability for PEP development at their school as evidenced by their inability to (specifically) identify the number of PEPs that existed in their school. I believe that if we were to compare that response to a similar question about the number of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) connected to the Exceptional Children being served in each school, principals would most likely be able to give the exact number for them. The point is that although the student population served by a PEP is different from those needing an IEP, the need for effective interventions is similar and equally as urgent, considering the conditions under which PEPs are written. One conclusion that can be drawn from this information is that Principals do not view PEPs with the same level of importance as they do other types of intervention plans (such as IEPs or RTI plans).

During the discussion with the Principal in school “A”, interview responses indicated a belief that a significant level of support was offered to assist teachers in completing their PEPs, while the perspective of the teachers who talked about the periodic “checks” of their PEPs, was that scheduled reviews felt more “supervisory” than supportive. One possible conclusion that can be drawn from the differences in the teachers’ and Principal’s perception regarding the purpose for working in PEP “teams” is that the Principal’s intentions were not clearly communicated. Another possibility is that a shared vision regarding what tasks are important for teachers to engage in at the school level was not developed or understood. To have the Principal’s voice report that an effective PEP support measure was in place, while at the same time hearing teachers mention that the same structure felt “supervisory” serves as a reminder of the need for establishing clear communication and a vision that is shared by everyone when the work is dependent upon the success of the larger “whole” rather than the individual members of an organization.

Research Question #2

To consider results responding to the second research question, “What differences in the quality of PEPs exist when comparing PEP samples collected at each of the Title I schools?” I reviewed the process for gathering PEPs and the data obtained to make sense of the findings.

One important statistic that required analysis and a possible explanation was the obvious difference in the number of PEPs that were collected at each school when comparing the two schools. From the beginning, the schools were selected for their similarities in size and student population. However, once the PEPs were collected the

difference in the quantity of samples collected at each of the two schools warranted an explanation. When collecting PEPs, both school principals helped gather all of the PEPs available for their third through fifth graders. School “A” collected 77 PEPs while School “B” collected 164. Upon further study into the end of year test data from the previous year, I discovered the number of third through fifth grader students who had passed the End-of-Grade (EOG) test varied significantly at the two schools. In School “A” out of the 277 students who had taken the EOG the previous year, approximately 28% of them did not pass the test. This statistic did NOT include students who had re-taken the EOG a second time before school ended or who had attended summer school and had been given the opportunity to re-take the EOG at the end of summer session. Under the same summer school and re-take options, of the 287 students who had taken the EOG in School “B” 46.5% of them did not pass. This would mean that the PEP projections (based on the previous year’s data) at School “A” would be approximately 77 or 78 (28% of 277) and at School “B” approximately 133 PEPs would be needed (46.5% of 287 students). The fact that School “B” had a higher number than the anticipated number of PEPs, could be explained by the re-take results obtained when teachers re-administered the EOG. At that time, students in North Carolina who passed the EOG in their second or third attempt could still be considered as passing at the school or district level and would therefore not require the development of a PEP but were *not* included in the state reporting of the percent of students passing. Also, previous years’ EOG statistics (used in the estimation of PEPs to be gathered for the study) would have included one group of students who had left the school (5th graders) and new students being added (3rd graders). In planning the research, it seemed reasonable to estimate the number of PEPs that would be collected at

each school using EOG test results. If the conjecture that students at School “A” had a much greater number of students pass the EOG in their second or third attempt, then one possible question for future investigation might be why that occurred.

The reasons for finding no significant difference in the mean scores on PEP samples between the two schools might be explained by the limited distribution in the range of scores found when measuring the quality of PEPs gathered from both schools. The fact that 76.6% of the PEPs in school “A” and 76.2% of the PEPS in school “B” were given an overall score of “10” or lower, might explain the lack of a significant difference in mean scores. PEP scores in both schools fit into a limited range that may have influenced the outcome. No PEPs were scored above a “16” out of the possible 27 points possible.

Also of importance was the consideration of statistical outliers that appeared in the PEP scoring data. Each research calculation was completed two ways to ensure that conclusions drawn were appropriate and mathematically supported. First, the lowest and highest score earned on the PEP rubric were removed and calculations were made. Then, the scores were included and the data was re-calculated. Based on the results, no changes in the overall relationships between data sets were observed when comparing the two methods of calculation. The same sets of conclusions were drawn regardless of the inclusion or exclusion of the outliers. Furthermore, it seemed important to include all of the scores earned using the PEP rubric in the end; given the narrow range of scores earned in the scoring of PEPs overall. By doing so, observers of this research could identify the full range of scores that were calculated using the PEP rubric.

At the onset of this study, I had established an important, additional goal beyond those specifically intended to answer the research questions. The goal was to construct the draft of a rubric that could (ultimately) be used as a viable tool for measuring the quality of not just the PEP but other intervention plans or documents as well. To that end, I believe that the field tested and revised PEP rubric yielded an instrument that holds potential for evaluating not just the PEP, but other types of educational intervention plans and therefore warrants additional trials of its use and further study regarding its applicability.

Research Question #3

As I considered the results of the data I had gathered to answer the third research question, “Are teachers’ perceptions regarding the level of support they receive toward developing PEPs a predictor of the quality of PEPs written?” it was clear that in this study, no evidence could be found that teachers’ perceptions were a predictor of PEP quality. As with any statistical comparison, the factors that influenced the result could have come from either or both of the two sets of data used in the comparison.

Accordingly, I reviewed the PEP data and the process I used for collecting it and revisited the teacher survey data looking for possible reasons I obtained these results.

The fact that the correlation between teacher survey results and PEP quality in this study was not found to be statistically significant supports the proposition that those two variables are independent of one another, making it possible that all combinations of PEP quality and teachers’ perceptions may exist. One possibility is that the revisions made to the questions developed for the POSC to “slant” it toward the investigation of PEPs may have weakened its level of reliability and validity and impacted its usefulness in trying to

make a comparison. Overall, data analysis also failed to confirm or deny that teachers' perceptions were accurately measured on the teacher survey used for this study.

Obtaining results that were inconclusive might also be attributed to the small sampling of teachers included in my research. Although the number of PEP samples gathered and scored (N =241) provided a reasonable sampling for study, those PEPs all came from a limited field of 30 classroom teachers that worked in one of two school environments.

Limitations to the Study

One limitation to this study was the possibility that any identified correlation between teachers' perceptions about school culture that affects their ability to develop PEPs and the actual content quality of PEPs they write could represent a relationship that is bi-directional. That is, the possibility exists that developing quality PEPs may actually have influenced teachers' perceptions regarding the extent to which supportive conditions exist in their schools and vice versa.

A second limitation existed specific to the selection of the two instruments used for this study. There is a possibility that the adaptation of questions for the teacher survey may have affected their ability to measure teachers' perceptions as intended, in spite of the fact that the researcher developed questions adapted directly from a survey proven to be both reliable and valid. An additional limitation regarding the use of the PEP Rubric may exist since a single researcher designed and then applied the rubric to score the PEP samples collected. However, the researcher did attempt to address one aspect of this issue by piloting the use of the rubric and then modifying it based on the results.

The study was also limited by its gathering of data at only two Title I schools both located in the same district, because it poses a risk that the results obtained may or may not apply to the conditions that exist in other districts, other non-Title I schools or in other Title I schools located in other locations.

Finally, clear limitations existed whenever participants were asked to self-report and discuss their perceptions about a specific topic. There is always a risk that they may choose to withhold information or “filter” their responses due to a perceived fear or threat of repercussion should their responses represent an unfavorable opinion or express criticism of their work environment. The opposite may have also occurred in as much as participants may have inflated their responses in an effort to protect themselves, appear more effective as a teacher, literacy leader or school principal. It is also possible participants simply overestimated their successes.

