

POLICY TO PRACTICE: THE EFFECT OF NCLB ON
MIDDLE SCHOOLS THROUGH THE VOICES
OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS

By

JEANANN MCWHERTER GAONA

Bachelor of Arts
University of Central Oklahoma
Edmond, Oklahoma
1993

Master of Arts
Southern Nazarene University
Bethany, Oklahoma
1999

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
May, 2008

POLICY TO PRACTICE: THE EFFECT OF NCLB ON
MIDDLE SCHOOLS THROUGH THE VOICES
OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Dissertation Approved:

Dr. Judith Mathers

Dissertation Adviser

Dr. Kenneth Stern

Dr. Kerri Kearney

Dr. MaryJo Self

Dr. A. Gordon Emslie

Dean of the Graduate College

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The doctoral process was described to me before I ever started on mine as a feat of endurance. While this is absolutely true, I believe that it is also a test to every aspect of one's life and in turn tests the lives of every person close to you. As the principal of Choctaw Junior High School, this has included every faculty and staff member with whom I work. I have gratitude always to Danny Clifton, Jeannie Frantz, Cindy Lewellen, Sherry Bumgarner and all of the other numerous people who have provided me with their expertise in education and the power of chocolate. Special thanks to Dr. Judith Mathers who gave me much needed guidance and moral support. My working relationships with all of you have now deepened into friendships I will treasure my entire life. All of you supported me even as I did not feel capable of supporting myself.

I express my thanks to my family. My mother, Pat McWherter gave me a love for education. My children, Ashley, Julian IV and Drew gave me an appreciation for where education can take you in life. The four of you have never let me feel as if I slighted you time, although this journey of mine has taken six years to complete.

Most importantly, thank you Julian, my husband and partner. I have been asked countless times how I have managed to keep this schedule of work, family and school. You are the true reason I have finished this process. Because you never gave up on me, I could not give up on myself. My greatest hope is that our children will be blessed with a spouse as supportive, selfless and compassionate as you have been for me. Your mother would be proud of you for the man you have become. Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Chapter | Page |
|---|------|
| I. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Statement of the Problem..... | 2 |
| Purpose of the Study..... | 3 |
| Research Questions | 3 |
| Theoretical Perspective..... | 3 |
| Significance of the Study | 6 |
| Terms | 6 |
| Summary | 9 |
| II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE | |
| A Brief History of Public Education | 11 |
| The History of No Child Left Behind..... | 15 |
| III. METHODOLOGY | |
| Research Questions | 19 |
| Research Design | 19 |
| Context..... | 20 |
| Participants..... | 24 |
| Data Collection Procedures..... | 24 |
| Ethical Concerns..... | 29 |
| Data Analysis | 30 |
| IV. TEACHER DRAWINGS | 32 |
| Gathering Drawings at Schools..... | 32 |
| Themes from Drawings | 38 |
| Conclusions..... | 107 |

TABLE OF CONTENTS, CONT.

| | |
|---|-----|
| V. TEACHER INTERVIEWS..... | 110 |
| Kingston Middle School Participants | 110 |
| Jackson Middle School Participants | 115 |
| Interviews..... | 120 |
| Analysis of Data | 150 |
| Emergent Themes | 152 |
| Recurrent Emergent Themes..... | 157 |
| VI. CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS | 158 |
| Kingston Middle School | 158 |
| Jackson Middle School | 185 |
| Emergent Themes | 206 |
| Recurrent Emergent Themes..... | 207 |
| VII.SUMMARY AND FINDINGS | 208 |
| Examination of Common Themes..... | 208 |
| Interpretation of the Data | 210 |
| Time and Political Spectacle Theory..... | 216 |
| REFERENCES..... | 239 |
| APPENDIX..... | 240 |

LIST OF TABLES

| Table | Page |
|--------|------|
| A..... | 21 |
| B..... | 22 |
| C..... | 23 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| Figure | Page |
|---------|------|
| 1..... | 31 |
| 2..... | 38 |
| 3..... | 39 |
| 4..... | 42 |
| 5..... | 43 |
| 6..... | 45 |
| 7..... | 46 |
| 8..... | 47 |
| 9..... | 48 |
| 10..... | 49 |
| 11..... | 51 |
| 12..... | 52 |
| 13..... | 54 |
| 14..... | 55 |
| 15..... | 56 |
| 16..... | 57 |
| 17..... | 58 |
| 18..... | 60 |
| 19..... | 62 |
| 20..... | 63 |
| 21..... | 65 |
| 22..... | 66 |
| 23..... | 68 |
| 24..... | 71 |
| 25..... | 72 |
| 26..... | 74 |
| 27..... | 77 |
| 28..... | 78 |
| 29..... | 79 |
| 30..... | 80 |
| 31..... | 81 |
| 32..... | 82 |
| 33..... | 84 |
| 34..... | 86 |
| 35..... | 88 |
| 36..... | 89 |
| 37..... | 91 |

LIST OF FIGURES, CONT.

| | |
|---------|-----|
| 38..... | 92 |
| 39..... | 94 |
| 40..... | 95 |
| 41..... | 97 |
| 42..... | 99 |
| 43..... | 101 |
| 44..... | 102 |
| 45..... | 105 |
| 46..... | 106 |
| 47..... | 107 |
| 48..... | 159 |
| 49..... | 160 |
| 50..... | 161 |
| 51..... | 162 |
| 52..... | 163 |
| 53..... | 164 |
| 54..... | 165 |
| 55..... | 166 |
| 56..... | 167 |
| 57..... | 168 |
| 58..... | 169 |
| 59..... | 169 |
| 60..... | 170 |
| 61..... | 171 |
| 62..... | 172 |
| 63..... | 173 |
| 64..... | 174 |
| 65..... | 174 |
| 66..... | 175 |
| 67..... | 176 |
| 68..... | 176 |
| 69..... | 177 |
| 70..... | 178 |
| 71..... | 179 |
| 72..... | 180 |
| 73..... | 180 |
| 74..... | 181 |
| 75..... | 182 |
| 76..... | 183 |
| 77..... | 183 |
| 78..... | 184 |
| 79..... | 186 |
| 80..... | 187 |
| 81..... | 188 |

LIST OF FIGURES, CONT.

| | |
|----------|-----|
| 82..... | 189 |
| 83..... | 189 |
| 84..... | 190 |
| 85..... | 191 |
| 86..... | 191 |
| 87..... | 192 |
| 88..... | 192 |
| 89..... | 193 |
| 90..... | 194 |
| 91..... | 195 |
| 92..... | 196 |
| 93..... | 197 |
| 94..... | 197 |
| 95..... | 198 |
| 96..... | 200 |
| 97..... | 201 |
| 98..... | 202 |
| 99..... | 203 |
| 100..... | 204 |
| 101..... | 204 |
| 102..... | 205 |
| 103..... | 205 |
| 104..... | 222 |
| 105..... | 245 |
| 106..... | 246 |
| 107..... | 247 |
| 108..... | 248 |
| 109..... | 249 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

With the words, “So free we seem, so fettered fast we are” (1855, p. 75), Browning recognized the paradox of living in the real world where free choice is encouraged, yet at the same time, being hindered by the constraints of society. Browning was referring to love in his poem; however, the same paradoxical observations may be made of education.

A public school is a system. First, it is a system that struggles to mirror a bureaucracy that finds success in the expertise of its employees. Secondly, it is a system controlled by outside forces, often with little or no expertise in the field of education, which impose policy through decision making processes often far removed from the educational context (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Smith, Miller-Kahn, Heinecke, & Jarvis, 2004). Organizational guidelines and frameworks plague public education with constraints; yet at the same time these guidelines and frameworks create a functioning system (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Chance & Chance, 2002).

Schools are influenced by numerous forces (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2005). Perceived successes of a school system are often determined by examining multiple viewpoints of that system (Bolman and Deal, 2003). However, these perspectives are habitually and perceptively manipulated by the outsider’s experiences. In a realm as politically charged as public education, the true experts of education,

classroom teachers, are frequently overlooked as important sources of knowledge and information regarding the functionality of schools' systems after the implementation of policy.

Statement of the Problem

State boards of education, state and local task forces, and local districts continually examine the consequences and/or sanctions for not following federal precedence (Esposito, 2003; Viadero, 2003, 2005). Curriculum reform, instructional practices, and district hiring guidelines remain in constant flux as new federal procedures continue to shape the educational environment in the United States (Herman & Dietel, 2005; Lutz, 2004).

National politics and local pressures influence education in the United States (Lucey, 2005; Putnam, 2003). Presently, public schools face the ramifications of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (Heinegg, 2005; Brimley & Garfield, 2005). With the passage of The Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (ESEA) in 1965 and through its various reauthorizations over the past four decades, including No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002, state boards of education, in order to receive additional federal funding, direct public schools to follow guidelines set forth by the federal government (Herman & Dietel, 2005). However, with the passage of NCLB, traditional state control of local educational practices now resembles federally mandated reform (Goertz & Duffy, 2003). As a result, the language of high stakes testing, annual yearly progress (AYP), and graduation requirements for high school seniors prevalent in NCLB are now standard vocabulary in school districts throughout the nation (Diener, 2004).

Limited research exists regarding the impact of these changing policies on classroom teachers, the people in direct contact with students and ultimately responsible for implementing and following mandated reforms and procedures. Without an understanding of this impact, necessary adjustments to policy cannot be made and the intended reform may fail.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of the Title I sections of No Child Left Behind legislation on middle school teachers.

Research Questions

Four primary research questions guided this study:

1. In the perception of middle school teachers, how has education been changed by the implementation of No Child Left Behind?
2. What changes do middle school teachers perceive have been made in their working environment as a result of the implementation of No Child Left Behind?
3. What changes do middle school teachers perceive that they have made in their practice as a result of the implementation of No Child Left Behind?
4. What changes or impact do the teachers perceive in their city or community from No Child Left Behind?

Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical perspective of this research was based upon Edelman's theory of political spectacle (1988). The media reports only on stories deemed newsworthy. These stories range from overtly controversial to simple reports over a newsworthy individual's everyday actions (i.e. a president's vacation). Edelman (1988) stated:

Government officials are both actors in the spectacle and an audience for it, though it is easier to recognize the former role than the latter. Like other spectators, they interpret news of public affairs in the light of their social situations and ideologies, doubtless with an especially strong commitment to the constructions that justify their official actions (p. 96).

Surrounding every news story is the reality that stories with strong emotional appeal, whether from controversy or tragedy, will be remembered by the public.

The aftermath of the actions of political leaders often does not represent why a decision to act was originally made. Edelman (1988) asserted that “assessments of performance of leaders are vulnerable to displacement, projection and rationalization” (p. 44). In essence, politicians manipulate the news and use news reports to their advantage in an effort to continually propagate the issues and policies they support. This “political spectacle” creates a world of ambiguities and situations in which leaders are given credit for creating change when, in fact, “except as minor elements of a complex transaction, leaders cannot provide security or bring about change” (Edelman, 1988, p. 65).

It is often the people responsible for implementing the policies created by politicians who bring about the change. Politicians, who generally spend a short period of time in office, depend upon the public to affect the change desired within the content of the policies passed. However, as the public makes interpretations of policy, sometimes the original intent of the politician is misinterpreted. Shakespeare captured the essence of this dilemma within the famous lines:

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.

They have their exits and their entrances,

And one man in his time plays many parts (1598, p. 305).

The politicians and the public, at various moments, play parts in implementing policies.

At times, some of the players feel that their parts have been developed for them with little consideration to the ultimate outcome that will be affected within the lives of the individuals.

Edelman's theory of political spectacle and its affects on public education can be viewed in the same context as Shakespeare compares life to a stage (Smith, Miller-Kahn, Heinecke, & Jarvis; 2004). The politicians create policy acted out by educators.

Students, parents and other public school patrons become an audience free to criticize the after-affects of this political performance. In reality, it is impossible for politicians to completely ascertain the overall, long-term affects of policy created. Often, by the time a policy's impact is completely determined, its creator is no longer a politician.

Political decision making is an orchestrated event designed primarily to convince the American public that any reform purposed by a politician or political party is good for the public (Smith, Miller-Kahn, Heinecke, & Jarvis, 2004). However, these reform measures are typically designed to be surface changes at best and at worst are made with little regard to the overall impact of a program. Although programs and reform may be labeled as "scientifically-based research," the research and subsequent findings are often influenced by the guiding policy that initially created the programs and reform. Research may take place, but that research is conducted through carefully scripted and supervised methods approved by the very agencies creating the policy.

Significance of Study

This study contributes to the literature on the impact of the NCLB policy on the classroom and perceptions of teachers concerning education and reform. It adds to the limited research available on the impact of NCLB. In addition, the use of participant drawings as an instrument for gathering data in this study contributes research to an unconventional and increasingly used methodology (Kearney & Hyle, 2004).

Terms

Several terms, specific to the language of NCLB and education are used throughout this study. The following is a list of common definitions for these terms.

- Academic Performance Index (API)—a numeric score, ranging from 0-1500, that indicates school performance based upon state-mandated tests, attendance rates, participation in state testing, and graduation rates in Oklahoma as well as individual scores of student subgroups within the school.
- Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) —NCLB requires that all states receiving Title I funding measure school progress in achievement to record movement towards 100% proficiency by 2014. This movement towards achievement is measured against state performance benchmarks when examining both the whole school and the student subgroups within a school. At least 50 students must test in a grade level subgroup for the tests to be calculated within a school's or district's AYP. Four primary components determine a school or school district's yearly progress (See Appendix A).
- Bedroom community— a city or town with little or no self-sustaining tax base, where residents travel outside of its borders for employment.

- Curriculum—a fixed series of studies required or collectively offered in a school setting.
- Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT)—standardized tests used to measure mastery of material specified within standards or skills
- High-stakes testing— assessments used to determine rewards given and sanctions imposed within an accountability system.
- HOUSSE—High Objective State Standard of Evaluation used in the state of Oklahoma to determine if a teacher is “highly qualified.” The form employs a criterion methodology awarding points to teachers for items such as years taught and certification tests passed. If a teacher reaches 100 points on the worksheet, they are considered “highly qualified” and allowed to teach in that curriculum area.
- IDEA—Individuals with Disabilities Act. First known as the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975. Public Law 94-142 required a free, appropriate public education for every child with a disability in every state and locality. In 1990, The Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments renamed the law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (NECTAC, 2008).
- Incorporated city—a legally defined government entity, with powers delegated by the state and county and created and approved by the voters of the city.
- Indian Territory—land set aside by the federal government as a destination for displaced Native Americans relocated during the early and mid 1800’s during

land seizures of traditional Native American residency throughout the United States.

- Middle school—in this study, the term “middle school” refers to the 6-8 grade configuration.
- OCCT—Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests. Developed by the Oklahoma State Department of Education to measure the academic achievement of students in core curriculum classes using a Criterion Referenced methodology.
- Pedagogy—Instructional strategies
- Performance Benchmarks—timelines established by the Oklahoma State Department of Education for schools and districts to reach certain rates of proficiency in math and reading tests. Benchmarks have been set in two testing categories: math and reading. Oklahoma set benchmarks with large jumps in scores every three years initially and then with large increases in scores during the last three years of the 13 year process (See Appendix B).
- Principal—the administrator of a school.
- Psychometry—The testing of mental and psychological capabilities
- School District—any area or territory comprising a legal entity, whose primary purpose is that of providing free school education, whose boundary lines are a matter of public record, and the area of which constitutes a complete tax unit (School Laws of Oklahoma, 2006).
- Special-education student—students classified under special needs as defined in IDEA. Students are placed on an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) that is a written statement of goals and strategies regarding a student’s education that is

developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with 42 U.S.C. § 1414(d), (Aurora Learning Community Association, 2007).

- Standards – what students should know and be able to do.
- Subgroups—categories identified under the mandates of NCLB to identify underrepresented or historically suppressed groups of students. At least 95% of students enrolled within a subgroup of a school must be tested. This participation score is calculated only if at least 50 students of identified subgroups are enrolled in the grade being tested in the school when calculating a school’s AYP or within the school district when calculating a district’s AYP.
- Superintendent—the chief administrator of a school district

Summary

Chapter One of this research proposal discussed briefly the impact of federal policy on school districts across the United States. While legislation is continually developed by policymakers and implemented within public schools throughout the United States, the impact of No Child Left Behind on classroom teachers needs examination if these reforms are to be successful.

Chapter Two provides a review of literature relevant to federal policy as related to public schools. This chapter provides an overview of the history of education within the United States and NCLB’s place within that history. In addition, literature related to the affects of standardized testing on teachers is also explored.

Chapter Three presents the methodology used for the research and how the data were analyzed. Three different means of gathering data were employed. This chapter

discusses in detail these methodologies and processes within the research portion of the project.

Chapters Four through Six present the data using these various methodologies. Summarizations of the findings, themes and other elements discovered during the three phases of research are explored in detail. In addition, links between the three phases of research are discussed.

Chapter Seven presents the summation and findings of the research. In addition, recommendations are made as to additional research that might be explored. This chapter further analyzes the common themes found within the research of the project and discusses links to literature presently in the field of education.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Instructors, policy makers and all stakeholders in education shape school systems, thereby creating a dynamic process. United States education nurtured community involvement from the very inception of schools in the 1600's throughout the American colonies (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999). With few exceptions, over a little more than two hundred years, the focus of public education in the United States steadfastly adhered to an ideal of community values reinforced through schools (Gallagher, Bagin & Kindred, 1997; Kozol, 1990). With the passage of The Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (ESEA) in 1965 and through its various reauthorizations over the past four decades, including No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002, state boards of education, to receive additional federal funding, direct public schools to follow guidelines set forth by the federal government (Johnson, Collins, Dupuis & Johnansen, 1988). However, with the passage of NCLB, traditional state control of local educational practices now resembles federally mandated reform (Goertz & Duffy, 2003).

A Brief History of Public Education

Historically, the federal government has taken a reserved interest in the educational practices of individual states (Brimley & Garfield, 2005). The federal courts, perhaps, take the most active role of federal government in determining appropriate educational practices court cases used to measure equity and equality of states'

actions (Alexander & Alexander, 2001; Brimley & Garfield, 2005). In addition to court cases, social, economic and political changes influence public education (Gallagher, Bagin & Kindred, 1997). Traditionally, the role of the federal government was to provide funding in a limited scope to states (Sheats, 1938).

The Beginning of Educational Reform

The Committee of Ten was formed in 1892 by the National Education Association to examine high schools and make recommendations regarding curriculum and programs. No high school teachers were members of the committee, and except for one high school administrator, the group consisted of college educators. As a result, vocational and technical programs were largely ignored (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999; Russell & Judd, 1940).

The influence of the Committee of Ten over high school curriculum and programs was significant. Through their recommendations, the Carnegie Unit was introduced to regulate the amount of hours needed for subject areas. In addition, the Committee recommended that high schools offer elective courses that would span a four year period—grades 9-12 (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999; Russell & Judd, 1940).

In 1902, John Dewey pronounced schools a means for bringing people together from all walks of life, from all economic and social settings (Spring, 1990, p. 163). Dewey became one of the most outspoken and influential leaders of education to denounce the idea that all education served the purpose of training the worker for industry. Although he initially resisted the ideals of progressive education, he later became the president of the Progressive Education Association and merged his ideals in a limited way with those of the progressive movement (Riner, 1989).

Progressive educators believed that all learning should center on the student and the student's interests. Indeed, the progressive movement determined that only through student interest would motivation toward learning take place (Donahue, 1993). This progressive educational movement, also known as life adjustment education, emphasized areas such as vocational technology and homemaking in the standard high school curriculum (Montgomery, 1991). The Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 provided the establishment for much of this progressive curriculum in America's high schools (Ellis, 1993). In essence, American education had attempted to align itself closer with Dewey's belief, "that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform" (1897, p. 79).

While Dewey's *Democracy and Education* (1916) focused upon the individual interests of the student, the Committee of Ten embraced a curriculum more akin to that rejected as elitist only the decade before. The primary purpose of the Committee was to create a uniform curriculum allowing for student admission into colleges and universities (Spring, 1990; Ornstein & Levine, 1981).

Sputnik

On the night of October 4, 1957, a man-made object circling the earth captivated the attention of people around the world. To the Soviet Union, the successful orbit of Sputnik represented validation of a scientific approach using continuous trial and error. The United States perceived Sputnik as a warning; without significant changes in approaches to science and technology, America would quickly become a second-world country (Dow, 1991).

In reaction to Sputnik's launch and the popular opinion that America's schools led to the United State's failure to launch a satellite first, the act authorized one billion dollars for public school reforms to enhance mathematical, scientific, technological, and foreign language education across the United States. The act provided federal money with a 50-50 matching formula where states or local districts would receive federal funding only if they matched the amount given by the federal government. The money from the act funded not only specialized summer instruction, but also curricular development projects throughout America. In addition, many college students received newly created federal loan money to obtain advanced degrees in science, mathematics and foreign languages (Montgomery, 1991).

The National Defense Education Act (NDEA) created an environment in which educators turned away from the progressive ideals of education experienced in the first half of the 20th century. Between World War II and the Sputnik launch, Americans viewed science and technology as a part of their birthright within their educational system and assumed that then current educational practices would guarantee superiority in science and technology worldwide; the NDEA essentially addressed a drastic change in the educational system of the United States and required a reexamination of educational practices. Prior to Sputnik, American citizens believed the United States would remain the leader in science and technology through its superior educational models (Montgomery, 1991). With the successful launch of Sputnik, those beliefs were dispelled.

The History of No Child Left Behind

In an almost complete return to the ideals expressed at the beginning of the 20th century, the United States again turned to schools as a means to rectify crisis situations encountered by youth everyday across the country, mainly regarding discrimination and poverty. Education, while somewhat influenced by the federal government primarily through statistical reports and analyses, remained a responsibility of the states and local governments (Reinhardt, 1960). With the passage of The Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (ESEA) in 1965, state boards of education directed public schools to follow guidelines set forth by the federal government to receive additional federal funding (Johnson, Collins, Dupuis & Johansen, 1988).

While President Lyndon Johnson is remembered for the policy agenda of the War on Poverty, President John F. Kennedy actually began the movement. The Coleman Report, released in 1965, detailed to Congress the necessity of not only funding educational opportunities for children from impoverished areas, but also providing an opportunity for these students to meet and learn with children from more affluent areas (Re'nyi, 1993). From The War on Poverty movement came such federally funded programs as assistance to underprivileged students and Head Start, which are designated as Title I and Title II in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 (Spring, 1990).

The creation of ESEA provided more federal funding than ever before for public schools (Brimley & Garfield, 2005). At the time he signed the ESEA into law, President Johnson stated, "By passing this bill, we bridge the gap between the helplessness and hope for more than 5 million educationally deprived children...I believe deeply no law I

have signed or will sign means more to the future of America” (Boethel, Blair, Ritenhour, & Hoover., 2006, p.3). Money became available to public and private elementary schools that provided educational services for low-income students through programs available in Title I of the Act. The federal government provided funding for textbooks, instructional materials, programs (Title III) and educational research (Title IV) to improve the education of all students in the United States (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999).

The main provision of ESEA was Title I funding for underprivileged students throughout the United States (Brimley & Garfield, 2005). Title I provided for remedial services of underprivileged students regardless of whether or not they attended public schools (Alexander & Alexander, 2001). “In essence, Title I was the major educational component of the War on Poverty” (Spring, 1990, p. 347).

A Nation at Risk

In 1981, during the presidency of Ronald Reagan, a national commission appointed, as a means of salvaging the United States Department of Education, by the Secretary of Education, T. H. Bell, was instructed to “examine the quality of education in the United States” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, p.1, 1983). The commission released a controversial report entitled “A Nation at Risk” in 1983 (Boethel, Blair, Ritenhour, & Hoover, 1996). Beginning with the introduction of the report and throughout the entire document, the commission conveyed a negative view of educational practices and curriculum throughout United States public schools by quoting Bell’s concern of “the widespread public perception that something is seriously remiss in our educational system” (National Commission on Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p.1).

Although questions regarding the success of the American educational system arose prior to the publication of “A Nation at Risk,” many critics of the report argued that math and science scores were not enough to judge an entire educational system (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Morgan, 1994). In addition, reformists recognizing the need of a public educational system to reinforce society’s values questioned whether or not even cultural values, once the very essence of public education in the United States, were being sustained within public schools (Morgan, 1994).

The Education Summits

During the 1989 Governor’s Summit, governors representing all 50 states pledged to reevaluate the status of public education in the United States (Re’nyi, 1993). From this summit, policy became a focus on products and outcomes (Mathers, 2000).

In 1994, President Clinton reauthorized ESEA as the Improving America’s Schools Act (IASA). This version of ESEA encouraged states to create standards-based systems for all students, including those students served under Title I programs. Additionally, the IASA emphasized core curriculum areas with a focus on professional development to improve teaching and learning (Boethel, Blair, Ritenhour, & Hoover, 1996).

During The National Education Summit of 1996, 44 business leaders and 40 governors discussed the state of education in the United States and tied accountability within schools to assessment results and standards considered measurable benchmarks (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999).

No Child Left Behind

As a continuation of the conservative beliefs established in “A Nation at Risk,” and the ideals expressed in both the 1989 and 1996 summits, President George W. Bush revised once more the influence of public education through federal funding. NCLB, a “reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965” (McLeod, D’Amico, & Protheroe, 2003, p.1), drastically redefined what might be considered the educational success of a student and in what manner states would be held accountable for a student’s education.

“The professional educator should be constantly in the process of examining, evaluating and perhaps rejecting or modifying what has been received from the past” (Elias & Merriam, 1995, p.206). At the same time, the professional educator is now asked to measure student success and achievement according to performance on state tests. In addition, policy makers and the outside public are constantly redefining the needs of individual students, and the best means for measuring and assessing whether those needs have truly been met.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of No Child Left Behind on middle school teachers in two Oklahoma middle schools.

Research Questions

Four primary research questions guided this study:

1. In the perception of teachers, how has education been changed by the implementation of NCLB?
2. What changes do middle school teachers perceive have been made in their working environment as a result of the implementation of NCLB?
3. What changes do middle school teachers perceive that they have made in their practice as a result of the implementation of NCLB?
4. What changes or impact do the teachers perceive in their city or community from NCLB?

Research Design

An ethnographic case study was chosen as the design for this study. The specific type of ethnographic research chosen was the multiple instrumental or collective case study. This specific type engages several cases, often of many individuals from a particular culture, examined by different instruments to deliver insight to a selected issue

(Creswell, 2003). Data were gathered from teachers in three ways: teacher drawings, interviews and classroom visitations.

Mertens (1998) explains that the nature of the research questions is often the primary reason a researcher uses the qualitative approach in a project. The research questions of this study required extensive subject participation and reflection that were not possible using traditional quantitative methods. The subjects provided ultimate insight into the impact of the federal policies mandated in NCLB.

The study followed an interpretive/constructivist paradigm. Society influences reality. Indeed, no one reality can exist for multiple people. Their interpretations and experiences influence the reality in which they live. In fact, participants' reactions to their realities often times influence not only their perspectives, but also the perspectives of those around them (Mertens, 1998).

Context

One primary component of ethnographic research is that participants share a similar culture. Location, history, economy and environment describe key aspects of culture (Creswell, 2003).

Kingston Community Characteristics

The community of Kingston lies just outside of Oklahoma City, the state's capitol. Although Kingston began as a farming community, within the last few decades, it emerged as a bedroom community with little commercial tax base within the district boundaries (DCSF, 2006). Kingston, not an incorporated city, but instead a small area located within several larger townships, is, however, considered its own community with a school district and limited shopping area. Kingston's population is currently a little

over 8,000 and continues to increase (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2005; Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, 2003).

Jackson Community Characteristics

Jackson, also with origins as a farming community, began as a part of Indian Territory in 1890. Unlike Kingston, Jackson is slowly growing from a bedroom community into a self-sufficient incorporated city with an increasing tax base from a growing economy (Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, 2003). The school district within Jackson provides attendance centers to students in Jackson with a limited outreach to students outside of the city borders. Twenty-six thousand, one hundred seventy-five people currently reside in Jackson (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2005).

State and District Population Averages

Oklahoma has 3,450,595 residents living in 69,956 square miles, separated into 77 counties. Table A below presents a comparison of the ethnic mix of the state and the two research sites (Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, 2005; Oklahoma Educational Indicators Program, 2005).

Table A

Ethnicity of Population

| Source | % Caucasian | % Native American | % African American | % Hispanic | % Asian/Pacific-Islander |
|----------|-------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| State | 80 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 1 |
| Kingston | 87 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Jackson | 60 | 27 | 8 | 4 | 1 |

Note. Jackson contains a substantially larger population of Native American students than that reflected by state averages; however, both Kingston and Jackson are similar to state averages in all other areas of ethnicity.

Table B below presents a comparison of income and education for the state and the two research sites. Economically, as seen in Table B, the average household in Kingston is more affluent and educated than that of the state while Jackson is somewhat less affluent and less educated than both Kingston and state averages.

Table B

Average Income and Education Level

| Source | Percent of population over age of 25 | | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|----------------|------------|---------------|
| | Avg. Yearly Income | College Degree | HS Diploma | No HS Diploma |
| State | 44,370 | 26 | 55 | 19 |
| Kingston | 92,778 | 58 | 38 | 04 |
| Jackson | 35,671 | 21 | 56 | 23 |

Note. HS= High school indicates either a high school diploma only or a high school diploma with some college (Oklahoma Department of Education, 2005).

State and District Academic Yearly Progress (AYP) Results

Oklahoma schools use criterion referenced-tests to measure the progress of the state's eighth grade students. These tests, along with students' attendance rates, are used by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) to determine a middle school's API which is then used to calculate a middle school's AYP. Table C below presents a comparison of the data of the state and the two research sites.

Table C

API and API Factors Year 2006

| CRT Source | API | Avg. Days | Percent of students passing | |
|------------------|------|-----------|-----------------------------|------|
| | | Absent | Reading | Math |
| Oklahoma Average | 1180 | 10.0 | 81 | 76 |
| Kingston MS | 1429 | 7.8 | 96 | 93 |
| Jackson MS | 1162 | 5.2 | 72 | 69 |

Note. Answering 70% or more of the questions on the test correctly is considered a passing rate on the OCCT. These tests scores are from spring 2006 (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2005).

Both Kingston and Jackson have scored above the state averages on the reading test, but not the math test. With a higher API than the state average, Kingston also scores above the state average in both reading and math. Jackson, although below state average test scores in reading and math, does have a lower rate of absenteeism than the state average. Jackson Middle School (MS) was placed on Oklahoma State's 2006 School Improvement list indicating that it had not made its AYP benchmark for the 2005-06 school year.

This did not occur because of the school's passage rate in math, which fell both below the state average and the 70% requirement to measure success. Jackson was placed on the state's school improvement list because of the performance of its special education students. These students represent one subcategory of many, such as racial minority groups, required to perform as well as all other students within the school. These subcategories are weighted into the API only if they contain 50 or more students in that grade level across the district.

Participants

Participants in this study were teachers in two Oklahoma middle schools. The opportunity to participate was offered to all teachers in the two schools.

The middle schools in Kingston and Jackson were purposively selected for this study because of easy accessibility to their administrators by the researcher and the proximity of both schools to the researcher's residence. Both middle schools are located within a 30 mile radius of the downtown Oklahoma City area and are considered "bedroom" communities of that city.

Data Collection Procedures

This project followed three phases of research using drawings created by participants, interviews of the participants, and observations of the participants in their surroundings. As noted by Mertens (1998), complications involved during the actual research of an educational setting can often be unpredictable so, the following precise procedures were followed:

Phase I:

- Contact the superintendent of Kingston and the assistant superintendent of Jackson by phone to schedule initial meetings.
- Explained by phone the plans of the researcher to superintendent and assistant superintendent.
- Asked permission to contact the perspective principals.
- Scheduled meetings with the principals at the middle schools at a time convenient to them.
- Met the principals and thoroughly explained the research design and methodology.
- Scheduled a time during a faculty meeting at each school to meet with the teachers for Phase I of the study.
- During the faculty meeting completed the following:
 - Explained to faculty the purpose of the study.
 - Provided each prospective participant with two consent forms, one to sign and return and one to keep (see appendix C) which allowed any data collected from the study to be used for research purposes.
 - Completed the drawings portion of the research process.

Phase II:

- Determined a location at the school sites to interview participants.
- Scheduled interviews with participants volunteering to be interviewed using the contact information provided.
- Interviewed participants employing interviewing protocol (Appendix D).

- Scheduled follow-up interviews with participants whose responses to the initial interview required clarification.

Phase III:

- Scheduled classroom visits with participants who participated in both the drawing and interviewing portions of the research.
- Took field notes and photographs during the classroom visits.
- Scheduled follow-up interviews with participants whose classrooms' visit required clarification or further information.

Data Collection for Phase I: Drawings

The first phase of the study employed drawing methodology. At a faculty meeting in each school, I handed out one piece of drawing paper and a box of 24 crayons to each teacher. I then asked the teachers to complete individual drawings titled, "No Child Left Behind and Me." The following script was read before they began: "Please draw the impact of NCLB on you. Do not use words or other symbols of language. Your ability with art does not matter; stick figures are fine." They were given 10 minutes to complete their drawings; however, several teachers requested more time. These teachers were allowed to complete their drawings. All participants finished their drawings within 20 minutes.

On the back of the individual drawings, teachers were asked to clarify any aspects of their drawings upon which they wished to comment. The teachers also supplied demographic information including age, the number of years taught, number of years taught at this specific site, and subject(s) taught. They were asked to give their names

with a telephone number where they could be contacted if they wished to continue in the second part of the study.

It is believed this method of initial data collection encouraged participants to begin feeling comfortable with my role as a researcher who values their opinion, and also as someone who recognizes a certain need for creativity when dealing with such an emotionally charged subject as NCLB (Nossiter & Biberman, 1990). Collier and Collier (1986) use photography in much the same way as I used these subject drawings. The participants were allowed to be the experts of the topic being studied. In addition, drawings allowed for an immediate display of emotions, rather than a description of those emotions after careful wording or editing. This allowed for the “power to capture unconscious material” (Vince, 1995, p. 11).

Data Collection for Phase II: Interviews

The second phase of the research consisted of interviews with the participants who volunteered to complete this phase of the research. Creswell (2003) encourages the use of the interview when it is impossible to observe participants directly. An essential element of this research, “interview-based research...is very effective in generating data about respondents’ concerns, feelings and/or perceptions” (Miller & Dingwall, 1997, p. 4).

The instrument used in this study was designed specifically for this project. Twelve questions provided a semi-structured format for this study (Appendix D). Each question centered itself around the teachers’ perceptions of the impact of NCLB and their personal teaching, their school and their community experiences. While the protocol guided the line of questioning during the interview portion of the research, some

participant responses warranted further lines of questioning more specific to the participant.

During this second phase of the research, participants were asked to elaborate on the drawings they created during Phase One. In addition, they discussed any other feelings they have concerning the effect of NCLB on education in general. These discussions focused on their working environment, their personal instructional practices, their personal experiences as both a teacher and student, and any changes or impacts made by NCLB in their own cities or communities.

The interviews took place in the participants' classrooms which allowed for additional reminders about the affects of NCLB within their working environment. I used a digital recorder and note-taking system (Appendix E) to record not only what was said during the interview, but also to record the general disposition of the participant and any immediate reactions to the interview by me immediately following the session. A semi-structured format of questioning was used (Appendix D). Dingwall (1997) discusses the importance of this structure in "that the interviewer defines what the parties are going to talk about and what will count as relevant" (p. 58). As needed, the drawings from Phase One were incorporated as additional comments by the participants warranted. Often, the participants themselves requested to make comments about their drawings.

Data Collection for Phase III: Observations

In qualitative research, "the researcher is the instrument" used to study participants (Mertens, 1998, p.317). Ethnographic research encourages the researcher to spend time in the participant's natural surroundings to understand shared belief systems and patterns within a culture (Creswell, 2003). This study required extensive time in the

field observing teachers at the selected school sites. The researcher took photographs and made field notes of the teachers' physical classrooms and the school in general. Any observations made during this third stage of the research were used to clarify responses from Phases I and II of the research, or expose questions that required additional time with participants. However, Phase III data also allowed more themes to be developed that represented commonalities found in all classrooms created by the teachers.

Ethical Concerns

The privacy of the participants, their schools and their districts was protected to every degree possible. However, as noted by Berg (1998), by its nature, qualitative research creates unusually close relationships between participants and researchers. In this study, all participants received pseudonyms, as did their schools and districts. But, to create consistency, "lists of names are sometimes maintained even when pseudonyms are used in field notes" (Berg, 1998, p. 38), as they were in this research. Interviews were on a home computer stored as digital audio files until transcribed. After the transcription occurred, the interviews were erased. Data were stored on a stand alone laptop with dial-up Internet access; however, the computer was password protected and used only by the researcher. After the project was completed, materials containing original names of participants and their districts were destroyed.

Validity and Reliability

After each phase of this study, participants were asked for clarification and validation of the information gathered through the use of member checks (Mertens, 1998). Participant feedback also occupied a critical role in the research. If questions arose during the analysis portion of the research, participants were contacted to clarify

confusing or incomplete data. However, since feedback from participants sometimes distorted original meanings or findings, any changes made to findings after these member checks were noted within the research (Miller & Dingwall, 1997; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Finally, triangulation of the data was essential in validating findings. Drawings, interviews and classroom observations, while each crucial in its own manner, were only one component to the final analysis made from data gathered during the research. By employing different methods of data collection, a type of persistent observation (Mertens, 1998) was maintained in that no one single visit determined the findings of the research.

Data Analysis

The constant comparative method of data analysis was used in this study (Mertens, 1998). Participant drawings were first compared to one another to identify any themes or similar content found within the pictures. The drawings were also discussed further as desired by the participants during each interview.

Both the researcher and the participant analyzed the drawing created by the participant in Phase I of the research. In addition, the data collected during the interview portion of the research served as a means to identify consistencies or outliers with the drawings, but also were used to identify additional themes not identified in Phase I.

The photographs taken in Phase III of the project were used to identify commonalities with both the data collected in Phases I and II. Further themes and outliers were also discovered during the photographic phase of the study. Analysis of data from all three phases of the study created triangulation, a replication of results from

the same participants using different methods of data collection (Denzin, 1989; Mertens, 1998).

The teacher drawings, interviews and classroom observations were then analyzed to determine commonalities between the teachers and the schools in relation to the affect of NCLB as seen below in Figure 1.

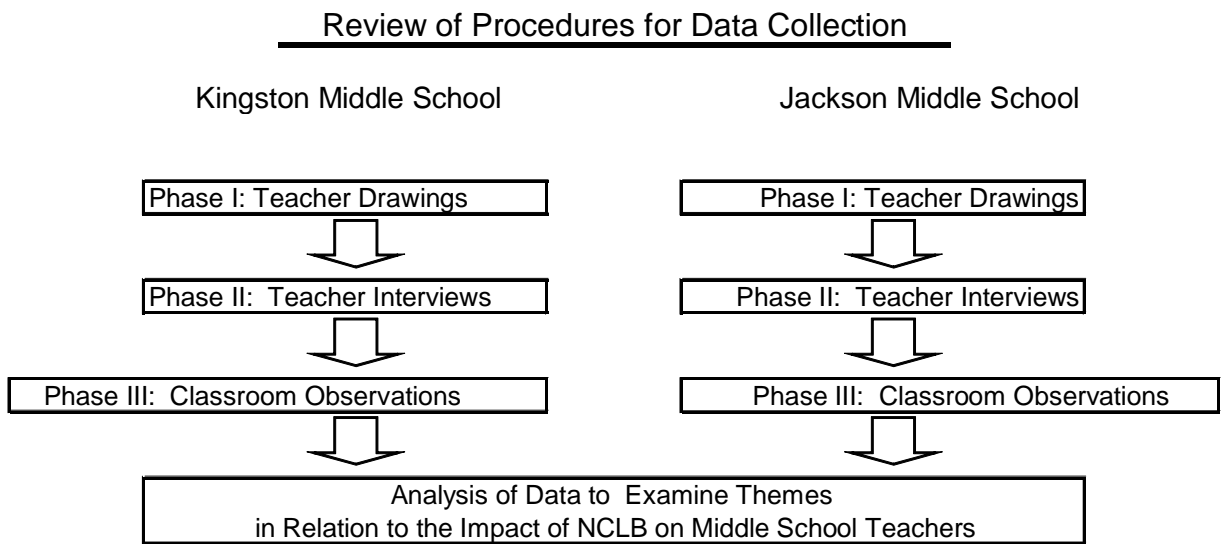


Figure 1. The analysis portion of the research created a bridge between the schools' data. Commonalities were then compared between teachers and schools.

Themes were identified from the data of Phases I and III. The interviews of Phase II were analyzed as a series of case studies while themes within the individual teacher's discussions were examined in more depth.

CHAPTER IV

PHASE I: TEACHER DRAWINGS

Phase I, the drawings portion of the data gathering took place in the media centers of the school sites. Kingston Middle School's principal tied the research of Phase I into a scheduled faculty meeting. Jackson Middle School's principal indicated that since no set meetings occurred for the entire faculty and that only "team" meetings were regularly scheduled, a special morning meeting of the faculty would be called to allow faculty to participate.

Gathering Drawings at the School Sites

Descriptions of the data gathering process as well as observations made during that period are presented below for each of the two sites.

Kingston Middle School

Phase I for Kingston Middle School was scheduled on a Tuesday afternoon at 3:00 in the media center after the teachers had been released from class for the day. The marquee at the front of the school had a sign stating that it had been donated by a local bank and that Kingston Middle School was a "Blue Ribbon School." There were paving stones at the front entrance with dedications to various students with their names and expected graduation years (mainly 2010) of students noted on them.

Students were exiting the building when the researcher arrived. The students were polite, and opened doors for the researcher to enter the school. Two boys were

jostling each other a bit in the hall, but no students raised their voices. No faculty members or adults were noticeably present in the halls.

The interior of the building was very clean with student artwork decorating the walls. Ceramic tiles painted with bright primary colors were affixed to an eastern, interior wall in the shape of the state of Oklahoma. Each tile illustrated historic aspects of the state, such as the land run, and other events, such as the founding of the school district.

The main office was located directly in front of the school's atrium. Exterior glass doors across the front of the school offered a view of the outdoors. A letter to parents lay in the receptionist's cubicle which provided details of the upcoming eighth grade promotion that would be held that Wednesday evening. The letter informed parents that a local church had been selected as the graduation site to allow enough room for all guests to attend. Parents were charged a five dollar fee to offset the cost of rental of the facility. Also noted were that dress clothes were appropriate and girls could wear, but were not required to wear formals. The letter was distributed by the school's parents organization.