Recommendations for further study

Based on the results obtained in this study, the researcher strongly recommends a review of the PEP process and the manner with which it is being implemented – especially in North Carolina’s most challenging schools. For example, while scoring PEP samples, more than a single instance emerged where the teacher wrote a single set of PEP goals that were duplicated and used for everyone in his or her class being served by a PEP, rather than attempting to personalize a plan to meet the needs of individual students. Also recommended would be the development of an ongoing support structure for teachers that would assist them in developing high quality PEPs that employ differentiated strategies in addressing the needs of their struggling students.

Finally, consideration should be given to schools with high populations of students at risk – usually those with high poverty – with the goal of creating new and more effective ways of providing their teachers with the instruction tools, knowledge and the time necessary for them to plan meaningful, differentiated instruction that will meet the needs of ALL students.

Given the data already gathered, I recommend further study in the following areas. First, I strongly recommend further field testing of a rubric used to assess the quality of a personalized or individualized learning plan for students. The use of such a rubric, designed to gauge the level of quality of an instructional plan could be applied to IEP documents and the newest intervention approach to supporting students at risk, “Response to Intervention” (RTI). And although the PEP is specific to North Carolina, other districts in other states have developed similar plans to assist students at risk. For example, in one district in Ohio, the teacher is expected to document a students’ inability to perform at the expected level, create a list of strategies they will then implement to support that student, and will maintain a student intervention folder that provides evidence of their support and tracks student progress. In addition, the latest “buzzword” in education for addressing the needs of struggling students is “RTI” (Response to Intervention). In some schools, the creation of an intervention “plan” could eventually be assessed using a rubric designed to measure the plan’s quality. However, a word of caution is in order as a researcher. Before assessing the quality or effectiveness of an intervention (at the application level) to see if it “works” what must first be considered is the fidelity of the intervention process. A number of intermediate steps occur between the writing of a plan and its implementation, all of which influence the outcome. If we

assume that the plan itself is of high quality, the extent to which the teacher (or provider) actually follows the plan is critical. If we assume the plan is actually followed, then the quality of the delivery and/or method used to teach the strategy could potentially impact the results. Next, consider that even if a well-written plan is effectively delivered, the extent to which the student understands and actually applies the strategy to his work or thinking has the potential to impact its effectiveness. Finally, of critical importance is whether or not the strategy selected by the teacher to begin with actually addresses the skill the student needs to strengthen. And so, the fidelity of the intervention during each and every phase of its implementation must be considered before analysis of its effectiveness could be made.

Additional studies focusing on all of the factors that may affect the quality of an intervention plan, such as the PEP are warranted. Whether it be a study that develops a teacher-based intervention for assisting them in creating instructional plans of quality in all areas of their teaching or one that simply identifies teachers who create lessons and intervention plans of high quality to see if there is a common factor among them – the need to further identify what is working and what is not in the area of teacher-developed instructional design would be worth the time.

Perhaps a comparison of a teacher's daily lesson plans to their PEPs to see if they correlate. Researchers may consider factors hinder teachers' work rather than support it. The list could continue, but what this researcher sees clearly is that there is a need for addressing the lack of quality in instructional design that is present in some schools knowing that high-quality teaching does not magically appear. It begins with high quality instructional planning.

Implications of the Study

The absence of literature focused on the quality of educational interventions being developed by elementary classroom teachers was alarming given the number of years that educators have been seeking to address the individual needs of students in their care who are most at risk of failure. More specifically, the state of North Carolina's mandate that the PEP be used as an intervention strategy originated in 2000 and since that time virtually no effort has been made to investigate the effectiveness of this legislative mandate. However well-intended, the state mandate without accountability for the quality of its implementation has evolved into little more than a paper shuffle among teachers, schools and districts. Results of this investigation also point out the number of teachers and educational leaders who (over time) have even regressed in their level of understanding of PEP requirements as a direct result of the lack of follow through regarding this initiative.

This study should serve as a limited but critically important first step in looking closely at the quality of educational interventions being developed and implemented in our schools whose stated purpose is to address the learning needs of struggling students. At the very least, the attempt to develop a measurable tool for assessing an intervention's quality should be viewed as an important educational breakthrough with implications far greater than the task of assessing PEP quality.

Educational literature is replete with studies focused on statistics that identify the achievement gap that exists among varying groups of our nation's children. It is my belief that one important step toward reducing that gap would be to guarantee that the educational interventions selected or developed for our students at risk are of a high

quality. We can no longer afford to waste valuable resources on strategies that are ineffective. The quality of an intervention strategy matters. There is a need for clearly defining which strategies *are* effective and with whom they are most effective.

Results of this study have educational implications at the school, district and state levels. At the state level, the state superintendent of education and other educational leaders should benefit from viewing the results of this study that highlighted the quality of PEP samples collected. The results of this study should (at the very least) identify the need to determine if this sampling is representative of PEPs across the state. Furthermore, should the quality of PEPs across the state be similar to those collected in the study, then state leaders must face that truth that the use of PEPs as an effective intervention has fallen short of its intention.

At the district level, educational leaders should be prompted to evaluate the quality of PEPs being developed within their schools as quickly as possible. The state mandate has always placed the responsibility for PEP implementation on the shoulders of district leaders. Results of this study indicate a concern about what is being developed and implemented by teachers during the PEP process. Clearly, if the quality of PEPs collected were representative of the district's level of PEP quality, then a district-wide plan for re-educating teachers and principals as to the requirements of a PEP is warranted. Furthermore, a district-wide plan for follow-through and review of PEPs to increase the level of accountability would also be in order.

Some districts or schools have assigned the school counselor as being the person in charge of intervention teams. And although school counselors have knowledge of psychology, sociology, and child development, they often lack the deeper understanding

of curriculum and instruction principles required for the development of an instructional plan. For districts with counselors at the head of the intervention process, there needs to be a plan for either educating them in the areas of curriculum and instruction or at the very least partnering them with a curriculum specialist as they oversee the PEP or Response to Intervention (RTI) process.

At the school level, if the quality of PEPs is an issue then teachers will need additional support for the development of interventions that are effective if they are to address the individual learning needs of the children they serve. Support would include professional development to improve their understanding of intervention strategies and opportunities to collaborate with peers so as to expand their repertoire of strategies available to help their struggling students. Teachers need professional assistance and *time* to develop intervention plans such as those relative to the PEP or RTI.

Another consideration at the school and/or district level may be greater inclusion of parents so they participate in the development of their child's intervention plan at a more meaningful level. Educating parents as to what an intervention plan should include might also allow for greater involvement or support from parents at home as the interventions are developed and implemented.

Finally, the impact of this study may also influence the work of agencies that support families, schools, and children who are disadvantaged. Organizations such as *Action for Children: North Carolina*, *UNC Center for Civil Rights*, *The Center for Poverty* and *Wrightslaw* (to name a few) seek to influence educational policy and practice that will impact those facing poverty, race and cultural disadvantages. Their advocacy efforts could benefit from the results of this study as they seek to improve the level of

support needed for our families and children at risk. By drawing their attention to the need for improving the quality of interventions, their influence might even serve to promote the needed changes as well.