The researcher met with the principal in her office at 2:45, prior to the drawing session. Terry Zel, principal there for three years, has been employed by the district for nine years. Mrs. Zel stated that several of her teachers are nationally board certified and that Kingston Middle School has been a Blue Ribbon school for three years. She stated that her school has a "really, really good staff," that is "very strong in curriculum knowledge" and that they are a "highly professional staff." She also stated that they are "very balanced as far as experience" explaining that she has veteran teachers near

retirement, teachers just beginning their careers, and every level of experience in between.

Mrs. Zel stated that the school is located in a growing district that continues to add programs every year requiring more and more training of her staff. However, she thumbs that her staff will face each challenge as needed. She continually reiterated that her staff was professional and willing to do what was necessary to provide an appropriate education for students in the building. She also praised the school district noting that both the superintendent and curriculum director are former principals of her school, acknowledging that this was quite unusual in any school district.

Kingston Middle School's media center was cozy with subdued lighting and neutral colors throughout the area. The floor was carpeted in a dark colored brown berber. Dark wooden bookshelves arranged throughout the media center created nooks and crannies with dark beige, over-stuffed chairs strategically placed for uninterrupted reading. Three walls of the media center were glass that faced out into the hallways. The back wall, painted in off-white, contained a light wood circulation desk with a storage closet behind it.

Teachers entered the media center alone or in small groups beginning about five minutes before the meeting was to start. Most of the 30 teachers who took part in the research sat at long, rectangle wooden tables; however, four of the teachers began the meeting by sitting in the over-stuffed chairs. The researcher was introduced to the faculty by Mrs. Zel who then helped pass out drawing paper and boxes of crayons for each of the teachers. The researcher began by stating the purpose of the project, to describe the affects of NCLB on middle school teachers in Oklahoma. The researcher

then asked the teachers to complete individual drawings titled, “No Child Left Behind and Me.” The following script was read before they began: “Please draw the impact of NCLB on you. Do not use words or other symbols of language. Your ability with art does not matter; stick figures are fine.” They were given 10 minutes to complete their drawings; however, several teachers requested more time. These teachers were allowed to complete their drawings. All participants finished their drawings within 20 minutes.

On the back of the individual drawings, teachers were asked to clarify any aspects of their drawings upon which they wished to comment. The teachers also supplied demographic information including age, the number of years taught, number of years taught at this specific site, and subject(s) taught. They were asked to give their names with a telephone number where they could be contacted if they wished to continue in the second part of the study.

After they began their drawings, one of the teachers who sat in an over-stuffed chair sat on the floor and used the seat of her chair as a drawing surface while another moved to a table with several other teachers. The two remaining teachers sat in the chairs and used books as writing surfaces.

At first, when the teachers began drawing, they giggled. They eventually settled down and began quietly chatting. The researcher overheard one of the teachers saying, “I love stuff like this.” They remained extremely friendly and many came up to the researcher after the drawings were completed to say that they would be willing to help in the next phases of the research.

One teacher remarked that she had signed the second consent form. She said she had completed her doctorate over 20 years ago and wished at the time she had willing

participants for her research. Several others made comments about how drawings could be incorporated into professional development activities and academic presentations at conferences.

Jackson Middle School

Jackson Middle School, built only four years earlier, is very modern with unique architectural elements such as skylights and rooflines. The building's design won architectural awards for the firm that designed it. In addition, it has been featured in national magazines and state newspapers highlighting its beauty. These articles are posted predominantly in a main hallway's display case at the front of the building. The building is one story with the primary length of the building facing the busy main street of Jackson. The marquee on the outside stated that Jackson Middle School was a "Blue Ribbon School" in 2004.

On the day the Jackson Middle School teachers completed their drawings, Principal Dr. Mary Francis met with the researcher in the media center at 7:30 a.m. The media center was traditionally arranged with very modern facilities such as open architecture, high ceilings and natural lighting. Dr. Francis talked about her experiences in Tennessee prior to becoming principal of the school. She talked a bit about merit pay and the differences in the state departments between Tennessee and Oklahoma. During an earlier conversation, she had mentioned how it was difficult to cut into teachers' personal planning period times for meetings because of the active local teacher union.

As the researcher and Dr. Francis talked, teachers began entering the media center. Most of them chose to sit at tables that were arranged in a horseshoe configuration in the center of the library. The meeting, or drawing session, began at 7:45.

Dr. Francis thanked the teachers for being at the meeting and then introduced the researcher. Two teachers who entered late chose to stand at bookcases located to the side of the tables during the researcher's explanation of the project. Teachers remained very quiet during the explanation of the drawing procedures. However, while crayons and drawing paper were passed out, several became very animated and excited about the prospect of drawing.

One group of teachers who sat near the center of the horseshoe giggled continually after they began their drawings. Three teachers, far away from this group, chose not to participate in the activity. Two other teachers stayed an additional 10 minutes drawing by themselves silently. In all, 36 teachers took part in the drawings.

During the drawing session, students began to enter the building in an orderly manner. No faculty escorted them or monitored them. The students stood quietly talking in the hall, went to their lockers, or stood outside their first period classes. Only two students entered the media center to ask questions, and the media specialist explained to them that the faculty was in a meeting so the students would need to return at a later time.

Dr. Francis suggested to the researcher that they should meet in her office following the drawing session. She left the media center before the researcher which allowed time for the researcher to gather materials and for Dr. Francis to begin the morning announcements. The researcher went to the principal's office approximately 10 minutes after the announcements were concluded. The leftover crayons were given to a teacher who told the researcher that she would take them to the school's art class.

When the researcher entered the main office, both secretaries at the front desks were busy answering phones, taking dropped off lunches from parents, and answering

various questions of staff members—many of whom were looking for the principal. The secretaries were not quite sure where she had gone.

About 12 minutes later, Dr. Francis appeared from a back location of the office suite and escorted the researcher to her office. She apologized repeatedly for the delay saying that there was an emergency to which she was called immediately following the announcements. A student brought a pellet gun to school, a teacher confiscated it, and then escorted the student to the office. Dr. Francis was trying to contact the student's parents. The researcher and Dr. Francis agreed to talk at a more convenient time which did occur prior to Phases II and III.

Themes from the Drawings

Fifteen themes, identified within the teacher drawings, occurred in both schools. The teachers had various levels of experience levels and represented both genders. Experience levels and subjects taught had only an occasional bearing upon the occurrences of the themes within the drawings. Drawing examples from each of the 15 themes are presented below.

The Influences of Nature

Three of the drawings depict NCLB as an element of nature, suggesting the stunted growth of subjects. In the drawings, either students or music become subjugated to the power of NCLB. The subjects in the drawings are unable to change or control the authority of NCLB and are either damaged or unable to sustain themselves.

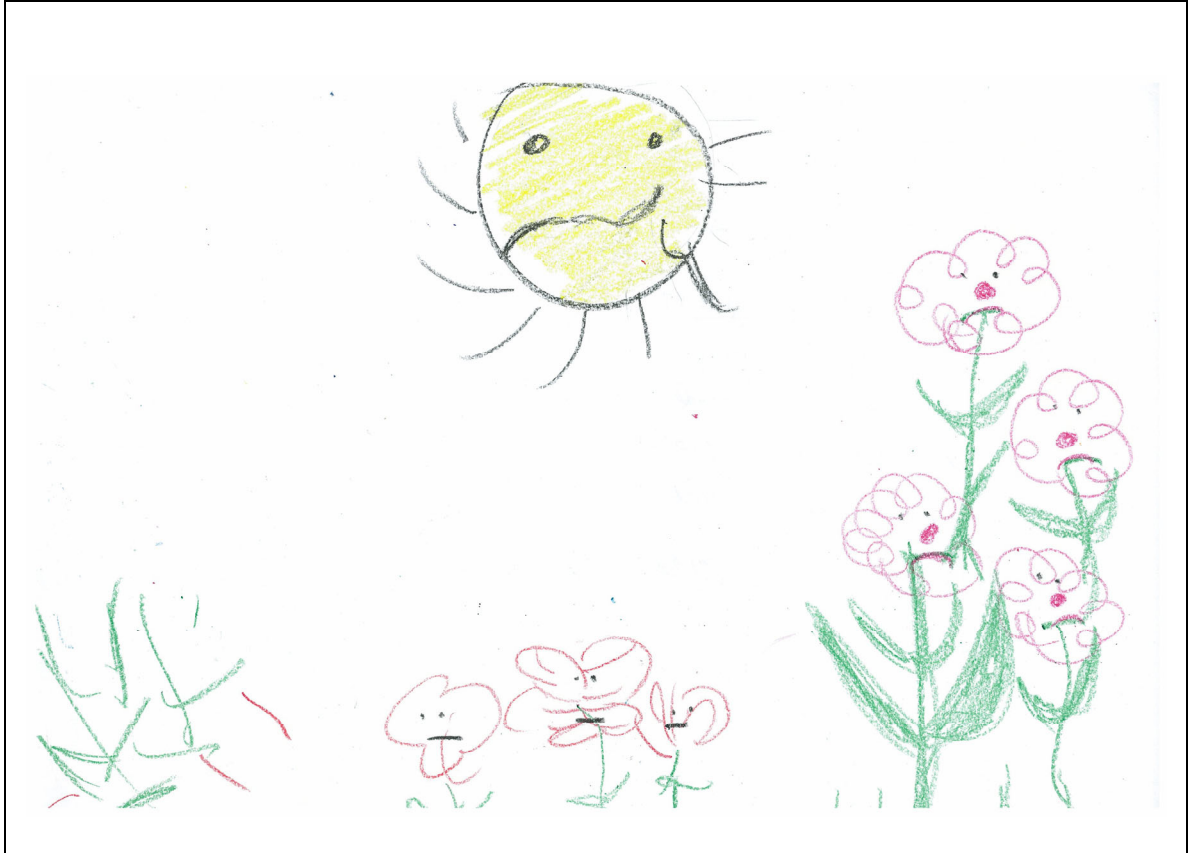


Figure 2. Ms. Smith from Jackson Middle School wrote, “The powers that be is the sun beaming down on the students (flowers). The strong, beautiful, bright flowers are sad but strong. The weak in the middle feel threatened by the sun and can’t grow due to the pressure and lack of freedom. The weeds on the left can’t make it.”

In Figure 2 above, the sun, normally a symbol of happiness, is prominently placed at the top middle of this drawing and is depicted with a confused mouth—half smile, half frown indicating puzzlement. The four tall flowers at the bottom right of the drawing all have clear frowns as do the three less detailed flowers located in the bottom center of the drawing, suggesting sorrow or grief. To the bottom left of the picture, the artist depicts a clump of something unclear in brown and green, once again implying disarray.

Overall, the drawing leaves the viewer at first with the sense that this is an idyllic scene with sunshine and green plants. But, the faces on the objects bring feelings of

confusion and sadness. This confusion is reinforced with the weeds in the left corner of the drawing that are undefined in both shape and identity. After reading Ms. Smith's comments about the drawing, another question becomes, "Who are the weeds?" Are these children, who because they are not as strong as the tall flowers, will eventually die from a lack of nurturing? In a sense, the flowers in the center, the "weak" ones, draw the eye away from the weeds and it is almost assumed that eventually the weeds will be pulled from the scene to allow the other "pretty" flowers to flourish.

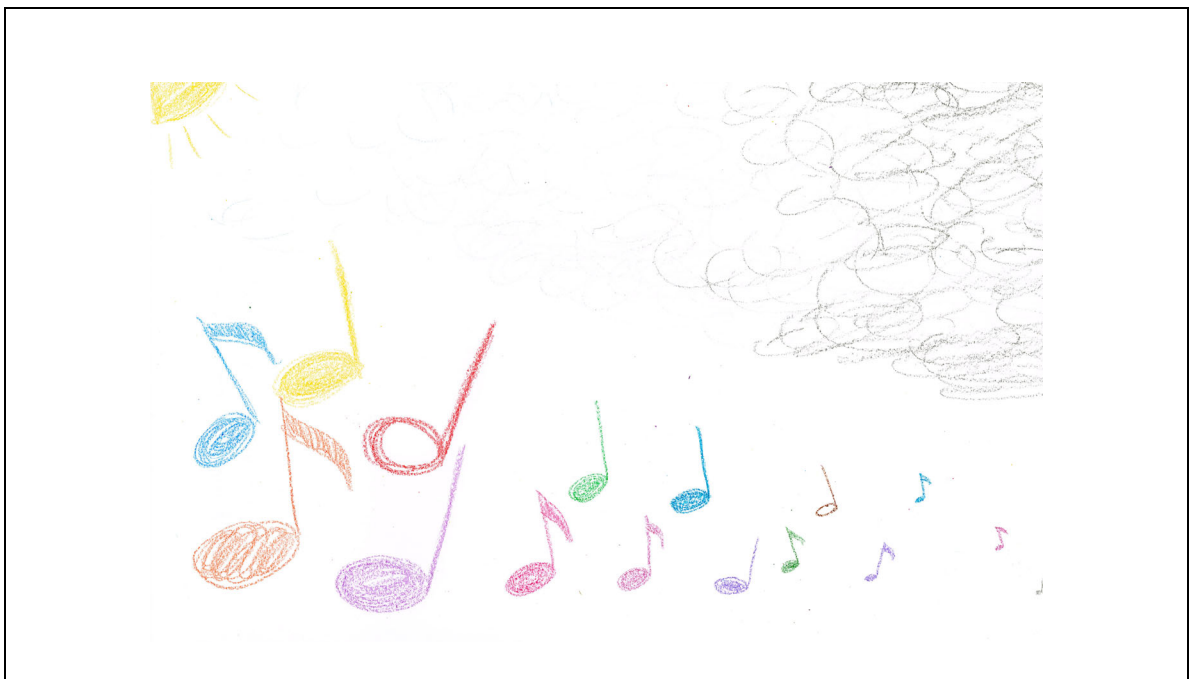


Figure 3. Ms. Walker of Jackson Middle School stated about her picture, "As the pressure for higher test scores has continued to increase, the importance of the arts seems to be pushed to the side. The fear of losing the arts in schools is everpresent (sic) and grows each year."

In Figure 3 above, a small glimmer of sun is present in the top left corner. At the top and middle right a large gray scribble or cloud becomes more noticeable in color and formation the further it gets from the sun. Ms. Walker, during her interview in Phase II, commented on the clouds saying:

The picture that I drew for you showed a dark cloud coming along, and I just think that's kind of what NCLB has done. It is kind of an overshadowing, dark cloud that kind of hangs over us all the time...that's stressful...no matter all the...standing on our head that we do, there's got to be something coming from the students too that we can't provide for them. There are other issues that can't be tested...I think we're being held responsible for some things that are out of our control and that's part of the very frustrating thing about this for me.

The musical notes on the left of the drawing, large and predominant, flourish under the sun; however, under the cloud, they become miniscule. The sound of the music is diminished as the arts are placed under the cloud of NCLB. The true identities of the students, in a manner, have become overshadowed by NCLB. What are the other "issues that can't be tested" in these students' lives and how can educators "provide for them" in a manner that recognizes their individualities as humans? Ms. Walker implies that NCLB has dehumanized middle schools students, turning them instead into inputs to measure the outputs of testing.

NCLB is portrayed as the sun in both Figures 2 and 3. Everything under the sun's sky, including music and students, is affected by the sun's rays. The absence of clear skies or nourishing sunlight adversely affects everything on the ground below it. The overall engulfing influence of NCLB and its designers is clearly shown in these drawings. As the sun affects the earth even though it is at such a far distance from the earth, NCLB affects curriculum and students although the policies are created and changed in places far removed from classrooms.

Classrooms

Ten drawings depict classrooms. The classroom represented in each drawing appears individualistic and, on the surface, is seemingly unrelated to any other classroom drawing. However, analysis shows this to be untrue as many of the classrooms share similar characteristics of teacher placement, student placement and furniture arrangement. The commentary written by teachers on the backs of all of the classroom drawings provide insight into the impact of NCLB on classrooms.

Five of the drawings display students working in groups either with a teacher facilitating the activity or with the teacher completely absent from the picture. Yet, all of these five drawings do contain people. Three of the drawings show traditional classrooms with students sitting at desks while the teacher is at the front of the room in an authoritative role. All but one classroom appears organized and well-structured.

Two of the drawings present a classroom as furniture only. Students and teachers are noticeably absent. In one of these pictures, the desks are empty boxes, organized in even rows, almost militaristic in their precision. The main focus of these drawings becomes the objects within them. Desks and materials dominate the classrooms while the interactions of students and teachers remain hidden from anyone glimpsing the scenes portrayed within the rooms.



Figure 4. Ms. Townsend of Kingston Middle School wrote on the back of her drawing, “I view No Child Left Behind as a terrific challenge to incorporate as many techniques as I can to engage every child of every ability. I know that the curriculum and testing is (sic) designed to ensure children are successful, and I embrace whatever positive progress we can make in engaging everyone.”

Figure 4 shows four people, two at each table. The setting is a classroom with a chart hanging behind the tables—something that might be expected in an instructional environment. One table, located on the left of the drawing, has a beaker, glass, and some type of tray on its surface. The table on the right includes a girl with black hair in a violet dress and a boy in a green shirt and green ball cap. This table has a red tray with something unclear placed in the middle of it. The items on the tables indicate scientific experiments are taking place and both sets of students are actively engaged in learning. All four students are comfortable in their surroundings and seem content or even happy to be learning.

Even the objects within the classroom of Figure 4 depict a hospitable environment created to encourage student learning. To the left of the first table is a window with four green plants on the sill and one hanging plant in the center. To the right of the second table is a tall stand with a partial box on top. These items bring warmth and a homelike familiarity to the scene. The students within the drawing are comfortable. Both Ms. Townsend's drawing and commentary regarding her drawing indicate a teacher who views NCLB in a positive manner. Ms. Clayton's drawing and comments shown below, in Drawing 4, do not portray the same positive attitude.

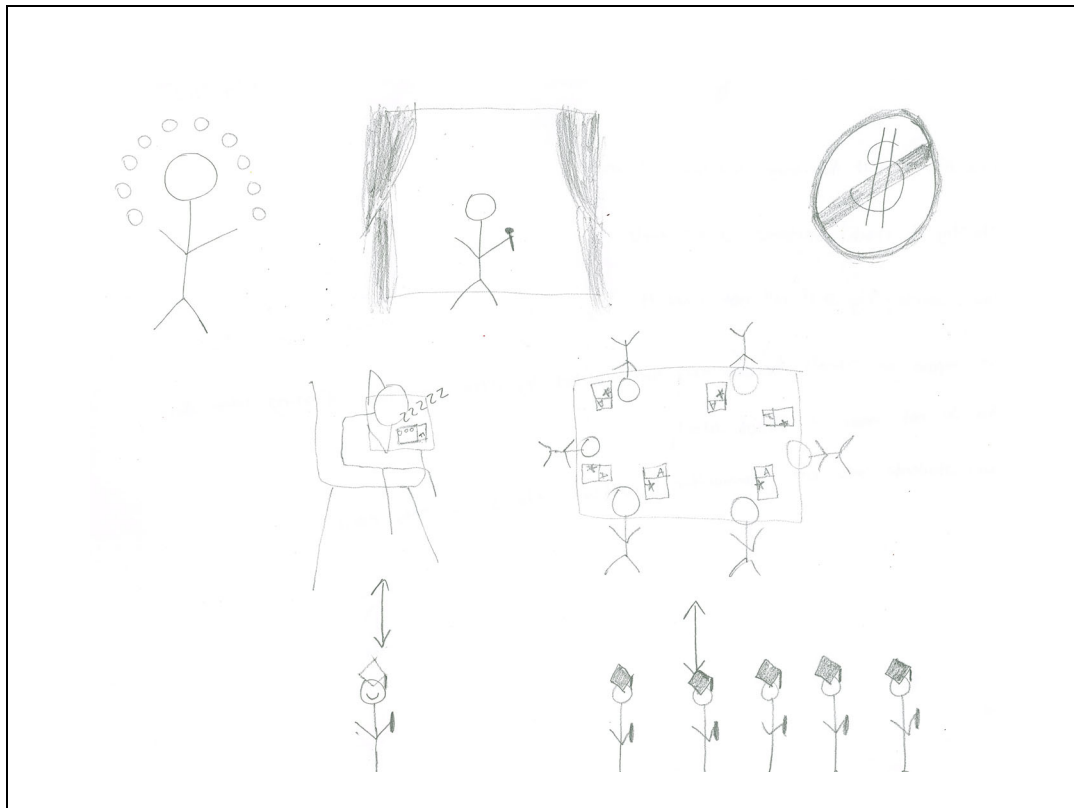


Figure 5. Ms. Clayton of Kingston Middle School commented on the back of her drawing, "President passed NCLB Act (sic) without for foreseeing (sic) problems will arise. Teachers continue to try to reach students at all levels. There will be some students [who will] (sic) still will not make it. NCLB has a negative impact on schools because they are punished by receiving less funding when there are some kids who do not make it through school. NCLB will 'pass' some students into our communities without the skills they need."

At the top left of the black and white Figure 5 is a juggler, in the center a person holding a microphone on stage with curtains drawn and to the right a “no money” sign. In the middle left of the drawing is a student asleep on top of an assignment graded with an “F.” In the right center, six students sit around a table with their assignments graded with “A’s” and stars. On the bottom of the drawing, underneath the sleeping student, a two-way arrow points to a graduate wearing a white mortar board and carrying a diploma. Underneath the students sitting at the table, another two-way arrow points to five graduates wearing black mortar boards with diplomas in their right hands.

The drawing creates the air of a circus performance with many rings of entertainment; albeit, the entire circus is performed in a strange gray and white created by a pencil rather than the crayons available to the teacher when she made the drawing. Although the scenes at first seem disconnected from one another, the arrows suggest a relationship between lazy students graduating, while also indicating that not all students will graduate. Ms. Clayton’s drawing and printed comments reflect her concerns about students’ learning. She explains this with her statement that students will receive diplomas, “...without the skills they need.” The diplomas and mortar boards do not necessarily indicate that an education has been received by the graduates. She seems to place the blame on NCLB considering the directions given to the teachers at the beginning of Phase I. “Without the skills they need” is a commentary on the narrowing of the curriculum created through testing focus on the Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests (OCCT).

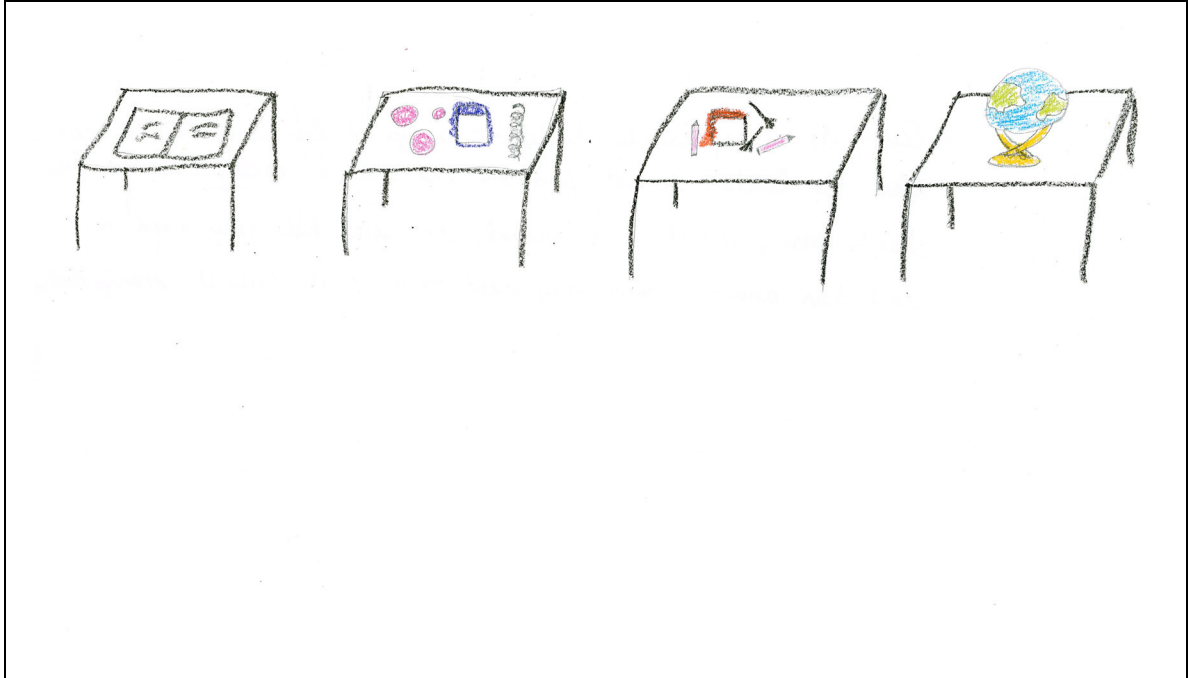


Figure 6. Ms. McCoy from Kingston Middle School wrote of her drawing, “Each desk represents different ways of learning. NCLB means that the teacher must find the best way for each child to learn-hands-on (sic), verbal, oral, visual, etc. Some kids may need to read their answers, some may need to write it, draw it, manipulate it.”

Figure 6 shows four tables. From the left, the first table holds an open book; on the second table sits a cup of something purple, three pink balls and a gray spring. The third table holds two pink pencils, two black brushes and an orange paper. A globe sits on the last table. Each table holds methods of learning and instructional materials; however, no students are present in the drawing. Ms. McCoy indicated on the back of her drawing that under NCLB teachers must instruct in a manner best suited to the individual needs of a student. In this comment, Ms. McCoy views NCLB positively but makes no mention regarding the manner in which students are tested. She indicates that students learn in different ways, but does not mention that they are tested in the same way.

Sarcasm

Two drawings indicated sarcasm towards NCLB. Both of these drawings have very brief descriptors; however, the visual impact of the drawings is amazingly strong. The drawings are almost caricatures such as those used in political cartoons to bring attention to sometimes complicated issues in a very emotional manner. Figures 7 and 8 provide visual commentary about NCLB which questions the intent of NCLB in a humorous manner.

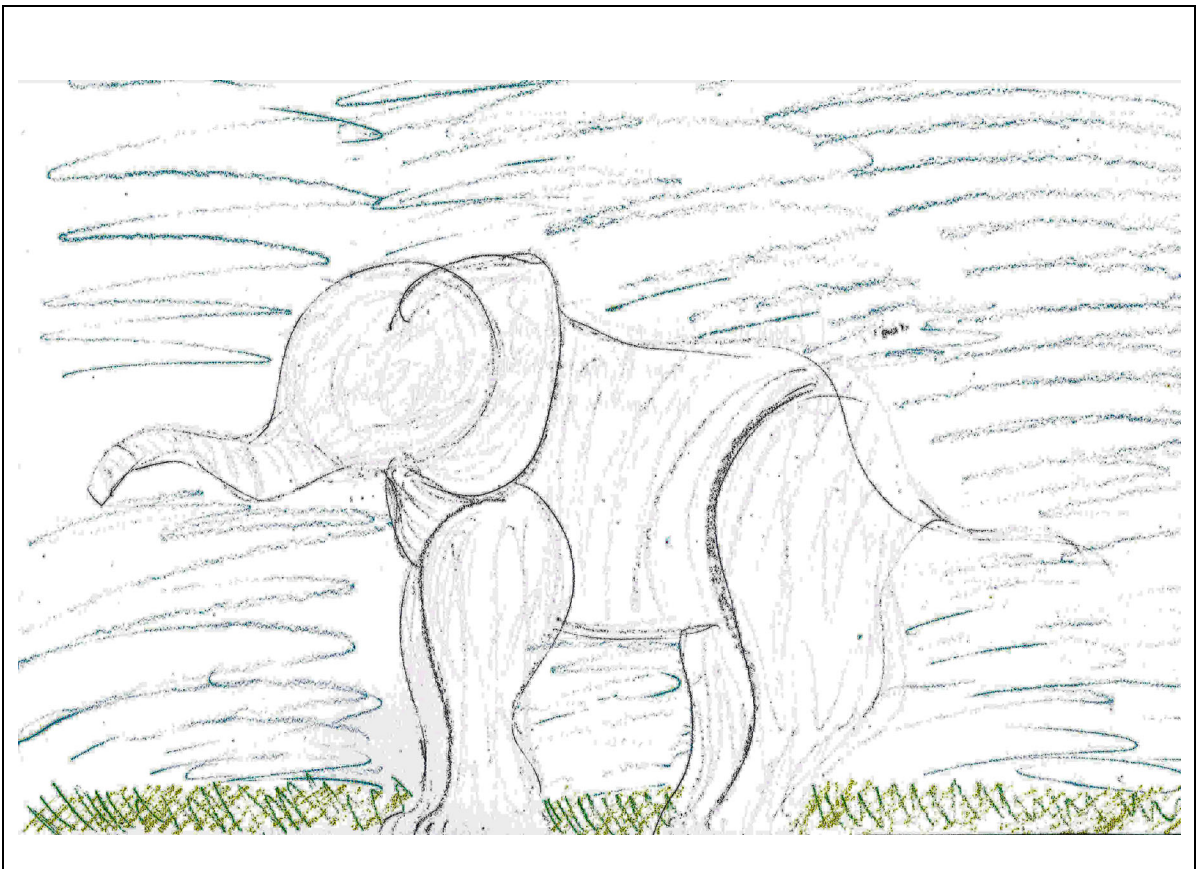


Figure 7. Mr. Williams from Kingston Middle School wrote of her drawing, “NCLB is a mosquito bite on an elephant’s backside. It’s annoying but inconsequential to me.”

In Figure 7, Mr. Williams presents the side view of a large elephant standing on green grass with a backdrop of blue sky behind it. A small bug hovers above the

elephant's posterior. Just as a small insect cannot penetrate the tough hide of an elephant, NCLB has not impacted Mr. Williams. He remains stoic in both his drawing and his comments. The elephant itself may also be in reference to the common caricature used to represent the Republican Party.

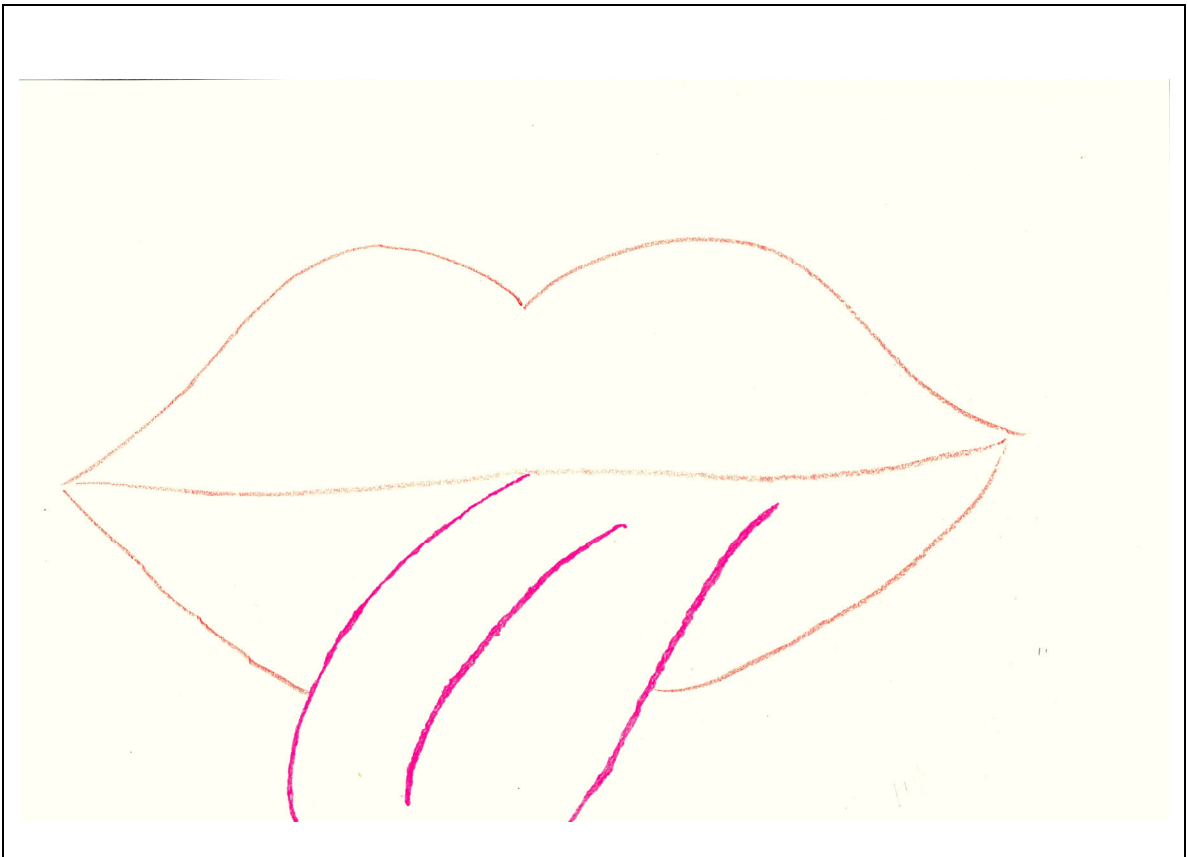


Figure 8. Ms. Coit, from Jackson Middle School, provided this brief comment on the back of her drawing, “Whatever!”

Figure 8 is of a large outline of lips in red with a pink tongue protruding from them indicating the traditional “raspberry.” The mouth with its large tongue defies authority. The reference of “whatever” by Ms. Coit seems to indicate that she will teach no matter the impact of NCLB or testing on her classroom. This attitude is similar to that

of Mr. William's in that NCLB affects their profession, but in the end will have little consequence to their successes or failures as educators.

Funding

Two drawings depicted educational funding and NCLB's negative impact on school funding.



Figure 9. Ms. Jones, the media specialist at Kingston Middle School commented about her picture, “Empty shelves—old books. More & more educational dollars are being spent on standardized testing, leaving less money for libraries. Empty desks—The higher requirements for library assistants (educational requirements) should result in higher pay. It’s hard to find someone qualified and willing to work for minimum wage.”

Figure 9 was completed by the media specialist of Kingston Middle School. This drawing contains two unhappy female stick figures. One, an adult, stands beneath an exit sign; the second, a child, stands in front of a half-filled book shelf. The lines of this drawing are sparse, yet, the sadness expressed on the faces of the two stick figures is

evident. Ms. Jones commented, “Empty shelves—old books,” although the media center at Kingston Middle School seemed quite modern. Her comments indicate that she does feel stress from a decreasing budget to purchase books and a lack of help from a library assistant who is qualified or adequately paid. The media center, a central means of curriculum support in most middle schools, will eventually decline in adequacy as funds are channeled to other areas. It is significant that the adult in the picture stands beneath an exit sign indicating the possibility that Ms. Jones contemplates leaving her career.

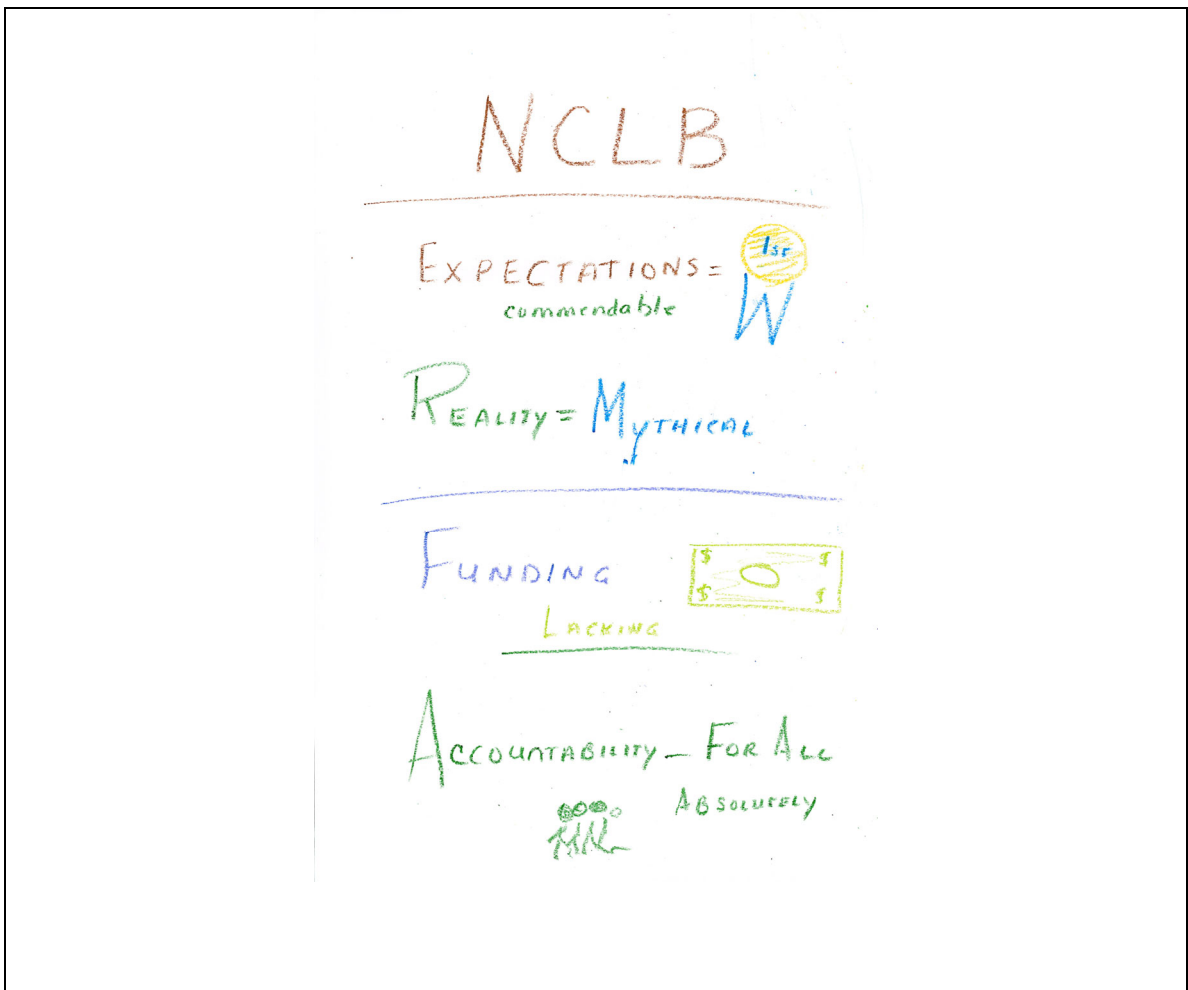


Figure 10. Mr. Chance of Jackson Middle School made no comment of his drawing which consisted of a series of statements regarding NCLB.

Figure 10 is not a drawing, but a commentary poster with statements in different colors. At the top of the page, Mr. Chance has labeled his drawing, “NCLB.” Below this title, he remarks that the expectations of the policy are, “commendable;” however, he states immediately that the “reality” of the expectations being reached are “mythical.” One of only two pictures on the drawing is of a dollar bill. Next to this bill is the word, “funding,” and below this is the word, “lacking.” Mr. Chance wrote, “Accountability—For All Absolutely” at the bottom of the page and underneath placed four green stick figures. Mr. Chance has become frustrated with the realities of NCLB which create inordinate pressure on the teachers of Jackson Middle School as they strive to assure that all of their students pass the OCCTs. He agrees that all teachers should be held accountable; however, at the same time, he realizes that some of his students may never pass the OCCTs. This sentiment is similar to many of the teachers’ comments throughout the study.

Eliminating NCLB

Two drawings advocate eliminating NCLB. While both drawings are very stark, they evoke clear messages of ending NCLB and its requirements.

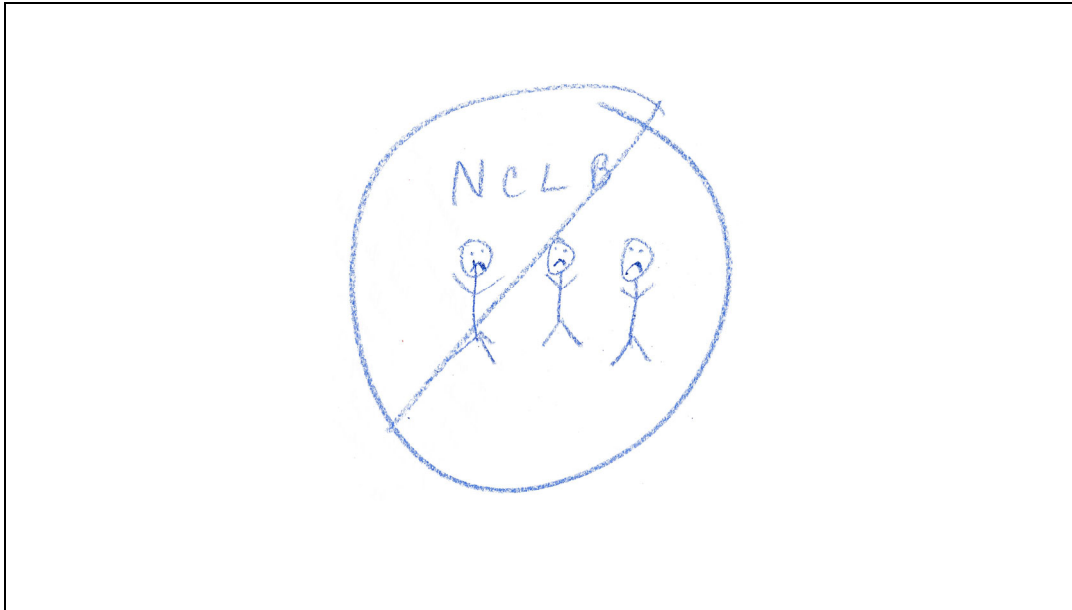


Figure 11. Ms. Garner, at teacher at Jackson Middle School wrote on the back of her drawing, “NCLB has removed the individuality in IEP’s. We are now told to what standard a child must achieve [no] matter the disability. I hate NCLB. Not all children can achieve at the same rate.”

In Figure 11, three stick figures with frowns for mouths stand within a circle with NCLB labeled above their heads. A slash through the circle indicates the elimination of NCLB. The message is reminiscent of picket signs used by striking workers. Ms. Garner, age 51, has taught as a special education teacher for eleven years at Jackson Middle School. The school was labeled “at risk” because of the low scores in the sub-category of special education. Both special education teachers and regular education teachers at Jackson Middle School referenced the pressures placed on special education students to perform at grade level on standardized testing.

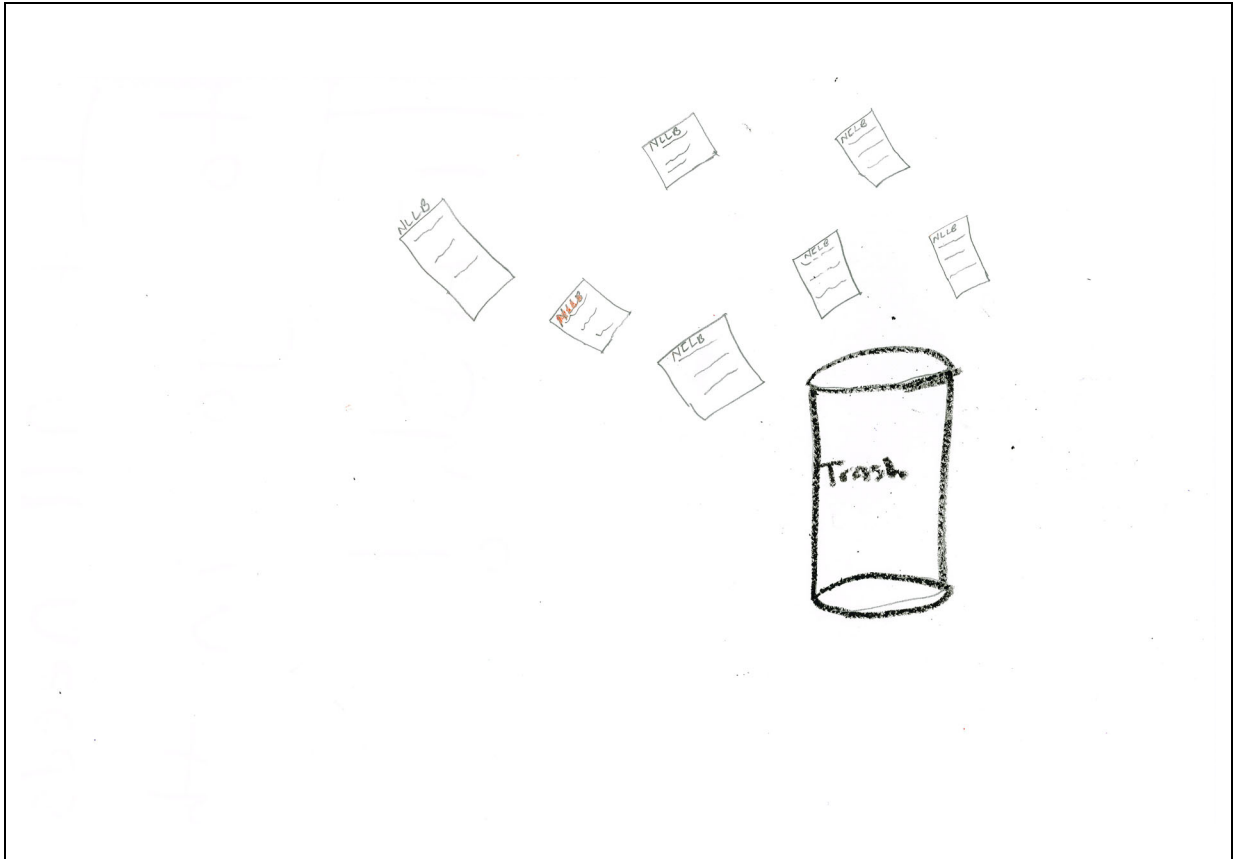


Figure 12. Mr. Palmer from Jackson Middle School commented on the back of his drawing, “It all needs to go in the Trash!”

Figure 12 displays pieces of paper entitled “NCLB” floating in the air above and towards a trashcan. The message of this drawing clearly advocates removing NCLB from school systems. This sentiment is apparent even without Mr. Palmer’s written comment. Mr. Palmer has taught Adaptive Physical Education at Jackson Middle School for ten years. Although Mr. Palmer does not work in a classroom in which standards are measured by the OCCTs, at some level the stress felt by other Jackson Middle School teachers who do have their curriculum measured in standardized tests must be manifesting itself in his surroundings as well. This stress may be brought to his class by

the students themselves, particularly the special education students mentioned by Ms. Garner in Figure 11.

Obstacles

In this grouping of four drawings, obstacles, barriers and entire courses detail the sentiments of the artists in relation to NCLB. The landscapes in these pictures are typically barren and desolate. The isolation of human figures, when they are present, depicts loneliness and desperation. Two of the drawings portray light at the end of their courses; however, the light is small and disappears in the backdrop of the hardships that must be overcome to reach it. These drawings demonstrate struggle. Each drawing presents a challenge to be faced either alone by students and teachers, or together as a team. The rewards are unclear and uncertain. Indeed, at times, the drawings depict no reward at all.

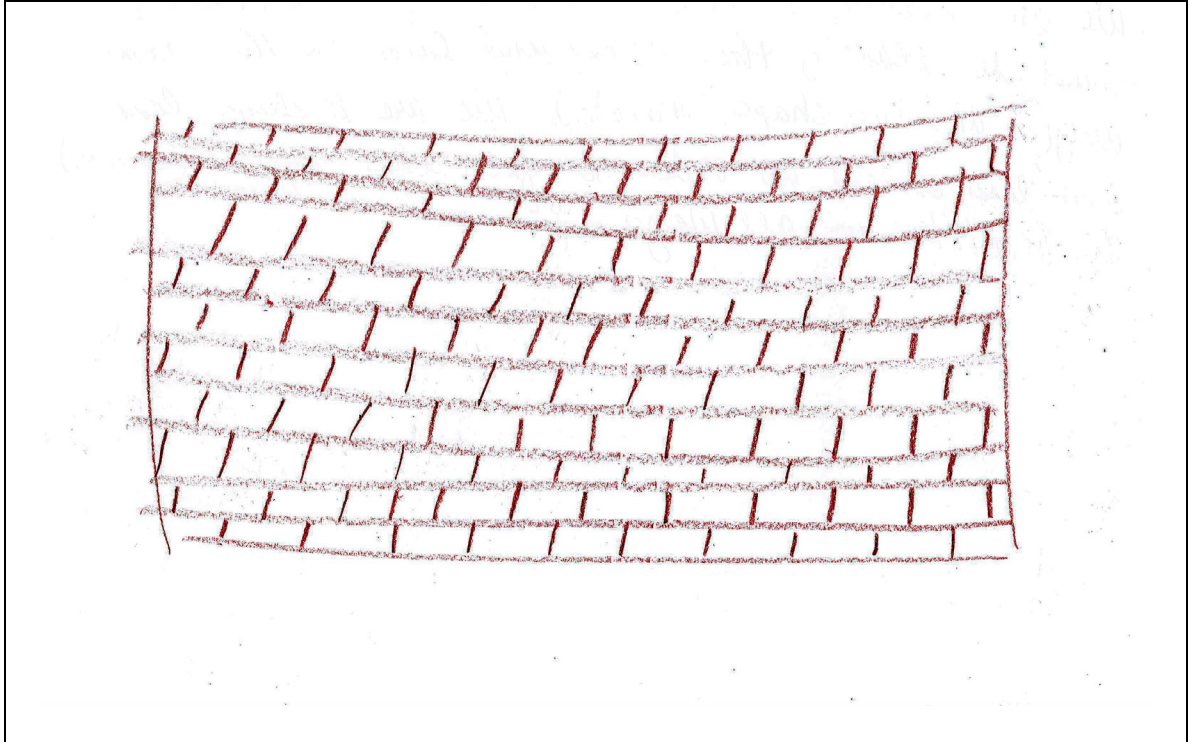


Figure 13. Ms. Franklin from Jackson Middle School wrote on the back of her drawing, “We are building a wall where every brick (child) must be exactly the same and laid in the same way (i.e. direction, shape, form, etc.). We are teaching less and less content in order to fill the squares (bricks) to be alike in all ways.”

Initially, the brick wall in Figure 13 is simplistic. The wall is uncolored except by the red lines defining it. The bricks are not themselves filled with color but are rather simple outlines. The wall creates an obvious barrier; however, it is unclear what is being protected or avoided. Ms. Franklin indicates that the bricks are children and that NCLB directs that each child be taught the same content no matter the child’s ability. Ms. Franklin’s choice of a barrier to represent children as they learn content gives significance to the wall.

An observer sees only one layer of depth to the wall, the required content of NCLB. However, when applied to the characteristics of each individual child, the barrier is substantially increased. This is the obstacle that a teacher encounters when teaching

students in his or her classroom—the individuality of each student. Education is not defined by content nor students alone, but by the effect that the content has on students with each of their individual characteristics. Ms Franklin comments that if a teacher supplies only the content that all students can understand, education becomes unsubstantial. Few concepts exist that are understood in the same way or at the same level by every student within one school. Unless the individuality of students is considered, educational content becomes as narrow as the curriculum has become with thirty years of accountability policy.

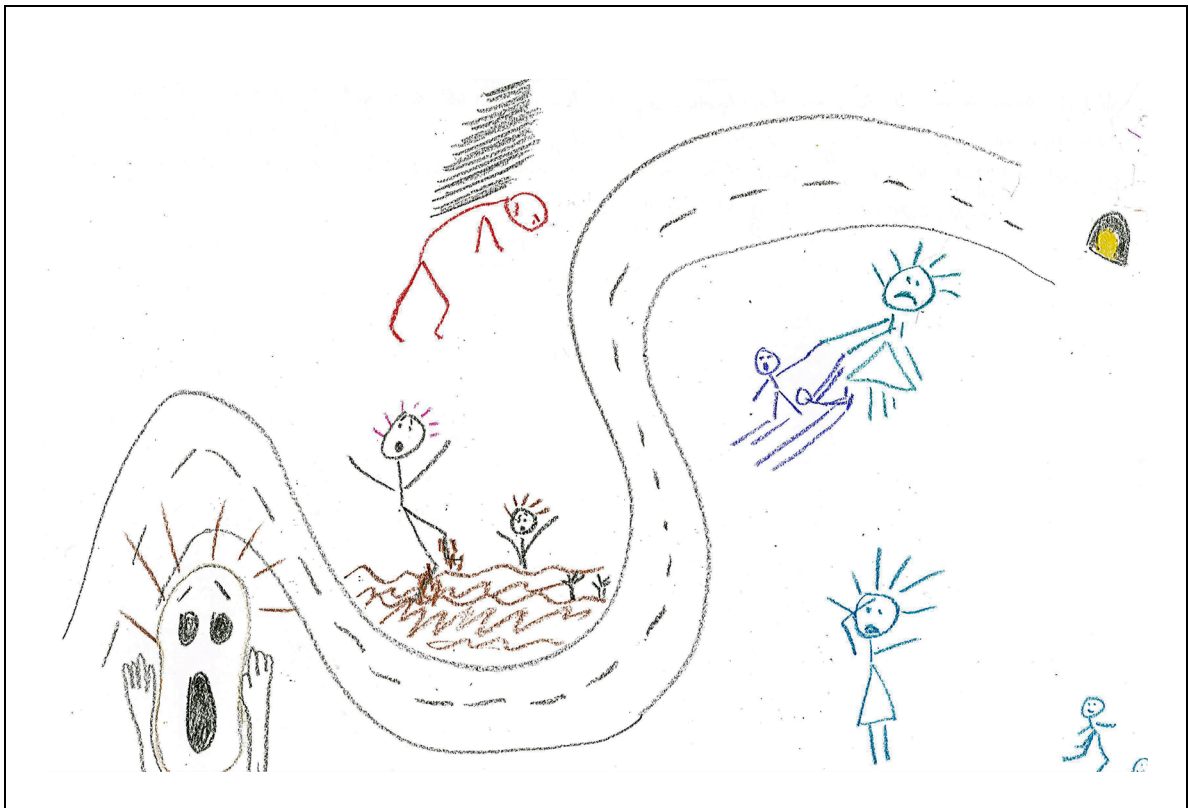


Figure 14. Ms. Rose of Jackson Middle School commented on the back of her drawing, “NCLB seems to me to lump our kids together and say we have to make all successful. Try as hard as I can, some will not cooperate—At first it scared me—then I felt like I was in deep mud or loaded with down paperwork (sic). I feel I’m dragging some kids, kicking and screaming and have completely lost some. But—there is a small light at the end of the tunnel.”

In Figure 14, a winding path bisects the drawing. Past the face in the lower left-hand corner, three figures fight against quicksand. One stands on the surface, but is tilted back as his feet remain trapped. Next to this figure is a second person straining to keep his torso from being buried. The last figure depicted is only two hands straining to remain free. Above this trio is a figure, back bent, legs bowed, head bowed with a look of determination on its face. The figure is struggling forward with a stack of paper on his back. To the right, an adult woman pulls two children towards a well-lit tunnel. At the bottom right of the drawing, the woman wipes her brow as two children run off the corner of the drawing. The entire setting of Figure 14 is one of hardship. Each scene depicts toil. The path cutting through the picture winds through the agony formed of desperation.



Figure 15. A close-up of the face drawn by Ms. Rose (shown in Drawing 12). The wavy lines above the face's head are similar to the wavy lines of the sky and river in Munch's painting (Figure 16).



Figure 16. Edvard Munch, *The Scream* (1893). Edvard Munch commented on his famous painting saying, “One evening I was walking along a path, the city on one side, the fiord below. I felt tired and ill...The sun was setting and the clouds turning blood-red. I sensed a scream passing through Nature; it seemed to me that I heard the scream” (Piper, 2004, p.377).

In Figure 15 a face with startled hair, surprised eyebrows and dark, hollow mouth and eyes grabs both sides of his face reminiscent of *The Scream* (Munch, 1893). Both the teacher’s drawing and Munch’s masterpiece, as seen in Figure 16, present a face with an open, gaping mouth that appears to depict complete desperation. Both faces have hands presented next to the cheeks portraying defeat or signifying despair. In each figure, the face has large oval, open eyes that either gaze at nothing as in Munch’s painting or seem incapable of seeing as in the teacher’s drawing. There is no past, present or future

experience that captivates the figure. The past, no matter what positive experiences the individual may have encountered, is now shadowed by a present and future that are equally barren and desolate. For Ms. Rose, her career has become filled with anguish as she struggles to find a path through NCLB in an almost impossible attempt to reach each child's needs. Munch, whose life was filled with illness, poverty, addiction and madness, faced incredible anguish and hopelessness. His painting reaches into the raw depths of emotional strife (Piper, 2004). For both Ms. Rose and Munch, despair is complete.

Tears

Four teachers presented tears within their drawings. In each of these drawings, a teacher cries. These teachers reflect upon NCLB with a bitter emotional response.

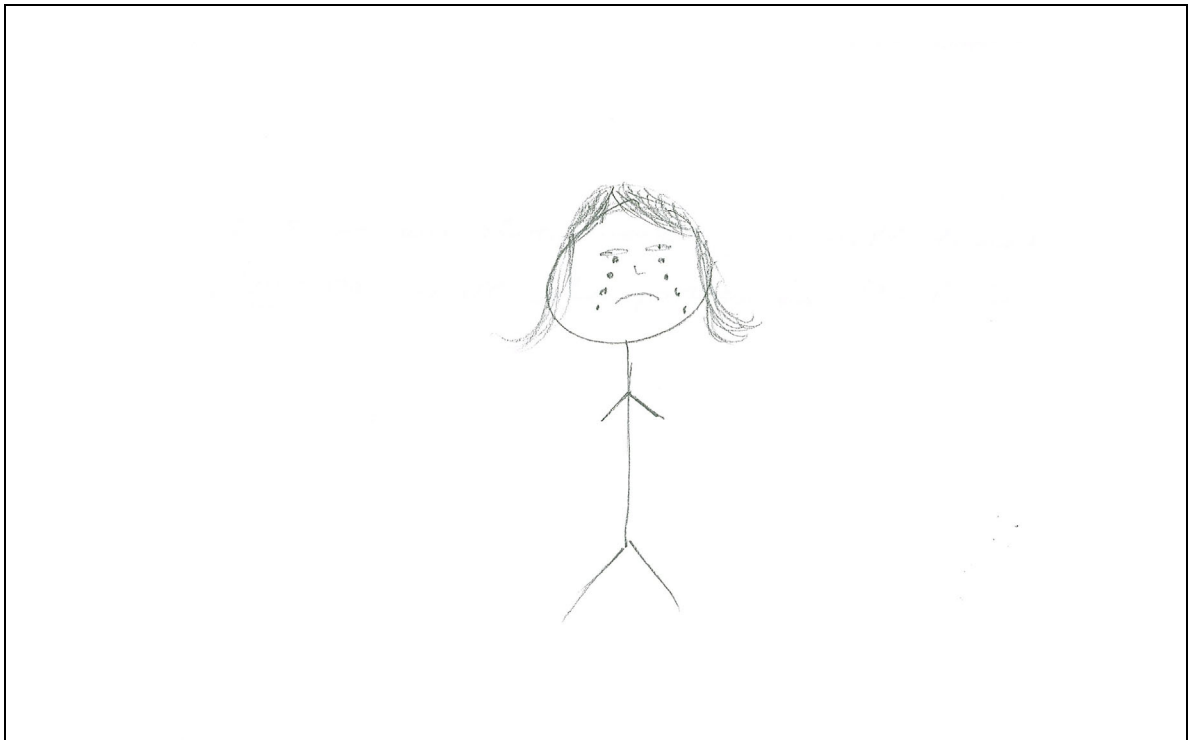


Figure 17. Ms. Miller, at teacher at Kingston Middle School wrote on the back of her drawing, “Too Little funding. Too much testing. Legislatures, who know nothing about teaching, pass legislation without thinking about what we do or how good we teach & how well our students perform, it’s never enough (sic)!”

Figure 17 is of a solitaire stick figure drawn in pencil. The negativity of the face's tears are emphasized by Ms. Miller's choice of pencil rather than crayon. The scene is drab with no warmth. Even the thin lines of the pencil's stroke make the figure seem unsubstantial. The teacher is insignificant, yet filled with sorrow. Although tears stream down the figure's face, there is a certain anger emoted by the set of the teacher's brows. This anger is again expressed in Ms. Miller's commentary regarding legislatures who approved NCLB when she states that they, "know nothing about teaching." Her frustration towards legislators who she feels are inferior in their knowledge of her career is clear.

Equally as striking is the lack of color within the drawing. Ms. Miller chose to create her figure with a pencil using only gray lead to outline the crying figure. There are no elements of pleasure and no color is allowed within this reality created by this teacher. Lines create the simple form; gray pencil sets the tone of bleakness.

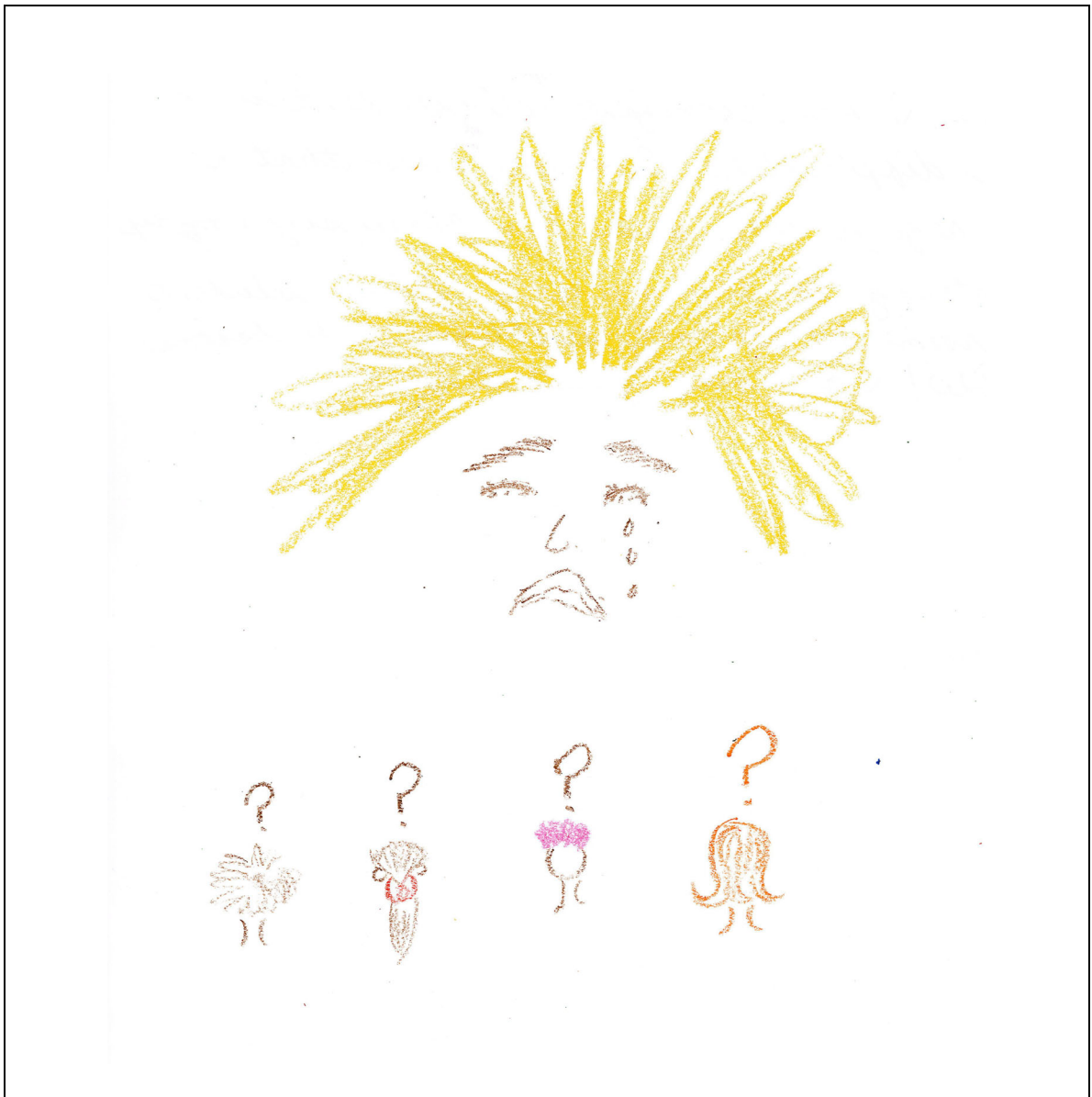


Figure 18. Ms. Peppa from Kingston Middle School stated on the back of her drawing, “As a teacher who taught spec ed (sic) for 24 years, I am cognizant of students with learning difficulties. However, now that I am in regular class and have class sizes up to 27, catering to the needs of those students in my room w/learning (sic) problems has become impossible! It’s very frustrating.”

Figure 18 contains a very large head with blonde hair in the center of the paper. Underneath this head are the backs of four very small heads with question marks above them. The central figure, presumably the teacher, is crying with tears coming from one eye. Again, however, as in Figure 14, there are sentiments of anger present. The large head in Figure 18 has hair that is drawn in a heavy-handed scribble. Each mark has been forced upon the page leaving heavy lines of crayon. The brows of this head are knitted in a manner that shows longing. It seems that the blonde head is staring to the right of the page pleading with an unknown person to show her empathy and understanding. Her mouth is turned down in a frown of sorrow as if her pleading is for naught.

The four small heads in front of her represent her students. The viewer sees no faces, yet the students are puzzled as shown by the question marks above their heads. Whether their questions arise from their teacher's emotional state or their lack of understanding over an assignment is unclear. From the comments written by Ms. Peppa on the back of her drawing, an assumption is made that these students are her special education students that she was once able to help, but now she feels overwhelmed by her large class sizes and the individual needs of her students.



Figure 19. Ms. Capron from Kingston Middle School wrote, “NCLB looms over my head. I feel like I am constantly questioning if I am good enough. I worry about lots of things, but it is always there at the back of my head like an insidious bug. Maybe insidious is too strong, but it’s always there.”

A lone figure stands in the center of Figure 19. She has short brown hair and wears a purple dress. The figure’s hands are reminiscent of an insect as they protrude from the sides of the figure’s body while the thin fingers point up to the large “NCLB” label above. The tears on the face of the teacher leap from her head. Ms. Capron described NCLB as, “an insidious” bug in her commentary. Ms Capron did not explain if the bug causes emotional pain or remains a simple annoyance much like the mosquito

portrayed in Figure 7; yet, the presence of tears indicates sadness. Ms. Capron now questions her self-worth asking, “if I am good enough.” This teacher has been placed in a position of self-doubt as she now questions her talents as an educator.

High-Stakes Testing

Six drawings address the standardized testing required of public school students. Four of the teachers who addressed student standardized testing also commented on certification tests and teacher built HOUSSEs required to be considered highly qualified in Oklahoma. These four teachers indicated that high-stakes testing affects not only students, but also teachers as they are required to pass certification tests to teach in certain areas.

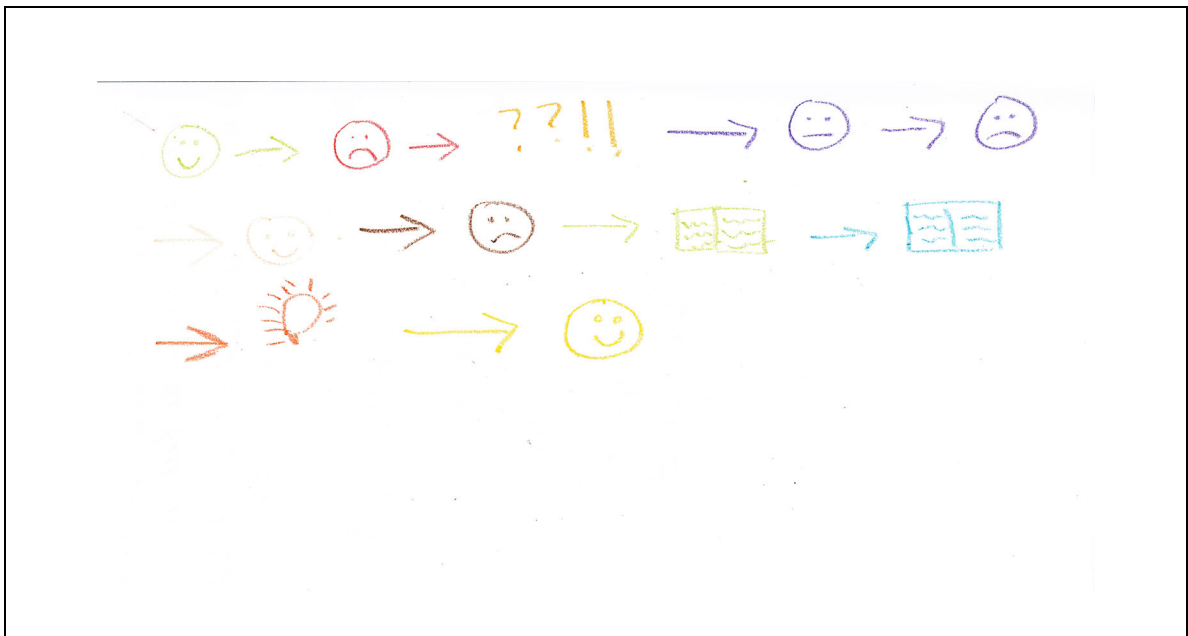


Figure 20. Ms. Hart from Jackson Middle School stated, “Although NCLB came about several years [ago], until ‘mandates’ are handed down, it’s just another word filed in the back of my mind. Then...EOI takes effect and you work hard to make students successful. Then...Highly qualified hits you in the face—I’ve taught, I’ve been successful, but I’m not HQ. Then Your (sic) school goes on improvement ☹️ But, wonderful things happen—you learn through reading, prof. development, etc. & are richer for it.”

Ten arrows in Figure 20 point in a series of symbols and faces as a progression from the smiling face of a teacher through that teacher's experience with NCLB. The smiling face becomes a frowning face then changes into question marks and exclamation points as the teacher first learns of NCLB. A straight lined mouth indicates indifference and then sadness again as more knowledge is required of her students. The mouth changes once more into a smile and then a frown again just before two pictures of tests. The last two items in the sequence are of a light bulb, a symbol of knowledge, and then the series ends with a smiling face. Ms. Hart indicated in her comments that she feels that through NCLB, "...wonderful things happen...you ...are richer for it."

This drawing represents the journey that Ms. Hart has made in her career with NCLB. Her progression has been one of growth. She indicates that through professional development activities Ms. Hart has become "richer." She also indicates that until NCLB affected her personally, she remained unaware of its requirements. She now sees NCLB as something positive that will enhance her career. These changes would never take place if NCLB had remained a policy that did not affect her personally.



Figure 21. Ms. Oron of Jackson Middle School wrote on the back of her drawing, “As a counselor—it seems there is more stress/or teachers to teach PASS skills—less time to make learning fun—more time for counselors to spend with testing—Less time to spend with students who really (sic) need counseling—for various serious (sic) issues—It seems the students care the least about testing—By the way—testing is more of a snapshot of any given day/or situation rather than a true ongoing assessment.”

Figure 21 shows a large standardized test in the middle of the page. A pencil sits to the left of the test and a person, a school counselor, is to the right. The counselor is surrounded by students. The students are placed around the head of the counselor suggesting that the counselor thinks of the students often. Ms. Oron indicated that her main frustration with NCLB has been the loss of her perceived primary duties as a school counselor. She wrote that she has spent more time “with testing” and “less time” with students in crisis. The standardized test and the students compete for her attention within the drawing. The standardized test remains predominant and now seems to monopolize the life of the counselor. Ms. Oron became a “counselor” not a test coordinator, although

that role is often one assumed by counselors within middle schools. Now, however, she has become a test coordinator who places her other roles as a counselor secondary to testing.



Figure 22. Ms. Bolts, a teacher at Kingston Middle School, stated on the back of her drawing, “Oklahoma required me to build a house (sic) for NCLB. I took a test to be certified in some areas. Checking reviews and tests to prepare for CRTs take a great deal of time. Some children have difficulty succeeding at that level.”

Ms. Bolts placed a house on the left side of the paper in Figure 22 to represent HOUSSE. The house is well-defined with two square windows, a round window, a front door and solid walls. A chimney emerges from the brown peaked roof. Wisps of smoke emitting from the chimney suggest a warm hearth inside. On the right corner of the house is a green tree. Below the house is the state of Oklahoma in red.

To the right of this domestic scene are three pictures. The bottom two pictures show two students taking tests. The student at the very bottom has red check marks on his test. The student above him has a stack of tests with a pencil poised in a writing position on top. This stack has high-lighted stars placed on the page and one red check mark. The blue clock above the tests has three hands pointing at 12, 4 and 8. The bottom two hands are connected by a series of broken lines above the numbers on the clock's face. There is a small, faint arrow written in pencil above the hand resting at 8:00 that points upward. This arrow, when paired with the broken lines, indicates the passage of time. The tests loom over the domestication of the house in a direct juxtaposition of what at first appears to be a peaceful scene. The test looms over Ms. Bolts as she places her HOUSSE in order.

School Timeline

Four teachers drew school timelines, representing the progression of education from a historical perspective. The teachers reflect upon the past and the present while at times suggesting the ramifications to the future for our current actions in education. The timelines are personal in that they reflect upon human experiences in education rather than showing the dates that certain policies were passed. The experiences represented relate to human involvement, sometimes that of individual teachers and sometimes of students and teachers in general.

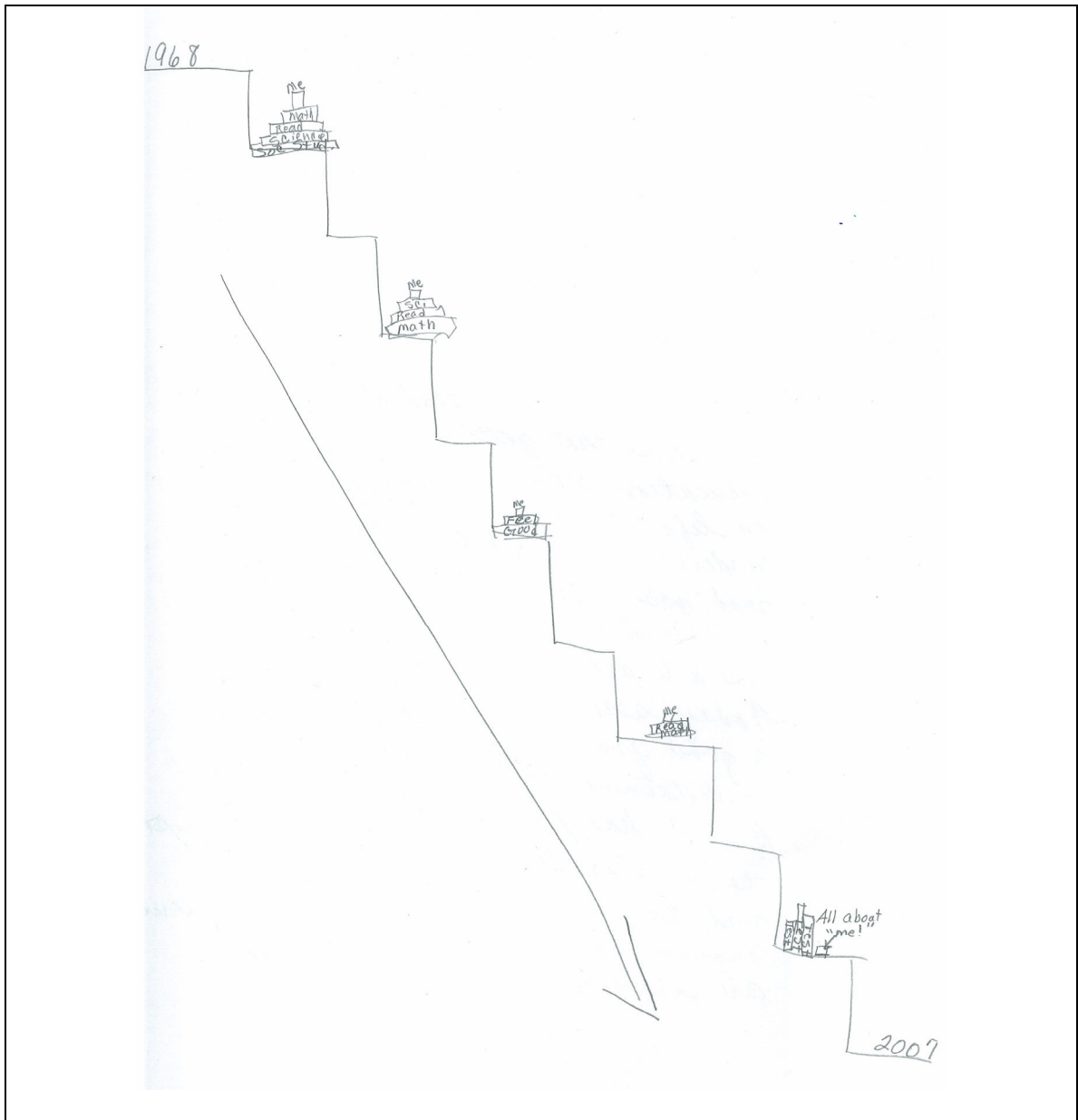


Figure 23. Ms. Clifton reflected upon her career, “Since I started teaching 1968 expectations for student learning has steadily declined (sic). It used to be that students understood that getting a good education would benefit them in life through (sic) the ability to understand the worlds and land a good job. They and their parents understood that they had to work hard to achieve an education. Today students expect to be handed a good grade and they had better be entertained too! No Child Left Behind has placed students into the regular classroom who disrespect and can not (sic) accomplish the requirements—so requirements are lowered—for everyone!”

Figure 23 shows a staircase sketched in pencil. Ms. Clifton presents a simple, grey drawing without any pleasure represented in the colors of the crayons available to her. Instead, her drawing is monotone and matter-of-fact. Eleven steps descend, as indicated by the downward arrow from the top left to the bottom right of the drawing. The staircase is presented with the top levels at the left and the bottom levels at the right of the drawing, just as the eye movement for the reader moves across the page. Ms. Clifton wrote, “1968” on the top step. On the next step is a stack of books labeled, “Soc Stu, Science, Read and math.” “Me” has been written on top of a square on top of the stack of books. There is a horizontal stack of textbooks resting on every other step in the staircase for a series of five stacks total. In the second series of books, “Soc Stu” is missing and “Science” has been abbreviated to “Sci.” In the third stack, the subjects have been reduced to “Math” and “Read” as has been the fourth stack. “Me” remains on each stack of books. The final stack of books placed on the second to last step is organized vertically. In this stack, the words on the spines of the books are unclear. Ms. Clifton wrote, “All about ‘me!’” to the right of this stack. The final step of the staircase is labeled, “2007.”

Ms. Clifton, a teacher of reading, language and social studies, has taught for 39 years. She has been at Jackson Middle School for 20 years. She is unhappy with what she believes to be the lowering of student expectations both within the school district because of NCLB requirements and by parents seeking perfection in their children even if that perfection is a fallacy. She feels pressured to “entertain” and assign students “good” grades even as the students “disrespect and can not (sic) accomplish the requirements” of

her classroom. For Ms. Clifton, the focus on giving children what they need in curriculum has changed to a focus on giving children what they want.

The staircase itself is reminiscent of “Up the Down Staircase,” a movie from 1967 starring Sandy Dennes as Sylvia Barret, a high school teacher in her first year of teaching who struggles to learn the ins and outs of her new profession (The Internet Movie Database, 2003). Ms. Clifton, a teacher nearing retirement, faces a similar dilemma as she encounters a changing educational environment in the school she has worked in for twenty years. The curriculum she teaches has changed for her as drastically as the behavior of her student body has changed. In her world, “...requirements are lowered—for everyone!”

Ms. Clifton’s drawing is an almost mirror image of the movie—a direct opposite progression. In the movie, a teacher, Miss Barret, begins her career disenchanted. At first, she is overwhelmed by student behavior and the curriculum demands. Every aspect of the school, including the proper staircase to use if descending to a lower floor, is foreign. However, in the end, she falls in love with her school and the career of teaching.

In Ms. Clifton’s career, she started as a young teacher in love with her job. She has become wrought with frustration as the years have progressed and students have changed. She has become disenchanted with student behavior and curriculum requirements. NCLB has left her recent memories of her career a disappointment.

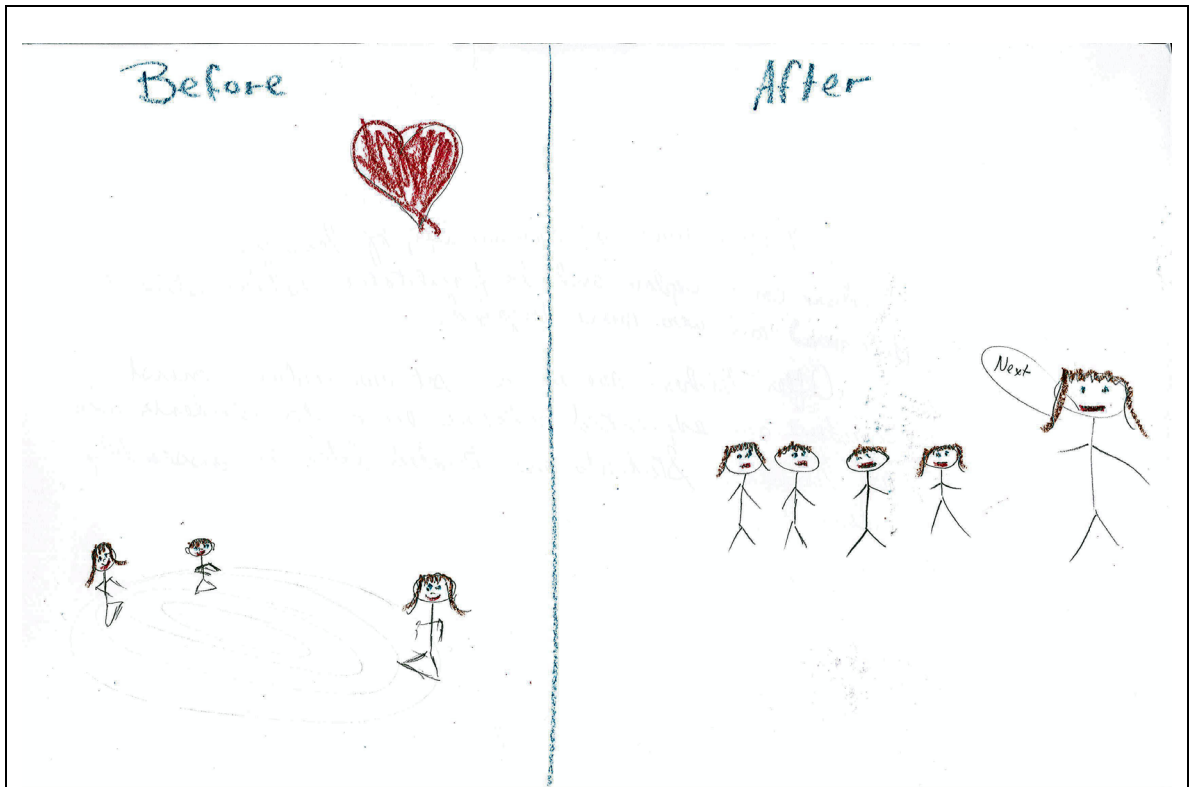


Figure 24. Ms. Barnum from Jackson Middle School remarks upon the changes in methodology for educators since the passage of NCLB, “Before was a community of learning. Teachers could explore and be facilitators, where students discovered and were more engaged. After teachers are in a set curriculum [and] must produce an expected outcome even for students who are limited [in their capabilities] (sic). Students are treated like an assembly line.”

Figure 24 is dissected by a blue line into two halves. On the left half of the paper, three figures, a teacher and two students, sit within a series of circles. The teacher and students are smiling as a lesson is being taught. Above them are a red heart and the word, “Before” written in blue. On the right half of the paper, four students stand in a straight line. Their teacher is to their right saying, “Next.” Above this half of the paper, Ms. Barnum wrote, “After” in blue. The figures on the right side of the page seem indifferent by the set of their mouths drawn in straight red lines. Ms. Barnum stated that under the current educational policies of NCLB, “students are treated like an assembly line.”

The “Before” picture indicates a loving environment where the teacher participates with the students and all are happy. The “After” picture is in direct opposition to a happy setting. The teacher is unable to address individual students and seems pressed for time by stating, “Next” as if she is servicing customers at the Department of Motor Vehicles. Ms. Barnum indicates that NCLB has restricted her abilities as a teacher to personalize education for her students.