Re-evaluating the quality of both the processes and the products currently in use for PEP implementation is critical if we are to address the needs of our most struggling students in meaningful ways. Ruby Payne (1995) says it best, “Responding to the impending crisis with the mindset that created it and with the strategies that have been used... to date is to invite more of the same results” (p.182). We can no longer afford to maintain the status quo that has allowed teachers to develop intervention plans that are weak and ineffective. If we are to address the growing needs of our students who are at risk of failing in school, we must develop a new understanding of the PEP as an intervention tool and establish systematic ways to assess their quality and effectiveness.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS AND
LITERACY FACILITATORS

- 1) Approximately how many students in your school have PEPs? Is there someone who keeps track of the number of PEPs here?
- 2) Are students who have a PEP listed in a school database (like SIMS)? If not, do you have a system for managing and/or monitoring the list of students with a PEP?
- 3) How would you describe the process for completing and reviewing PEPs?
- 4) How/where did you learn about the implementation of PEPs?
- 5) Are there procedures or guidelines in place at your school that specifically define or outline which students should have a PEP and a specific point (or points) in time at which PEPs should be developed? If so, may I obtain a copy of the guidelines used?
- 6) How do new teachers or new hires learn how to complete a PEP?
- 7) What form(s) do you use for writing PEPs? May I obtain a copy of this form?
- 8) Once completed, where are copies of PEPs kept?
- 9) Who decides whether or not an individual student needs PEP?
- 10) Specifically, what documentation is required for a student's PEP?
- 11) Is there someone responsible for checking to see that PEP requirements have been met? If so, who is that person? (List by title or job description, rather than name)
- 12) How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the use of PEP's as an instructional tool for addressing the needs of students at-risk using the following scale? What are your reasons for this rating?
 - 5 = Highly Effective
 - 4 = Effective
 - 3 = Somewhat effective
 - 2 = Ineffective
 - 1 = Highly Ineffective
 - 0 = No Opinion or No Response
- 13) Finally, do you have any other comments to make about PEPs?

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the purpose for writing a PEP?
2. Who requires that a PEP be written? What must a PEP include?
3. Where/from whom did you learn about writing a PEP?
4. How confident are you that your PEPs are written correctly?
5. Who is involved in writing PEPs?
6. What factors determine whether or not a PEP gets written for a student?
7. Approximately how many PEPs do you write each year?
8. Where do you obtain the forms needed for PEPs and where are your PEPs forms kept once they are completed?
9. How important are PEPs to you as a teacher? To your students? To their parents? To your Principal, Assistant Principal and/or school leaders?
10. How often do you review or refer back to PEPs you've written?
11. What is the parent's role in implementing the PEP? What is the student's role? The Principal's role?
12. Do you receive any kind of support here at school to assist you with writing or learning about how to write your PEPs? If so, who provided that support and what was the nature of the support that was given?
13. Have you received support from a source outside of this school?
14. Overall, do you feel you have received adequate support for learning how to develop and implement PEPs?
15. Do PEPs make a difference in the way you teach students?
16. Is there anything else you'd like to say about writing PEPs?

APPENDIX C: PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CULTURE QUESTIONS

Instructions: Please read each item and then rate the extent to which it occurs at your school. Completely fill in the bubble for each selected response.

Scale of: 1 = Not at all, 2 = Little, 3 = Some, 4 = Much, 5 = Very much

1. Faculty consistently considers how teaching/learning can be improved.
2. Students are persistent in completing difficult tasks.
3. Students are provided opportunities to engage in self-assessment.
4. Data are used to determine the level of individual student achievement.
5. Teachers are sensitive to different student learning styles.
6. Faculty are encouraged to exercise initiative for change to improve their performance.
7. Parents' behaviors indicate a belief that success in school is dependent on student effort.
8. Students are engaged in planning that impact the school program.
9. School policies are consistent with state policies.
10. The goals are connected to the mission statement.
11. Students respect different kinds of intelligences.
12. Students are taught to build on their strongest learning modes.
13. Collaboration among faculty is motivated by attempts to improve student learning.
14. Teachers vary their instruction to accommodate different learning styles.
15. Students are intrinsically motivated to learn.
16. Rigorous standards provide the backdrop for our mission statement.
17. There is collaboration among faculty.
18. The principal uses professional feedback from the teachers.
19. Students are encouraged to identify their individual learning styles.
20. Professional trust is evident among the faculty.
21. When outcomes are less than desired, faculty increase their efforts to attain unmet goals.
22. Students exercise control over their own learning.
23. Students look for ways to improve their own performance.
24. The mission statement communicates clearly.
25. The vision indicates that students are to be engaged in learning at high levels.
26. Faculty view accountability as a positive concept.
27. Goals for school improvement are measurable.
28. Parents' behaviors indicate that they feel their efforts at home do affect their children's success in school.
29. The entrance to the school is welcoming to visitors.
30. The mission statement communicates the work that must be done to fulfill the school's purpose.
31. Teachers look for ways to improve their own performance.
32. Students take pride in the physical appearance of their school.
33. Teachers encourage student questioning.
34. The vision is communicated to parents.
35. There are channels for open communication among the school staff.
36. Students are engaged in decision-making that impacts the school program.
37. Those affected by a decision play a significant role in the decision-making process.
38. Professional staff value input from students.
39. Students are encouraged to learn with one another.
40. Leadership within the school is open to anyone willing to assume responsibility.
41. Parents are engaged in planning that impacts school programs.
42. Teachers use instructional practices that stimulate curiosity.
43. Administrators include teachers in the decision-making process.
44. The school gives an appearance of being safe.
45. School policies are consistent with district policies.
46. Decisions that affect the school in general are based on school goals.
47. The school provides an inviting appearance.

48. The intrinsic motivation of students increases as they move through this school.
49. Faculty members have the power to act on their decisions.
50. Students view assessment as a means to give them feedback on their learning—not only as an end in and of itself.
51. Faculty members perceive the vision as including a shared responsibility for high levels of student learning.
52. Faculty members respect each other professionally.
53. Students accept responsibility for their own performance.
54. The physical environment of this school is maintained so that the building appears clean.
55. Faculty work together to seek solutions to problems.
56. The vision is communicated to the professional staff.
57. Administrators are team players.
58. The principal is receptive to various points of view.
59. High expectations are incorporated into the mission statement for this school.
60. Students are aware of their own learning strengths.
61. There are signs that help visitors find the locations they are looking for in our building.
62. Students believe that hard work pays off.

Demographics

63. What is your role in the school? (Select only one.)
 - Counselor
 - Librarian/Media Specialist
 - Principal/Assistant Principal
 - Regular Classroom Teacher
 - Special Education Teacher
 - Other
64. How many years have you taught/worked at any school?
 - Less than one year
 - One year to five years
 - More than five years to 10 years
 - More than 10 years to 15 years
 - More than 15 years to 20 years
 - More than 20 years
65. Select one:
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Hispanic or Latino
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - White
 - Other
66. Select one:
 - Female
 - Male

APPENDIX D: TEACHER SURVEY

Part I: Please read each item and then rate the extent to which it occurs at your school. Circle the number for each selected response using the following scale:

1 = Very Rarely, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Very Often

	VERY RARELY	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN
1. Faculty considers how teaching/learning for students with PEPs can be improved.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Students with PEPs are persistent in completing tasks that are difficult for them.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Students with PEPs are provided opportunities to engage in self-assessment.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Data is used to determine the level of individual student achievement on PEPs.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Teachers are sensitive to different student learning styles among students with PEPs.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Faculty are encouraged to exercise initiative for change to improve their performance.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The behavior of parents whose children have PEPs indicates they have a belief that success in school is dependent on student effort.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Students with PEPs are engaged in planning that impact the school program.	1	2	3	4	5
9. School policies about PEPs are consistent with state policies about PEPs.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The goals of this school are connected to the mission statement.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Students with PEPs respect different kinds of intelligences.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Students with PEPs are taught to build on their strongest learning modes.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Collaboration among faculty is motivated by attempts to improve student learning.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Teachers vary their instruction to accommodate different learning styles of students with a PEP.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Students with a PEP are intrinsically motivated to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Rigorous standards provide the backdrop for our mission statement.	1	2	3	4	5
17. There is collaboration among faculty in implementing PEPs.	1	2	3	4	5
18. The principal uses professional feedback from the teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Students with PEPs are encouraged to identify their individual learning styles.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Professional trust is evident among the faculty.	1	2	3	4	5
21. When PEP outcomes are less than desired, faculty increase their efforts to attain unmet goals.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Students with PEPs exercise control over their own learning.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Students with PEPs look for ways to improve their own performance.	1	2	3	4	5
24. The mission statement communicates clearly.	1	2	3	4	5
25. The vision indicates that students are to be engaged in learning at high levels.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Faculty view PEP accountability as a positive concept.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Goals for school improvement are measurable.	1	2	3	4	5
28. PEP Parents' behaviors indicate that they feel their efforts at home do affect their children's success in school.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Teachers who write PEPs are familiar with the legal requirements of the process and document.	1	2	3	4	5
30. The mission statement communicates the work that must be done to fulfill the school's purpose.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Teachers look for ways to improve their own performance in serving students with PEPs.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Teachers follow all of the steps required to complete PEPs.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Teachers encourage questioning among students with PEPs.	1	2	3	4	5
34. The vision is communicated to parents.	1	2	3	4	5
35. There are channels for open communication about PEPs among the school staff.	1	2	3	4	5
36. Students with PEPs are engaged in decision-making that impacts the school program.	1	2	3	4	5
37. Those affected by a decision play a significant role in the decision-making process.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Professional staff value input from students with PEPs.	1	2	3	4	5

Part I: Please read each item and then rate the extent to which it occurs at your school. Circle the number for each selected response using the following scale:

1 = Very Rarely, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Very Often

	VERY RARELY	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN
39. Students with PEPs are encouraged to learn with one another.	1	2	3	4	5
40. Leadership within the school is open to anyone willing to assume responsibility.	1	2	3	4	5
41. Parents are engaged in PEP planning that impacts school programs.	1	2	3	4	5
42. Teachers use instructional practices that stimulate curiosity among students with a PEP.	1	2	3	4	5
43. Administrators include teachers in the PEP decision-making process.	1	2	3	4	5
44. Teachers develop PEP goals from results obtained from at least one diagnostic assessment.	1	2	3	4	5
45. School policies regarding PEPs are consistent with district policies for PEPs.	1	2	3	4	5
46. Decisions that affect the school in general are based on school goals.	1	2	3	4	5
47. PEPs developed at this school include proper signatures.	1	2	3	4	5
48. The intrinsic motivation of students with a PEP increases as they move through this school.	1	2	3	4	5
49. Faculty members have the power to act on their PEP decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
50. Students with PEPs view assessment as a means to give them feedback on their learning and not only as an end in and of itself.	1	2	3	4	5
51. Faculty members perceive the vision as including a shared responsibility for high levels of student learning among students with PEPs.	1	2	3	4	5
52. Faculty members respect each other professionally.	1	2	3	4	5
53. Students with PEPs accept responsibility for their own performance.	1	2	3	4	5
54. Teachers at this school use assessment data to develop their PEPs.	1	2	3	4	5
55. Faculty work together to seek solutions to problems they encounter in implementing PEPs.	1	2	3	4	5
56. The school's vision is communicated to the professional staff.	1	2	3	4	5
57. Administrators are team players.	1	2	3	4	5
58. The principal is receptive to various points of view.	1	2	3	4	5
59. High expectations of students with PEPs are incorporated into the mission statement for this school.	1	2	3	4	5
60. Students with PEPs are aware of their own learning strengths.	1	2	3	4	5
61. Faculty is provided with a sufficient amount of instructional materials necessary to address the learning needs of students with PEPs.	1	2	3	4	5
62. Students with PEPs believe that hard work pays off.	1	2	3	4	5

Part II: Please answer each of the following items in the space provided.

63. List the total number of students assigned to your classroom this year. _____
64. List the total number of PEPs you are responsible for implementing this year _____
65. Which of the following kinds of support are provided to teachers in your school to assist in completing PEPs? (Check all that apply)
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Written information about how to write a PEP | <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance in planning instruction using a PEP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Written examples of a PEP to use as a model | <input type="checkbox"/> Information about PEP support beyond classroom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A list of goals and objectives a teacher could use to develop PEPs | <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance in using assessment data to write a PEP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal assistance in completing a PEP | <input type="checkbox"/> Information about which assessments to use on PEP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In-service training on how to develop a PEP | <input type="checkbox"/> Written information on how to implement a PEP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In-service training on the effective implementation of a PEP | <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance in communicating with ESL parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School-based reminders about PEP deadlines | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
66. What is your role in the school? (Select one.)
- | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Classroom Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
67. How many years have you taught/worked at any school? (Select one)
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than one year | <input type="checkbox"/> From one to four years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> From five to nine years | <input type="checkbox"/> From 10 to 14 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> From 15 to 20 years | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 20 years |
68. Race/Ethnicity (Select one)
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American | <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander | <input type="checkbox"/> White or Caucasian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
69. Gender (Select one)
- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Female | <input type="checkbox"/> Male |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
-

Thank you for completing this survey.

APPENDIX E: PILOT STUDY RUBRIC

PEP FEATURE	3	2	1	0
ACADEMIC STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES	Strengths and Weaknesses: Based on 2 or <u>more</u> diagnostic assessments. <u>Detailed</u> assessment data is used to identify student's academic strengths & weaknesses. <u>3 or more specific</u> academic strengths and academic weaknesses listed	Strengths and Weaknesses: Based on <u>one</u> diagnostic assessment Assessment data is used to identify student's academic strengths & weaknesses. <u>2 specific</u> academic strengths and <u>2 specific</u> academic weaknesses listed	Strengths and Weaknesses: Based on one assessment tool (not diagnostic). Limited or no assessment data is used to identify student's academic strengths and weaknesses. <u>At least 1</u> academic strength and 1 weakness is listed	No Academic Strengths and Weaknesses Listed
TARGETED SKILL(S) and STRATEGIES (That address the Targeted Skill)	Targeted Skills Listed: Are <u>specific</u> to the subject area (Reading, Math, or Writing) Are age- appropriate Reference the <u>specific</u> NC SCOS objective they link to	Targeted Skills Listed: Are <u>generally</u> linked to the subject area (Reading, etc.) Are age- appropriate Reference the NC SCOS but lacks specific objective	Targeted Skills Listed: Are <u>not</u> linked to the subject area (Reading, Math, Writing) Are not age appropriate Lacks a link to NC SCOS	No Targeted Skills Listed
	Strategies for Addressing Needs: Include instructional goals <u>directly</u> linked to assessment data -strengths and weaknesses Include goals that are clear & <u>measurable</u>	Strategies for Addressing Needs: Include instructional goals without a clear link to assessment data Include goals that are clear	Strategies for Addressing Needs: Limited or unclear link between instructional goal s and assessment data Lack instructional goals	No Instructional Strategies Listed
TARGETED SKILL / STRATEGY REVIEW	PEP Includes: Ongoing monitoring occurs at more specific, <u>frequent</u> intervals (EX: each grading period) A PEP review based on <u>reassessment</u> & led to instructional adjustments. <u>Clear</u> indication that PEP is complete or continued. If continued, includes new skill.	PEP Includes: Progress monitored at <u>required</u> intervals (initial, review, and final dates). PEP review led to instructional adjustments <u>Clear</u> indication that PEP is complete or continued. If continued, NO new skill listed	PEP Includes: Progress monitoring lacks review at <u>all</u> required intervals PEP review did not lead to instructional adjustments No indication whether PEP is complete or continued.	No Plan for Monitoring Progress is Provided
PEP FORMS INCLUDE PROPER SIGNATURES & DATES	Forms completed and include: <u>Initial Conference</u> signatures/dates Parents Teacher Other relevant professionals Correct Contact Information <u>Review Conference</u> signatures/date Parents Teacher Other relevant professionals Correct Contact Information <u>Final Conference</u> signatures/dates Parents Teacher Other relevant professionals Correct Contact Information	Forms completed and include <u>Initial Conference</u> signatures: Parents Teacher Other relevant professionals Correct Contact Information At least <u>one additional</u> Conference held (either the Mid-Year Review Conference OR the Final Conference) that also includes signatures, correct contact information and dates	Forms completed and include <u>Initial Conference</u> signatures: Parents Teacher Other relevant professionals Correct Contact Information NO ADDITIONAL CONFERENCES HELD	No Signatures Included Forms are Not Dated
GRADE LEVEL: 3 4 5 SCHOOL: School A School B				