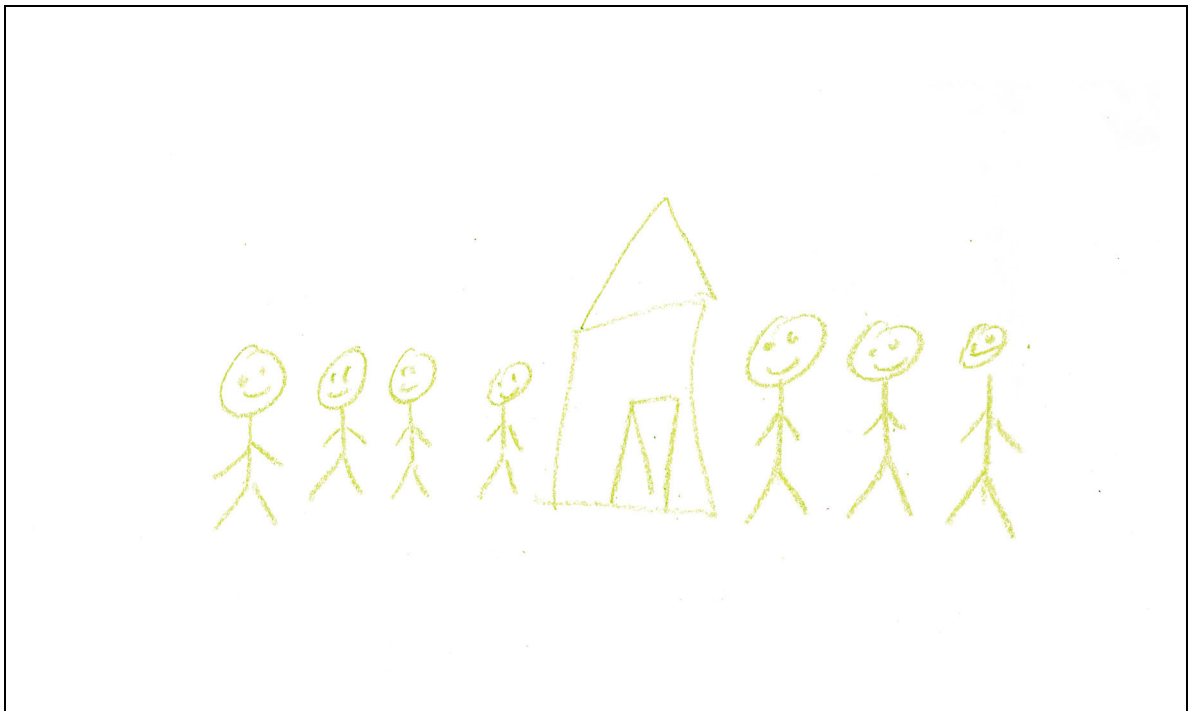


Figure 25. Mr. Frantz from Jackson Middle School commented on his drawing, “NCLB is a start. Its ideas are noble. However, rework is needed to accomplish the goal of no child left behind (sic).” The drawing’s color was darkened using Microsoft “Paint.” The original drawing was created in a light shade of lime green that made it difficult to see on the white paper.

Figure 25 shows four stick figure students entering a schoolhouse, but only three exiting on the other side. The drawing, presented in lime green, is very simple. All seven figures are smiling. The building in the middle contains a high, peaked roof and one door. The door has a diagonal line on its front which seems to restrict entrance. Mr.

Frantz stated that NCLB is “noble” in intent, but does need to be reworked in order to “accomplish the goal of no child left behind (sic).”

During his interview in Phase II, Mr. Frantz stated about his drawing and the schoolhouse within it:

You have four people go in and three people that come out and to me, the intent of No Child Left Behind was to have four people go in and four people come out. Which is good, it’s going to be debated as to how you get there...it will probably be reworked and like I said, ‘it’s going to be debated’...I think it might be a step in the right direction.

When asked if it was really possible to have four people enter the school and three people leave, Mr. Frantz commented:

I’m an economics guy that says that 3% unemployment is the best that you’re going to get, so maybe four people going in and three people coming out is as good as it’s going to get...in America you always like to think, well, the goal is four and we like to keep going to four. But realistically, it’s probably not going to get there.

Mr. Frantz indicated that his drawing was created from an economics point of view, the basis for all current school reform. However, he does state that realistically, not every child will succeed.

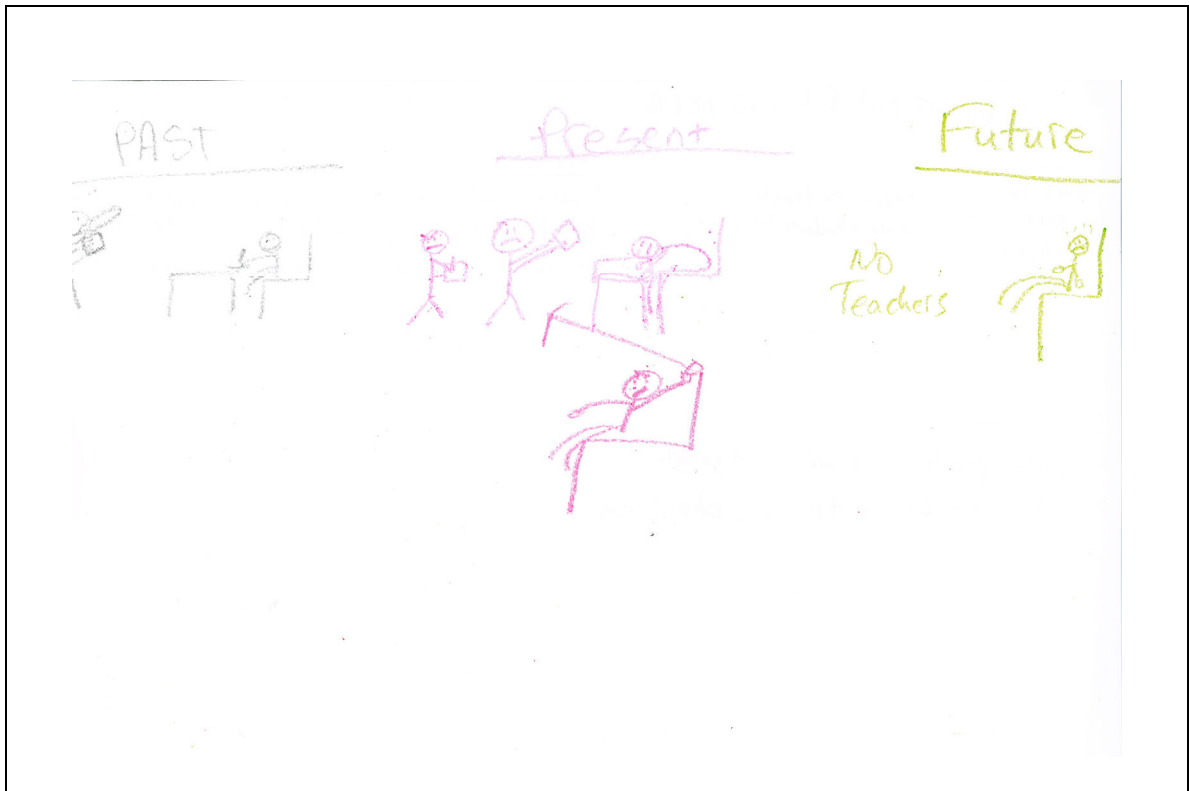


Figure 26. Mr. Lewellen of Jackson Middle School wrote on the back of his drawing, “The past, present and future of NCLB. Past: Teachers have the freedom to teach how they wish, thus the students learn and enjoy. Present: Teachers are scrutinized & evaluated based on teaching children with no respect for authority and no desire to learn. Future: No young people will want to go into teaching. So=Large teacher shortages (sic).”

In Figure 26, Mr. Lewellen, a relatively new teacher with six years experience, two of them at Jackson Middle School, created three scenes. The first, labeled “Past” is drawn in gray. This scene shows a teacher lecturing to a student who is diligently taking notes at his desk. The middle scene, labeled, “Present” is shown in pink. Two figures stand with arms straight outward holding pieces of paper. A third figure in front of these two figures is slumped over a desk and seems to be asleep. A fourth figure sits below the other three. This figure, a student, sits in a desk and is throwing a piece of paper into the air. No predominant teacher figure is noted. In the last scene, labeled, “Future,” a green

student sits with his legs dangling in a very tall desk. The student's mouth is frowning. Mr. Lewellen has placed the words, "No Teachers" in front of the desk.

The drawing suggests that in the past, everyone, teachers and students, found the classroom pleasing. Yet, Mr. Lewellen is a new teacher so this memory of the past in a classroom may only be his memory as a student, not as a teacher. His perceptions of what a classroom should look like compared to his own experiences as a student may have clouded his memories. If he were a model student, he might expect the same behavior of his own students. He suggests that presently, students are out of control and teachers are losing their identity as authority figures in classrooms. In the future, he indicates that there will not be enough teachers and eventually every student will find the classroom setting overwhelming and education unattainable. Mr. Lewellen later stated during his interview in Phase II about his drawing:

The past in the black or gray, it shows a teacher teaching. They've got a smile on their face because they are enjoying it. They're teaching how they want to. The kid's writing stuff down. They enjoy it, they're listening. It might be presented in a way that they enjoy and they understand. So there is a positive atmosphere.

However, when commenting on the "present" scene, he describes an Orwellian scene where NCLB takes on a "big brother" persona:

You've got a person that's evaluating the teachers behind them with this real mean look on their face. You've got one kid asleep 'cause they could care less. You've got one kid throwing paper wads at the teacher because they have no clue and they don't care what is going on. They know the teachers are getting evaluated and you know how 7th graders think, 'Well, if the teacher gets in

trouble, it doesn't impact us any.' Whereas they don't realize that some of the teachers they like may be the ones getting in trouble.

The ramifications of the present that Mr. Lewellen describes manifest themselves in his vision of the future:

The student with the real puzzled look on their face, sitting there, 'What's going on?' Teacher shortage...that's why you're going to have less young people going into the teaching profession, and many of the people who do come into the teaching profession are going to leave it.

Mr. Lewellen's comments about teachers leaving education were similar to the comments of many other teachers during their interviews. Even though he is relatively new to teaching, he considers leaving the profession as demands upon him increase.

Frustrated Faces

All nine of the teachers who created frustrated faces in their drawings used similar characteristics to represent their reactions to NCLB. The heads have either open mouths, jagged teeth, or both. The hair on the heads is standing up or drawn with very heavy crayon strokes indicating anger. The eyes, drawn with vivid color choices, penetrate the viewer, sometimes without directly looking forward. In each drawing, the faces are aggravated by NCLB.



Figure 27. Ms. Bumgarner, a teacher at Kingston Middle School, wrote, “Too much testing that doesn’t really tell us what all our students know. Too much pressure on both the children & the teachers—all feel like they are going to fail. Everybody feels crazy and out of control—I want to pull my hair out.”

Figure 27 is of a blonde woman with curly hair and bright blue eyes. The right eye’s pupil is solid while the left eye’s pupil is not colored completely. Her hands are on her head and six black, jagged lines surround her hair. The lines look like lightning bolts; however, she wrote that NCLB makes her want to pull her hair out therefore the lines are actually pieces of hair that she has ripped from her head. Her mouth is wide open allowing the pink tongue to be seen. The entire face is almost crazed in a perpetual scream against the policy of NCLB. The students within her class will soon be affected by her emotion if her frustration becomes anymore overwhelming.



Figure 28. Ms. Wilson from Jackson Middle School stated quite bluntly, “I think NCLB is a big bunch of crap!”

Figure 28 presents a blonde woman with defined, blonde curls. Ms. Wilson has drawn the curls in a heavy-handed, angry manner. The woman’s eyebrows are dark brown with the innermost ends pointing downwards perpetuating a look of hostility. The face’s eyes are drawn with a bright blue crayon that is unnatural in its intensity. The mouth is a jagged line of sharp edges that signifies an almost fearsome scowl without showing teeth. Underneath the picture, Ms. Wilson placed a red exclamation point. Ms.

Wilson's drawing and comment about NCLB radiate fury without defining the exact areas of displeasure against the policy.



Figure 29. Ms. Hanson of Jackson Middle School stated on the back of her drawing, "I'm a 'little' nervous about the test!"

The face in Figure 29 has brown hair standing on end with straight bangs hanging to a point just above a pair of blue-rimmed glasses. Ms. Hanson's drawing has lime green eyes with only a very small, undefined brown brow above them. The face's nose is also brown and off-centered. The mouth is a red circle that appears to scream. The face's intensity is in direct contrast to the words "little nervous" that Ms. Hanson uses to

describe her feelings about standardized testing. The drawing is over-exaggerated to express her frustration and her commentary is sarcastic in its use of the word “little.”

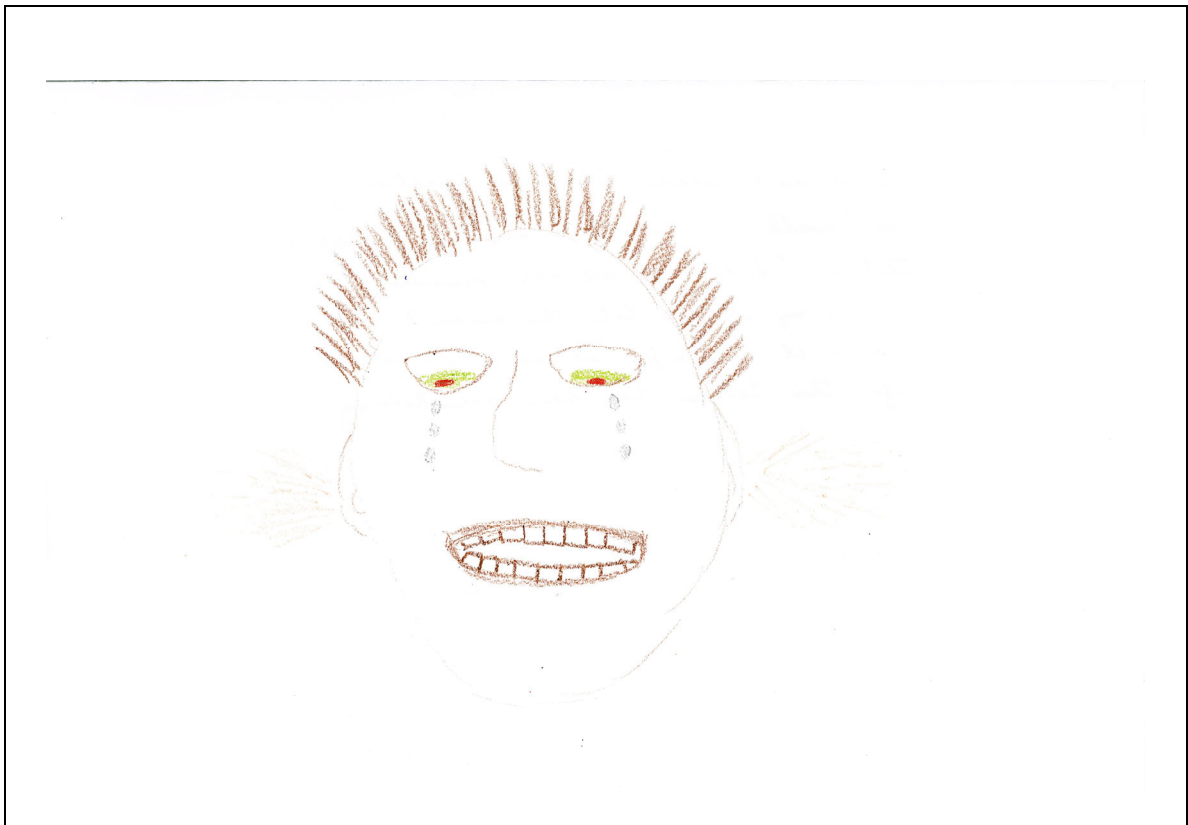


Figure 30. Ms. Griffith, a teacher at Jackson Middle School, described her feelings through another voice, “This is a teacher that is questioning how well he has done preparing for state testing: ‘Did I get all PASS presented?’ ‘Will my students take this serious?’ ‘Will I have a job next year?’ The stress for this teacher has been overwhelming.”

Ms. Griffith’s response to NCLB, shown in Figure 30, is close to demonic in the overall characteristics of the face. The figure has straight short brown hair standing on end over the top portion of the head. Brown lines emit from the face’s ears as if steam is being released from its brain. The eyes, while streaming with tears, are frightening with their yellow irises and red pupils that gaze downward—both unnatural in color and powerful in their intensity. The mouth is open and surrounded by brown, hollow teeth.

Ms. Griffith, who has taught for 13 years at Jackson Middle School, questions, “Will I have a job next year?”

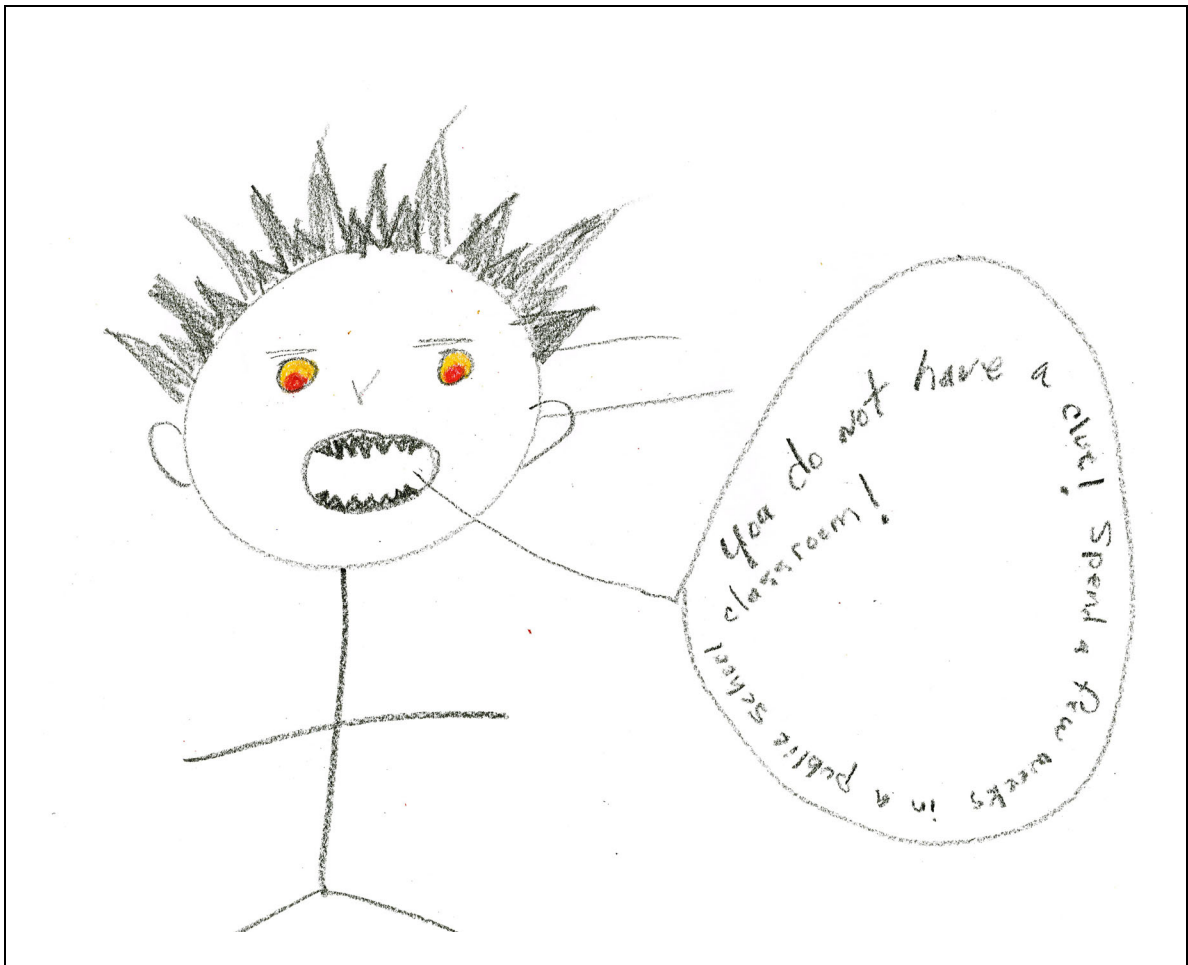


Figure 31. Ms. Burch from Jackson Middle School, made no comments on the back of her drawing. She did write caption inside the dialogue balloon of the drawing, “You do not have a clue! Spend a few weeks in a public school classroom!”

The figure in Figure 31 has eyes that peer from the center of the page with bright red pupils and yellow irises. The rest of the form, drawn with a pencil, frames the eyes and highlights their intensity. The figure is drawn with sharp edges and straight lines with only a few elements of soft shapes. The hair on the head is drawn with a series of filled-in triangles creating sharp angles on top of the face. Straight lines rest above the

eyes to form eyebrows. A “v” shape rests between the eyes to create a nose. The mouth, filled with razor-edged black teeth, is open in a scream emitting the balloon of dialogue expressing the frustration of Ms. Burch.

Teacher-Centered Classrooms

The two teacher-centered classroom drawings depict young, attractive teachers contemplating NCLB. Both drawings represent a teacher as the center of NCLB’s impact, and were created by Kingston Middle School teachers. Mr. Fields, a 24 year old language arts teacher, was completing his second year of teaching at the school. Ms. Harris, a 23 year old language arts teacher, was completing her first year of teaching.



Figure 32. Mr. Fields of Kingston Middle School wrote, “As a teacher just in my second year, I have nothing to compare NCLB to—I have experienced both years. I am constantly thinking about how much time I have left to cover all my lessons so I can teach to that all-important test (the pencil). We must always be reading & learning, even [with this methodology] some students are interested.”

Figure 32 shows a male teacher on the left of the page. He is leaning to the left in a somewhat casual manner. He is wearing blue pants that because of his youthfulness appear to be jeans. He wears brown shoes, a brown belt, white shirt and green-striped tie. His shirt seems short at the sleeves, but may be a white Oxford-type shirt with the sleeves rolled up his forearms. The man's blonde hair is cut in a short, spiky manner.

From the side of the man's head, a thought balloon contains seven pictures that dominate the top portion of the drawing. In the top right-hand portion of the balloon, there is a clock. The clock is a typical school-style clock with prominent numerals set at 9:00 with a white face and black rim. Under the clock is a pencil, and to the left of the pencil are four heads. The head on the left has blonde hair and a straight-lined mouth. To the right of that head, is another head with brown hair and a large smile. The third head in this row has brown, curly hair a mouth tilted up on the right corner almost in a smirk. The last head has a blonde Mohawk and with eyes and mouth that indicate sleep. Above the heads is an open, red covered book.

Mr. Fields' opinion of NCLB is entirely focused upon his classroom while his students, time management and testing dominate those thoughts, the smile on the teacher's face in the drawing seems to show happiness.



Figure 33. Ms. Harris, at teacher at Kingston Middle School, wrote on the back of her drawing, “So many different levels in one room. Am I able to reach everyone?” This comment is significant considering that the teacher she drew has arms so faintly sketched that they are almost invisible.

A woman wearing a black and white striped, fitted dress stands in the center of a classroom in Figure 33. Her bobbed, brown-highlighted hair creates a coiffed image. Two emotion balloons are located above her head. The balloon on the left contains a happy face with an exclamation point located on the right cheek. The bubble on the right contains a frowning face with an exclamation point on its right cheek. A large window frame is on the wall behind the teacher. The frame focuses initial attention back to the teacher.

On the right bottom section of the drawing three students sit at desks in an inverted pyramid formation. The student at top left of the seating arrangement has his head face down and is asleep. The student to his right is sitting up, facing the teacher; however, he has a frown on his face and has an emotion balloon with a question mark above his head. Below these two students, the third student is also facing the teacher. His mouth is wide open and above his head is a conversation balloon with three lines of dialogue scribbled followed by exclamation points.

Three female students, also in an inverted pyramid formation, sit at the bottom left of the page. The two girls at the top of the pyramid sit attentively at their desks. Their arms are raised above their heads and they are engaged in the classroom. The third girl, at the bottom of the pyramid, also is sitting upright; however, there is a large smile on her face and she seems to be looking somewhere in the distance, away from her teacher.

The teacher's expression is passive. Her mouth remains neutral as do her eyes. However, because of the emotion bubbles above her head, she seems confused—one bubble is positive, the other is puzzled, as expressed by the question mark next to the frowning face. Ms. Harris also expresses this confusion when she asks, "Am I able to reach everyone?" The teacher that she has drawn has very faintly sketched arms. Although the comment from the back of her drawing refers to a figurative act of reaching her students in an academic manner, the physical lack of arms in her drawing signifies the impossibility of reaching any of her students adequately.

Political

Four teachers created political drawings. The drawings all have specific content directly attributing a politician’s involvement or response to implementing NCLB. Three of the drawings obviously portray this involvement, while the fourth, Drawing 35, comments on the involvement on the back of the drawing.



Figure 34. Ms. Thompson from Jackson Middle School discussed the art of teaching, “In principle teaching just those certain skills aren’t going to be enough for our children to be successful. Why do we have other[s] deciding what is best for our students.”

Figure 34’s political comment concerns former President Bill Clinton. At the bottom right corner of the drawing, Ms. Thompson wrote in purple crayon, “Thank you Bill Clinton?” She commented on the drawing during her interview in Phase II:

I did say, the only reason I put, “Thank you Bill Clinton” on there is because people do push this on George Bush and no I don’t agree with all of No Child

Left Behind, I'm concerned the direction it might be taking this year, holding teachers accountable, how can you take one set of students and hold me accountable to their past, their present and their future? And that's my job? I have a problem if it's heading in that direction. I think some of those people need to come back to the classroom. Referring to national legislation and stuff like that. I think that there needs to be more local teacher input than the department of education in Washington, D.C.

"Testing" is written in purple crayon diagonally at the top left corner. The word is repeated at the top center and right corner of the drawing. Under the three "testing's" are seven red-lined sheets of paper with red writing. The sheets ark from left to the right. Directly under each sheet is a wavy arrow, also in red, pointing to a blue stick figure.

The blue stick figure has six strands of wavy hair standing on end. To the left of the figure is blue label of "Me" pointing to the figure; however, this label has been crossed out with very thin pencil lines. Under "me", Ms. Thompson wrote a second label in pencil that reads, "My students." The implication is that testing in some manner affects students. Because of the initial label of "Me", an assumption may be made that Ms. Thompson also is affected by testing.

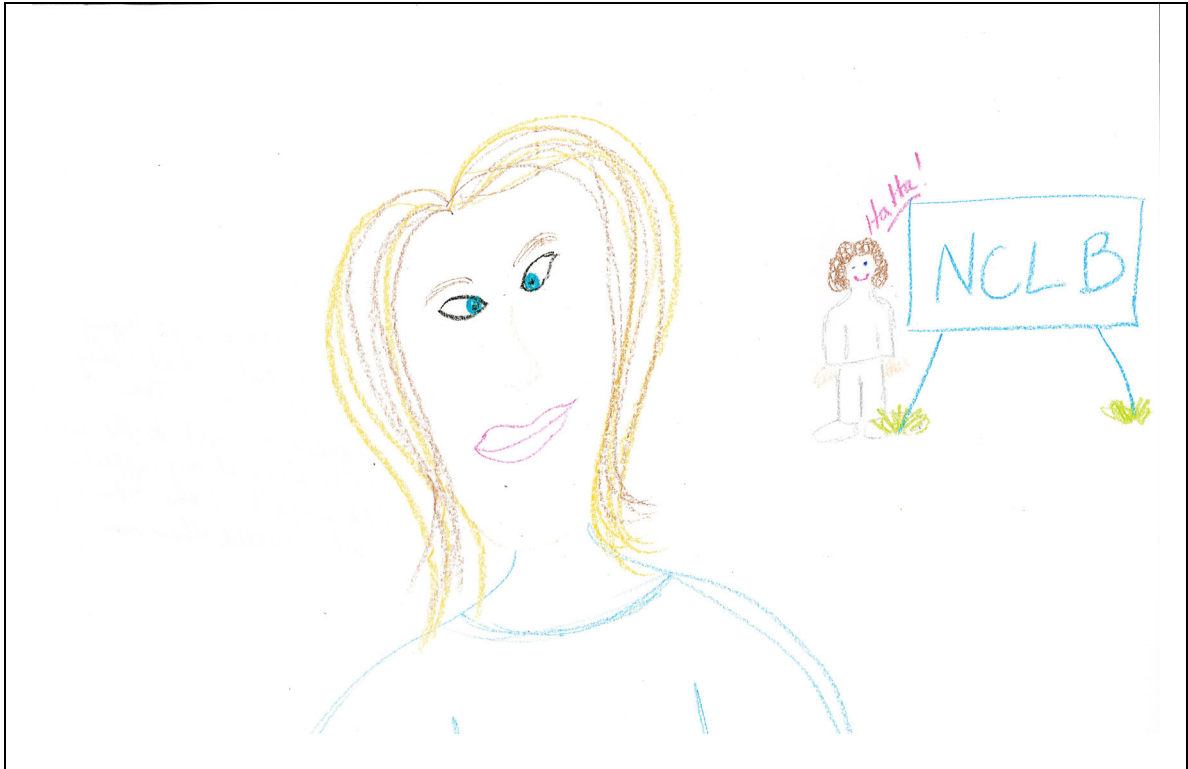


Figure 35. Ms. Craig from Jackson Middle School stated, “I am cross-eyed trying to figure out what ‘they’ want from me. The congressman next to the sign is laughing at my efforts. (No support from those who created this mess!)”

The large head of a female teacher dominates the center of Figure 35. The teacher wears a blue, crew-necked shirt. She has shoulder-length brown, high-lighted hair. Simple red lines form her mouth in a crooked fashion with the left side of her lips much larger than the right side. Her bright-blue eyes are crossed.

A lone figure stands next to a sign to the right of the teacher in the upper corner. Ms. Craig, in her commentary, indicates that this figure is a “congressman.” The congressman wears gray clothes. Her brown hair is shoulder length and curly. At her right foot is a clump of bright green grass. Above this clump of grass, a large, blue sign with two blue legs reads, “NCLB.”

The congressman looks directly ahead and laughs, “HaHa!” in pink letters above her head. Ms. Craig expresses her frustration by stating that she is “cross-eyed” from her unsupported efforts. In addition, she feels that there is “no support” from the legislatures that passed the policies of NCLB.



Figure 36. Ms. Mayson from Kingston Middle School wrote, “Bush pushed for this legislation. We don’t get enough money to teach the way kids need to learn.”

A large representation of the United State’s flag dominates the background of Figure 36. The president stands with arms slightly akimbo in the center of the drawing. His hands seem to cover his groin. A podium with the presidential seal stands to the left of the President. In the bottom top right area of the flag and to the bottom left of the President are two, green dollar signs. Large red, “X’s” have been placed over the dollar signs. Ms. Mayson commented on her drawing during her interview in Phase II:

Well, it’s kind of funny about this picture because when all the teachers were

sitting there drawing, and this is how easily you can be influenced by your peers..I was sitting there drawing my picture of George Bush and everything, because really that's all I knew about it at the time, I knew that it had to do with a focus on testing, but I didn't put that here...but a teacher across from me was like...we were all chatting and laughing and doing our drawing, she said, "Well, you don't get money to do the things you want to do."...that's why I put that on here, with the x's.

Discussing her image of the American flag, Ms Mayson said:

I did that because of my personal feelings about him. I feel like...he's more focused on...America and American this, this and that. And, it's all about...money. It is all about money for him in my opinion and...I guess because I think that he doesn't really care about the little people or the little things or the teachers or the Muslims in this country or the immigrants or the, you know things like that. I just feel like he's all like patriotic, but it's not real patriotism.

Ms. Mayson stated on the back of her drawing, "Bush pushed for this legislation."

In the next sentence, she complains that there is "not enough" funding to address student needs. Her frustration stems from the effect of unfunded mandates on teachers.

Although legislatures passed NCLB, Ms. Mayson places the blame for unfunded mandates with President Bush whom she says forced NCLB to pass.

Unanswered Questions

Five teachers addressed unanswered questions they have regarding NCLB. Three of the teachers, two of them are represented in Figures 37 and 38, featured teachers as the primary focus of their concern. These teachers clearly identify themselves as confused

about the policy intent of NCLB. Two teachers, one at Jackson Middle School, the other at Kingston Middle School, drew nearly identical pictures to express their confusion (Figures 37 and 38). Their drawings are very simplistic questions marks that symbolize their personal questions concerning NCLB.

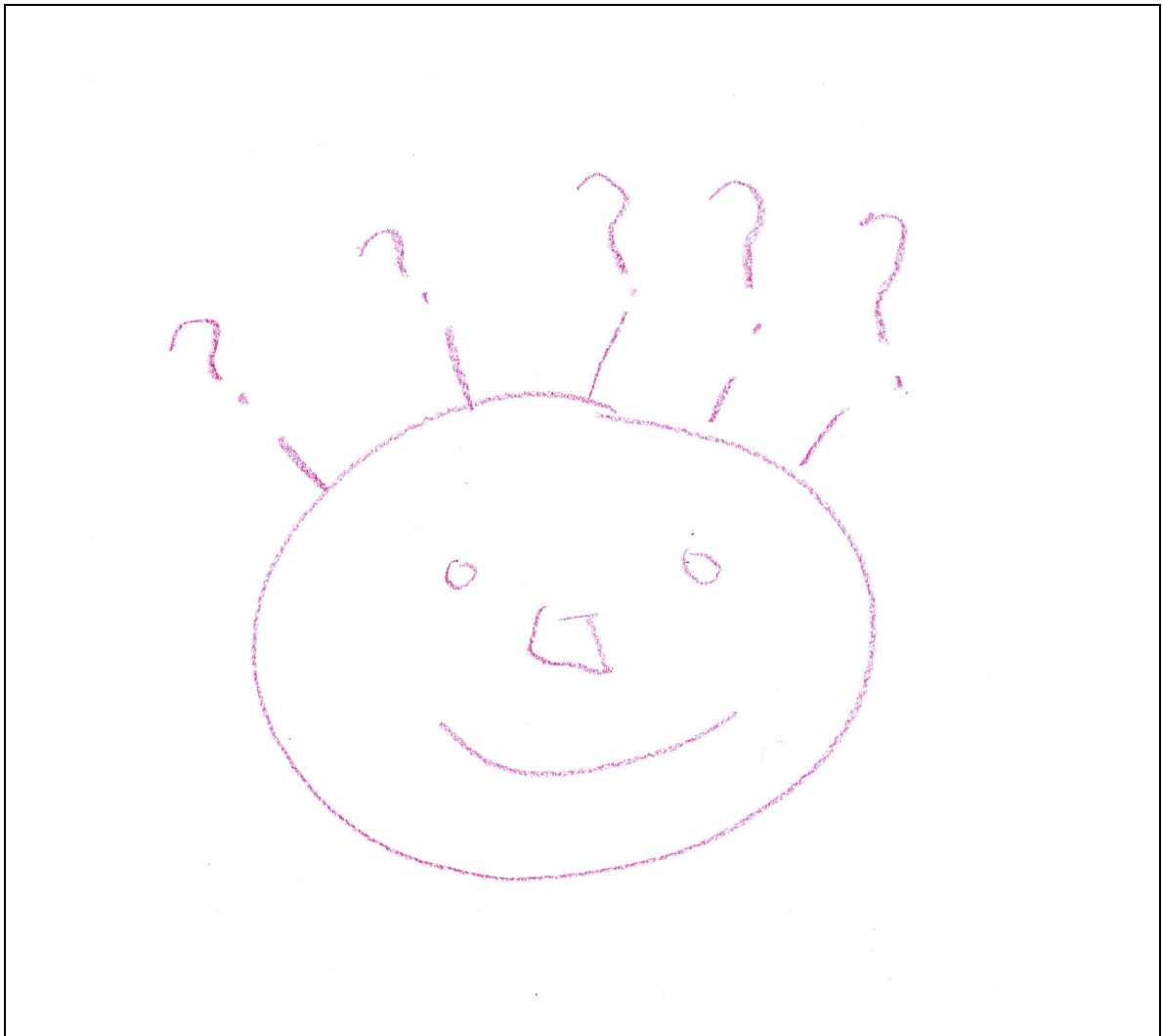


Figure 37. Mr. Farris from Jackson Middle School stated, “There are many things that could be brought about this. Ex. Are we being fair to us or the student—Are we making it to[o] easy for the student in some aspects of school (sic).”

Figure 37 is childlike in its simplicity. A purple circle frames a face made by two smaller circles for eyes, a crooked, hollow square for a nose and a curving line for a

smile. Mr. Farris adds symbolism to the face with five question marks emerging from the top of the head and attached by lines creating hair. His questions regarding NCLB are addressed in his commentary when he asks if the policy is “fair” to both teachers and students and when he asks about making things “easy for the students.”

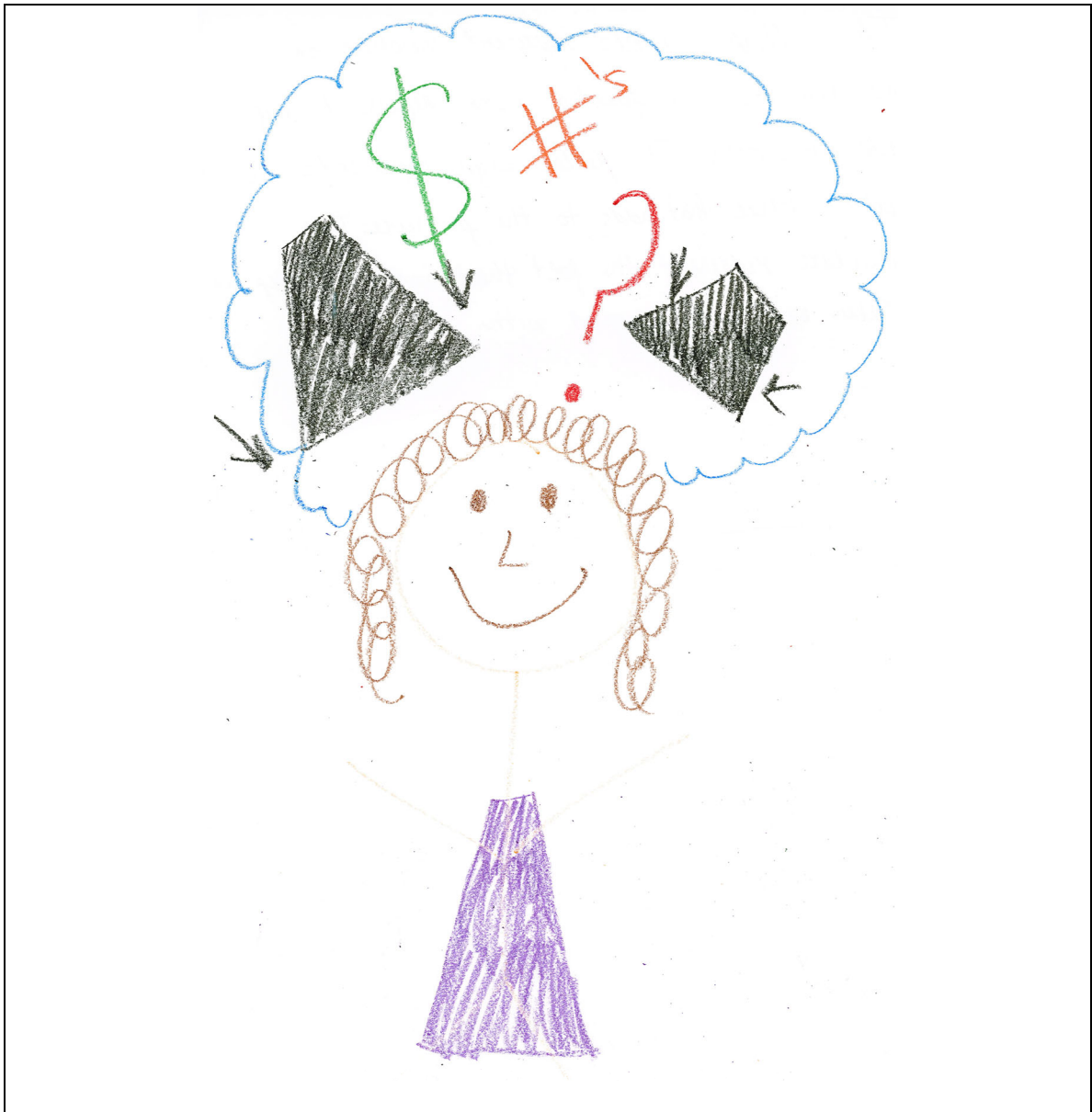


Figure 38. Ms. Libby from Kingston Middle School stated, “The black objects represent weights on my shoulders. The question marks represents (sic) my total confusion. The dollar sign represents the bottom dollar that adds to the pressure. The numbers represent the fact that individuality is taken out and replaced with a number.”

A teacher in a purple dress stands in the center of Figure 38. Short brown hair frames a smiling face. The teacher's eyes are dots and her nose is a half triangle. Above her curly hair is a blue thought bubble, with two black weights. The larger one sits on the bottom left of the bubble and the smaller one is on the bottom right. Ms. Libby placed black downwards arrows on both sides of each weight. A red question mark sits to the left of the smaller weight. A green dollar sign sits above the arrow on the right side of the larger weight. A hash mark with an "s", symbolizing numbers, sits in the top center of the thought bubble.

Ms. Libby states that she feels pressured by NCLB. The "weight" of the policy bears down upon her as she struggles with "total confusion" and the "bottom dollar" of school funding that is affected by NCLB. She used the symbol of a number to represent the replacement of her students by the "numbers" they create as they test and are represented in categories and subcategories rather than by their "individuality."

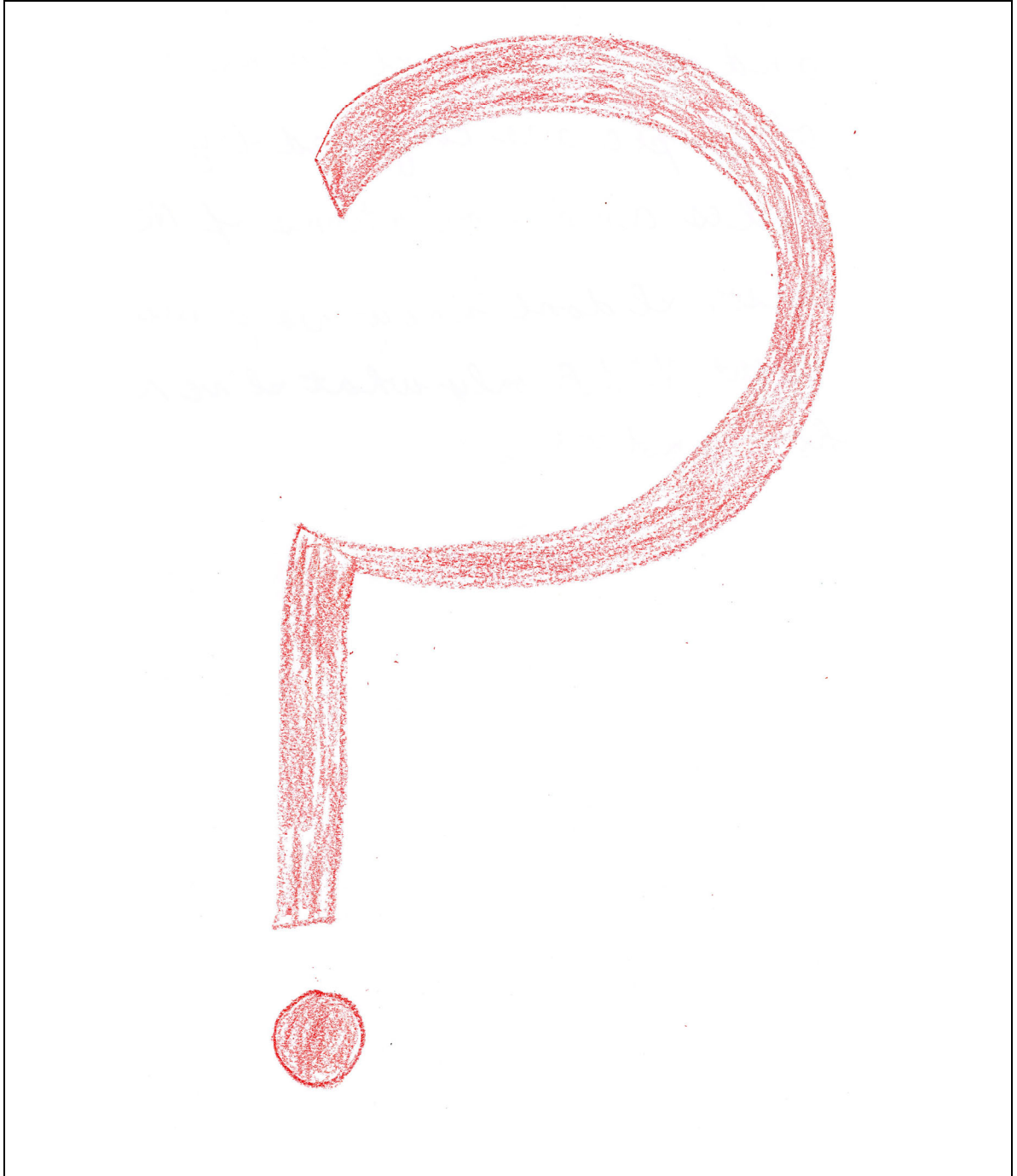


Figure 39. Ms. Lawless, a teacher at Kingston Middle School, expressed her puzzlement stating, “My drawing represents confusion and ignorance. I think a lot of people are confused by the rules and regulations of NCLB. Also, I don’t know very much about NCLB, only what I’ve read here and there.”



Figure 40. Ms. Marson from Jackson Middle School expressed similar frustration to Ms. Lawless in Figure 39. Ms. Marson wrote, “One big question mark Huh (sic)?”

Figures 39 and 40 present two question marks drawn by teachers from two different schools. Both questions marks are large and dominate the entire page of their drawings. Both are vertically positioned on the paper to create a tall symbol. Drawing 35 is colored in a solid red. Drawing 36 is a question mark with multi-colored polka dots of brown, blue, orange, purple, violet, yellow and green on the hooked portion of the mark. The circle at the bottom of the question mark is striped with the same colors used in the hook.

Ms. Lawless's reflection upon NCLB expresses her confusion over the implantation of the law. She admits "confusion and ignorance" while at the same time expressing her thoughts that "a lot of people are confused" by the intent of NCLB. Ms. Marson's reflection is more succinct in her question, "One big question mark Huh (sic)?" Both drawings are almost identical in shape and size. However, Figure 40 is more detailed than Figure 39. This detail is in direct contradiction to the detail of the comments. Ms. Marson's creation is one of contemplation as she decorated her question mark whereas she was unsure about placing her exact thoughts into words, another indication that she is confused. Ms. Lawless's Drawing 35 acted more as a position from which she could then express her thoughts in words. Drawing 35 acted as a springboard into Ms. Lawless's emotions.

Teacher Timelines

Four drawings explore various timelines for a teacher including career changes and personal growth. For the most part, the timeline drawings have negative elements in

their focus. These elements are highlighted somewhat in the drawings themselves but more often manifest in the comments made by the teachers on the backs of the drawings.

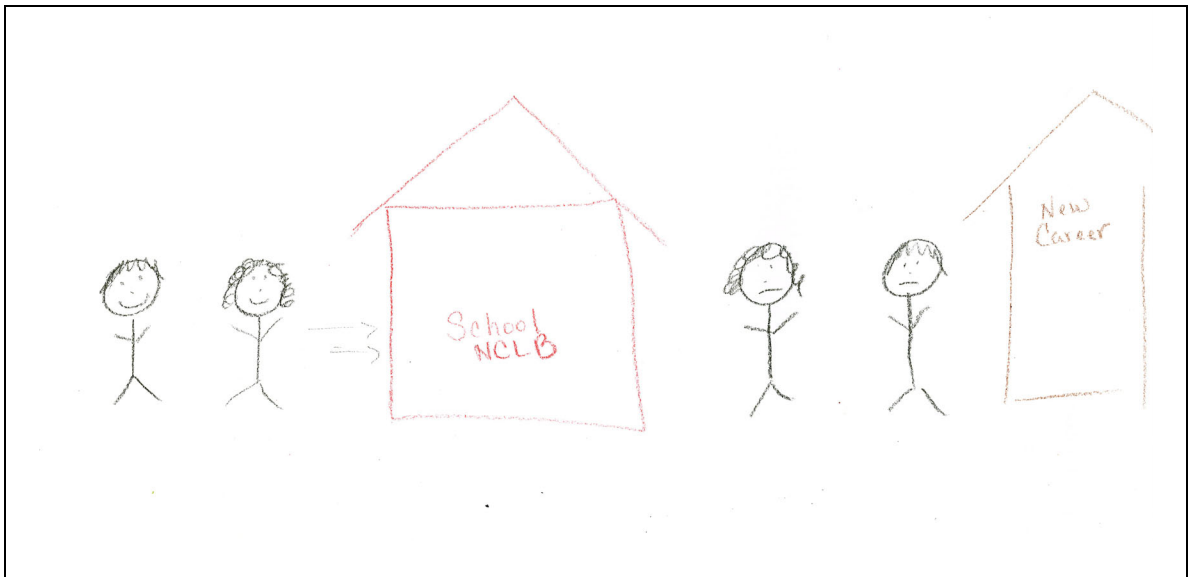


Figure 41. Ms. Rogers, a teacher at Jackson Middle School, wrote on the back of her drawing, “The more unrealistic expectations put on teachers now & in the future of NCLB will eventually cause a major teacher shortage. This will cause larger class sizes and more students will be really and truly left behind.”

Figure 41 explores the idea of a career change for a teacher. A building labeled “School” with “NCLB” underneath it is in the center of the paper. The building is formed from an uncolored red square with a pitched roof on top. To the left of the drawing are two smiling stick figures drawn in pencil. To the right of these figures are two arrows oriented horizontally and pointed to the school building. Two more figures stand to the right of the school building. These figures have straight lines for mouths. Another brown building labeled “New Career” is to the right of these figures. The figures seem happy to begin their career in the “School NCLB” building; however, these same figures are apprehensive as they move into the “New Career” building.

Ms. Rogers, a science teacher for four years at Jackson Middle School, commented on the back of her drawing that she predicts a “major teacher shortage” as more and more teachers change careers. These changes were further discussed by Ms. Rogers during her interview in Phase II when she stated:

I would like to start my Masters and I’m trying to think of one that’s not in education so that if I get to that point where, especially from the rumors that you have about the new No Child Left Behind, the renewal...there’s no way.

When asked about the source and content of the rumors, she elaborated:

They’re modifying like how to be highly qualified. Like no longer is it based on how many hours you have in science, I’ve heard, that if might be whether or not your students pass, 75% of your students pass the test. That’s how you’re highly qualified...We’re about to lose a lot of teachers...I think it’s going to get to the point where teachers are going to say, “I don’t have to take it.” And they’re either going to quit, and you’re going to have, like I said on the picture, they’re going to go into different careers and then you’re going to have larger classrooms. And you’re going to have kids who are truly not getting their education because they’re going to be sitting there and you’re going to have a room full of thirty or thirty-five kids, it’s kind of hard to keep up with a kid whose just sitting there quietly and not doing their work and you don’t really know if they’re learning or not because they’re quiet...I think that education of our kids is going to be lowered. An that’s going to hurt our workforce and our economy eventually and it’s just going to go downhill from there once that happens.



Figure 42. Ms. Dixon of Jackson Middle School commented on NCLB stating, “All the politicians care about are the test scores! If they cared at all about the children, No Child Left Behind would not exist. All it is, is a bunch of paperwork that they placed on the teachers and principals that does not benefit the students at all (sic).”

On the left half of Figure 42, a teacher stands under a corner of sunshine. The grass under the teacher’s feet is green and lush. The figure has long brown hair and smile on its face. The word “Pre” in blue crayon is written to the upper left of the teacher’s head. The word “teacher” is written to the right of the grass. The right half of Drawing 38, however, is labeled “Post” in blue crayon to the right of a second teacher’s head. The “Pre” teacher has arms pointed straight out from her sides slightly reaching towards the sky. The legs are in a wide stance on top of the grass.

This scene in “Post” is much different from the first and reminiscent of the “Influences of Nature” drawings (see Figures 2 and 3) in which there is discord in the environment because of NCLB. There is a cloud above her head and brown, dead grass

beneath her feet. To the right of the dead grass is the label “teacher” written in pencil. In this drawing, the teacher has morphed into a disheveled figure with seven strands of hair and four drops of saliva spewing from her mouth as she blows her tongue in mockery. Her mouth has a tongue protruding from it similar to the “raspberry” seen in Figure 8. The “Post” teacher’s arms are slightly askew and pointed upwards as if to say, “I give up!” These arms are somewhat short compared to “Pre” teacher and this teacher’s legs are half-covered by the brown grass.

The teacher in the “Post” picture is larger than the “Pre” teacher. There is a sense of disorder in this size. The “Pre” teacher is compact and neat. Her overall appearance is groomed and even. The “Post” teacher’s body may be larger, but this teacher’s figure does not create a sense of ordered presence as seen in the “Pre” teacher drawing.

Special Education

Two teachers, neither of them special education teachers, created drawings addressing the needs of special education students. These drawings reflect upon the increased responsibilities of all classroom teachers to meet the needs of all students. Rather than placing special needs students in self-contained special education classrooms, all teachers have now become responsible for these students’ needs.

Both teachers indicate that the needs of all special education students must be served by their teachers. However, the teachers do not agree upon the means with which this can be met. The first teacher expresses her displeasure with mainstreaming, while the second teacher acknowledges that the needs of her own special education daughter have not always been served through mainstreaming.

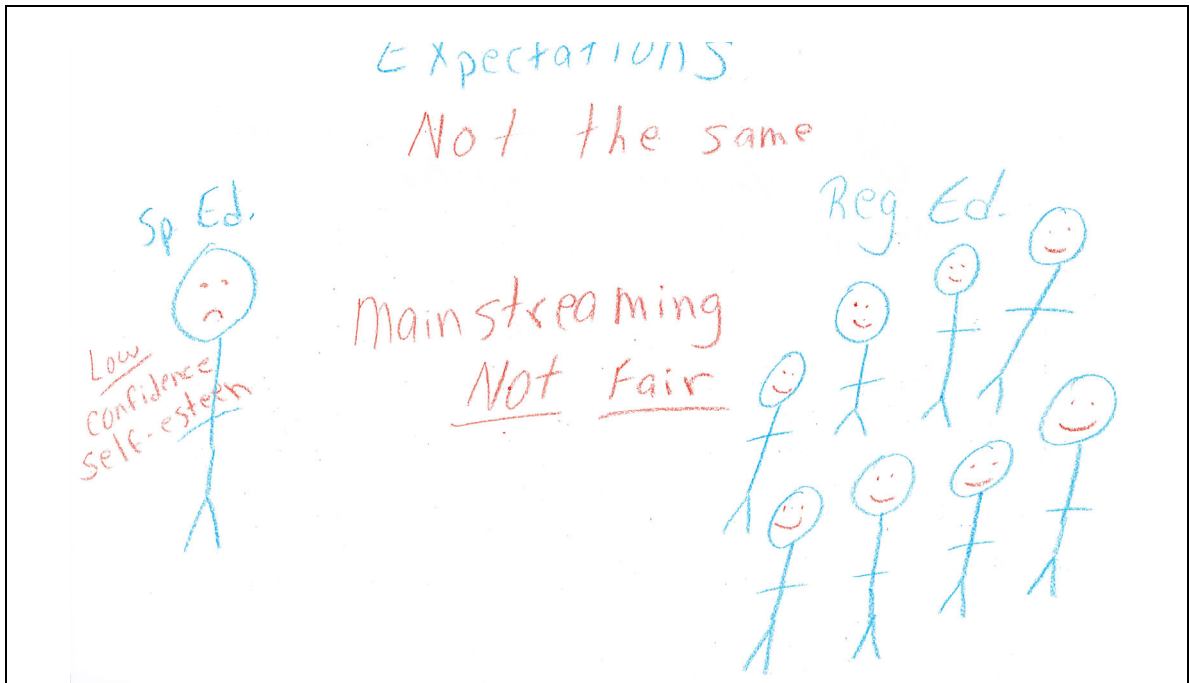


Figure 43. Ms. Hart from Jackson Middle School stated, “Teachers can’t teach equally to reg. & special Ed. (sic) Students shouldn’t be subjected to the same style of learning.”

Figure 43 states at the top center of the paper in blue “Expectations” underneath this word in red, Ms. Hart wrote “Not the same.” In red crayon in the middle of the paper, “Mainstreaming Not Fair” is written with the words “not” and “fair” underlined. On the right center side of the paper is written, “Reg Ed.” Below these words, eight stick figures stand in a double row, four on top, and four on bottom. These stick figure students are drawn with blue bodies and red faces. All of them are smiling.

To the left of the page, a lone stick figure, in the same color scheme as the same students, stands with a frowning mouth. This figure is much larger than the other stick figures, almost double their size. “Sp. Ed.” is written above this student in blue. In red, the word “Low” which is underlined with “Confidence” underneath it is written to the students left. Underneath “Confidence” is written “Self-esteem” also in red.

Ms. Hart is a 46 year old teacher of computer education at Jackson Middle School. She has taught at this school for nine of the twelve years she that has been a teacher. Ms. Hart advocates the separation of special education and regular education students by the manner in which they are educated. She states this in her commentary when she writes, “sp. Ed. Students shouldn’t be subjected to the same style of learning” as the regular education students in her class.



Figure 44. Ms. Green from Kingston Middle School created an idyllic scene in her drawing, commenting on the back in an almost poetic form:

“All together.
Working together
Helping more kids
Individual learning but as a group not
secluded”

Figure 44 reflects unity among students from vastly different backgrounds. Five students face forward in a loosely formed group. Each student, though drastically

different in dress and appearance, wears a smile. To the far right of the group, a tall student dressed in black pants and a black turtleneck stands facing forward. Her arms are straight to her sides. She has short, straight multi-colored hair that includes unnatural shades of pink and purple. A bald headed student is to the left of the black-clad student.

This bald student stands out from the other students not because of her stature, but because of her bald head. Another student in a wheelchair sits on the left of the page. She has blonde, curly hair and blue eyes. She has on a bright orange shirt and yellow shorts. This student draws attention as much as the bald headed student. They are both happy and are included within a group of students that might be considered “normal” within a school. These students were drawn in honor of Ms. Green’s personal experiences as the mother of a disabled student which she discussed in Phase II during her interview:

I was drawing that and I was thinking of my daughter, I started to put hair on it, and I was like, ‘Oh that reminds me of Denise and when she had to have her head shaved and had to come to school bald and all the different things she needed when she was in a wheelchair and bald and everybody just kind of grinned for about a week and then it was back to normal.’ So that’s what I was thinking when I drew that.

Ms. Green’s commentary about her drawing discusses her vision of “All together; Working together; Helping more kids.” However, the reality of her experiences with her own daughter reflect a much harsher image of what some special education students and their families actually face in the classroom:

I personally feel like they care a lot about her and they've watched her go through all this. But sometimes, once they get her in class, the tune changes a little bit. You see how hard she works, but now you have her in class and suddenly they, some of them will take on this thing. I think part of that goes back to we don't get much education on differences in kids in college even.

Ms. Green clarifies the experiences of her daughter in class as she explained:

She has no short term memory. That part of her brain was actually removed. She had a quarter of her brain removed years ago and so she really doesn't have short term memory. It's very slight; it's more of an instant feedback kind of thing. She is supposed to be given materials or told what to study a week in advance so she can get that into the long term memory and study it. Never happens. It's always last minute. Always the day before or two days before and that's the biggest problem. And then just the fact that she has to miss so much.

Paperwork

The paperwork drawings suggest jobs of drudgery without human contact. In each of the three drawings of this category, educators are hidden behind stacks of paperwork. The two teachers and one counselor are consumed by the requirements of NCLB's implementation and record keeping.

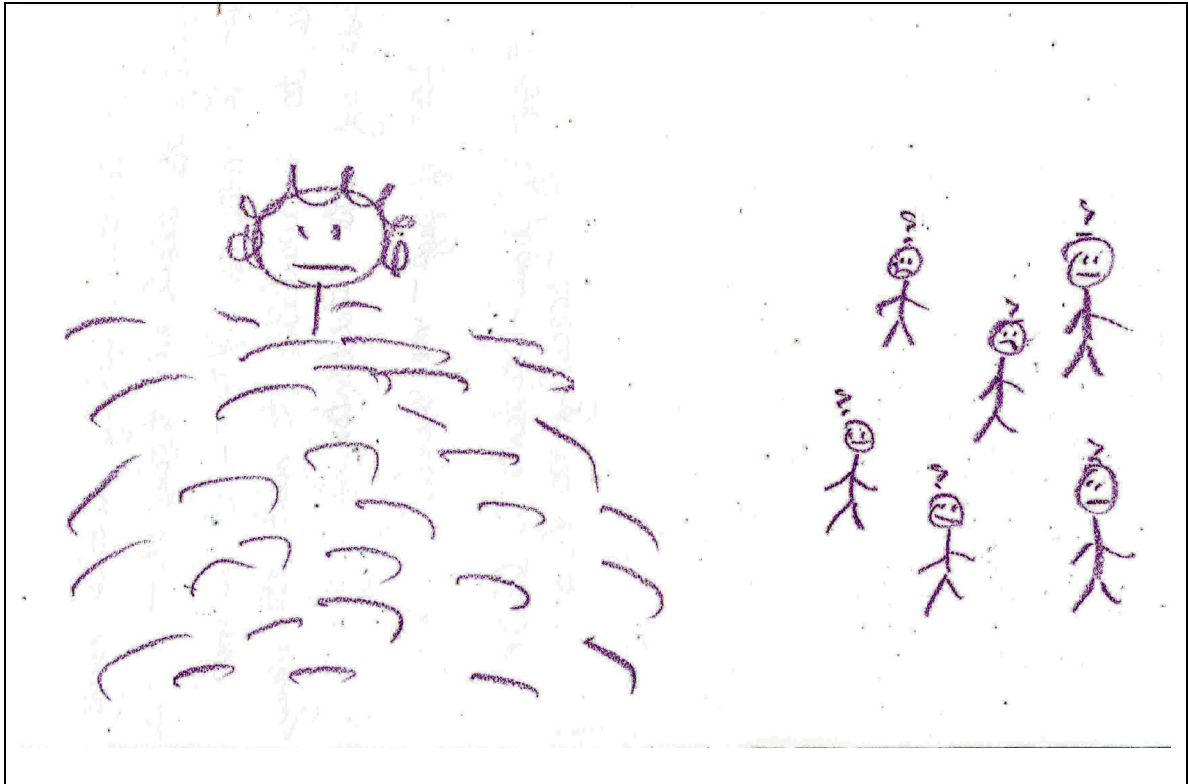


Figure 45. Ms. Reid, a teacher at Jackson Middle School, wrote on the back of her drawing, “As a counselor, spending countless hours preparing the school for testing, etc. & all that is involved w/that (sic)—I am not able to be available to meet the many needs of the students. Left of page—me buried. Right of page—students in limbo receiving no help.”

Figure 45 is of a rather large stick figure shown with curly hair, a straight mouth and with most of its body, except a section of neck, hidden underneath mounds. To the right of this figure, six smaller stick figures stand with unhappy faces mirror the straight lined mouth of the larger person. These small figures all have question marks located above their heads. The entire drawing is one of overwhelming confusion. The relationship between the adult and students is disassociated. The counselor remains removed from the students by her position behind mounds of paperwork while the students are located far away in a corner removed from their counselor.



Figure 46. Ms. Russ from Jackson Middle School, wrote on the back of her drawing, “Our students will graduate with the skills to take tests. The amount that translates into job skills is negligible. By increasing the amount of ‘testing’ throughout the school year, the students have a certain level of ‘burn out’ by April, testing month.”

In Figure 46, a teacher with long dark blonde hair sits with her elbows on the desktop. Her bright blue blouse contrasts against the black bottom of the desk and the black stacks of papers on either side of her. The stack on the left, twice as tall as the teacher, is labeled, “Benchmark Practice Tests.” The smaller stack on the right is labeled, “Tests to be given.” The teacher gazes straight ahead, her arms protectively placed in front of her body. Ms. Russ discusses in her commentary that the true skills learned by

her students will be “to take tests” which is reminiscent of the High-Stakes testing drawings (see Figures 20, 21, and 22).



Figure 47. Ms. Divo of Jackson Middle School commented on the back of her drawing, “Lots of Paperwork—Ever Changing Confusion (sic).”

A teacher with curly black hair in a red chair sits behind a brown desk in Figure 47. Two tall black stacks of papers sit on either side of the top of her desk. Gold rays point outward from their tops. Two more tall stacks of black paper sit on the floor of either side of her desk. The teacher’s mouth is a straight line of frustration. Ms. Divo comments that the amount of paperwork demanded of her leads to “Ever Changing Confusion.”

Conclusions

The drawings allowed teachers to express themselves with immediate emotions when asked about the impact NCLB has made upon their lives. Teachers recorded an almost instantaneous response to the prompt with little time to contemplate their answers. Given the relatively short period that teachers were allowed to complete Phase I of the

study, their drawings reveal their innermost sentiments about a sometimes controversial law that impacts their careers.

Many of the teachers suggested by their drawings that outside forces including school administrators and government officials were making decisions that altered teacher classroom routines. These decisions influence many aspects of a classroom including methodology, time management and even pedagogical issues. Teachers who mentioned outside forces of any type invariably felt resentment towards those entities. This resentment often stemmed from a feeling that the autonomy of a teacher's classroom had been taken away from them. In addition, the loss of freewill by the teacher to make decisions based upon the individual needs of students was also removed as outside forces began controlling classrooms through policies and procedures.

Some teachers indicated that they originally supported the intent of NCLB; however, since its implementation, they believe that NCLB has not and in most cases cannot improve student performance. The individual needs of students are stripped away in an effort to provide broad educational gains across a large number of schools. Individual student performance has not been considered, just as the abilities of individual students are not considered.

A number of teachers indicated in some manner that they consider changing their careers. These teachers, sometimes, were teachers with only a few years of experience who looked to an advanced degree in an area not related to education to create new job opportunities for them. Several of the veteran teachers mentioned the erosion of the pleasure they once associated with their work as a teacher. Many teachers reflected their concerns regarding a future teaching shortage and the ramifications of that shortage as an

increasing number of teachers leave the field. Overwhelmingly, teachers who created the drawings expressed concerns about education overall, not just how NCLB affected their own personal careers.

CHAPTER V

PHASE II: TEACHER INTERVIEWS

The second phase of the research consisted of interviews with the participants who volunteered to complete this phase of the research in order to understand the impact of NCLB on middle school teachers in Oklahoma. Descriptions of each of the participants are offered below followed by highlights of their individual interviews. Finally, an analysis of the data and emergent themes are presented.

Kingston Middle School Participants

Ten Kingston Middle School teachers initially expressed interest in being interviewed. Of those ten, four were selected because of what became insurmountable scheduling problems. The four teachers interviewed represented a wide spectrum of experience both in their overall years of teaching and the number of years they had worked in Kingston Middle School. Below, each of the Kingston Middle participants is introduced individually.

Mr. Follet

Mr. Follet, a science teacher with short gray hair and a trimmed goatee, has a tanned, weathered face earned from his years spent outdoors as the district's tennis coach. His body is a tight, compact frame of well-aged muscle. He has taught science for twenty-seven years at Kingston Middle School, the only school in which he has taught. His manner is that of a competitor seeking to win each challenge he encounters. When discussing his allegiance to Kingston, he emphasizes the pride he has in his school with a

commanding voice and implies that the school is excellent not because "...it has a Blue Ribbon in front. It happens because of what happens in the classroom."

He seemed nervous that he had agreed to be interviewed as his eyes continually shifted from one corner of the room to the other refusing to make eye contact with me. He kept his hands folded in his lap moving his thumbs across one another as his discomfort increased. At first he tried to remain matter-of-fact about his experiences as a teacher, but his stoic façade soon crumbled when his eyes teared up as he discussed his many years spent in the classroom. He seemed surprised by the depth of his emotions and continually apologized for his tears. His hands attempted to bat away the tears each time he reached to his cheeks in an effort to dry his face. He appeared to be a man who seldom cries.

Ms. Monroe

Ms. Monroe is a 24 year-old seventh-grade science teacher with two years of teaching experience at Kingston Middle School. She is an attractive, arresting figure who takes great care with her appearance. She arrived at the interview in her classroom wearing large diamond earring studs, a fitted black t-shirt and tan skirt with light gold embroidery. Her piercing blue eyes are deep violet. With her coiffed black hair, she resembles a young Elizabeth Taylor.

Ms. Monroe exhibited energy and enthusiasm throughout the interview. She most often talked at a very fast pace, continually moving her crossed legs as she spoke. She treated the interview as if she were a salesperson selling merchandise. Every comment regarding her instructional choices was backed with a brief sale's pitch about how students enjoy the product of her curriculum. She also seemed very concerned that I

would like her. Her first question after we introduce ourselves was if I would care for a Coke. Then she quickly escorted me to the teacher's lounge and found a cup with ice for me. My comfort seemed more important to her than the content of the interview.

Her manner is gracious and hospitable. At times, it seemed that we were sitting on the porch of her home watching the scenery of her classroom as she explained her rationale behind her decisions as a teacher. Her exuberance affected me and it was easy to imagine young students feeding off her energy until their minds raced through her lessons in science. She told me that she "loves teaching" with a directness that made me believe that her statement was true. Her parents were teachers and "she always knew this is what she wants to do."

Ms. Green

Ms. Green is a thirty-eight year old science teacher with eight years of teaching experience in elementary schools. This is her first year teaching at Kingston Middle School. Her other years of experience were spent in inner-city schools where she "knew she was appreciated." She feels somewhat hassled by her students and their parents at Kingston where privileged backgrounds are the norm.

Ms. Green was dressed in light, tan slacks with a bright pink blouse that accentuated her peaches and cream complexion. Her sandy, blonde hair was cut short and slightly messy as if she just stepped indoors from a windy day. She was a somewhat overweight woman, but her body made her more approachable. She immediately apologized after she introduced herself for her lack of knowledge concerning NCLB. However, her quick smile and self-effacing manner made her seem genuine rather than ignorant.

She also apologized for her messy room explaining in the same breath that she was trying to prepare for a fieldtrip that had already been canceled and rescheduled twice. She was afraid that her students would be disappointed if they were not able to go on the fieldtrip. The other trips were cancelled for unavoidable problems. First a tornado hit the Kingston area the day before the first trip was to take place. Classes were canceled delaying the fieldtrip until the next week. Ms. Green received notification shortly thereafter that the field trip location was shut down for a hazardous waste clean-up. The trip was canceled a second time.

As Ms. Green explained this, she patted my arm in an almost motherly fashion as if comforting me for some imagined disappointment I felt about the field trips being canceled. This empathy was expressed throughout the interview when she discussed various topics. She was matronly and kind in her explanations; however, when she discussed a topic for which she felt strongly, her demeanor became almost fierce. She reacted as a mother who will comfort a child in one moment, but fight for that child if needed in the next. She expressed strong opinions with great passion extenuated by a raised voice and clipped words.

Dr. Fairweather

Dr. Fairweather is a fifty-one year old teacher at Kingston Middle School. Her curly black shoulder-length hair and coal black eyes create a striking contrast to her pale skin just as her thin, tall frame and perfect posture are aristocratic in its bearing. Yet, when she spoke, she had difficulty completing one thought without jumping to another topic, sometimes with no relation to the first. She also had a tendency to peer down her pinched nose during the interview. She attempted to put the listener at ease with her

words; however, her demeanor seems judgmental at times as though she had created opinions of people and then found the people lacking in the end.

She has taught for a total of seven years; though, this is her first year as a special education teacher at Kingston. Her previous teaching experience was in a high school as a language arts teacher in regular education classes over twenty years ago. She is a licensed psychometrist and school counselor with a Ph.D. in psychometry. She continually referenced her degree noting at the same time that few teachers in the public school system have attained a doctorate.

Until this school year, Dr. Fairweather worked in the private sector as a special education advocate contracted by parents of special needs students. She would assist parents as a liaison between regular education teachers and the students by clarifying homework assignments and IEP meetings. Most of this contract time took place either in the school or at a public meeting place such as a library where she offered individualized instruction for students as needed. She explained this work as not that of a tutor but rather stated that she “was teaching” students “strategies for learning for life” by instructing them “how to learn” through resources that she would bring to the meetings.

The confidence Dr. Fairweather exuded when discussing her degrees and her past work experience created an affect of bravado. At the same time, when she spoke of her current work, she seemed uncertain, almost fearful. Her voice lost its natural projection and became soft. When this happened, she quickly changed the topic to another subject, either her past work or the work of other teachers within the school.

Jackson Middle School Participants

Six teachers from Jackson Middle School participated in the interview phase. All teachers who volunteered were interviewed. Just as at Kingston, the Jackson Middle School participants represented various levels of teaching experience. Each of the Jackson Middle School participants is introduced below.

Ms. Walker

Ms. Walker, a 47 year old vocal music teacher with ten years of teaching experience, has worked at Jackson Middle School for nine years. She wore her dark blonde straight hair in a shoulder-length bob. The day of the interview, she was dressed in school logo polo and khakis.

Ms. Walker's eyebrows knitted in frustration when she discussed her own teaching experiences during the last few years. In those moments, her face aged and her stress was more apparent. She rarely smiled, but did not seem stern because of this. There was sincerity in her manner throughout the interview that made me think of her as focused rather than harsh.

Ms. Walker's eyes teared when she discussed teaching. Her softness crumbled in a matter of minutes and desperation replaced stress. I felt a need to comfort this woman who only a few minutes ago interacted with a special-needs child in the hall in an encounter that left them both smiling. She did not have to tell me that she loves teaching; every word she spoke expressed this passion. Unshed tears often welled within her eyes and her heartbreak for her experiences with NCLB seemed complete.

Mr. Lewellen

Mr. Lewellen is a 27 year old 7th grade Geography teacher who has taught at Jackson Middle School for the past 2 years. He has a total of six years experience as a teacher and coach; during that time he has taught in four different schools. He indicated in a deep, country drawl, that he has changed schools because of his coaching interests. He always wanted to “be a coach” but never mentioned teaching as a career goal.

Mr. Lewellen’s brown hair is trimmed short and with his clean-shaven face he seemed younger than 27. He wore comfortable, casual clothing—khakis and a polo shirt. His legs remained stretched straight in front of him, crossed at the ankles in a cocky manner. His wrists were crossed in his lap, but occasionally he gestured robustly with his hands, waving them above his head or in front of his face. He watched the digital clock inset in the wall across the room from him, but never stopped talking until the interview was concluded.

Mr. Lewellen created a rather charged atmosphere as he expounded upon his feelings regarding NCLB. More often than not his statements were not supported with fact, but relied entirely upon his personal beliefs. He was very interested in his philosophies and shared them freely. It seemed that he longed to argue with someone to prove his intelligence, often seeming disappointed when I did not engage in his invitation of debate.

Ms. Rogers

Ms. Rogers is 31 year old with light brown, shoulder-length hair. Her dark brown eyes give the impression of somberness, but there is also an air of peace about her. She is soft-spoken and gentle in her mannerisms. When she walked across her

classroom, her steps were small and carefully measured. Most of her actions were taken with timidity and trepidation.

Ms. Rogers has been at Jackson Middle School for four of her seven years of teaching. The first three years of her career, she taught in Texas. When she discussed those years, her voice tensed while even her mannerisms indicated stress as she recalled the memories. It is evident that recollections of Texas are not pleasant for her. She does not miss Texas, but instead seemed to have left the area as an escape.

Each time Ms. Rogers discussed standardized testing, she used her hands to denote the levels of frustration she was feeling. She first raised a hand above her head making lateral chopping motions. With every point, her hand lowered and the motions became broader. Her voice moved up octaves and a treble became apparent. Her voice portrayed her feelings more truly than her words could express.

Ms. Thompson

Ms. Thompson is a 47 year old Language Arts teacher who has taught for fourteen years at Jackson Middle School. Her hair was arranged in a haphazard arrangement of brown curls that flopped from side to side when she moved her head. Her clothing was obviously selected for comfort, navy blue pull-on pants and a crew necked pale yellow t-shirt.

Ms. Thompson seemed absent-minded and scattered in both her speech and actions. She rarely completed a thought, but instead jumped from subject to subject. She remained active during the interview, even attempting, at one point to grade student papers, as she answered questions. I asked if we needed to reschedule the interview for a

time more convenient to her schedule, but she instead put away her papers and attempted to focus on the interview.

In one telling moment, an accurate reflection of Ms. Thompson's overall personality came to light. She glanced down at her shoes and commented that she was wearing two different shoes—different colors and styles. She noticed only after half the morning was over. She made no apology for her odd choice, but instead commented upon the fact as if making an observation about the weather.

Mr. Frantz

Mr. Frantz is a 57 year old first year teacher who recently retired from the Oklahoma National Guard and still wears his gray hair in a short military cut. His khakis were pressed with crisp straight seams and his polo shirt was decorated with a school logo. He seemed to wear his school clothes as if they were a uniform for teaching.

Mr. Frantz became a teacher not by design but by happenstance. A golf coach from the district was retiring, and Mr. Frantz was approached by one of his daughter's former coaches to see if he had any interest in working as a teacher and golf coach. In the Oklahoma National Guard, Mr. Frantz had worked some evenings and weekends with at-risk youth assigned to the program for life skills. He enjoyed the youth and felt that he was too young to completely stop working. He and his wife discussed retirement options and decided that teaching would be a good second career.

This year, Mr. Frantz works as a civics teacher, but next year will become a technology teacher working in the school's computer lab. He enjoyed working with the civics curriculum particularly when he enhanced textbook material with real-life items such as the voting ballots he brought to class for students to examine. He chuckled at the

thought of himself teaching technology and mentions that during his time in the Oklahoma National Guard, Mr. Frantz was teased by colleagues for his lack of motivation to utilize new computer technology as it emerged in the workplace. The principal notified him earlier this month that instead of teaching Civics next year he will be teaching students general principals to master computer technology.

Mr. Frantz exuded enthusiasm as he discussed being a new teacher. It was somewhat disconcerting at first to see so much energy released by a man who so recently retired from another career. He remained bemused about his school as we talked, never taking any experience as a personal affront, but rather as a life-lesson. A student yelled an obscenity outside his classroom door during the interview, but Mr. Frantz did not look in that direction, instead focusing upon what he said about his life as a teacher.

Ms. Hedge

Ms. Hedge is a 7th grade geography teacher who has taught at Jackson Middle School for three years. She arrived for the interview in a navy blue pant suit that seemed more formal than the casual attire of the other Jackson Middle School teachers. She has unusual olive-colored eyes and sandy brown hair that just brushes past her shoulders. She is a petite middle-aged woman who at first seemed to have a personality that matched her own physical size.

Ms. Hedge voice was soft and her words seemed deceptively gentle shrouded in her Southern accent. Only by listening closely to her words did I sense a passion for the work she does. At the beginning of the interview, when asked about NCLB, she grimaced as if tasting something bitter and answered the questions with a soft voice. But her words reflected the bitter expression of her face.

This look remained on her face throughout the interview until she discussed a school-wide testing incentive she developed, then Ms. Hedge's face became animated and her disposition cheery. She became invigorated in a manner not expressed previously. I wondered if her students saw this side of her; she is infectious when she enjoys the subject she is discussing. I hoped for her students that she loves geography as much as she loves her testing incentive program, because she was engaging and almost beautiful in this form.

Interviews

When teachers from both sites were asked to select a time to be interviewed, all except one chose to be interviewed during their planning period. Ms. Monroe, from Kingston Middle School instead requested that her interview take place after school. All of the teachers were invited to choose any location for their interview, but they all selected to stay within their classrooms.

Mr. Follet

Mr. Follet's interview took place on Thursday morning at 8:00 during his planning period in his classroom, which he shares with a social studies' teacher. The classroom was primarily decorated with social studies posters. Overall, the room was sparse in decoration and color.

His greatest sense of change within the district during these years is not from instructional influences or federal laws. He misses the sense of a small community that used to be reflected within the school system. He is not as familiar with parents, students or the extended families of his students. Mr. Follet sensed that this has affected the parental support of decisions that he makes as an educator. "If you get to know somebody

and somebody knows you, and understands your character and where you're coming from, then they're more likely to support you down the line...I think we've lost that sense of community."

He feels resentment that NCLB has implied that no public schools are successful. He expressed that at Kingston, "every child has the opportunity to learn and to be taught and not just be passed by or passed on. They all have the ability...to achieve at their highest level that they can achieve."

Mr. Follet does not believe that NCLB necessitated a pedagogical change in the Kingston School District. He commented that, "we've always felt like every kid needed to learn, has the ability and we strive for excellence so it wasn't...something brand new to us that needed to be done." In the past, curriculum changes within the district have been teacher led and teacher driven with experts within the district having the most impact upon curriculum choices. This practice continues as the Kingston School District continues to score well on state standardized tests.

Mr. Follet discussed his personal interpretation of NCLB and its impact on instruction within his classroom. He has changed instruction in his own classroom for special education students during the year to guarantee an appropriate learning opportunity for all of his students. He became frustrated after years of simplifying curriculum for every student in order to reach his students with lower learning capabilities. In describing this methodology he stated, "What I used to do is I'd modify it way down and I'd just give [it to] them, but I felt like with No Child Left Behind they need to see all the materials. And so we do all the materials."

This change of instructional methodology has permeated much more than just the exposure to curriculum his students receive. Mr. Follet has changed the seating arrangement within his classroom to enhance educational opportunities for his special education students. He described one of his classes by stating:

I have a class that has several, well five, special ed. kids and they have problems reading and they have problems with comprehension if they do read. And so, I give the assignment and we go back to that table and the five of us do their worksheets, or labs, or whatever we're doing...They do everything that everybody does, but they need extra help, so I help them and I think that's no child left behind...It's something I decided to do on my own...They seem happier because they are accomplishing something, even if I have to give them most of the answers. They feel like they've done something.

The choices he has made regarding his classroom have been personally driven and have been influenced by his intimate perceptions as the teacher of a classroom with distinctive needs.

Mr. Follet does believe that other schools, not as successful as Kingston, must make changes. He referenced NCLB as a tool noting that:

For those kids who don't have parental support, who don't get breakfast in the morning, they don't sleep at night because of all the stuff going on in the neighborhood. I think they bring so much baggage. They have trouble learning because they've got all these other things to worry about besides school. And I think those kids are the ones that were getting left behind.

He is very concerned with what he perceives to be a lack of instruction at other schools including a school in which his brother teaches.

When discussing his brother's school, Mr. Follet's eyes began to tear. He discussed issues that his brother faces such as gang membership among students, low performance on standardized testing and a general apathy by staff members for student success. "The last few years have not been good discipline-wise as far as their racial problem goes...that really bothers my brother." When asked if his brother ever inquires about the successes experienced at Kingston Middle School, Mr. Follet responded that there is a certain professional jealousy experienced by his younger brother. "...They don't want to hear what's going on here because they wish they had that, but they don't."

Mr. Follet's primary frustration with education has been with schools that do not adequately perform on standardized tests and other state measurements. He believes that they are unwilling to observe what he perceives to be the superior practices of Kingston Middle School. He stated:

I would think if I was in a situation where there was someplace better, I would go visit and find out what they're doing right that achieves that...It's frustrating to me that in the news all we hear is 'This bad school; that bad school; these bad kids.' ...They need to come and film good places and show what education is really about. See, I'm passionate. I'm getting tears in my eyes because that bothers me that other schools don't try to get better.

He senses that some schools are not succeeding. He also feels resentment towards NCLB for its assumption that he personally has students who are left behind, "It's almost like as

a successful school, you've been thrown into the pot with everybody else who hasn't been successful...that ignores you as a professional who has been successful."

Ms. Monroe

Ms. Monroe's interview took place on a Thursday, after school at 3 p.m., in her classroom. NCLB does not necessarily equate testing to Ms. Monroe. She stated that she was not even conscious of state testing until the week before the tests were administered. She feels that because she is a competitive person, she wants to prove that her instructional methodology will have a positive impact on teaching and student learning. One of her greatest aggravations with her school is what she defines as the "old" science teachers in her building that teach in an "old-fashioned" manner that is dependent upon lecturing. She describes her own teaching style as exploratory in nature. She relies upon an inquiry-based method that she first learned of in a district in-service led by a fellow district teacher. She described herself as feeling like the "monster" within her had been released and after that in-service, her creativity as a teacher gained worth. She also stated that she never wants to feel as though she has "taught to a test."

She feels some frustration about state mandated testing. She believes that the testing measures testing skills only allowing a very shallow recall at best of student knowledge rather than a deep-knowledge of subject matter. "The CRTs, for example, in science basically test whether you can read a jaded chart...or graph or something. It does not adequately test...whether...they know a concept or understand."

Unlike Dr. Fairweather, Ms. Monroe has experienced great help within the science department concerning resources and curriculum. She admits that at times, the science teacher next door shares "useless knowledge" and that their approaches to

instruction vary drastically. However, overall, “the people around me have just influenced me completely in a positive way.”

The most pressure she feels regarding the instruction provided to her students stems from the historical performance of her school in the past on state testing. She indicated that this pressure is institutionalized rather than overt by saying:

We don't get a lot of pressure from them (administration) until it's test time and then it is of large importance...being able to exceed or maintain the expectations...they make it pretty clear what our scores have been in the past, so it's always kind of over your head where you're like, I need to at least do that well.