APPENDIX F: PEP PILOT STUDY DATA

SAMPLE	TWO Diagnostic	Strengths & Weakness	Target Skill	Strategy	Review	Forms	TOTAL
A	1	2	1	1	1	2	8
A	2	2	2	1	1	2	10
A	2	2	2	1	2	3	12
A	3	3	2	0	0	2	10
A	2	2	2	2	1	3	12
A	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
A	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
A	0	3	1	2	1	1	8
A	2	2	2	3	1	2	12
A	1	3	2	2	3	3	14
A	3	3	2	2	1	3	14
B	3	3	3	3	3	3	18
B	3	2	3	3	3	3	17
B	3	2	3	3	3	3	18
B	3	3	3	3	3	2	17
B	0	3	2	1	2	3	11
B	1	3	3	3	2	3	15
B	1	3	3	2	2	1	12
B	3	3	2	2	2	2	14
B	3	3	3	3	3	3	18
B	0	3	1	2	3	3	12
B	2	2	3	3	2	3	15
B	3	3	3	3	3	3	18
C	0	1	0	1	1	1	4
C	0	2	1	1	2	3	9
C	0	1	2	1	0	3	7
C	1	2	1	0	2	3	9
C	0	0	1	0	1	2	4
C	0	2	1	1	1	2	7
C	0	2	1	1	1	3	8
C	0	1	1	1	0	2	5
C	0	2	1	1	0	2	6
C	1	1	0	0	0	2	4
C	0	1	2	1	1	3	8
D	2	0	3	3	3	2	13
D	1	1	2	2	1	3	10
D	1	1	2	2	1	2	9
D	2	3	2	2	1	3	13
D	2	3	2	2	1	2	12
D	1	1	2	3	2	3	12
D	0	2	1	1	1	2	7
D	1	1	2	---	0	3	7
D	0	2	2	2	2	3	11
D	0	2	1	2	1	3	9
D	0	2	1	1	1	3	8
D	0	1	2	2	2	3	10
E	2	1	2	0	2	1	8
E	2	3	2	2	0	3	12
E	3	3	2	2	2	2	14
E	3	3	3	3	2	1	15
E	2	2	2	2	3	3	14
E	3	3	2	2	0	3	13
E	1	1	1	2	2	2	9
E	2	3	2	2	2	3	14
E	2	3	3	2	2	3	15
G	1	1	2	1	1	1	7
G	1	1	2	1	1	3	9
G	1	1	2	1	1	3	9
G	1	1	2	1	2	3	10
G	2	2	1	1	0	3	9
G	3	2	2	2	2	2	13
G	1	1	2	2	3	3	12

G	2	1	2	2	2	3	12
G	1	2	2	1	1	3	10
H	0	1	1	0	1	2	5
H	1	2	3	2	1	2	11
H	1	1	3	1	1	2	9
H	2	1	3	2	0	1	9
H	1	1	2	2	2	2	10
H	0	2	2	1	2	3	10
H	0	2	3	2	2	2	11
H	1	1	2	2	1	2	9
H	2	1	2	3	2	2	12
J	1	1	2	2	1	2	9
J	3	2	3	2	1	2	13
J	1	2	1	2	1	3	10
J	1	2	2	2	1	1	9
J	0	1	2	2	1	2	8
J	0	1	2	2	1	2	8
J	0	1	2	2	1	1	7
J	0	1	2	2	1	2	8
J	0	1	2	1	0	2	6
J	0	1	2	3	2	2	10
J	1	2	1	2	2	2	10
K	1	0	2	1	1	3	8
K	1	0	2	0	3	1	7
K	2	1	2	2	1	3	11
K	1	1	3	2	0	3	10
K	1	1	1	1	0	3	7
K	1	1	2	1	1	1	7
K	0	1	2	1	1	0	5
K	1	1	1	1	1	3	8
K	0	1	2	1	0	2	6
K	0	1	2	1	1	3	8
K	2	1	2	1	0	3	9
K	1	1	2	3	2	3	12
M	1	1	1	2	1	1	7
M	0	1	3	2	2	2	10
M	2	2	2	1	2	2	11
M	2	2	2	2	2	3	13
M	3	3	2	3	3	2	16
M	3	3	3	3	3	2	17
M	0	3	3	3	3	3	15
M	1	2	2	1	2	2	10
M	0	3	1	3	2	2	11
M	2	2	2	2	2	3	13
M	0	2	2	3	3	3	13
N	1	2	1	1	2	2	9
N	2	0	3	3	3	1	12
N	1	1	2	2	1	2	9
N	1	1	1	0	1	0	4
N	1	1	2	2	1	2	9
N	0	1	2	2	2	1	8
N	1	2	3	1	0	3	10
N	2	2	2	2	3	3	14
N	1	3	2	2	2	2	12
N	2	2	1	1	1	----	
N	0	2	2	2	1	3	10
N	0	2	2	3	2	3	12
O	1	1	2	2	1	3	10
O	1	1	1	1	1	2	7
O	1	1	2	2	2	2	10
O	3	2	2	2	1	3	13
O	0	2	2	2	2	3	11
O	0	1	2	0	1	1	5
O	1	1	1	1	1	----	
O	0	1	2	2	2	3	10
O	0	1	1	1	0	3	6
O	2	1	0	2	1	3	9
O	0	1	1	1	1	2	6