Ms. Monroe believes that most of the pressure to perform well on tests is internalized. “The pressure is kind of on myself to become better.” She expressed that without state testing she would continually strive to improve her performance as a teacher. She commented on what she perceives to be the ultimate purpose of learning science:

I won't teach to some test especially that just causes them (students) to interpret things. I would prefer if they (the students),...understood how our earth, how our world really works. That's more important to me that they have an interest in that rather than being able to pass a test.

This altruistic perception of the importance of science by Ms. Monroe seems to indicate a desire of hers to create better people within her students. High performance on standardized testing does not necessarily indicate a true measurement of her success as a teacher.

She stated that her students' performances both in the classroom and on state test hinges predominantly on parental influences. She believes that parents within her school "push their kids to make good grades." At this point in the interview, she chuckled and reflected that:

I think a lot of our kids feel pressured...it's hilarious. One day they'll act like monkeys, the next day we'll have a test and it's like they come in and they're prepared and they're ready to go...I think parents put a lot of pressure on kids as far as making good grades...as soon as they [the students] hear the word test or quiz on Friday, they'll be like 'Oh my gosh!' You know, they'll just start freaking out.

Parental influences on her students' behavior have had more impact on her classroom than standardized testing.

Dr. Fairweather

Her demeanor was quite helpful, and she stated that she looked forward to assisting someone working on a doctoral degree because of her own difficulties in securing research subjects while she earned her Ph.D. twenty years ago. The interview was scheduled for a Wednesday morning at 9 a.m. during her planning period.

Dr. Fairweather was contacted by telephone the week before the interview to schedule a time and place for the meeting. Dr. Fairweather's interview took place in her classroom. Dr. Fairweather was a few minutes late when she met the researcher at the classroom door. The classroom was typical of many special education classrooms in that it was small in size with tables and chairs instead of student desks. The room was comfortable in a student-friendly manner with educational posters decorating the off-

white walls. The floor was covered in a short, beige berber carpet lending to the home-like atmosphere of the classroom. The first half of the interview took place as originally scheduled, but was postponed half-way through the process until the following day because of a previously scheduled IEP meeting Dr. Fairweather had forgotten. When the parent arrived for the meeting, the interviewer left. The interview continued on the following day again at 9 a.m. in Dr. Fairweather's classroom.

When the interview resumed on Thursday, Dr. Fairweather immediately apologized. She explained that the interview would be a few minutes shorter than the original hour allotted because students were on a short schedule due to a school assembly she had forgotten. She did state that if there were questions remaining at the end of the interview, she would be happy to reschedule for a later date. Eventually, the interview did take longer than an hour.

When the tardy bell rang, five male students began entering the classroom. Two of the students went to the "snack cabinet" located behind the teacher's desk and took out snack sized bags of potato chips. The other three students sat at the tables within the classroom and began working on assignments from their textbooks. Dr. Fairweather instructed her students to go to the classroom next door until they were told to return because she did not want to stop the interview. She escorted them to the adjoining classroom and handed out a worksheet for them to complete.

The boys next door began talking quite loudly after Dr. Fairweather returned to her classroom to complete the interview. A few minutes later, several loud thuds could be heard from the room. Dr. Fairweather left her seat and went to the classroom next door. She raised her voice several times; however, the only word that could be clearly

heard through the wall was “Hush!” She returned to her classroom and the interview continued without interruption.

Her experiences during this first year at Kingston Middle School were fraught with frustration. While enjoying a certain autonomy within her classroom from her principal, Dr. Fairweather experiences stress caused by three distinct situations within the school. The first is related to an elective class that she teaches, the second is uncertainty about curriculum programs utilized in various departments, and the third is about her own situation as a “Highly Qualified” teacher as determined by the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

At the beginning of the year she was assigned Study Skills as an elective class to teach. She stated that originally she planned to bring in the curriculum she utilized as an advocate to teach her special education students. Her principal was very supportive of this plan. Dr. Fairweather explained:

I came in thinking that I had a curriculum for study skills since my function in my business was to teach kids to learn more efficiently. I had all kinds of information to disseminate to them...the very first two or three weeks I would give them a sheet with some objectives...How can you stay better organized at home? How can you organize your notebook better?...It was just little self-teaching kinds of things.

Within a few days, however, a parent complained that the study skills class should be an hour of the day in which students were to complete unfinished assignments from other classes.

The principal met with Dr. Fairweather and relayed the conversation with the anonymous parent. The principal then told Dr. Fairweather, "It is not to be taught like a class." Dr. Fairweather remembered her response to the principal saying:

Ok. So when you come in on Fridays and the kids do not have (and this is not to bad mouth her, it was just confusion on my part...she's a wonderful principal), if you come in on Fridays when they have no homework in a study skills class and they're literally rolling off the walls, bouncing off the walls, wanting to play on the computers, wanting their I-Pods and everything, it's ok? And she said, 'It's ok.'

After this conversation with her principal, Dr. Fairweather worked on changing students' schedules out of the study skills class and into other elective classes. Her class load in Study Skills is greatly reduced from the former twelve students she once had. She described her current class as:

I've got three kids in my study skills class. One can't write. I write for him every day. One is multi-handicapped; he has work from me to do every day because he's in two of my classes. He can't get it done. He's too slow. One comes with homework he actually needs to do and he's only on a program monitor.

Dr. Fairweather's second frustration hinges from feeling like an outsider within the school she works. Teachers in the school do what they do in an organized manner that is not overtly apparent to outsiders. If a teacher is new to the system, the expectation is that the new teacher will learn about the system through trial and error. It is not a

matter of not having questions answered if you are new to the school; it is a matter of having no idea what the correct questions are.

Three examples from Dr. Fairweather's own experiences exemplify this process. One involves workbooks which she explained:

I came in not having a clue what sources I was supposed to be using and where they were. I found out in January—late January—that every one of my students actually had a math workbook that I could have been using. I bought my own book [before finding this out]. I found out by talking to a teacher. She had them all in a closet.

Another involves a language arts grammar curriculum that she has heard of from students, parents and other teachers. The program follows students through the K-12 Kingston school district; however, Dr. Fairweather has been unable to receive training in order to use this licensed program which she thinks looks “cool” from materials she has seen that other teachers have left in the copier machines in the teacher's workroom. Finally, an electronic ledger system is available in which students can answer questions electronically in the classroom. She feels this system would be “really useful” for her students; unfortunately, “one teacher has had them ever since we got them in the building.” Dr. Fairweather believes that this teacher is learning to use the system so that she can train other teachers within the building, but is not certain this is true.

Her final frustration, however, is one that could determine her eligibility for reemployment during the next school year. The Oklahoma State Department of Education has sent notification to Kingston Middle School that Dr. Fairweather is not a highly qualified teacher. Her frustration over this situation has made it difficult for her to

discuss NCLB at all. Two and a half hours into the three hour interview, Dr. Fairweather finally addressed her personal experiences with NCLB commenting:

I don't really discuss it, because I try to be a positive person; there's no point in focusing on the negative, but for this particular year in my life it has affected me because I can't believe that I would ever choose to come back to school with all the degrees and certification that I have in the area that I am teaching...I have a counselor's certification, every area of special education...I have psychometry...lot's of experience, years of experience, and I'm still having to be just like everybody else...they're not going to address me personally...I understand somebody coming up with some kind of formula. I just can't believe that I'm having a problem fitting into it.

Further into the interview, she discussed how she could not understand how she was not a "shoe in" for her teaching position with the experience and education she has completed.

Dr. Fairweather believes that she has been overlooked both by her school and the state government. Her years of experience outside of a classroom have not been considered as relevant to her current position when she has completed her HOUSSE worksheet. Her personal education culminating in a Ph.D. has not fulfilled the requirements set forth by the Oklahoma State Department of Education. She questions the future of Oklahoma that has been "considered on the bottom" of educational achievement "for such a long time" and negatively compares the decisions made by Oklahoma State in relation to NCLB to other states that have given teachers more "fluidity" in becoming high qualified.

Ms. Green

Ms. Green's interview took place promptly at 10:45 on a Thursday morning during her planning period in her classroom. She was helping four students at her desk when the interviewer opened her classroom door. She quickly dismissed the students and invited the interviewer to have a seat at a student desk while she sat at a similar desk across the aisle.

Twenty minutes into the hour-long interview, her daughter knocked on the door. Ms. Green greeted her daughter, introduced the researcher then instructed her daughter, Denise, to "go to the closet." The closet, a fairly large storage area used for beakers and other science materials, is located behind the classroom door. Denise has a small desk situated in the back of the storage area in which she keeps textbooks and supplies.

Ms. Green shared that several years ago a part of Denise's brain was removed because of trauma. Although Denise looks like an average sixth grade girl, she has no short-term memory. Ms. Green explained, "She had a quarter of her brain removed years ago and so she really doesn't have short term memory. It's very slight. It's more of an instant feedback sort of thing." Ms. Green's frustration stems from a previous hope that NCLB would address the students in school "who aren't being serviced...who are being left behind." However from this year's experience with her own daughter attending the school in which she teaches, Ms. Green stated, "...she's supposedly a serviced child and she's being left behind."

Denise was enrolled in Dr. Fairweather's study skills class at the beginning of this school year. Ms. Green commented on the class saying:

She was enrolled in a study's skills class which was supposed to be where if she

had missed a lot of days or had work that needed to be ... Things like that where you were supposed to be able to give it to the special education teacher and when she was in there for the study skills hour, she could work on that stuff. But...she got in there and drew pictures because the teacher never gave her the stuff, or it never made it to my daughter. It was also supposed to be...a monitoring thing where if there was a test coming up, that teacher could get a hold of a study guide or something and help her prepare for the test. It didn't happen. It still required me to do everything so I actually pulled her out of study skills and she's with me that hour in my closet and she does all that stuff.

The study skills class is the same one discussed by Dr. Fairweather above. Dr. Fairweather's perception of the purpose of the class was profoundly different from that of Ms. Green, a colleague in the same school and mother of one of the classes' students.

The predominate focus of Ms. Green's interview quickly became an expression of her general concern for special education students, such as her own daughter, and other students she referred to as "gray area" children within the school. The "gray area" children she defined as those students without a support network of involved parents or relatives. These students, who do not qualify for special education services, often fail classes without a parent intervening. She stated her concern regarding the impact of such children in the future on Kingston School District saying:

I understand why we are how we are because we have excellent test scores and I think we have excellent teachers, and I think we have excellent administrators, but I think in our school district, in our case, the majority of our kids are the middle to the upper and don't require a lot of extra so that is probably how we

still maintain that because we have a lower percentage of those kids that really are being left behind. As we grow, that percentage is growing and it's starting to show.

She observes the district growing in population with more average-sized homes being built. In turn, the demographics of the district are becoming more normed to the state's population.

Her professional perspective of NCLB and its implications for special education students has been profoundly influenced by her daughter. Yet, on the few occasions in which she expressed this frustration over Denise's experiences in the Kingston School District, Ms. Green felt ostracized. She also believes that her job would have been jeopardized if she had not stopped expressing her opinions of problems she encountered in the special education department as the mother of a special-needs student. She acknowledges this limitation within her district, but cautioned that if left unaddressed the district's reputation for scoring high on the OCCT would eventually end noting that "we're not performing quite as well." The growing number of special education students within the district remains a concern of hers. "If you go and look at our API scores, yeah we're top in a lot of things, but if you look in the special education component of it, we're one of the lowest."

Ms. Green believes that universities have a responsibility to better educate future teachers concerning special needs students. Teachers were empathetic to Denise after her surgery and subsequent recovery. At one time, they held a district-wide fundraiser to assist with the family's medical expenses. Ms. Green observed, though, that once the teachers had Denise as a student they quickly became frustrated because Denise looked

“normal,” but was unable to learn at the same pace of her classmates. Again, the matter of “gray area” children surfaced as Ms. Green speculated that Denise, a special-needs child who did not receive adequate intervention, was actually a protected student. “Gray area” children, without the protection of parents or an IEP, could only suffer from the treatment of teachers expecting every child to fall within a norm.

Kingston has attempted to address the “gray area” child situation by hiring a resource teacher hired to act as a “school mom.” Both Ms. Monroe and Ms. Green referenced the “school mom” who contacts teachers of students falling behind, pulls them from elective classes, and addresses assignments as needed. Additionally, the “school mom” works with these students, up to fifty a day, to complete projects and other assignments that parents might otherwise assist their children with in the evenings. Similarly, the “school mom” will pull students from class to complete assigned Internet research if the “school mom” knows that the student does not have Internet accessibility at home. Ms. Green stated, “She is a superwoman. She used to be a special education teacher—probably one of the best ones we had, so it’s perfect.”

Ms. Walker

Ms. Walker greeted the interviewer at her classroom door with a quick smile as a student walking down the hall stepped between Ms. Walker and the interviewer. The girl, apparently a special needs student, interrupted the initial conversation and grabbed Ms. Walker in a bear-like hug. Ms. Walker laughed and asked how the student’s day had been as Ms. Walker entered her classroom while the student continued down the hall. The quick exchange between the teacher and student demonstrated great patience on Ms. Walker’s part. The interaction left the student smiling.

Several students entered the classroom during the interview, which took place during Ms. Walker's planning period. None of the students knocked on the door and all quickly exited when Ms. Walker shooed them away with the wave of a hand. However, Ms. Walker always completed her thoughts on the topic she was discussing. In addition, she took each interruption in its course without pausing if she were speaking at the time of the distraction.

Ms. Walker thinks that NCLB was "intended as a standard for education in the United States with good intentions but not on a reasonable scale." She noted that it is "very difficult to maintain evidence of progress" after schools have reached a certain level. Ms. Walker also believes that NCLB has focused attention on only certain subject areas. At the moment, she feels isolated from the other faculty, particularly those subject area teachers who have students taking the OCCT in their areas. In essence, NCLB has narrowed the curriculum, slowly pushing classes such as choir into a no-man's land of unimportance.

This isolation became most apparent to her during professional development meetings at Jackson. The administration of the school assigns the faculty to tables with teachers in the same discipline area—American history teachers sit with geography teachers (Social Studies); while English teachers sit with Reading teachers (Language Arts). However, during the last few professional development meetings, Ms. Walker has entered the media center, where the training takes place, and quickly feels as if she is the "odd man out." She reflected on the January meeting stating:

They actually assigned us to a curriculum area...I think I was assigned to Social Studies. You know music can relate to all of them; I don't think I would have

assigned music to social studies myself...I think I would have chosen a group that I felt related more to music...that probably would have been math or reading. You know there's so much in all the music that we sing—there's reading, there's text.

She laughed sadly and continued, "It's just that nobody knows what to do with us." She reflected on the insecurity she now feels as her administrators focus on core curriculum and testing related issues.

Throughout the interview, Ms. Walker mentioned several times that she felt withdrawn from the school. She had become discarded by other adults in the building in an effort to improve test scores. When the focus on test scores intensified, she slowly became excluded from groups of faculty members as their discussions center around testing performance by students. She stated that she believed her worth and value as a teacher became negligible because no standardized tests are given in music. She noted that if asked she could contribute to two core curriculum areas—reading and math, the two areas used to determine a school's API.

Similar to the statements of several teachers at Kingston, Ms. Walker also regarded the pressure placed on teachers to improve student performance was not mentioned constantly by her building administrators. Rather there is "just an awareness that we're on the list; the pressure is on to increase test scores all across the building." She stated that there is a constant anxiety placed upon the teachers at Jackson to "get off the list" that distracts from creativity and takes away "freedom" from teachers.

However, the primary distraction within the school, Ms. Walker believes comes from a general discipline problem with the students. She observed that:

Some things...will have to change with discipline in the school. I think that affects what we do more than...the curriculum that is being taught. If we don't have discipline, we can't teach what we need to teach and students won't learn what they need to learn without discipline.

She clarified her ultimate belief about what needs to change at Jackson Middle School by stating, "When parents support you but they can't do anything about it either [the student behavior], there's a problem."

Mr. Lewellen

Presently, Mr. Lewellen is considering the pursuit of a Master's Degree in any area that will allow him to leave education. During the interview, he sat on a tall stool while the interviewer sat in a student desk.

Mr. Lewellen regards NCLB as a positive piece of legislation, but does view some of the goals within the legislation as unrealistic in their expectations. In addition, the emphasis placed upon the results of standardized testing has impacted his instructional practices. His voice tensed when he commented:

It's become to where we're so...hammered on testing, you don't even know how you're going to teach a lesson. It's just making sure that content gets taught [in] one way shape or form and not really paying attention to how you're going to do it...making sure you teach A,B,C, D and E (pounds on hand as he says each letter) throughout the year so that way, that what they're going to be tested on, so that's what they need to know.

He, just as Ms. Walker mentioned, believes this has taken away from his "creativity" as a teacher. "We feel like we're going to lose too much time teaching this, instead of getting

this.” He observes that this continual scrutiny of what will or will not be tested is what makes teachers “crazy” about NCLB’s requirements.

Mr. Lewellen’s reaction to professional development related to the school’s test scores is mixed. He feels resentment towards the school’s in-house professional development activities examining the disaggregation of data from the tests and notes that these observations never progress to answering what the teachers might do to improve the scores. “We’ll break down by statistics...’how many do you think are going to pass it? How many do think are not? How many are in the middle where they may or may not pass it?” These activities in statistical analysis never answer Mr. Lewellen’s questions as to how he might help his students in the areas they will not pass.

The State Department of Education has created a professional development opportunity for geography teachers that Mr. Lewellen does believe assists him as a teacher. “Geography Academy is more focused on questions that come up or they help with lesson plans.” During the annual Geography Academy, “...one of the guys that’s in charge of the social studies, he helps head the whole thing” assists geography teachers from around the state as they examine weaknesses in student performance and then offers suggestions related to those particular areas. He noted that “We spend more time on content and on trying to learn...I hate to say it, it’s almost memorizing, but content that’s going to be tested on.” This statement is a juxtaposition of Mrs. Monroe’s statement that learning should be inquiry based.

Mr. Lewellen believes that the greatest problem his school faces in improving test scores is related to student attendance and behavior. He questioned, “Now who’s held accountable for attendance?” A growing transient population within the district makes it

difficult to know students very well which in turn affects student behavior. He stated this sentiment, “Don’t hammer us on our test scores when we have so many kids who are discipline problems, so many kids that are gone.” Reflecting upon his own experiences as a student, he remembered parents who would support school faculty without question. However, he feels now that parents support their children without question, no matter what the behavior of the child within the classroom. “Now the kids are enabled so much. Everything is just given to them, so they expect everything to be given to them, so when you finally do try to discipline them, they can’t believe it.”

Rather than applying the same standards for every student, Mr. Lewellen wants student individuality to be recognized. He commented:

Until it gets understood that the kids are different, they have to be treated different, they learn differently and that the teachers are given flexibility to try to adapt their teaching based on that and give them some flexibility in how they teach...Let us teach. We will get it taught.

He is also dismayed that he is unable now as a classroom teacher to “find ways for the kids to learn” but now finds himself instead focused on other areas which he stated:

I come in and I’m thinking, well I’ve got to teach this. I’ve got to make sure that x% of the kids pass the test and yet I’ve got 7 or 8 kids in the class that are nothing but discipline problems...So I get completely frustrated, I get to thinkin’ well then why keep doing it? Why keep showing up to work every day and working my rear end off and nothing changes?

He observes that he does not feel the same about his career as he did in the past:

I don't enjoy teaching as much. My attitude is not as good as it used to be. I used to really enjoy coming to school and teaching because I felt like I was in control of things.

Rather than empowered, he now feels emasculated.

Ms. Rogers

She spent her first two years of teaching in Texas. She believes that Oklahoma is moving along a path very similar to Texas' emphasis on testing performance with one notable exception, "The students were held accountable." She describes Oklahoma as having "no consequence for the students." Her greatest worry is that testing will become the preeminent factor in the classroom rather than the curriculum.

Testing has recently dominated every aspect of her classroom. Her district, with the aid of teachers, has created benchmark testing and district-developed standardized testing using sample questions and structures straight from the state department. These tests create even more constraints on instructional time as every moment in the school day is geared towards preparedness by students not only for the CRTs, but also for these district benchmark tests.

Similar to Ms. Walker, she worries about the emphasis placed upon testing when considering that her subject area, science, although a core curriculum area, is not one of the two areas used to determine API. When spring testing is completed, she has recently started teaching her students items that they are not testing upon, but that she feels are important to becoming a well-rounded science student. She reflected upon the time restrictions regarding testing dates and curriculum choices, stating:

You wish you could teach it and you wish you could go on because it does relate to it, but you know it's not going to be one of the questions or a topic, so you just kind of tell them well, wait till next year or wait till after CRTs and then we can...discuss it.

Her student's interest has been tabled in an effort to teach according to a testing timeline. "I love my job, but I don't like what I'm required to do."

In addition, she now faces testing fatigue both from herself and her students. She commented that this testing exhaustion becomes intolerable for her eighth grade students, stating:

They feel like they're tested every minute...there's too many of them. And then you have CRTs and then we're testing with benchmarks. I mean, they always say, 'Ms. Rogers, I'm tired of taking tests.' And I'm like, 'I know, I'm tired of giving you tests, but it's not my choice.' I mean I'm doing what my boss is telling me and what the state is telling me and the federal government is telling me, you have to take this test. And I think that by the time they actually take the CRT, they're just tired. They're tired of everything.

She reflected upon her students' feelings regarding standardized testing, stating, "I would be tired if I was in 8th grade. And if I was an 8th grader tested this much, you know, I would have blown it off."

Just as other teachers expressed, the loss of the identity of individual students disturbs Ms. Rogers. She "strongly disagrees with No Child Left Behind" in that it compares "two different groups of kids" when examining testing results by grade level year to year. She would rather see a comparison of "5th grade to 8th grade" noting

improvements by the group year to year. At this moment, Ms. Rogers regards NCLB as flawed because test comparisons are actually of one class's performance to another class's. She feels this does not measure improvement. "There's some groups that are higher level on average than other classes and I think that's one thing that a lot of kids are falling through the cracks because we're not really seeing if that kid improved."

She also fears that focus upon the individual student will diminish as teachers leave the profession of teaching. Ms. Rogers envisions class sizes increasing as a teacher shortage prevails because current teachers say, "I don't have to take it." She foresees a day when classes are "going to have a room full of thirty or thirty-five kids" as teachers leave education. She discussed how these large class sizes harbor student failure, saying, "It's kind of hard to keep up with a kid who's just sitting there quietly and not doing their work and you don't really know if they're learning or not because they're quiet." With her eyes tearing, Ms. Roger admitted that she considers leaving education herself:

I am thinking of going into a different career. It's hard to come up with that new career...you still love teaching, but you're so frustrated and there's so many people who you're frustrated with that you think another job has to be better or you think another district has to be better or anything...and not really wanting to leave this profession, but knowing that for your personal health, mentally and emotionally and physically, that that other career, no matter what it might be has to be better than what you're doing now.

Ms. Thompson

As with many other teachers, she has noticed a shift during her 23 years of experience with an increased emphasis on standardized testing results. She finds that

newspaper reports have increased public awareness about the performance of Jackson Middle School. She remarked that most often the comments hinge on Jackson's decline in performance, "because just two years ago we were a blue ribbon school." Now community members have asked her, "Why are you on the list now?"

Students have also changed as the pressures of standardized testing permeate every facet of the school climate. She has noticed a particular change in student behavior after the weeks of standardized testing end:

Their behavior has gone out the window. They don't feel like they're held accountable anymore, and I'm like going school's not over. We're still learning. We're still learning here. The behavior...it's like used to when you checked in those books, the last week of school, they thought school was out. You know, now it's like when the test is over, we're all going to play.

In an effort to counteract the after-effects of school wide testing, Ms. Thompson developed a school initiative entitled, "Bring It On."

Jackson Middle School teachers, led by Ms. Thompson, solicit free merchandise and money from local stores. Four weeks prior to testing, teachers within the building "ticketed" students for good behavior. Ms. Thompson explained, "You know, you had to have overall great behavior...your pencil in class, be on time, working and stuff like that and you got one ticket per class." Names would then be drawn from the "ticketed" students at the end of the week with the names of winning students announced over the intercom. Students then went to the main office to claim their prizes. The school gave away I-pods, \$5 gift cards to Sonic, CD players and various other prizes. She has kept the large, five-gallon, plastic storage containers in her classroom from which the

students' tickets were drawn. She pointed to them, smiled, and noted the labels by grade on front of the containers in which student "tickets" were turned in and drawn from. She plans to use the same containers next year in her "Bring it On" campaign.

Ms. Thompson also organized a positive campaign throughout the school to highlight testing week. The teachers on the committee made posters advertising, "Bring It On" in reference to testing week. Other posters with enlarged driver's licenses with the motto, "We Want You" under the driver's picture were posted throughout the school. Just prior to the test, the committee sponsored a testing pep rally with cheerleaders, the band, and the high school boys basketball coach who served as a motivational speaker. No organized surveys of teacher or student perceptions of the campaign were conducted, but Ms. Thompson believed, "the minute you started ticketing...our 8th grade teachers...noticed a change in behavior...a positive change in behavior."

However, Ms. Thompson also felt powerless to eradicate some influences on student behavior and performance. She discussed the overall attendance of students at school who often missed classes because they "had to babysit" the night before. She also reflected upon the impact of special education scores when the district's "special education director didn't know what to do." While the lack of parental support cannot easily be changed, Ms. Thompson did observe changes in the special education department this year. "We are able to meet the needs of the special education kids, whether it be modified tests or portfolios."

Ms. Thompson reflected upon her career stating that, "I don't have as much fun anymore." In an attempt to bring some of the joy she once had for her job, she has created joy in the one thing now dominating her school—standardized testing. She

reflected upon these feelings stating, “I feel restricted...I feel restricted that this is what they have to know, and once the test is over this year, I’m thinking, oh my gosh, I can do this and this and this.” She added that after her school was identified as a needs improvement school, she is “trying to think positive about it” and approach it from an opportunity of change rather than a result of punishment.

Ms. Thompson fears for the students who do not do well with test taking and the pressures of standardized tests. She reflected upon her own experiences:

I was not a test taker growing up, and I fear there are a lot of children like that. My younger sister, her degree from college is from ballet. She has a master’s in ballet. So, her things weren’t tested. Her abilities and whatever she was going to be; we just don’t fit into a mold. My goal in life is to come up with a way to assess our children with that fitting their mold.

She later stated that once she could find the way to test those children fairly she could “retire to the Bahamas.”

Mr. Frantz

Mr. Frantz began the interview by talking about his wife who has been a teacher for 15 years. They have lived in this general area since they were first married many years ago. Their two grown daughters graduated from the Jackson School District.

He cited fellow teachers as having the most impact on his school year; however, the textbook has driven his overall curriculum choices, and his wife has influenced his methodology. Mr. Frantz was unaware of PASS before he started teaching. Even then, no one discussed the requirements of PASS or the impact it might have on curriculum choices. He found a copy of PASS in his room and began exploring the state

department's website on his own time. From the information he gathered about civics curriculum, he then began accessing the city commissioner's office and various other government agencies to supplement the material provided by the textbook. After discussing the lack of enthusiasm in his classes during his lectures with his wife, she asked if he had an overhead projector. He did not and did not know how to access one. His wife directed him to go to the media center and ask the media specialist to check one out in his name. He followed his wife's advice and began enhancing lectures with overhead notes that he then required students to copy. His experiences are similar to Dr. Fairweather's in that he often does not know what questions to ask or even who to question; however, through chance, he believes that he has improved his classroom substantially.

Mr. Frantz supports NCLB believing that students will need the ability to compete globally as they enter the workforce in the future. He thinks NCLB has identified children throughout the United States not having equal success rates with more advantaged peers. However, in reality, he does not believe that a 100% success rate for all students is possible:

It's probably made it more aware that students...out here that are being left behind. I don't know that the community didn't already know that in the first place. I think every community knows that. And I think every school board knows it...I think they've always known that there's always going to be some children that are not going to be able to graduate and those are the ones that you try to put extra emphasis on or you look at a little bit extra...I'm an economics guy that says that 3% unemployment is the best that you're going to get...but you

know in America you always like to think...the goal is for four to go in and four to go out...but realistically, it's probably not going to get there.

Mr. Frantz, while supporting NCLB, also thinks that the most pressing change needed with NCLB is to make students "more accountable for the tests."

He acknowledged that at the middle school level, he can fairly accurately identify students who will not complete high school. Yet, he also believes that external forces are most influential to a child's success. With this in mind, he attempts to reach his students by allowing the chance to recover after a failure in his class. He contemplated his positive approach with his students saying:

I tell my students, 'Everyday is a new day,' and I always use the analogy of playing pool. I say every morning we'll rerack them and do it again. It's just, you know, at the end of the day, you put the chairs up on the table and you walk out. When you walk in, in the morning, it's a new day. You can start all over with a clean slate and you go on.

Ms. Hedge

Ms. Hedge acknowledged NCLB has "set some bars so that we don't have a senior who graduates from high school who can't read or write." Conversely, she believes that not all students should aspire to a college degree. She clarified this saying:

I certainly think they can be productive adults, but...I think the emphasis now...is about college. But, when I sit back, way back, and really look...there're probably more that aren't going to go than are going to go. And so, I sing the praises of v-tech and other stuff, but we have to get them through up to high school to 10th

grade before they can ever get into that. And, I've got kids in my class right now talking to me about quitting school.

She blames the high school for students quitting stating that they "kick them out" because the high school administrators do not want to deal with students' inappropriate behavior. Ms. Hedge feels intimidated by her student's behavior. She remarked that students "get away with murder" without any consequences. Although she has attempted to get "meaner" at the beginning of the school year, without administrative support in her building, she thinks her efforts are futile. Ms. Hedge said, "If I was 400 pounds or 6'6" it would be a little easier."

Communication between the office administrators and counselors with classroom teachers is another weakness that Ms. Hedge has observed in her building. She discussed two incidences involving students in which she believes she might have been able to impact her student's school lives if she had been given more information. She leaned forward in her chair when she talked about the first student who was homeless. "I didn't know of anybody being homeless." She remembers thinking "this kid smells so bad," never realizing that he was living in a car and unable to shower regularly. She was given the information by another teacher when Ms. Hedge asked how to approach the student about his hygiene. She now feels guilty that she could not help him earlier in the year. The second student Ms. Hedge referenced was a student she had in class her first year in the building. She remembered the student:

I had a kid try to commit suicide, and I heard it through the grapevine; I was never given that information...As far as I know, he's been hospitalized ever since. He tried to hang himself, and he was a good kid. He was smart...I was just blown

away...you can't tell, you know. You just don't have a clue from looking at somebody...I'm still amazed that happened and yet, I can't understand why they don't want it on the national news or whatever...I'm just amazed that I worked with this kid and nobody passed on that information.

However, recently counselors did inform Ms. Hedge of a child who had someone die in his arms as he attempted to administer CPR to the accident victim. She feels appreciative of the information and tries to be more sensitive to his needs now.

In reality, she is baffled about what would help her students succeed in general. She noted that during her first year of teaching, her student's test scores were not significantly different from those of the veteran teachers around her. "Realistically, I can't believe that my scores can be anywhere near compared to the one that's been here 25 years and knows the ropes." She now questions why her test scores were not different than those of the more experienced teachers.

She ended her interview saying, "I really felt like your study, if your study can shine any light on the areas, and somebody is going to listen to all these different teachers, that was a positive. I think you picked a pretty good subject matter...an important one."

Analysis of Data

All four teachers interviewed at Kingston Middle School acknowledge that at least in part, the success of the district's students is directly related to the privilege of their home life. None of the teachers admitted to changing instructional styles as a direct result of standardized testing or the mandates of NCLB; however, all of the teachers mentioned a heightened awareness for students with special needs, whether identified

through IEPs or without a support system within their homes. There was a general disdain that Kingston Middle School, a relatively high-performing school, fell under the same mandates as every other school within the state. None of the teachers interviewed believed that NCLB had greatly impacted their school; however, they all did express the sentiment that other schools would benefit from following the examples modeled within Kingston.

The teachers of Jackson perceived the “needs improvement” label of their school as a manifestation of what they believed to be wrong with their school. If a teacher believed attendance was not adequate, then their answer about what made Jackson become labeled as “needs improvement” would be the attendance rates of students; if the teacher believed that special needs students were not learning curriculum, then the reason Jackson was on the needs improvement list was because of special needs students. The only teacher to correctly identify the reason, low reading and math scores by special education students, was Mr. Frantz, the first year teacher.

The low performance of special education students as a sub-group on the OCCT has placed Jackson Middle School on the Needs Improvement list. However, the teachers of Jackson have taken the list very personally. Working in the environment they do, which is overall quite oppressive, they have taken time to analyze what is wrong with their school. As each teacher was asked about the list, they all, with the exception of Mr. Frantz, developed some theory that centered upon this personalization. Even with a focus in professional development on analyzing test scores, teachers have still created their own sense as to why their school is not succeeding according to state department guidelines.

It was evident that teachers in Jackson Middle School became very media aware after their scores were published and their school was labeled as Needs Improvement. They feel that every facet of the community now observes their actions. Jackson Middle School teachers continually referenced their inability to be creative, but instead felt enormous pressure to improve student performance upon standardized testing.

However, many of the decisions regarding how best to serve the students' needs came from outside sources with little or no input from the teachers themselves. These decisions were made by administrators in the district office who hired particular companies to provide professional development. These decisions came from the professional development company who provided workshops about analyzing test scores. Finally, these decisions came from the state department of education who has determined that certain "prescriptive" measures such as professional development focused upon analyzing test scores can improve a schools' performance. Especially when considering Ms. Hedges students' test scores, it seems wise to ask, "To what extent does the teacher really impact the scores?"

Emergent Themes

Eight emergent themes were identified from the interviews in Phase II of the study. These themes are introduced below. They are further analyzed in Chapter 7.

Elective Curriculum Concerns

The two teachers who taught elective classes both identified uncertainty about the appropriate placement of their curriculum within their respective schools. These two teachers used phrases such as "not to be taught like a class," "odd man out," and "nobody knows what to do with us" to describe the uncertainty they felt about the appropriate

placement of their classes within the curriculum. One of these teachers completely revamped her class in an attempt to meet what she believed to be the principal's expectations. The other teacher continues to struggle with her class and her own place within the school as more focus is placed upon standardized testing preparation.

Changing Communities

Four teachers used phrases and words to describe the changes within their school districts such as, "lost that sense of community," "grow," and "growing number." Additionally, some teachers used phrases such as "in the past" and words such as "now" when describing progression of time and corresponding changes within their school district communities. Without exception, these changes within the school district communities were perceived as negative by the teachers. Growth within both districts led teachers to become concerned about the changing characteristics of their student bodies with growing numbers of underrepresented groups such as special education students and migratory groups becoming more predominant. In Kingston, the teachers feared that these students would be unreachable, so plans such as the "school mom" have been implemented to assist the students. In Jackson, teachers are disenchanted with the lack of support they receive from this changing population of parents. Attendance rates are dropping, student behavior is regressing and test scores will suffer as a result.

Changing Professional Development Focus

Teachers from both schools commented on changes within their professional development focus. Teachers from both Kingston and Jackson utilized phrases such as, "break down statistics" "more focused on questions" and "different emphasis" to describe how professional development had changed within their districts since the

implementation of NCLB. However, the two schools have changed their professional development in very different ways.

Kingston relies upon a set of guidelines to describe the ideal teacher attributes of a teacher within Kingston. These attributes, labeled, “The Eagle Code” referencing the mascot of the school district, are given to every new teacher at the beginning of the school year. The attributes were developed by Kingston teachers five years ago and now serve as a beginning of the year professional development activity to inspire teachers to perform their best throughout the year. The Eagle Code does not serve as a pep rally “cheer,” but acts more as an expanded mission statement that the school reviews periodically.

Jackson Middle School has employed an outside agency to assist teachers as they analyze test scores and student performance on the standardized tests. During every district professional development day, teachers from Jackson meet in the media center and are divided by curriculum area. Within these small groups, the teachers analyze test scores noting discrepancies in grade level or sub-group performance. The teachers also have developed benchmark testing to measure student performance throughout the year on PASS objectives in preparation for the OCCTs. Every teacher from Jackson mentioned these professional development meetings at some point during their interviews. Every teacher also expressed frustration that the outside company did not help the teachers discover a better method of delivery for their students.

Teachers Leaving the Profession

Only teachers from Jackson Middle School mentioned leaving the teaching profession. These teachers used phrases such as “masters degree in other area,” “leave

teaching,” “find another career,” “I don’t have to take it,” and “thinking of going into a different career.” These teachers were also teachers who had been teaching less than seven years. None of the teachers nearing retirement mentioned changing careers; however, none of the mid-career teachers mentioned leaving teaching either.

Loss of Creativity

Teachers from Jackson Middle school expressed frustration from the perceived sense of lost creativity they felt as the pressures of improvement on standardized tests became more emphasized. These feelings were described with words and phrases such as, “loss of freedom,” “lost creativity,” “I was in control” and “restricted.” The loss of creativity within the classrooms had manifested itself as the teacher’s calendars gradually focused upon benchmark testing and other activities implemented in an effort to improve test scores.

Meeting the Needs of All Students

Teachers from both schools noted a desire to meet the needs of students of all abilities. Teachers used phrases like, “all have the ability,” “every kid needed to learn,” “problems learning,” “trouble learning,” “special education component,” “learn differently,” “kids are different,” and “don’t fit into a mold.” Very rarely were the phrases used in a derogatory sense. Generally teachers had become more aware of student differences as mainstreaming became more predominant in classes. Teachers often sought professional materials on their own in an effort to meet the needs of all students within their classes. There was no notable increase in this awareness between teachers in either school although Jackson Middle School had been placed on the “Needs

Improvement” list for students in the special education sub-group performing below acceptable levels on the OCCTs.

Parental Support

Teachers at both Kingston and Jackson Middle Schools used phrases such as “kids who don’t have parental support,” “bring so much baggage,” “push their kids,” “parents put pressure,” “gray area kids,” “parents support you” and “who’s held accountable?” to address the importance of parental support for their students. This support was described in mostly positive terms from teachers at Kingston Middle School and mostly negative terms from teachers at Jackson Middle School. Kingston Middle School teachers mentioned repeatedly that parents had the power to create a positive influence for students both from support and pressure to succeed. Jackson Middle School teachers often mentioned their desire for parents to be held responsible for student’s behavior and attendance in school which both adversely affected standardized testing results.

Standardized Testing Pressures

Concerns regarding the pressures from standardized testing were mentioned most consistently during all of the interviews from teachers from both schools. Teachers used phrases such as “does not adequately test,” “exceed or maintain,” “pressure...on myself,” “teach to the test,” “kids feel pressured,” “maintain evidence of progress,” “pressure to increase test scores,” “hammered on testing,” “tested every minute,” “tired of giving...tests” and “more accountable for tests”. In addition words such as “fatigue” and “tired” were used to express both the condition of students and teachers as they prepared for standardized testing. Only negative connotations manifested as teachers described

their perceptions of the OCCTs. Although one teacher expressed pride in his school's performance at Kingston, teachers from both sites described feelings of oppression regarding standardized testing with the word "pressure" expressed repeatedly.

Recurring Emergent Themes

Five emergent themes in Chapter 5, Phase II, interviews are common with those found in Chapter 4, Phase I, teacher drawings. Both data contain evidence of concerns regarding teacher shortages, loss of creativity, teachers' inability to meet the needs of all students within their classrooms, timelines and standardized testing. These emergent themes are discussed further in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER VI

PHASE III: CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

All teachers who participated in interviews also agreed to have me observe their classrooms. The observations took place to determine the environment and atmosphere created by the teacher. Presentations of the observations and comments of the teachers' classrooms are offered below. In some instances, student's pictures and/or names and teacher names were edited from the photographs to protect the identities of the participants as well as the identities of their students. Entire classrooms are shown with the elements of some of the classrooms highlighted. The analysis of the emergent themes is then discussed.

Kingston Middle School

The classrooms of Kingston Middle School were all carpeted and contained few, if any, outside windows. The doors of the classrooms, which open into hallways, had narrow windows on one side running the length of the door. These windows allow minimal hallway lighting to enter the classrooms; therefore, if the classroom lights are turned off, the classrooms remain very dark. Several of the teachers added desk and floor lamps which created soft lighting in the corners of the classrooms. Kingston teachers are allowed to individualize their classrooms with customized painting and extensive wall hangings which reflect the personalities of the teachers. It was evident throughout the school building that teachers spent a great deal of off-contract hours working to customize their working spaces.

Mr. Follet, Science Classroom, Kingston

Mr. Follet's classroom, although it was painted in an eggshell white, had been decorated extensively with posters. He also brought many personal elements into the room including southwestern knickknacks on the built-in shelves and cabinets along his back wall.



Figure 48. Mr. Follet's shelves on the East wall of his classroom are almost completely bare as he had already packed the contents in cardboard boxes in preparation for the summer months.

Mr. Follet's classroom walls contained many examples of student work; however, most notable was the overall absence of decoration in some areas and the moving boxes packed in others. Textbooks were stacked on many of the available surfaces. The room was gradually being closed for the school year as seen in Figure 48 even though almost one month of school remained when the observation took place in April.



Figure 49. Mr. Follet's students discuss an assignment. A mobile of planets hangs from the ceiling. Interspersed along the West wall of the classroom between inspirational posters are examples of student work.

Mr. Follet allowed me to take photographs of his classroom while students were present. Students continued working on assignments as I made observational notes and took photographs. They glanced at me often at first, but eventually forgot that I was in the room. When this occurred, their manners relaxed. They began talking more in small groups. Some even began walking around the room as the class period came to a close. A few approached Mr. Follet at his desk while others asked their peers for help on that night's homework assignment. Examples of student work can be seen in Figure 49.

Mr. Follet assigned his students posters on which they were to create animal and plant cells. The students turned in the assignments to Mr. Follet on the day of the interview. He planned to hang the best of the posters throughout his classroom.

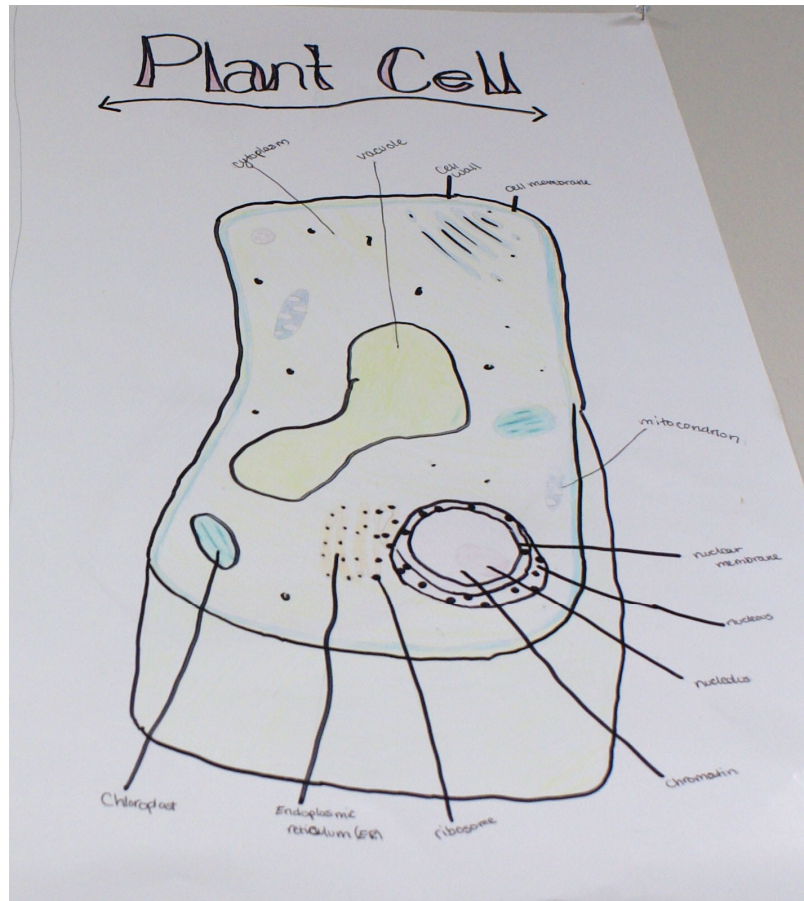


Figure 50. Labels surround the picture to identify the parts of the cells. The students placed their names on the back of the posters where the grade would later be added to protect student confidentiality. This assignment meets PASS objectives for 8th grade science students.

One of the posters seen above in Figure 50 had been placed on the classroom wall with thumbtacks. The assignment suggests a traditional science lesson such as the type complained about by Ms. Monroe in Chapter Five who expressed concern that traditional science teachers did not require students to explain material thoroughly. She emphasized the necessity of inquiry based learning in her classroom; however, the students must use a certain amount of creativity to complete the project assigned by Mr. Follet. The day of the observation, students who had not finished their posters were reminded that their assignments were due the next day. From the conversations within the room, some

students planned quite elaborate posters with more colors than that used in the assignment above.



Figure 51. One student stands at the table of two other students as Mr. Follet reminds students of their homework assignment. Two science posters hang on either side of a map on the South wall.

Mr. Follet used a somewhat relaxed method in his instruction. He did not require the students to remain seated during his lecture as some students changed tables periodically. Many of the students at first appeared unaware of the lecture; however, when Mr. Follet asked questions, students answered correctly. Students also approached him in an informal manner sometimes leaving their tables and walking to his desk without asking permission. None of the students ever raised their hand in order to garner permission; instead the class followed simple rules of courtesy by never interrupting one

another or their teacher. Girls socialized at the end of the class period as seen above in Figure 51.



Figure 52. Mr. Follet placed a stuffed armadillo on a piece of driftwood on his South window sill as if it is gazing outside. His room contained one of the few classroom windows within the building.

Mr. Follet exhibited personal items in his classroom as seen above in Figure 52. The stuffed armadillo, although related to science, was positioned strategically with a humorous flair. Other items continued this southwester theme of decoration including wooden carvings of a coyote and a cactus. Overall, the room was the least decorated of any at Kingston, but it did not seem as sterile as the rooms at Jackson.

Several times during the interview, Mr. Follet's dry wit became apparent just as it was with the stuffed armadillo. It also manifested itself through his verbal interactions with students. He never lost his temper and kept a low tone even as he addressed students' inappropriate behavior.

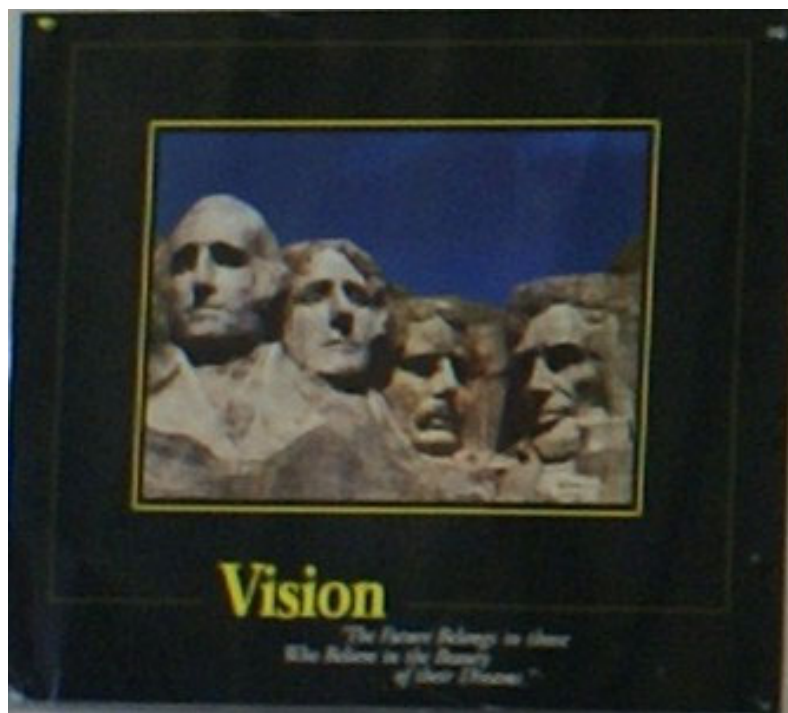


Figure 53. This poster is one of many inspirational posters hanging on the walls of Mr. Follet's classroom. The poster is located within a grouping of others with similar styling shown in Figure 49.

Mr. Follet used inspirational posters throughout his classroom to decorate walls. Several of the posters contained inspirational phrases such as Mount Rushmore poster which stated "Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality," as seen above in Figure 53. Several others within the grouping addressed other positive personality attributes including leadership and inspiration. These posters were purchased in a catalog from which he received a discount for buying more than one. Surrounding these posters was hung student artwork from previous assignments mainly drawings of cells. Although he had done this haphazardly, by placing student work among the store-bought posters, he emphasized the importance of what his students had accomplished within their assignments.

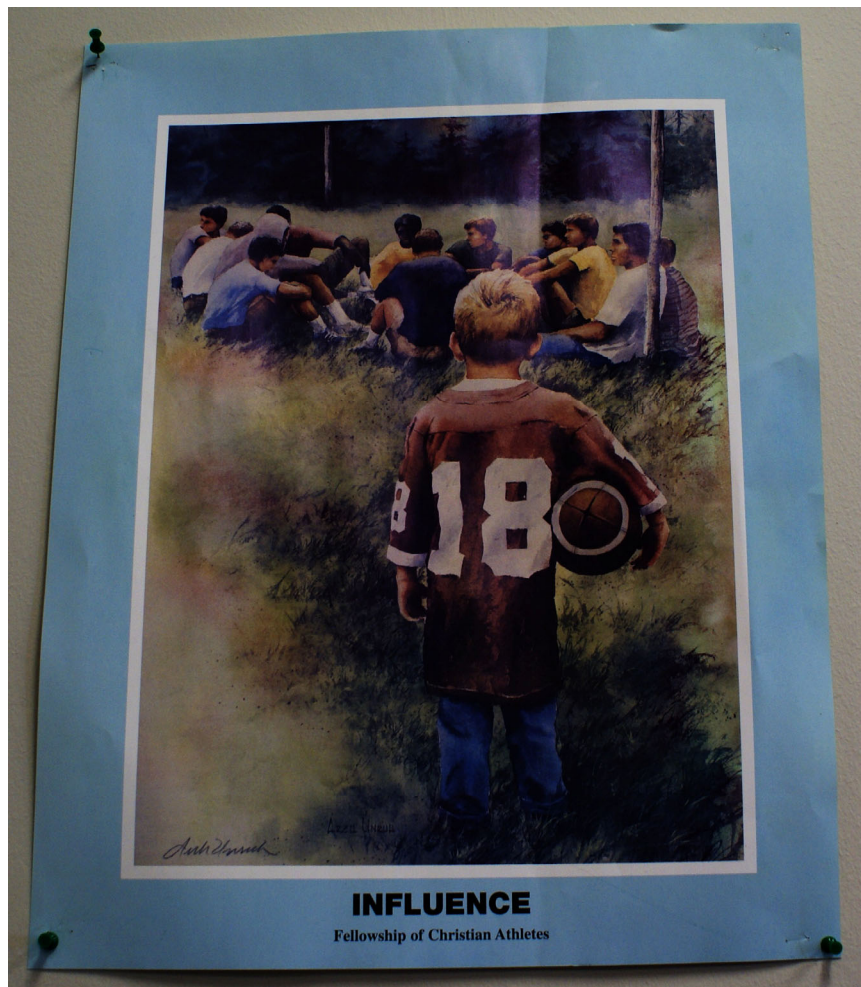


Figure 54. Mr. Follett hung this poster stating, “INFLUENCE: Fellowship of Christian Athletes” despite rulings by the Supreme Court discussing equal access in schools for organizations.

He did mention during his interview, when asked about the poster shown above in Figure 54 that he sponsored Fellowship of Christian Athletes in his room before school. He smiled often when talking about the organization and appeared to enjoy sponsoring the group. His sons, who have since graduated from high school, had been involved in the group while they attended Kingston.

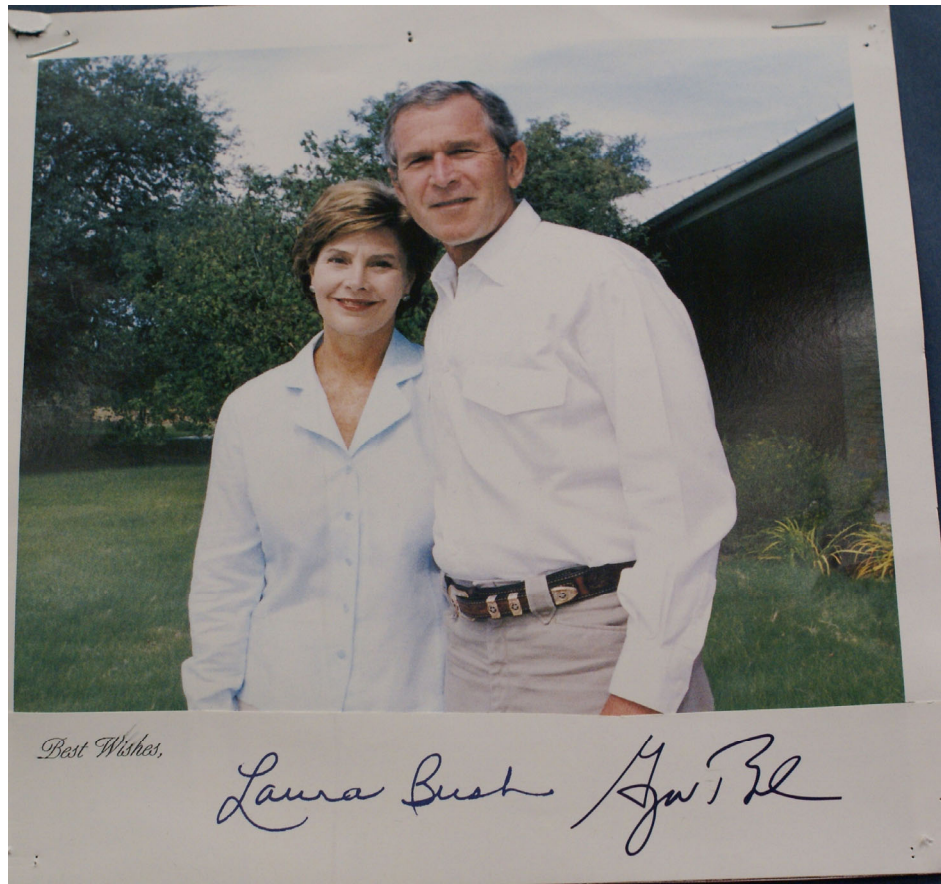


Figure 55. This photograph of President Bush and First Lady Laura Bush was located in Mr. Follet's classroom. It should be noted that every classroom at Kingston Middle School contained a photograph similar to this one.

On a bulletin board behind his desk, Mr. Follet had hung a picture of President and Mrs. Bush as seen above in Figure 56. Mr. Follet remains generally supportive of NCLB; however, he does express concern about requirements for Kingston Middle School. He believes that the primary focus of the law should be on the improvement of schools such as the one in which his brother works as mentioned previously in Chapter Five. As more standardized testing performance demands are placed upon Kingston his resentment grows against NCLB.

Ms. Monroe, Science Classroom, Kingston

Ms. Monroe painted two walls of her room a very bright shade of lime green. She had gray built-in bookcases similar to those found in Mr. Follet's room; however, her students sat at desks rather than lab tables. Ms. Monroe used the tops of the cabinets for additional storage of scientific models and manipulatives. Most of the decorations within her room were student assignments, and because of the bright walls with the assignments, the room was very personalized. Ms. Monroe's science classroom has tile floors and various science posters, mainly related to safety, at the front of the room. A storage closet is located behind the teacher's demonstration table. A large television set was placed on a rolling cart at the front of the room for easy relocation.



Figure 56. Two of Ms. Monroe's classroom walls were painted lime green which was in striking contrast to the gray walls of lab tables and cabinets.



Figure 57. The lab tables have movable student stools for student seating. Each lab table is labeled with a station number and has a separate sink.

Student desks sit in neat rows and columns in Ms. Monroe's classroom. The teacher's demonstration table is located at the front of the classroom as seen above in Figure 56. All of the student desks face towards the front of the room giving an appropriate point for students to take notes from the whiteboard or the LCD projection. Lab tables and cabinets, shown above in Figure 57, all in shades of gray laminate, wrap around two walls of the traditional middle school science classroom.

Unlike Mr. Follet, Ms. Monroe had not been packing away for the summer. Every item within the room seemed to be in its appropriate place. Her organizational skills were apparent in the details. Lab tables were numbered and the week was organized on a white board according to assignments and learning objectives. She seemed to have the capability to find anything within her room in a matter of moments.

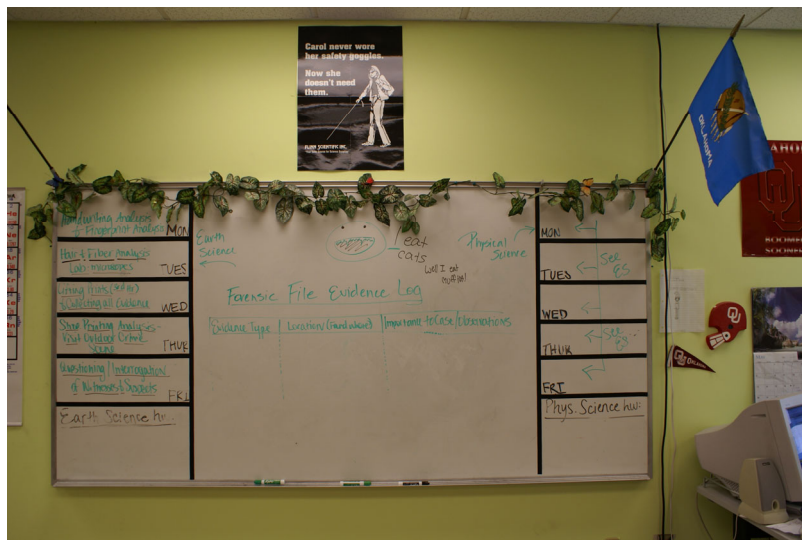


Figure 58. Ms. Monroe teaches both Earth Science and Physical Science. During this week's lesson, Physical and Earth Science students were learning the same objectives, as seen by the arrows located on the right of the board titled "See ES" (which refers to earth science) that are pointing to the other side of the board.



Figure 59. Ms. Monroe uses this poster provided by a science supply company to emphasize the importance of proper laboratory procedures with her students.



Figure 60. Ms. Monroe used a comic strip from the newspaper to explain the importance of science to her students.

Ms. Monroe used a white board that had been sectioned with black electrical tape to create lines and boxes as seen above in Figure 58. Six boxes on either side of her white board were used to write lesson objectives to be learned by students in the two sections of science she teaches. Each box represents one day of the week with the largest box at the bottom of the board, the sixth box, used to write in homework assignments.

The posters located in Ms. Monroe's classroom were mostly related to science with the exception of a poster of a local university as seen to the right above in Figure 58. Posters were used to instruct students about science laboratory safety as seen below in Figure 59. One cartoon cut from a local newspaper humorously portrays the importance of science in the world as seen below in Figure 60.

Although Ms. Monroe uses a very traditional method to inform students of instructional objectives throughout the week, she also presented one of the most creative lessons of the two schools observed. Ms. Monroe, who stated during her interview that science instruction should be inquiry based rather than lecture based, assigned students a

multi-week unit entitled “CSI.” The unit consisted of many lessons in inquiry. For a full description of the assignment with photographs see Appendix F.

Ms. Green, Science Classroom, Kingston

Ms. Green’s classroom, while overall very creative in its decorations, did contain an element of a traditional classroom design.



Figure 61. Several of Ms.Green’s framed awards had been given to her from her previous district. Over half of the items were completion certificates from professional development workshops.

Teacher certificates, diplomas and various awards were framed and placed on the wall to the side of the teacher’s desk. The 13 framed items in her classroom were hung in no particular order in an almost haphazard manner.



Figure 62. The bottom shelf of the bookcase held books. The rest of the bookshelf was covered entirely in a plethora of personal items.

Ms. Green's classroom was very creative overall. In one corner, she displayed a Minnie and Mickey Mouse collection on top of a white bookcase seen above in Figure 62. The rest of the bookcase was covered in memorabilia from travels she had taken with her family across the country. Pictures of her daughter Denise and other family members were displayed in various unmatched picture frames. The items seemed to spill from the bottom of the bookcase until they covered a small refrigerator she kept in her room for personalized items, although the teacher's lounge was well equipped and contained a

large refrigerator for teachers to use. The refrigerator provided evidence of the chasm she mentioned between her and other faculty members since her daughter began attending school at Kingston. Ms. Green used creativity to an extent not seen in any of the other classrooms from either school. The creativity originated from the teacher's mind, but the execution of the creativity came about from student work. Ms. Green turned her entire classroom into a pallet of illustrations usually placed in a typical Earth Science textbook.



Figure 63. When entering the classroom, this wall faces the door. The wall showing mountains and deciduous rainforests, also contains the primary whiteboard used in the classroom for instruction and a Smartboard screen used with an LCD projector and computer.



Figure 64. This wall is a continuation of the wall from Figure 23. The deciduous rainforest wall also showed water elements. The large boxes of pretzels on the right of the photograph are snacks for the field trip mentioned by Ms. Green in Chapter Five.



Figure 65. The back wall, leading to the hallway, is filled primarily with cabinets and lab tables. The desert painting is the only corner of the wall that is painted. Note the open door to the right. This is the storage closet mentioned in Chapter Five in which Ms. Green's daughter, Denise, spends her elective hour working on assignments at a small desk that is hidden from the camera's range.



Figure 66. This wall where the storage closet is located is painted with grasslands and tundra.

Ms. Green's classroom held furniture that was of the same type used in other Kingston classrooms. Students sat at desks with wood laminate tops, metal legs and plastic seats. The teacher's desk, a standard metal desk with a laminate top similar to the student desks, was located in front of the student desks and to the side of the classroom in a corner. She had divided the entire classroom into geographic characteristics such as tundra, deciduous rainforest, and desert regions as seen above in Figures 63, 64, 65 and 66. Last year, her students assisted her in the afternoons with painting the walls.

The decorations used within Ms. Green’s classroom extended to the ceiling tiles above the student desks. As seen above in Figures 67 and 68, students had painted views from space. The figures painted on the ceiling tiles represented both the Earth as seen from space and its continents from an aerial view. However, there were also painted representations of star formations, planet rotations and galaxies. When the walls of the classroom were completed, students removed the ceiling tiles from the ceiling grid, painted the scenes upon them, and then replaced them overhead when the tiles had dried.

Dr. Fairweather, Special Education Classroom, Kingston

Dr. Fairweather, of Kingston Middle School, had just completed an assignment with her students in Language Arts to determine the level of knowledge they had gained within the instructional year.

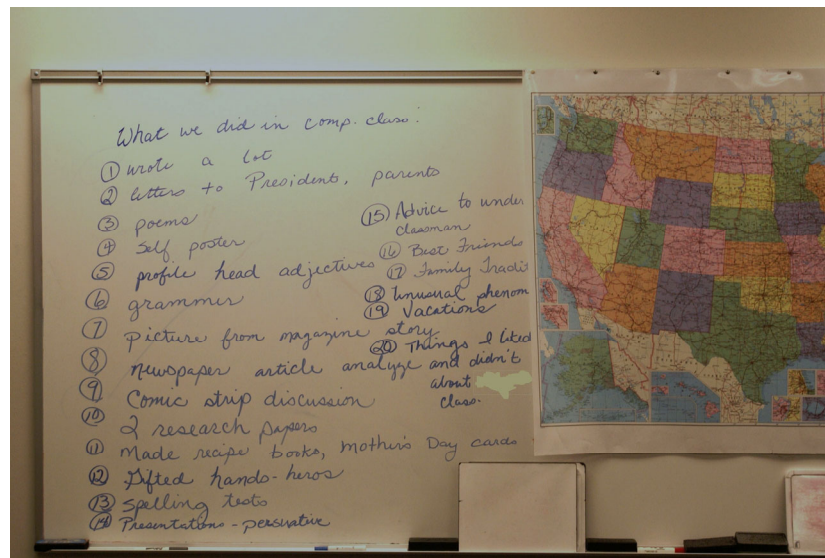


Figure 69. Items in the list included “grammar” as seen in number 6; however, grammar has been misspelled with an “er” rather than an “ar” suffix at the end of the word. The map to the right of the list is used by Dr. Fairweather in her Social Studies class during another class period.

She asked students to brainstorm together to generate a list of instructional objectives as seen above in Figure 69. This list was placed on the white board at the front

of her classroom as students named objectives. Dr. Fairweather then asked students to write on one item of their choosing from the generated list. The assignment took one class period to complete.



Figure 70. To the right of the sofa that Dr. Fairweather brought from home, she placed a medium sized bookcase diagonal to the wall. The angle of the furniture brings even more customized homelike elements to her classroom. She selected a large piece of art to display behind the sofa similar to “sofa-sized” paintings often displayed in living rooms of homes.



Figure 71. The computer desk shown in this photograph is also a personal item of Dr. Fairweather's. Note the curvature of the desktop adding even more customization to the classroom.

Dr. Fairweather brought a homelike atmosphere to her classroom by adding pieces of art painted by her adult son. The works shown above in Figures 70 and 71 are both oils; however, she also had pieces of art he had produced from pastels and watercolors. She brought additional elements from home into her classroom as seen in Figure 70 by adding a Native American headdress hanging from the coat rack. The small couch also seen in Figure 70 was brought from her home to add a personalized reading space for her students to utilize in Language Arts.

Figure 71 shows two personalized items added to the classroom. The first is a stuffed Teddy Bear placed behind the computer monitor. This computer is used by students to complete writing assignments in Language Arts. The second element is a zebra striped throw pillow placed on a computer chair in front of the desk. Dr. Fairweather commented in the interview that because both of her children are grown, she

spends a “large number” of hours in her classroom well past the time many younger teachers do.



Figure 72. The majority of these cameos were only partially completed. Eventually all of them would have white paper on top with student writing.

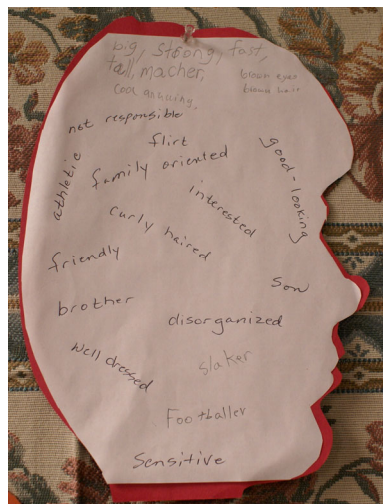


Figure 73. This student’s cameo contained words such as: friendly, sensitive, good-looking and athletic. However, self-doubt by the student was evident in other words selected such as: not responsible and disorganized. Many teachers mentioned the difficulty of teaching pre-pubescents and young teenagers filled with self-doubt.

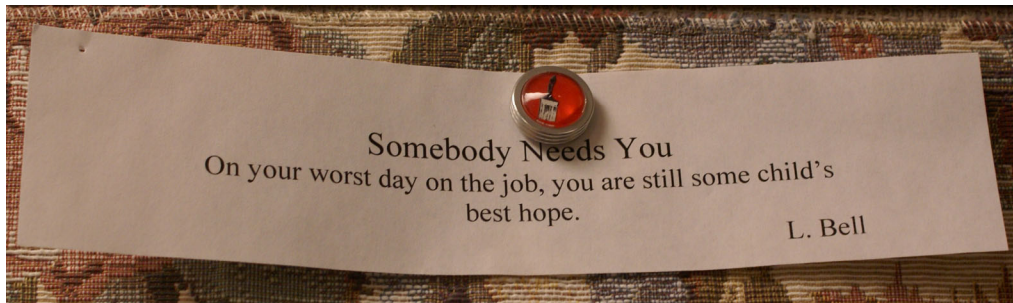


Figure 74. This simple statement by Larry Bell served as a reminder to Dr. Fairweather that her duties as a teacher have great affect on the lives of her students.

Dr. Fairweather assigned her language arts students two different creative assignments. In the first, seen above in Figure 72, Dr. Fairweather used an overhead projector to create shadow cameos of the students' profiles on colored butcher paper. The students then cut out their likenesses from the paper and cut a second, smaller cameo from white paper. On top of the white paper the students then wrote adjectives describing themselves as seen in Figure 73 above. These cameos were displayed on one bulletin board in Dr. Fairweather's classroom.

Many of the descriptors that students used of themselves were negative and displayed the emotions often felt by middle school students. Dr. Fairweather attempted to balance this negativity with a quote from Larry Bell that she tacked to the top left-hand corner of the board as seen above in Figure 74. Interestingly, the quote seemed almost a reminder to her that all of the words chosen within the cameos were chosen by students. She mentioned that her responsibility as a teacher often exceeds teaching state mandated objectives that will be measured by NCLB.

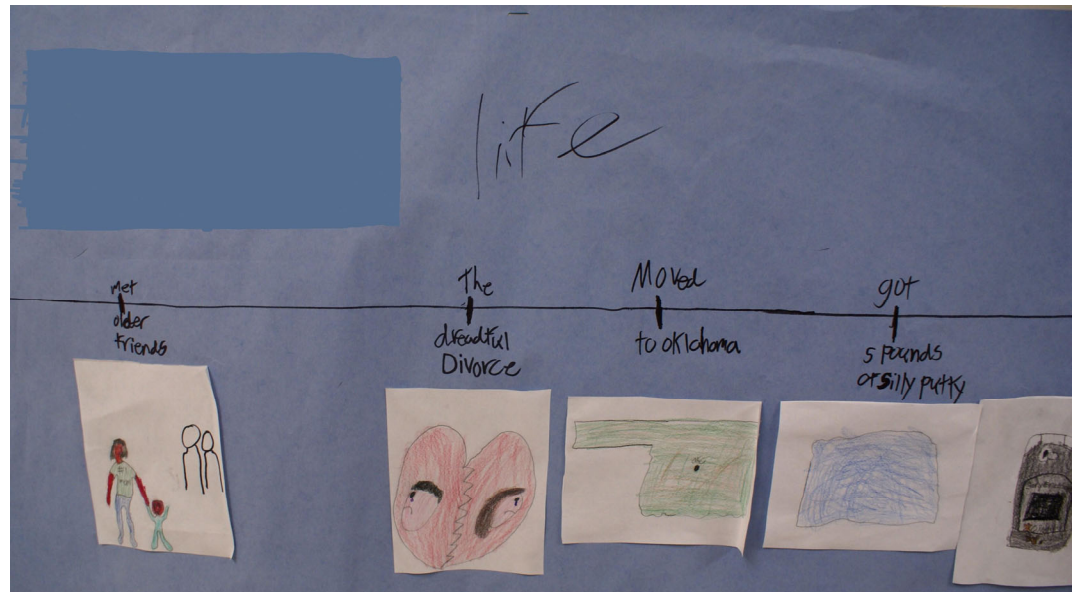


Figure 75. Dr. Fairweather assigned students to create timelines of their lives. Note the center picture labeled “The dreadful Divorce” represented by a heart broken in the middle with her parents facing in opposite directions.

Another assignment displayed in Dr. Fairweather’s room involved students creating a timeline of their lives to this point. The majority of the posters contained photographs of the students with their families. Several of the students remained positive throughout their timelines mentioning such events as birthdays and vacations. However, many of the timelines also exhibited unpleasant aspects of a child’s life such as those seen above in Figure 75. These timelines again emphasized the concern of many teachers who participated in Chapter Five that students face pressures and fear far more pressing in their lives than those created by NCLB.

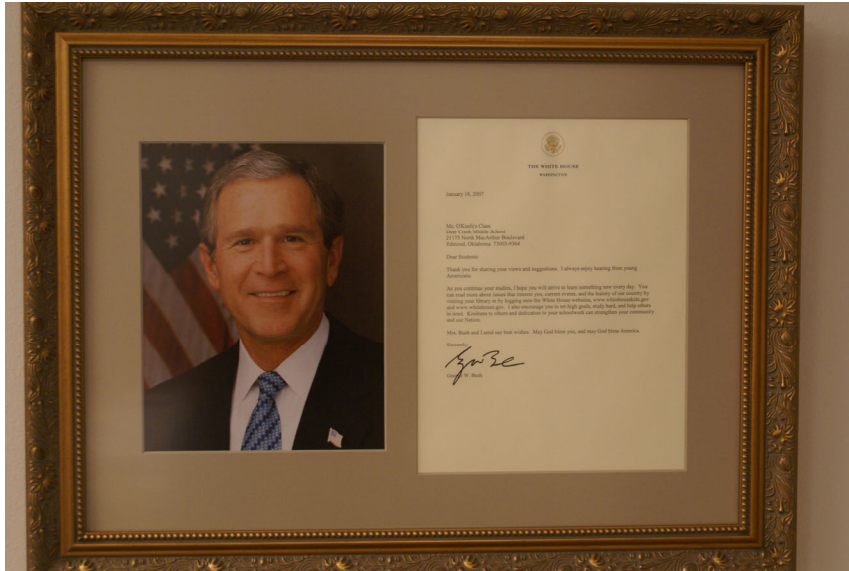


Figure 76. This photograph of President Bush is matted in a golden frame next to a letter from the President written on official White House Stationary.

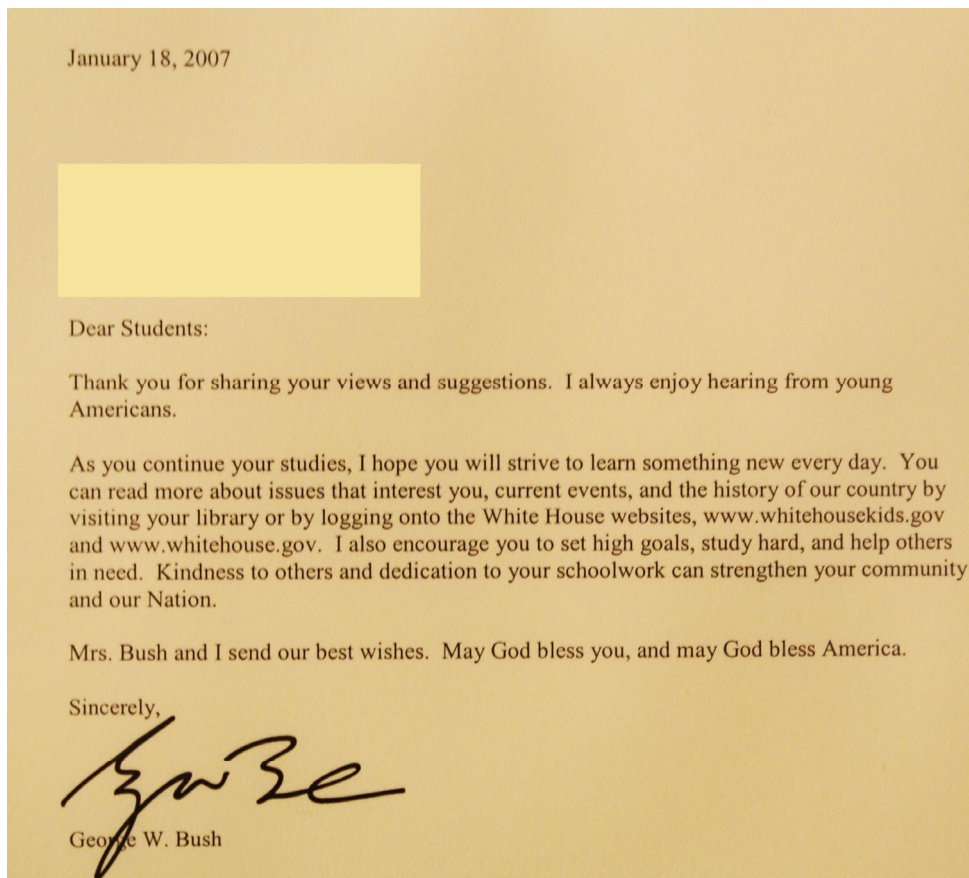


Figure 77. This letter from President Bush references letters sent by Dr. Fairweather's class.

Dr. Fairweather displayed a gilded framed photograph and letter from President Bush in her classroom as seen above in Figure 76. She had assigned students a letter writing assignment earlier in the school year expressing their opinions of various laws. On January 18, 2007, her students received the President's response—a blanket letter addressed to the entire class as seen above in Figure 77. No classrooms at Jackson Middle School contained photographs or other references to President Bush while most of Kingston's classrooms did contain similar materials. Both schools predominantly displayed the United States and Oklahoma State flags in their classrooms. Neither school referenced any politicians at the state level within their classrooms.

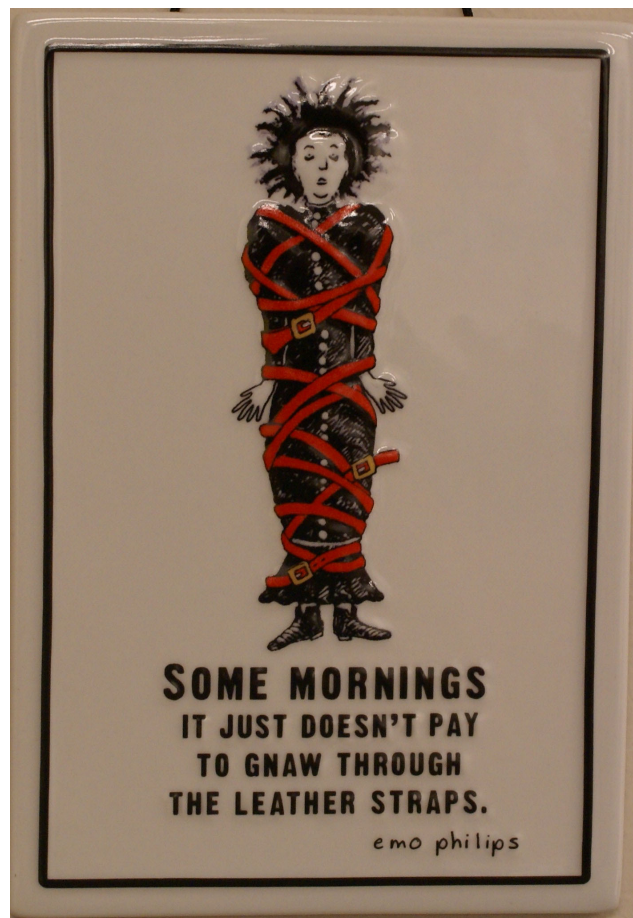


Figure 78. It seems more than coincidental that the figure in the plaque has dark, curly hair and pale skin similar to that of Dr. Fairweather.

Dr. Fairweather's sense of humor was expressed in her choice of one plaque hanging in her classroom as seen above Figure 78. The plaque seemed to reference some of her experiences this first year at Kingston. These straps could metaphorically represent the "red tape" Dr. Fairweather is facing from the Oklahoma State Department of Education as she attempts to become Highly Qualified despite her years of experience outside the classroom.

Jackson Middle School

The architecture of Jackson Middle School lends itself to creative displays by its teachers although they often cite frustration at a loss of creativity because of the restrictions placed upon them by NCLB. The classroom door areas of Jackson featured four single-paned stacked windows with ledges facing the hall area. The doors themselves were made of solid wood; however, the windows located on sides of the left and right sides of the door allowed teachers to create a very welcoming entrance to their classrooms. The doors were located in recessed nooks which allowed an extension of the classroom decorations for the teachers into the hallway. Two of the teachers from Jackson used the windows and the entrance nooks quite creatively to lend both a unique and a welcoming entrance for students.

Ms. Walker, Choir Classroom, Jackson

Ms. Walker's classroom, the choir room of Jackson, was organized to stimulate sound. Few visuals on the walls are present in an effort to avoid distraction of the student as they rehearse music. A large amount of money has been spent for the classroom on instrumentation including a concert grand piano and an impressive assortment of percussion instruments. However, Ms. Walker was fearful that as the curriculum narrows

in an effort to prepare students for the OCCT (Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests) her program may eventually be eliminated. She believes that music is one layer of a well-developed civilization that will slowly unravel if forgotten.



Figure 79. The classroom chairs were located on the south wall of the classroom. The door of the classroom is located to the right of the picture, just out of the camera's view. The folding chairs are equipped with small desktops that can be folded down to the side when not in use. A chair at the bottom right corner of the risers has its desktop folded out, ready for use while the chairs to its left have their desktops folded in a down position.

Shown in Figure 79 above, the classroom contains traditional rows of black, folding chairs lined on black risers. The white walls of the classroom, from this angle are without decoration. Only acoustical tiles on the walls break up the monotony of the painted cinder block walls. The brown, carpeted floor, which also assists in the acoustics of the room, does little to add any type of ambiance to overall effect of the sterile environment.



Figure 80. The color choices used in Ms. Walker’s bulletin board display a selection of muted color schemes—black, deep brick red, tan. To the right of the bulletin board, a small section of music can be seen.

Ms. Walker, from Jackson Middle School, used a bulletin board display, as seen above in Figure 80, to provide information about an upcoming Oklahoma Summer Arts Institute for which students could apply. Most elements, such as the posters on the walls, within Ms. Walker’s choir room were very minimal. Considering the concern for her content area that she expressed during the interview phase of the research, it could be that Ms. Walker’s attempt to create a somewhat bland classroom is actually an internal defense mechanism she exhibits to lend more credibility to the subject area she teaches. This validity of the value of her program has slowly been stripped from her curriculum by the state department. The only PASS objectives available to her are within approximately eight pages entitled “General Music” for grades 6 through 8.



Figure 81. Notice the Braums bag underneath the piano. This bag, from a popular Oklahoma dairy store, indicates that Ms. Walker has brought at least one element of her home life into her classroom perhaps to use as an improvised tote.

A concert grand piano sat predominantly at the front of her classroom as seen above in Figure 81. The piano belongs to the school as does the music stacked on top of it; yet, the arrangement of the piano as well as the haphazard piles of papers behind the stacks of music lent themselves to a more homelike atmosphere than that of a classroom. A black, metal stool with a worn seat sat to the side of the piano suggesting that Ms. Walker often sits on the stool facing her students.

This corner of her classroom was quite cluttered. Although most of the items were not personal, they did present an atmosphere of organized chaos. The items were not carefully placed by any means, but they did relate to activities that were taking place in the classroom such as upcoming choral performances. Even though Ms. Walker thinks

as if curriculum has been overlooked by the rigors of testing from NCLB, it is evident that she cares a great deal about teaching her students music.



Figure 82. The drums have specialized storage racks along a wall of the choir room. The xylophones ranging from soprano to bass in size are to the right.

Ms. Walker incorporates bongos, drums and xylophones into her students' performances throughout the year. These instruments (See Figure 82) allow students another outlet for creativity within her classroom. As she continues to feel more and more isolated by other teachers within her building who focus upon standardized testing results, what will happen to Ms. Walker's percussion instruments?



Figure 83. Ms. Walker's continued enthusiasm for her subject matter, despite her concerns about its place in the school curriculum, is evident with this border.

Ms. Walker decorated one wall above her hallway door with inspirational banners such as the one seen in Figure 83. Although she stated that she is experiencing inordinate

amounts of stress from NCLB, she is attempting to remain positive with her students. Her classroom was austere in some regard, such as the generally stark walls and minimal decoration; yet, the warmth of Ms. Walker's personality would provide comfort for most students.

Mr. Lewellen, Social Studies Classroom, Jackson

Mr. Lewellen shares his room with another social studies teacher who is female. The decorations throughout his room were mostly chosen by the other teacher.



Figure 84. Mr. Lewellen displays various educational and social studies materials in one corner of his classroom.



Figure 85. More examples of Social Studies items. Note the modern digital clock recessed into the wall. This is the clock that captured Mr. Lewellen’s attention during the interview.

Most of the items relate directly to his subject area as seen above in Figures 84 and 85. Aside from the obvious feminine influences throughout the classroom, such as flowers on the wall, Mr. Lewellen seemed very comfortable in this space.



Figure 86. This copy of the Pledge of Allegiance was mounted on the white board at the front of the classroom.

Mr. Lewellen's classroom, as many in Jackson, contained an American flag and an Oklahoman flag. His Social Studies classroom also contained a copy of the Pledge of Allegiance as seen above in Figure 86. The decoration had been made by the teacher who shared his the room. She enlarged the image, cut out the figures with words and then laminated the poster.

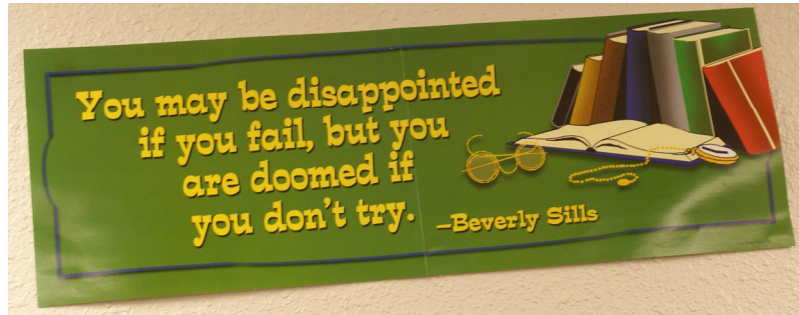


Figure 87. This poster, hanging in Mr. Lewellen's classroom, is reminiscent of Jackson's students' experiences with the OCCTs.