APPENDIX G: PEP RUBRIC FOR BEGINNING OF THE YEAR

PEP FEATURE		3	2	1	0	SCORE
USE of DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT	I.	Strengths & weaknesses are based on two or more diagnostic assessments	Strengths & weaknesses based on one diagnostic assessment	Strengths & weaknesses based on assessment <u>not</u> diagnostic	No Assessment	
	II.	<u>Detailed</u> assessment data is used to identify student's academic strengths & weaknesses	<u>Sufficient</u> assessment data used to identify academic strengths & weaknesses	<u>Limited</u> assessment data is used to identify student's academic strengths weaknesses	No Assessment Data	
ACADEMIC STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES	III.	3 or more <u>specific</u> academic strengths and 3 or more specific academic weaknesses listed	2 <u>specific</u> academic strengths and 2 specific academic weaknesses listed	1 strength & weakness is listed OR strengths & weaknesses (2 or more) listed are <u>not</u> specific	No Academic Strengths & Weaknesses	
TARGETED SKILL(S)	IV.	Skills are <u>specific</u> to the subject area (Reading, Math, or Writing)	Skills are <u>generally</u> linked to the subject area (Reading, etc.)	Skills are <u>not</u> linked to the subject area	No Targeted Skills Listed	
	V.	References the <u>specific</u> NC SCOS objective that addresses each skill	References the NC SCOS in general but lacks specific objective	Vaguely links skills to the NC SCOS	No Reference to NC SCOS	
STRATEGIES (That address the Targeted Skill)	VI.	Instructional strategies are <u>directly</u> linked to student strengths and weaknesses	Instructional strategies are <u>weakly</u> linked to student strengths & weaknesses	Instructional strategies are <u>not</u> linked to student's strengths and weaknesses	No Instructional Strategies Listed	
	VII.	Strategies listed are clear, <u>specific</u> & <u>measurable</u>	Strategies listed are <u>clear</u> and <u>specific</u> but not measurable	Strategies listed are too broad, vague, and are not measurable	No Strategies Listed	
PEP FORMS PROPER SIGNATURES & DATES	VIII.	<u>Initial Conference</u> Includes: ALL Signatures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents • Teacher • Other relevant professionals AND is DATED	<u>Initial Conference</u> Includes: REQUIRED Signatures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents • Teacher AND is DATED	<u>Initial Conference</u> Includes: Teacher's Signature ONLY AND IS DATED	Signatures Or Dates MISSING	
OVERALL QUALITY of PEP	IX.	Overall, the PEP is of <u>high</u> quality and provides <u>exceptional</u> detail that would promote effective classroom implementation	Overall, the PEP is of <u>average</u> quality, with <u>sufficient</u> detail for effective classroom implementation	Overall, the PEP is of <u>poor</u> quality and has <u>limited</u> detail for effective classroom implementation	No Details Included	
TOTAL SCORE (27 POINTS POSSIBLE)						

APPENDIX H: TEACHER SURVEY DATA

SCHOOL A = 17 teachers

	301	303	304	305	306	401	402	403	404	405	406	501	503	504
Q														
C	13	5	5	3	3	3	3	4	2	5	5	4	5	4
C	17	5	5	4	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
C	18	5	5	4	1	3	4	4		4	4	5	4	4
C	20	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4
C	35	4	4	3	2	3	3	1		1	3		1	3
C	37	3	3	3	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	1	1	2
C	40	3	3	3	2	3	4	5	4	1	4	4	4	5
C	43	5	5	4	1	1	2	1	1	1		1		4
C	49	5	5	4	3	4	2	5	1	2	4	4	4	5
C	52	3	3	2	3	4	4	4	1	3	5	3	3	5
C	55	5	5	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	1		1	3
C	57	5	5	3	3	3	4	3	2	3	4	3	3	5
C	58	5	5	3	3	4	4	5	3	4	5	5	5	4
AVG	4.3	4.3	3.3	2.2	2.6	3.2	3.1	1.9	2.5	3.6	3.3	2.85	4.2	3.6
"C" ITEMS = Perceived Sense of COLLABORATION														
P/S	3	4	4	3	3	1	3	3	3	1	3	3	2	2
P/S	8	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
P/S	36	3	3	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	4	1	1	3
P/S	41	4	4	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	5	2
P/S	46	5	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	4	4	5
AVG	3.8	3.8	3.2	2	1.4	2.2	1.8	1.8	1.6	3.2	2	2.6	2.8	2.2
P/S items= PARENTS & STUDENTS are perceived as decision-makers														
K	29	5	5	3	1	1	4	4	4	3	3	1	4	4
K	32	5	5	2	1	1	3	3	3	3	4	2	1	4
K	44	5	5	4	3	2	4	5	4	3	4	2	1	5
K	47	5	5	4	1	1	3	3	1	3	4		3	5
K	54	5	5	3	1	2	3	3	4	2	3	2	1	4
AVG	5	5	3.2	1.4	1.4	3.4	3.6	3.2	2.8	3.6	1.8	2	4.4	4
"K" items= teachers' perception they KNOW PEP requirements														
S	2	4	4	4	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	3
S	7	3	3	4	4	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	2
S	12	5	5	3	3	2	2	4	3	4	4	3	1	4
S	15	3	3	3	5	2	2	2	2	3	1	2	1	3
S	19	3	3	3	3	1	2	4	2	1	4	2	1	2
S	22	3	3	3	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	3
S	23	3	3	3	1	1	2	3	1	3	1	1	1	3
S	28	4	4	3	1	1	2	1	3	1	3	1	1	2
S	33	4	4	3	3	1	3	4	5	5	4	5	1	4
S	38	5	5	3	2	2	3	4	5	2	5		1	4
S	50	5	5	4	2	1	2	3	4	4	1		1	2
S	53	3	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	3	2	1	1	3
S	60	3	3	3	1	1	2	3	3	2	4	5	1	3
AVG	3.7	3.7	3.2	2.4	1.3	2.1	2.9	2.9	2.5	2.5	2.2	1	2.9	1.9

"S" items = teacher's perception STUDENTS responsible for their learning

T	1	4	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1
T	5	5	5	3	3	3	3	4	3	1	1	1	1	5	5
T	6	5	5	4	4	1	2	3	4	3	5		4	5	5
T	11	3	3	3	1	1	2	3	4	4	1	3	2	5	2
T	14	5	5	3	3	2	4	4	5	5	5	5	1	5	4
T	21	5	5	3	4	3	3	1		1	3	1	1	4	4
T	26	5	5	3	2	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
T	31	5	5	3	3	2	3	5	5	5	5	1	1	4	4
T	39	5	5	2	3	2	3	5	4	5	5		1	5	4
T	42	5	5	4	3	3	2	5	4	4	5		1	5	4
T	48	5	5	4	1	1	3	3	2	1	5	1	1	3	2
T	61	5	5	3	2	2	1	2	4	3	2	4	1	5	3
T	62	4	4	4	1	1	1	3	1	2	5	1	1	3	2
AVG	4.7	4.7	3.2	2.5	2.1	2.4	3.2	3.2	2.8	3.4	1.9	1.31	4.2	3.2	

"T" items=perception TEACHERS are responsible for student learning

V	4	5	5	4	4	4	2	3	2	2	1	3	1		3
V	9	5	5	3	1	1	3	4				4	4	5	5
V	10	5	5	4		4	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	5
V	16	5	5	3		2	4	4	4	5	3	5	3	5	4
V	24	5	5	2		2	4	3	4	4	4	3	4		4
V	25	5	5	3	4	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	4
V	27	5	5	3	2	3	3		5	5	4	4	4	4	4
V	30	5	5	2		2	3	4	4	4	4	1	4	5	3
V	34	4	4	3	1	3	3	4	5	4	4	3	5	4	3
V	45	5	5	4	1	1	4	4	4	3	3		4	5	4
V	51	5	5	4	2	1	2	4	4	3	1		1	5	4
V	56	5	5	3	2	3	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	4
V	59	5	5	3	1	1	3	4	5	4	5		1	5	4
AVG	4.9	4.9	3.2	2	2.4	3.2	3.8	4.3	3.9	3.5	3.6	3.31	4.8	3.9	

"V" scores = perception that the school has a clear VISION and mission

63	18	18	18	17	17	18	19	17	18	19	19	18	18	19
64	11	11	5	8	9	11	10	12	15	5	16	10	5	7
66	Reg	Reg		Reg	Reg	Reg	Reg	Reg	Reg	Reg	Reg	Reg	Reg	Reg
67	5>9	5>9		20+	10>14	10>14	10>14	5>9	1>4	1>4	5>9	5>9	10>14	5>9
68	1>4	1>4		5>9	1>4	<1	5>9	1>4	1>4	1>4	1>4	1>4	5>9	1>4
69	W	W		W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
70	F	F		F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F

SCHOOL B = 14 Teachers

Category	301	302	303	304	305	306	402	404	405	501	502	503	401	403
Q														
C	13	3	5	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	3	3		
C	17	3	4	4	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	1	2	
C	18	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	
C	20	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	3	5	3	3	5	
C	35	4	3	2	3	4	3	4	2	3	4	1	3	
C	37	3	4	3	2	2	2	3	4	5	1	3	2	
C	40	4	4	2	4	4	2	4	3	3	3	3	4	
C	43	4	4	1	4	3	1	4	2	4	2		5	

C	49	4	4	3	2	4	2	3	3	5	4	4	4
C	52	4	4	1	5	4	3	4	4	5	4	3	4
C	55	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	2	4	3	2	4
C	57	4	4	3	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	4
C	58	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4
AVG	3.8	4	2.8	3.5	3.7	3	3.7	2.9	4.2	3.2	2.9	3.69	

"C" ITEMS= Perceived Sense of COLLABORATION

P/S	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	1	2
P/S	8	3	4	4	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	2
P/S	36	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	1	1	1
P/S	41	3	4	1	2	3	2	3	2	1	1	4	2
P/S	46	4	4	2	4	3	2	4	4	5	4	4	4
AVG	3.2	3.8	2.4	2.4	2.6	2	2.6	2.4	2.6	2	2.2	2.2	

P/S items = PARENTS & STUDENTS are perceived as decision-makers

K	29	4	5	4	4	4	3	4	3	1	3	1	2
K	32	4	5	4	5	4	3	4	3	4	3		3
K	44	4	5	4	5	4	4	3	2	4	3	5	5
K	47	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	4
K	54	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	3	4	4
AVG	4.2	5	4	4.8	4	3.6	3.8	3.2	3.8	3.2	3.8	3.6	

"K" items= teachers' perception they KNOW PEP requirements

S	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	1
S	7	3	3	4	1	3	3	2	3	5	3	2	2
S	12	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	2	3
S	15	3	3	3	1	3	2	2	4	3	2	2	1
S	19	3	4	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	1	1
S	22	3	4	4	3	3	1	3	1	1	2	1	2
S	23	4	3	3	2	3	1	2	1	1	2	1	1
S	28	4	3	2	3	4	2	2	3	3	3	1	1
S	33	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	2	1	3
S	38	3	4	4	2	3	3	4	2	3	1	2	3
S	50	3	4	2	1	3	3	4	2	1	3	2	3
S	53	4	3	2	1	3	2	3	2	1	2	2	2
S	60	4	4	1	2	3	3	3	2	5	2	3	2
AVG	3.5	3.5	2.9	2.2	3.2	2.3	2.8	2.4	2.5	2.2	1.6	1.92	

"S" items= teacher's perception STUDENTS are responsible for their learning

T	1	4	4	3	5	3	3	3		3	2	3	2
T	5	4	3	4	5	5	4	3	2	4	3	3	4
T	6	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	3	4	3	3
T	11	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	2	4	3	3	3
T	14	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	4
T	21	3	5	4	4	4	3	4	3	2	3	2	3
T	26	4	4	3	2	4	2	2	2	2	3	1	2
T	31	4	4	4	5	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3
T	39	4	5	2	4	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	3
T	42	3	5	2	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	3	4
T	48	4	4	2	3	3	3	3	1	1	2	2	2
T	61	4	4	2	3	3	3	3	4	5	4	3	2
T	62	3	3	1	2	3	3	2	1	3	2	2	2
AVG	3.7	4.2	2.9	3.8	3.7	3.2	3.2	2.6	3.2	3	2.5	2.85	

 "T" items= perception TEACHERS are responsible for student learning

V	4	4	4	4	5	4	2	3	2	3	2	1	3
V	9	4	4	4	3	4	4		4	4			3
V	10	4	5	3	5	4	5	3	2	5	5	5	4
V	16	4	5	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	4	4	3
V	24	4	5	4	5	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	3
V	25	4	5	4	5	3	4	4	4	5	4	5	4
V	27	3	5	4	5	4	4	3	2	4	4	5	3
V	30	4	5	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	3
V	34	4	5	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3
V	45	4	5	4	5	4	4	3	4	5			4
V	51	4	4	3	4	4	3	2	3	3	3	3	3
V	56	4	5	3	3	4	2	3	4	5	4	5	4
V	59	4	5	2	4	3	3	3	4	5		2	3
AVG	3.9	4.8	3.6	4.3	3.7	3.5	3.1	3.2	4.2	3.8	3.8	3.31	

 "V" items indicate perceptions that the school has a clear VISION and mission

63	20	18	19	18	18	19	19	16	17	21	22	21
64	14	12	12	12	15	11	14	10	15	15	16	12
66	Reg	Reg	Reg	Reg	Reg	Reg	Reg	Reg	Reg	Reg	Reg	Reg
67	20+	10>14	1>5	15>20	20+	1>5	<1	1>5	<1	10>14	1<5	5<10
68	20+	1>5	1>5	10>14	20+	1>5	<1	1>5	<1	1<5	1<5	<1
69	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	B	W	W	B	W
70	F	F	F	F	F	F	M	F	M	F	F	F

APPENDIX I: PEP SCORING DATA

SCHOOL A = 77 PEPs TOTAL

3rd Grade Data = 32 PEPs

SAMPLE		Grade										TCHR	
Number	Level	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	Total	Avg Qual	AVG
A3001-01	Third	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	2	0	7		
A3001-02	Third	0	0	1	2	0	3	1	2	0	9		
A3001-03	Third	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	0	9		
A3001-04	Third	0	0	1	3	0	3	1	2	0	10		
A3001-05	Third	2	1	1	3	0	2	1	1	0	11	0	10.1
A3002-01	Third	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	0	9		
A3002-02	Third	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	0	0	7		
A3002-03	Third	2	1	1	3	0	2	1	2	0	11		
A3002-04	Third	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	0	9		
A3002-05	Third	2	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	12	0	9.6
A3003-01	Third	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	3		
A3003-02	Third	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2		
A3003-03	Third	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	3		
A3003-04	Third	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	2.75
A3004-01	Third	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
A3004-02	Third	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
A3004-03	Third	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
A3004-04	Third	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
A3004-05	Third	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10	1	10
A3005-01	Third	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
A3005-02	Third	2	1	1	3	0	3	2	2	2	16		
A3005-03	Third	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10	1.3	12
A3006-01	Third	0	0	1	3	0	3	3	2	2	14		
A3006-02	Third	0	0	1	3	0	3	3	2	2	14		
A3006-03	Third	0	0	1	3	0	3	3	2	2	14		
A3006-04	Third	0	0	1	3	0	3	3	2	2	14		
A3006-05	Third	0	0	1	3	0	3	3	2	2	14	2	14
A3007-01	Third	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	0	1	8		
A3007-02	Third	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
A3007-03	Third	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
A3007-04	Third	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
A3007-05	Third	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10	1	9.6

SCHOOL A - Fourth Grade = 29 PEPs

SAMPLE		Grade										TCHR	
Number	Level	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	Total	AvQual	AVG
A4001-01	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	2	2	12		
A4001-02	Fourth	0	0	1	2	0	3	2	2	1	11		
A4001-03	Fourth	0	0	1	2	0	3	2	0	1	9		
A4001-04	Fourth	0	0	2	3	0	2	2	2	2	13		
A4001-05	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	3	1	2	1	11		
A4001-06	Fourth	0	0	2	3	0	3	2	2	2	14	1.5	11.7
A4002-01	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	3	2	0	1	10		

A4002-02	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	0	1	8		
A4002-03	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
A4002-04	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	0	1	8		
A4002-05	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	0	1	8	1	8.8
A4003-01	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	3	2	2	1	12		
A4003-02	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	3	2	0	2	11		
A4003-03	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	2	1	11		
A4003-04	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	3	2	2	1	12		
A4003-05	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	3	1	0	1	9	1	11
A4004-01	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
A4004-02	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	0	1	8		
A4004-03	Fourth	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	0	1	9		
A4004-04	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	0	1	8	1	8.75
A4005-01	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	0	1	8		
A4005-02	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	0	1	8		
A4005-03	Fourth	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	5		
A4005-04	Fourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	0	1	9	0.75	7.5
A4006-01	Fourth	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	1	6		
A4006-02	Fourth	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	2	1	7		
A4006-03	Fourth	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	3		
A4006-04	Fourth	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	5		
A4006-05	Fourth	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	2	1	7	0.66	5.6

SCHOOL A – Fifth Grade = 16 PEPs

Number	Level										TCHR		
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	Total	AvQual	AVG
A5001-01	\	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	5		
A5001-02	Fifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	0	6		
A5001-03	Fifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	0	6		
A5001-04	Fifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	0	6	0	5.75
A5002-01	Fifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	0	1	9		
A5002-02	Fifth	0	0	1	3	0	3	2	0	1	10	1	9.5
A5003-01	Fifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	1	7		
A5003-02	Fifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	1	7		
A5003-03	Fifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	1	7		
A5003-04	Fifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	1	7		
A5003-05	Fifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	1	7	1	7
A5004-01	Fifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
A5004-02	Fifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
A5004-03	Fifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
A5004-04	Fifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
A5004-05	Fifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10	1	9.8

PEP QUALITY - MEAN SCORE for SCHOOL A 9.0519

SCHOOL B = 164 PEPs TOTAL

Third Grade = 60 PEPs

SAMPLE Number	Grade Level										TCHR		
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	Total	AvQual	AVG
B3001-01	Bthird	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	2	0	6		
B3001-02	Bthird	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	2	1	11		

B3001-03	Bthird	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	2	1	11		
B3001-04	Bthird	0	0	3	3	0	2	1	2	1	12		
B3001-05	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	2	1	11		
B3001-06	Bthird	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	0	1	9		
B3001-07	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	0	1	8		
B3001-08	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B3001-09	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	1	7		
B3001-10	Bthird	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	2	1	11		
B3001-11	Bthird	0	0	2	3	0	2	2	0	1	10		
B3001-12	Bthird	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	2	1	11		
B3001-13	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9	0.92	9.62
B3002-01	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	3	2	2	1	12		
B3002-02	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	2	1	11		
B3002-03	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	2	1	11		
B3002-04	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	2	1	11		
B3002-05	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	2	1	11		
B3002-06	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	2	1	11		
B3002-07	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	2	1	11		
B3002-08	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	2	1	11		
B3002-09	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	2	1	11		
B3002-10	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	2	1	11	1	11.1
B3003-01	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3003-02	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	2	1	11		
B3003-03	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	3	2	2	1	12		
B3003-04	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3003-05	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3003-06	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B3003-07	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3003-08	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3003-09	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3003-10	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3003-11	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3003-12	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10	1	10.2
B3005-01	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3005-02	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	3	2	2	1	12		
B3005-03	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3005-04	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3005-05	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3005-06	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3005-07	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3005-08	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	2	1	11		
B3005-09	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3005-10	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3005-11	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3005-12	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B3005-13	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10	1	10.2
B3006-01	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B3006-02	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B3006-03	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B3006-04	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		

B3006-05	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B3006-06	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B3006-07	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B3006-08	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B3006-09	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B3006-10	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B3006-11	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B3006-12	Bthird	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10	1	9.08

SCHOOL B - Fourth Grade = 51 PEPs

Number	Level	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	Total	TCHR	
												AvQual	AVG
B4001-01	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4001-02	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	1	7		
B4001-03	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B4001-04	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B4001-05	Bfourth	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	8		
B4001-06	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4001-07	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4001-08	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4001-09	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	3	1	2	1	11		
B4001-10	Bfourth	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	2	1	11		
B4001-11	Bfourth	0	0	2	3	0	3	2	2	2	14		
B4001-12	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	2	2	12		
B4001-13	Bfourth	0	0	2	3	0	1	1	2	1	10	1.1	10.1
B4002-01	Bfourth	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	4		
B4002-02	Bfourth	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	3		
B4002-03	Bfourth	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	5		
B4002-04	Bfourth	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	3		
B4002-05	Bfourth	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	3		
B4002-06	Bfourth	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	3		
B4002-07	Bfourth	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	2	1	7		
B4002-08	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4002-09	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4002-10	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	3	1	2	1	11	0.4	5.9
B4003-01	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	2	1	11		
B4003-02	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4003-03	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4003-04	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	0	1	9		
B4003-05	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4003-06	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	3	1	2	1	11		
B4003-07	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4003-08	Bfourth	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	2	1	8		
B4003-09	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4003-10	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4003-11	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4003-12	Bfourth	0	0	2	3	0	3	1	2	1	12		
B4003-13	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	2	2	1	11	1	10.2
B4005-01	Bfourth	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	2	1	11		
B4005-02	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4005-03	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		

B4005-04	Bfourth	0	0	1	2	0	2	1	2	1	9		
B4005-05	Bfourth	0	0	2	3	0	2	2	2	1	12		
B4005-06	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4005-07	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4005-08	Bfourth	0	0	1	2	0	2	1	2	1	9		
B4005-09	Bfourth	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	8		
B4005-10	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B4005-11	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4005-12	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4005-13	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B4005-14	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B4005-15	Bfourth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10	1	9.73

SCHOOL B – Fifth Grade = 53 PEPs

Number	Level	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	Total	TCHR	
												AvQual	AVG
B5001-01	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B5001-02	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B5001-03	Bfifth	0	0	2	3	0	2	2	2	1	12		
B5001-04	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B5001-05	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B5001-06	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B5001-07	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B5001-08	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B5001-09	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B5001-10	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	1	7		
B5001-11	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	1	7		
B5001-12	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	1	7		
B5001-13	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	0	1	8		
B5001-14	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10	1	9.29
B5002-01	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	0	1	8		
B5002-02	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	0	1	8		
B5002-03	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B5002-04	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B5002-05	Bfifth	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	2	1	11		
B5002-06	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B5002-07	Bfifth	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	2	1	11		
B5002-08	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B5002-09	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B5002-10	Bfifth	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	2	1	11		
B5002-11	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B5002-12	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9	1	9.83
B5003-01	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B5003-02	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B5003-03	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B5003-04	Bfifth	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	8		
B5003-05	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B5003-06	Bfifth	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	8		
B5003-07	Bfifth	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	8		
B5003-08	Bfifth	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	8		
B5003-09	Bfifth	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	8		

B5003-10	Bfifth	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	8		
B5003-11	Bfifth	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	1	6		
B5003-12	Bfifth	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	1	6		
B5003-13	Bfifth	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	1	6		
B5003-14	Bfifth	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	1	6	1	7.71
B5004-01	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B5004-02	Bfifth	0	0	2	3	0	2	2	2	1	12		
B5004-03	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B5004-04	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	10		
B5004-05	Bfifth	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	2	1	11		
B5004-06	Bfifth	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	2	1	11		
B5004-07	Bfifth	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	2	1	11		
B5004-08	Bfifth	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	1	6		
B5004-09	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B5004-10	Bfifth	0	0	2	3	0	1	1	2	1	10		
B5004-11	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B5004-12	Bfifth	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	9		
B5004-13	Bfifth	0	0	2	3	0	1	1	2	1	10	1	9.85
PEP QUALITY - MEAN SCORE for SCHOOL B										9.4634			