Jackson continues seeking methods in which to improve student test scores, particularly for special education students mainstreamed into regular education classes such as social studies. The poster shown above in Figure 87 mirrors the disappointment felt by the teachers of the school.



Figure 88. This poster of Eric Namesnik, a United States Olympian medalist, the white board at the rear of the room.



Figure 89. The decorations to the right of the whiteboard on the wall belong to the teacher with whom Mr. Lewellen shared his classroom.

Mr. Lewellen's coaching interests were apparent throughout the room as seen above in Figure 88 and at the top of Figure 89. The classroom was predominantly decorated with swimming posters and memorabilia from the other teacher's travels. Other curriculum related items were seen in the room also. Newspapers were stacked below the table located beneath the whiteboard shown in figure 89. The newspapers are used as part of a curriculum program for current events set up through a local newspaper.

Ms. Rogers, Science Classroom, Jackson

Ms. Rogers classroom is similar to many in Jackson with only one door and no windows. The space, without the addition of a teacher's personal touches, appeared sparse.



Figure 90. The student groupings are functional in their arrangement. The teacher's desk and whiteboard are decorated and inviting. The student area is unremarkable in its arrangement.

Ms. Roger's classroom, displayed in Figure 90, has painted off-white walls, brown Berber carpet and single student tables arranged in groupings of two. The tables have metal bases with wood laminate tops. Each of the groupings has black plastic stacking chairs for student seats. Students face forward towards the white board while the teacher's desk is located at the front of the room facing the students. An overhead projector was placed at the front of the room and a television hung from a wall mount. The chalkboard to the right of the room seems to have eraser marks on it, but no writing was present. There is a pull-down overhead projector screen above the chalkboard indicating that at sometime during the day, students may need to look to the right of the room for instruction.



Figure 91. Above Ms. Roger's door and to the right of it, a timeline of important scientific events is displayed.

Ms. Rogers decorated the nook area of her classroom door with a nautical theme reflecting the team on which she teaches—"Nitro Fish." She drew a picture of a tropical fish with the team's name above it. The teams within Jackson are arranged in a manner that allows core curriculum teachers, math, language arts, science and social studies, to teach the same group of students. In addition, the teachers have a common planning period during which they can discuss common issues encountered with these students or even arrange cross-curriculum lessons. Commercially produced cut-outs of fish decorated the wall behind the door as seen above in Figure 91. Even with these additions, the room still lacked personality. The fish decorations seemed only a

duplication of the other teachers' decorations within her team. The border placed above the door of the scientific discovery timeline appeared to be an afterthought of decoration, perhaps a piece she found no use for within her classroom.



Figure 92. Ms. Rogers had slung a sweater over the back of her office chair. With the books, banker's lamp, sweater, and cluttered desk evidence suggests that Ms. Rogers spends a great deal of time at her desk and in her classroom similar to Dr. Fairweather at Kingston Middle School.

Ms. Rogers angled her desk facing outwards in a back corner of her room as shown above in Figure 92. The desk faces her students while various file cabinets and bookcases are arranged along the wall behind the desk. She displayed several photographs of family members on top of the largest file cabinet. A stuffed wolf and three fuzzy writing pens with faces sat on top of a smaller file cabinet close to her desk. Ms. Rogers had a personal banker's lamp on her desk with copies of several books underneath the lamp suggesting moments when she might open a book for pleasurable reading during her time at Jackson.

An “Easy” button is located at the front of her desk as seen above in Figure 92. During her interview, Ms. Rogers discussed in detail the pressures she feels from the testing requirements of NCLB. The “Easy” button suggests that a quick fix to the testing requirements would be agreeable to her present demeanor.

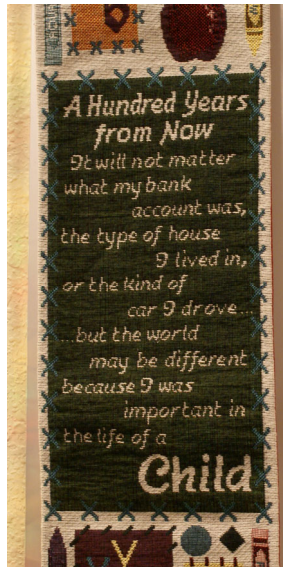


Figure 93. What place will the results of standardized testing hold 100 years from now?



Figure 94. Ms. Rogers has taken all decorations, such as trophies, from the tops of her cabinets. In addition, she has boxes throughout the area in which is slowly packing items that will not be left displayed during the summer months.

apple was very complimentary of her teaching. Above the apples, she wrote in marker, “Remember, Keep Ms. Thompson away from my parents!” The remark was added by her with sarcasm after she read the student apples.

Ms. Thompson placed a copy of her own poetry under the student apples. The poem, reminiscent of a Dr. Seuss book reads:

Would you teach my student?

Would you teach them here or there?

Would you teach them anywhere?

Would you teach them if they had no hair?

In a school?

Where they drool?

Would you teach them on a mule?

Would you teach Tyler and Deon?

In Science about neon?

What about Chastity and Kristen?

In Math would they listen?

What about Ian and Nick?

In PE to fetch a stick?

What about Michaela and Haley?

Would teach them daily?

My students, my students

They must learn.

I am so concerned.

Would you teach them about “the” test?

I want them to do their best.

Would you teach Brandon and Austin?

While I’m in Boston?

What about Martin and Bryce?

How to be Nice?

Would you teach Ashley about Chinese rice?

And what about Deiondre,

Would you?

Could you?

Teach him all the way to May?

Although written by the teacher as an example for her students, the content of the poem is disturbing in that Ms. Thompson contemplates every student for whom she is responsible to teach. Some of the word choices are quirky such as “mule;” however, when rhymed with the word “droot” the reader is reminded that many special needs students enter a regular education classroom on any given day.

The fifth stanza of the poem ends with two lines, “Would you teach them about “the” test? I want them to do their best.” Teachers at both Jackson and Kingston want their students to succeed on the OCCTs. At Jackson, that desire has become more pressing after the school learned it was on the Needs Improvement list. The success of the teachers has become directly related to the success of their students.



Figure 96. Ms. Thompson displays numerous Oklahoma items in this personalized corner of her room behind her desk.



Figure 97. In the front left corner of the classroom, Ms. Thompson uses the tops of file cabinets to display personal pictures amongst other collectibles.

Her classroom was pleasant in that the decorations she chose reflected not only her curriculum, but also her personality. Most of the items (Figure 96) are personal touches surrounding the necessary materials needed in a language arts class. The classroom's content (Figure 97) was fairly standard in the teachers' rooms of both Kingston and Jackson. Such items as classroom rules and calendars were found in most areas of both buildings.

Mr. Frantz, Civics Classroom, Jackson

In most classrooms of teachers interviewed, immediately walking into the room, one could identify the subject taught within the classroom. Mr. Frantz's room contained sinks, cabinet tops and textbooks from a science class although he taught civics. He later clarified these items indicating that he shares the classroom with another teacher who

does teach science. Many of the teachers at Jackson indicated that they felt a loss of identity as a teacher as their creativity slowly gave way to the demands of testing.



Figure 98. The top right block of the shelving unit contains a photograph of his favorite university's stadium in which Mr. Frantz enjoys watching football games.

Mr. Frantz's classroom, seen above in Figure 98, had an organized shelving unit hung on a wall. Although he was unable to decorate the entire room, this wall with its shelving unit had been decorated by him. Mr. Frantz, with this shelving unit, demonstrated his creativity as he displayed items reflecting his interests. Textbooks were carefully placed in three sections of the case, while the other four units held personalized items of his favorite college sport's team, a fake plant, and a wooden dinosaur. On top of the unit were two framed posters, one of a piano keyboard with a rose, flute and sheet music placed on top; the other poster had the words, "In God We Trust" printed in gold on top of a waving portion of the United States flag.



Figure 99. Mr. Frantz's classroom displayed this message. Despite his age, Mr. Frantz remained willing to attempt new method to reach his students.

The positive attitude he maintained as he completed the first year of his second career was reflected in both his interview and also in the poster seen above in Figure 99. His wife assisted him in selecting the banner. Next year as he becomes the school's technology teacher it may be important for him to reflect upon the message of the poster. This change brings more anxiety for him at the end of his first year as a teacher.

Ms. Hedge, Geography Classroom, Jackson

Ms. Hedge expressed concern about her students' behavior in her interview stating that if she were a much larger woman, it would be easier for her to control her classes. The entrance to her classroom and calendar on the wall suggest a pleasant teacher who creates an inviting atmosphere for her students. She did not seem in a rush to pack up her things and begin her summer vacation as other teachers did. However, the frustration she felt over her students' willingness to stop learning once standardized testing ended manifested itself in a completely sarcastic bulletin board that would do little to persuade students to continue learning. Perhaps the behavior problems she experienced with her students was influenced by her own behavior after testing ended.



Figure 100. Ms. Hedge used the window ledges of her classroom door space to display her collection of garden frogs and wooden flowers.



Figure 101. Ms. Hedge's alcove is decorated with a large apple labeled with her name. Rainbow numbers have been placed above her door.



Figure 102. The computer located below the bulletin board is available to students to use for assignments or supplementary assistance utilizing computer programs.

Ms. Hedge used her classroom door windows to provide a welcoming entrance to students as seen below in Figures 100 and 101. As one entered the classroom, a cheery bulletin board with a calendar faced the door as seen below in Figure 102.



Figure 103. Cartoon images of children are featured in the bulletin board's background material. To the bottom right of the dog, there is an image of Superman with his pants falling down and striped boxers show over the waistband of his tights. It is unclear if the dog is a student or the teacher; it is also unclear who the image of Superman represents.

Every teacher interviewed expressed emotion when questioned about NCLB and the requirements for standardized testing. However, only one teacher created an entire bulletin board scheme reflecting that stress. Seen above in Figure 103, Ms. Hedge's bulletin board features the large face of a yellow Labrador Retriever. The dog is snarling and makes the statement that "Testing is over!;" it finishes its thought by asking, "Why are we still doing work?"

Emergent Themes

The personality of the teacher affects the overall style of a teacher's classroom, rather than arbitrary control by the Oklahoma State Department of Education or even the mandates of NCLB. However, the personal choices used to determine those decorating selections can very much be influenced by outside pressures placed upon a teacher. If testing were not a prominent focus within the minds of teachers at Jackson, Ms. Thompson would never have focused her poem upon standardized testing and Ms. Hedge would have found another caption for her "dog" bulletin board. The majority of teachers whose classrooms were photographed did attempt to create a teaching atmosphere that would allow them comfort.

The most important aspect of the teachers' classroom observations is that items observed within the classrooms did support items discussed during the interviews. These items sometimes provided cross-referenced support of another teacher's observations. Clearly, curriculum influences the selections made by teachers as they decorate and arrange their classrooms. However, the general disposition of the teacher also affects those decisions. Teachers who taught in a very traditional manner generally created a traditional atmosphere within their classrooms. Those teachers whose subject matter lent

itself to hands-on instruction applied elements to their classrooms to support that instruction.

NCLB, at this point, seemed to affect teachers on an emotional level rather than a practical level as they made selections of materials to include in their rooms. The teachers at Kingston teach in an autonomous manner. Their selections and choices, even the manner in which they decorate their classrooms, are seldom influenced by their peers or their administrators. The same might be said for Jackson in relation to their decorative choices within their classrooms; however, their time has become monopolized by testing preparation. Their individual personalities may slowly disappear as their minds become focused upon testing preparation as evidenced by the classroom décor.

The teachers of Kingston, as exemplified by Ms. Green, were allowed freedom by their principal to bring inordinate amounts of creativity into their classrooms. This creativity was not seen in Jackson where teachers commented regularly that they believed their creativity had been removed from their teaching. This removal, they explained, was a result of the emphasis placed upon state standardized testing and the preparation for the testing.

Recurring Emergent Themes

Four emergent themes in Chapter 6, Phase III, classroom observations are common with those found in Chapter 4, Phase I, teacher drawings and Chapter 5, Phase II, teacher interviews. All three data contain evidence of concerns regarding loss of creativity, teachers' inability to meet the needs of all students within their classrooms, timelines and standardized testing. These emergent themes are discussed in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of the Title I sections of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation on middle school teachers. The four primary research questions which guided this study were:

1. In the perception of teachers, how has education been changed by the implementation of NCLB?
2. What changes do middle school teachers perceive have made in their working environment as a result of the implementation of NCLB?
3. What changes do middle school teachers perceive that they have made in their practice as a result of the implementation of NCLB?
4. What changes or impact do the teachers perceive in their city or community from NCLB?

Presently, public schools face the ramifications of NCLB (Heinegg, 2005; Brimley & Garfield, 2005). With the passage of The Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (ESEA) in 1965 and through its various reauthorizations over the past four decades, including NCLB in 2002, state boards of education, to receive additional federal funding, direct public schools to follow guidelines set forth by the federal government (Herman & Dietel, 2005). However, with the passage of NCLB, traditional state control of local educational practices now resembles federally mandated reform (Goertz & Duffy, 2003). As a result, the language of high stakes testing, annual yearly progress (AYP), and

graduation requirements for high school seniors prevalent in NCLB are now standard vocabulary in school districts throughout the nation (Diener, 2004).

As public schools within Oklahoma that receive public funding, the two middle schools in this study must meet the requirements of the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE). Kingston Middle School is a “Blue Ribbon” school whose students continue to score well on the Oklahoma Core Criterion Tests (OCCT). Jackson Middle School has been a “Blue Ribbon” school as recently as two years ago; however, the school was placed on the “Needs Improvement” list in 2006 after their special education students did not meet the requirements of subgroup performance as set forth by OSDE.

The study was conducted in three Phases. In Phase 1, teachers from both schools created drawings describing their interpretation of how NCLB has affected them. In Phase 2, volunteers from both schools were interviewed, and during Phase 3, the classrooms of those interviewed were observed. The emergent themes from all three phases of the research were then compared.

From the emergent themes, an overarching theme was identified and examined in relation to time and the theoretical perspective of Political Spectacle.

Examination of Common Themes

Sarcasm and humor by participants in all phases of the research indicated that many of the teachers used these as coping mechanisms for dealing with increased scrutiny of their schools by the public in relation to their performance on standardized testing. The interviews and classroom observations provided a public glance into the teachers’ feelings, while the drawings of Phase I allowed an intimate glimpse into the teachers’ deepest emotions regarding the impact of NCLB. Sixty-six teacher participants

expressed varied opinions regarding NCLB; however, the great majority of the teachers' opinions reflected negatively upon the impact of NCLB within their individual classrooms.

Five of these themes from Phase II were common with the themes identified in Phase I. These included concerns regarding teacher shortages, loss of creativity, teachers' inability to meet the needs of all students within their classrooms, timelines and standardized testing.

Four emergent themes in Phase III were common with those found in Phases I and II. All three phases contain evidence of concerns regarding the validity of high-stakes testing, loss of creativity, teachers' inability to meet the needs of all students within their classrooms, particularly those considered marginalized and special need students. Adding these four to the theme of teacher shortage, five primary themes frame the discussion, conclusions and recommendations of this study.

Concerns of Validity in High-Stakes Testing

Teachers at both schools expressed concern about the effects of high-stakes testing as these effects related to instructional methods. Career teachers and those nearing retirement lamented the changes in the focus within their classrooms from a curriculum reflecting teacher choice to a more structured curriculum determined by OSDE. Most of the teachers cited the inability of multiple-choice testing to measure true comprehension and in-depth knowledge of curriculum. In addition, there was a shared concern that students and teachers faced "testing burn-out" as the number of required state mandated tests increased. At Jackson Middle School, the addition of district benchmark tests also was believed to be problematic.

The finding of teacher concerns over the inability of multiple-choice testing to measure true comprehension and in-depth knowledge of curriculum is supported in existing literature. Outcome assessments have existed in American schools since the mid 1800's, with multiple-choice testing formats have existing for nearly as long. By World War I, standardized testing was used to measure and determine students' performances through school. Tests became "high-stakes" in the 1950's when students were required in some areas to test in order to be promoted to the next grade level (Glaser & Silver, 1994; Hattie et al., 1999). The first major assessment attempt by the federal government was the Equality of Education Opportunity Survey (EEOS) administered to over 600,000 students in public schools to create results for the Coleman Report in 1965 which documented student achievement throughout the nation (Glaser & Silver, 1994).

Many teachers from both Kingston and Jackson discussed their concerns over the validity of using in standardized tests to adequately determine adequately a student's knowledge of curriculum. The multiple-choice format used for standardized tests was continually cited as an inadequate format to determine students' knowledge of content. A consistent concern of test theory is whether or not the same areas of cognition are adequately measured utilizing different formats of test administration (Hattie, et al, 1999). Christenson & Ysseldyke (1989) called for alternative methods of assessment that create more valid results.

While performance-based testing may seem preferable to a typical limited multiple-choice construct of testing, performance-based testing remains limited in its application. Realistically, performance based standardized testing such as science testing that measures tactile skills may be cost-prohibitive for any large-scale administrations

(Stecher & Klein, 1997). Another problem in implementing performance-based testing is the training involved for the test administrators. Contamination of test scores by administrators (inter-rater reliability) must also be considered when examining any method of test administration used (Hattie, et al., 1999).

Loss of Creativity

The majority of teachers at Jackson Middle School expressed dismay at what they perceived as a loss of creativity as they struggled to adhere to the increased demands of benchmark and standardized testing. Rather than just infringing on instructional time, these teachers believed that the creative innovation they once brought to instructional practices had nearly vanished under the pressures of improving student performance on the OCCTs. They feared that their classrooms were becoming a forum for best testing practices rather than best teaching practices.

Existing literature supports this finding. Standardized tests often trap educators as the educational process becomes limited in its creativity and stifled by the structures of the required tests (Adkison & Tchudi, 2001; Smith, 1991). Thomas (2001) stated that standardized tests, whether criterion or rubric-based, tend to create an ultimate end-point in assessment and limit creativity in curriculum. Indeed, this suggests that not only the creativity within curriculum is limited, but also that a teacher's teaching practices may be limited creatively as well.

NCLB Impact on Marginalized Students

Jackson and Kingston teachers referred often to marginalized students. They felt that lack of parental involvement often affected their students' performances. This lack of involvement sometimes occurred from financial hardships created through economic

difficulties, but other times was the result of parents neglecting their children. Some teachers from Jackson believed that until parents were held accountable for some of the items used to determine the APIs of schools no positive changes could occur. The majority of teachers at Kingston mentioned a “school mom”, a certified special education teacher who pulled students from elective classes in order to complete projects, homework or other assignments normally done in a home environment with the support of parents, as a tool to mimic the benefits of involved parents in an effort to alleviate poor student performance in the classroom.

The literature supports these concerns. Every child is entitled to a rigorous education including those students from disadvantaged backgrounds of low-socioeconomic areas and schools with high representations of minority students that have not performed well on standardized testing in the past (Jago, 2001). In a study of teachers in Massachusetts, Luna and Turner (2001) found that urban administrators are often perceived by teachers as intrusive in classrooms in an effort to make sure that teachers continue to attempt making student performances improve on achievement tests. Teachers felt that this intrusion is often disguised as an attempt to align curriculum. In addition, following the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), teachers often did not change the taught curriculum, but did fine-tune the content within the curriculum and the instructional methods used to teach the content.

NCLB Impact on Special Education Students

Teachers from both schools also noted the importance of addressing the needs of special education students even as the focus of energy within the schools became more concentrated on standardized testing results. One teacher from Kingston discussed in

detail the ramifications of the brain injury of her own child and the subsequent consequences experienced by the child in the classroom. Teachers from both schools altered their educational practices in an effort to provide adequate educational opportunities for their students because other resources, such as special education teachers, were deleted in the schools.

These concerns are mirrored within the high-stakes testing terature. In special education programs the IEP is used to guide that student's education and provided a means to determine the level of that student's success. For some students, success may be identified if the student showed greater self-esteem during the school year. "This position runs counter to the standards-based reform movement..." (Heward, 2003, p. 188) that has become prevalent in The United States. Yet the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act of 1997 (IDEA) reaffirms that in essence, the meaning of a skill for a student depends upon the relevancy of that skill upon the students' life (Heward, 2003).

This concept of individualized learning again leads to the relevancy of testing in a student's life. While the importance of a sufficient reading level for a student is without dispute, the method of measuring that reading level might be arguable. Research has exposed the problem of transferability in means of measurement and results in measurement. Helwig, Rozek-Tedesco and Tinday (2002) described this problem while studying the impact of altering standardized mathematics testing from a read and answer approach to an oral administration. In the end, the question of how much the actual test was altered because of the means of administration was unanswered. Yet again emerges the issue regarding the method in which a test is administered. To meet the needs of a student's IEP, an educator may be directed to administer a test orally; however, the very

change in the administration of that test might influence or even invalidate the results of the test itself.

The ramifications for special education students taking high-stakes standardized tests are extraordinary. In the 2001-02 school year, 2,846,000 students in the United States, ages 3 to 21, were classified as students with learning disabilities. Of all special education students served in the United States, 44.4% are classified as learning disabled, constituting six percent of the total school population (National Clearinghouse of Educational Statistics, 2003). Amendments to IDEA require educators to provide special education students access to the general curriculum rather than simply requiring access to regular-education classrooms (Sousa, 2003). In practical application, this implies that a majority of special education students classified as learning disabled are required to participate in widespread, state-or federal mandated, high-stakes testing.

Teachers of the learning disabled are reporting disturbing results after testing their students in high-stakes standardized tests. Crist and Shafer (2001) report watching mainstreamed special-needs students struggle every year to succeed on tests in which teachers know the students cannot succeed. Both teachers from a high-performing suburban school and a low-performing urban school expressed concern that the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) refused special education students a diploma based upon their performance on one standardized test (Luna and Turner, 2001).

Modifications of high-stakes tests for the learning-disabled remain the most readily available corrective practice for educators to implement. An important aspect of modifications for special-needs students on standardized tests is the question of what that

student's score might have been under standardized-testing conditions without modifications (Hattie, et al., 1999).

Teacher Shortage

Teachers at both schools indicated that they had been impacted by NCLB legislation. Many younger teachers, new to the career of teaching, considered leaving the profession by seeking master's degrees in other fields. Other teachers commented on the probable ramifications on education if such a teacher flight from education should occur. An increase in teacher-to-student ratio, the inability of teachers to reach every student, and a probable decline in educational outcomes were among the issues discussed as teachers contemplated low teacher attrition.

Political Spectacle Theory and the Impact of Time

While the five specific themes above emerged individually, time manifested itself as an overarching theme throughout all three Phases of the research. In the drawings, time or timeliness appeared, as progression through classrooms and careers. In the interviews, it became evident in the discussions of careers, both beginning and ending. Time is present in the observations and photos of the classrooms as a contrast between the two schools studied.

Time is also a prevalent element within this study when closely examining the theory of Political Spectacle as a backdrop to the structure of these schools. Placing the two schools within the context of a play in which the teachers and students become mere actors reinforces the progression of time demonstrating effects evident in schools functioning under NCLB.

Political Spectacle in Kingston and Jackson

Ultimately, the many politicians who redefined themselves as supporters of the “evidence” presented in *A Nation At Risk* created the Political Spectacle now affecting both Kingston and Jackson Middle Schools. Politicians create a political spectacle for the purpose of correcting a “problem” in society defined by them (Edelman, 1988). The possible ramifications of the “fix” to the problem within a political spectacle rarely bother politicians. Years after a policy is passed, when the politicians have left their elected offices, the results creating the “fix” often become worse than the problems they attempted to solve in the first place. Politicians begin as the directors and producers of various Political Spectacles enacted within public life, and end their careers by returning to the citizen filled audience.

Teachers and other school participants have become responsible for the implementation of subsequent policy following NCLB. Since 1983, when *A Nation at Risk* described a crisis within United States schools, standards-based reform has permeated every crevice of United States classrooms. In Oklahoma, through the support of OSDE, Oklahoman Core Curriculum Tests (OCCT) have been implemented as the instrument through which changes in public education might be made.

The results of these tests have profoundly affected Oklahoman schools. Kingston Middle School currently is experiencing the title of “Blue Ribbon School” receiving accolades and praise for the fine work of its teachers. Jackson Middle School, a former Blue Ribbon School, now finds itself on a Needs Improvement list of the state. Every moment of the working day of the Jackson teachers is now spent attempting to improve

the test results of a group of students now completely different from those originally tested in 2005 when they were also designated as a “Blue Ribbon School”.

In this specific road company (this study) of the Political Spectacle of NCLB, the actors are the classroom teachers at Kingston and Jackson are the teachers within their classrooms. These teachers at both schools desire to remain dedicated to their students, but the effects of NCLB are creating dramatic differences between the teachers in the two schools. Kingston Middle School is yet relatively unaffected by NCLB. Jackson Middle School, on the other hand, has been dramatically affected. The performance of a small sub-group of students on standardized tests, a changing population of students, and a radically changing community have morphed the entire school environment. NCLB judged the teachers in Jackson Middle School and found them lacking, the scripts were rewritten, and the Spectacle remounted, but the actors remain the same, and they find their parts very difficult to play.

The timelines within these two schools are also changing. Teachers at Kingston begin their days early and end their days late, much past the hours demanded by their contracts. Evidence of this time well-spent is seen as teachers meet with students to assist with homework or assignments before and after school. Frequent collaboration occurs between the teachers to enhance instruction. Even during the regular classroom day, teachers meet outside of their classrooms and greet each other as they pass in the halls. The principal schedules time on Mondays to visit every classroom; however, other than this interaction, she creates a *laissez faire* working environment for her teachers, increasing both their perception of autonomy and their creative freedom.

Creativity exudes itself in all areas of the school, from displays of student artwork in the halls to custom paint jobs within the classrooms. Space in some areas, such as the computer lab, has been temporarily redefined to create enhanced learning environments for the students. Professional development usually involves a sharing of “best practices” by teachers within the school. Spontaneous collaboration of teachers occurs frequently as they attempt to move their students at even greater levels of learning. Some teachers note that the community is slowly changing; however, with each change Kingston finds ways to adapt, such as employing “school moms,” and changing instruction for special needs students. Teachers do what they can to address student needs.

While Jackson Middle School is a phenomenal architectural achievement. However, the architecture itself cannot bring warmth to the hallways of the school. At 3:30 p.m., when the teachers’ contract day ends, the hallways are vacant. The main office is locked and dark. No students linger in classrooms. Only an occasional custodian can be found unlocking a door to begin cleaning a classroom.

Even during the day, when students are present, more often than not teachers retreat to their classrooms as students pass one another in the halls. Interaction between the teachers is hidden and secretive, never overtly displayed in public. The majority of their meetings are carefully scripted in professional development “opportunities” presented by an outside firm. These meetings consist of hours of data analysis used to study every piece of evidence of their failure to proficiently instruct students in tested curriculum. Teachers are even assigned seats to ensure they sit with carefully chosen colleagues as if the teachers themselves are incapable of making such an important decision.

The classrooms themselves contain a few personal artifacts of teachers, an occasional personal photograph, a carefully selected poster but from one room to the next, plain eggshell paint and neutral tones define classroom space. Only the architecture of the school itself exhibits any personality, but it is the personality of the architect, somewhere far removed from the teachers and students. Any ownership of the school by the occupants within is slowly diminishing even as the constraints of NCLB become more tightly adhered.

The overarching timeline for the presentation of the Political Spectacle of NCLB is as follows. Teachers enter their careers with expectations of flourishing in a vocation of helping students. In both Kingston and Jackson this desire was apparent for all teachers. Teachers at Kingston still experience this fulfillment of their professions. The joy in their work day is in the time they spend with students. However in Jackson, when the script of the Spectacle is changed as the “punishments” of NCLB become manifest, as a school is labeled “Needs Improvement” on the basis of one year’s test scores, in one grade level’s performance, by one sub-group of students, the vocation of each teacher becomes a job. Although most cannot completely end their careers at the moment, they move toward the end by leaving as soon as possible at the end of their work day.

The effect of NCLB identified in this study is causing teachers to “treat” test scores rather than teach students. Teachers at Jackson have been told by their administrators to focus attention on their test scores. The students are being slowly forgotten except by those teachers lamenting the changing community support network once found in the town of Jackson. Teachers at Jackson are experiencing changes that radically alter their professional lives. From the interviews and drawings of Jackson

teachers, it is clear that some aspects of the environment of Kingston Middle School once could be found at Jackson. How could teachers feel a loss of creativity if they had never experienced the freedom allowed in a school such as that found in Kingston? It seems that at one time that freedom did exist as evidenced from their label as a “Blue Ribbon School” two years ago.

As to the element of time, what might one day become of Kingston? The school itself is similar to the school Jackson once was. Teachers experience community support: students succeed academically; teachers dutifully attempt to reach their students through creativity and a genuine concern. If substantial changes are not made the mandates of Title I in NCLB, the time will come when the performance of one sub-group of students will place Kingston on the Needs Improvement list.

What will one day become of Jackson? Jackson has already lived the past that is now Kingston’s present. They live in the cold sterile environment of numbers. What will happen as their older teachers retire and their newer teachers leave in search of a “better” career? What will happen to the students in both of these schools? What will happen to society as a whole if only the results of standardized tests remain the focus of the Political Spectacle even as the necessary substructure of a society’s support system (the Spectacle production crews) slowly erodes into that of neglectful parents and failing students? Who becomes responsible for lowering the final curtain on a Political Spectacle created by long forgotten politicians?

The timeline of events portrayed in the Political Spectacle can be used to measure the hours of a school day, the calendar days within a school year, and even the career of a teacher as seen below in Figure 104. These timelines occur naturally, yet with the

application of policy, they begin to manifest patterns that are unwanted by teachers, and detrimental to education in general.

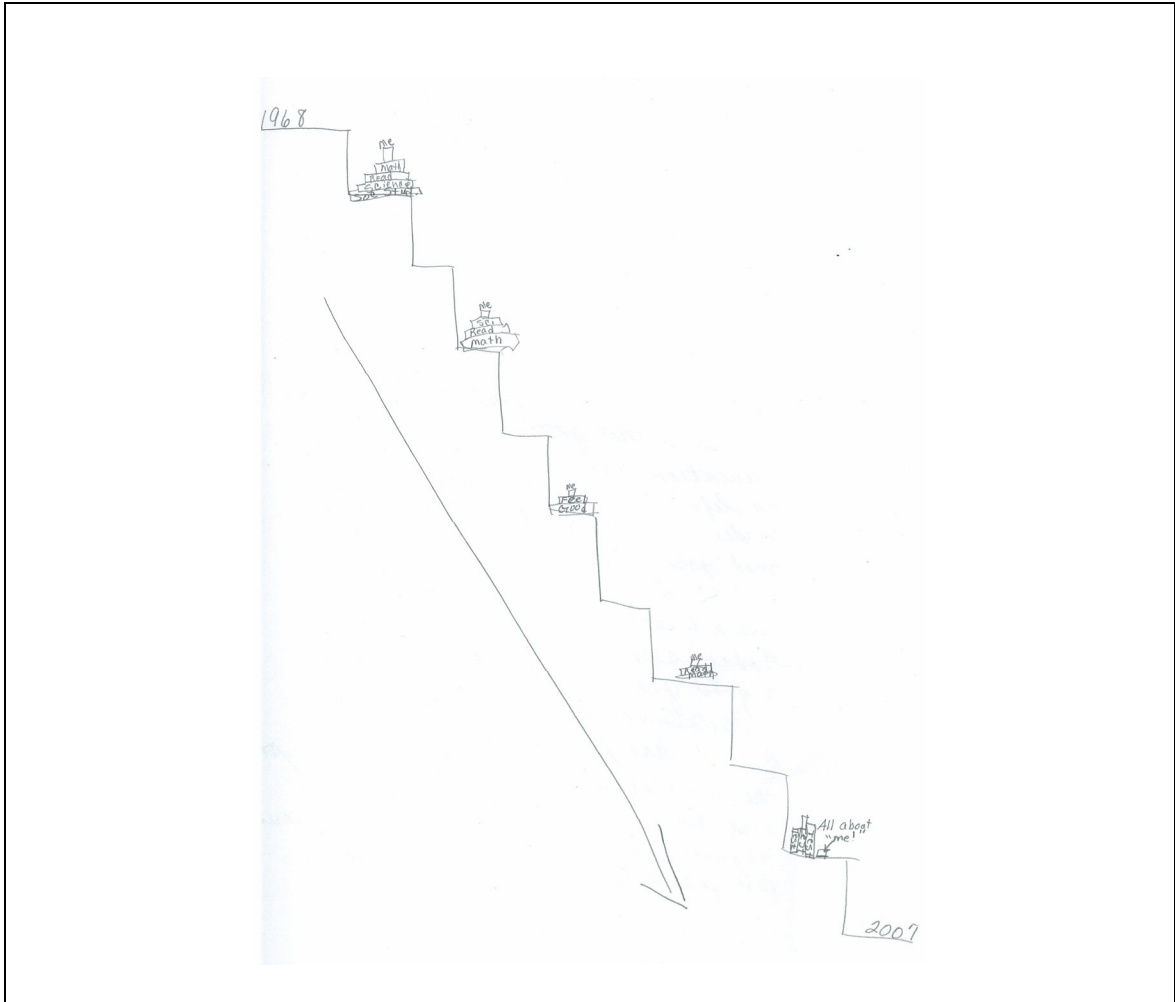


Figure 104. Just as in Ms. Clifton’s drawing, education within public schools is following a timeline created by the political spectacle of NCLB.

The final success of a play, of course, is always determined by the reviews of the critics. Potential audience members read the reviews and decide if the play is worth buying tickets to see. Parents and other patrons of public education have become the audience. The media at this time report about the bangs and bumps of educational progress in our country in their role as critics. Unfortunately, by focusing upon the bad reviews, the only reviews deemed newsworthy, any achievements made by schools are

quickly forgotten. In Jackson, the principal who inherited the problems of the former administration, must deal with feedback from patrons regarding the failure of the school which happened after she took the position. Few patrons realize that the scores were earned before she was ever hired as principal.

Parents and patrons have yet to react to these reviews in any significant manner. Right now, they continue to buy tickets and attend performances, but they do not understand that they can influence the script, thereby changing the action and ending of the Spectacle. Complaints are mild in comparison to what normally proceeds in the run of a play. Eventually when all reviews of a play are negative, the play eventually shuts its doors. Both audience reaction and negative reviews have closed many a Broadway production. The same may prove true for this particular Political Spectacle.

Implications for Policy and Practice

By the school year 2013-14, all students, regardless of Individual Education Plan (IEP) specification, must pass their state's proficiency requirements as determined by standardized test scores. While NCLB allows for up to three percent of a state's school population to take alternative methods of assessments due to special needs (McLeod, et al., 2003), in the 2001-02 school year, 6,407,000 students from the ages of 3 to 21 were served by federally-funded special education programs (National Clearinghouse of Educational Statistics (2003). No matter what a student's ability is or handicap they happen to have, all students must show proficiency in subject areas by taking a state-administered assessment test and passing that test according to the guidelines set forth by that state (U. S. Department of Education, Office of the Deputy Secretary, 2004).

Although these two Oklahoma middle schools produced different results on Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests (OCCT), teachers mention stress from high-stakes standardized testing. In addition, many of the relatively new teachers discussed leaving the profession of teaching. This possible teacher flight from education could eventually lead to a shortage of teachers throughout education. Essentially, the very policy developed to improve educational practices throughout the United States may eventually destroy any progress made in student performance as measured on standardized tests. Unfortunately, the only effective method with which to test this theory is to wait for the policy to be in effect for many years until its true impact on education might be discovered.

NCLB has created a situation in which educators no longer simply face occasional disgruntled students or parents as in the past. Both individual teachers and schools districts as a whole now find themselves now confronting a changing locus of control in which politicians determine what and when events occur within a classroom and when they occur. These politicians have often not been in a public school classroom for years, and have usually never taught in these classrooms. Teachers in this study feel that their professionalism is now in doubt and these policies were created without their input.

Most importantly perhaps is the inevitability of schools in Oklahoma being placed on the Needs Improvement list as certain sub-groups within their schools increase. Two of the teachers in Kingston predict the same fate for their school as the special-education population continues to grow. The question remains, what happens to a school once it is placed on the list because of the performance level of a sub-group and that sub-group's population does not decrease? Statistically, leaving the Needs Improvement list is

impossible. As proficiency targets rise and the population of sub-groups within schools increases, the Needs Improvement list does likewise resulting eventually in all schools being labeled failures.

Remarkably, as OSDE addresses the performances of Needs Improvement schools, many of the changes within a school such as Jackson begin resembling schools not normally associated with high performing students. In a school such as Kingston, teachers retain their creativity; Jackson teachers feel that their creativity is hampered with increased requirements. In Kingston, teachers retain control of their academic and instructional calendars; Jackson teachers complain that even the time with their students is limited as testing demands of benchmark tests increases due to reviews and other requirements placed within their instructional days. In Kingston, teachers arrive early and stay late working in their classrooms; Jackson teachers seek escape from their restricted working environment, arriving at the last possible moment for work and leaving as soon after their students at the end of the day as possible. In some aspects, OSDE is nurturing an environment of failure expected in the lowest achieving schools.

The overall implication for policy and practice is that at some point either the majority of public schools within Oklahoma will be Needs Improvement schools, or eventually the entire current policy will be discarded. This is a waste of precious time, resources and students. An entire generation of children may receive inadequate education as OSDE attempts to develop correct practices to implement faulty policies. The only hope for public education within Oklahoma is to seek the guidance of those working most closely with children—the teachers. Politicians will continue to hamper the success of students if they fail to listen to teachers.

Recommendations for Future Research

A longitudinal study of teachers from the beginning of their careers until the end of their careers could provide insight into further timeline patterns related to political spectacle theory experienced by teachers. The cost and time commitment of such a study is justifiable when considering the importance of public education within the United States. If generations of students will be affected by the policies implemented within government, it is wise to study those effects in depth with a time commitment equal to the rhetoric proffered by politicians as they promote their policies. Medicine and healthcare is studied extensively in such a manner—just as the health of a body is invaluable, so too is the development of the mind. The National Center for Educational Statistics is capable of launching and sustaining the collection of data required.

From such a study, additional research into coping mechanisms to deal with stress caused by outside policy would assist schools in their attempts to retain teachers in an effort to better educate students. All of the teachers interviewed at both Jackson and Kingston discussed stress within their working environments. Stress is expected when working with middle school students and their families; however, undue stress from outside entities far removed from the classrooms should be mitigated as much as possible. Again, if we value public education, then the instruments providing that education, namely teachers, should be considered in all aspects of policy implementation and ramifications.

In addition, further research similar to that completed in this study should be conducted nationwide. The impact of NCLB on teachers in Oklahoma schools could possibly differentiate between states as the mandates of NCLB are interpreted in other

ways. The debate of equity versus equality particularly when considering funding of both state and federal mandates might be one aspect to consider when studying effects of accountability on public schools. Furthermore, test results should be analyzed by an outside entity other than the State Departments of Education. Accurately determining trends in test scores of students as they progress from one grade to the next should be researched year to year. Moreover, analyzing the probability of schools/districts leaving the Needs Improvement once they have been placed on the list would seem to be of great importance to the State Department of Education, particularly in relation to changes within the population of any subgroups that may be identified as causing the initial placement on the list. Simply reviewing the data used to label schools as Needs Improvement by an outside auditing firm may safeguard districts from any unfair labeling.

Yet, in Oklahoma, school districts sometimes find themselves labeled as Needs Improvement by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) even when inaccurate data has been used to determine that label such as in the case of Western Heights Independent School District Number I-41 versus the State Department of Education (2007). During this case, Western Heights argued the label placed on them by OSDE was based on graduation rates that did not utilize the required four years of data required by state law and did not reflect students who transferred to other school districts but instead considered these students drop-outs. Rather than following the required appeal system within the law, the state department refused to recalculate or even review its decision. In this case, Number 103302, the court ruled that OSDE was indeed

required to follow the appellate procedures required by state law. Currently, the case is following the appellate process and is as yet undecided.

Despite the apparent arrogance of federal and state politicians as well as the OSDE, the entire blame for NCLB cannot be laid at their feet alone. Public educators must take responsibility for the education of students. Rather than mindlessly following arbitrary laws without public comment, teachers must instead actively educate policy makers. Schools continue to function on some level no matter the burdens placed upon them. This continual effort to maintain public education speaks to the vocational nature of the teaching profession. However, simply functioning is not acceptable. Accountability in public education cannot be determined by a yearly standardized test or a worksheet to determine if a teacher is “highly qualified.” Public educators must instead develop a framework of accountability within their profession using resources with national reach such as professional organizations and unions. Teachers are the experts of education; it is time that they not only are given the responsibility, but demand the responsibility of structuring our educational system not guided by the whims of politicians, but by the experts of the field.

The Snow Globe Effect

The teachers who participated in this study describe a working environment comparable to that of a snow globe. Two snow globes sit on a government official’s desk. The first snow globe contains a bucolic setting. Pastures lay across from a school building with happy teachers and students inside. The yard outside of the school contains neatly trimmed grass with a marquee in front of the building stating, “Kingston Middle

School—A Blue Ribbon School.” There is a light dusting of snow on the ground; however, it is very faint and insignificant.

The second globe contains a picturesque little town with a Starbucks down the street from a school building that sits in a significant amount of snow. The building is beautiful with unusual lines in its architecture. The snow outside has drifted against this school’s marquee which reads, “Jackson Middle School: Blue Ribbon School 2006.” Many features of the building that make it unique are a bit hidden by the large amounts of snow. Against some classroom windows, the drifts are so deep that if a child were to walk through them, he would soon lose his way.

Kingston Middle School’s teachers and students teach and learn within the walls of its classrooms. Some of them are blissfully unaware of the snow on the ground outside. But, when they look out their windows, they do notice the other globe with its white blanket surrounding Jackson Middle School. Most of the people within Kingston say to themselves, “If they would have done better, the snow wouldn’t be so deep.”

The teachers and students within Jackson Middle School are preparing for the next blizzard. Occasionally, from seemingly nowhere, a giant hand reaches across the desk, lifts up their globe, and another avalanche of snow falls from the sky. At first, they would help one another get their footing. They picked up books from the floor that had fallen from cases, they would meet to explore new ways to combat the snow, and they worked as a team. Lately, as the snow outside deepens, it is easier to wade through the drifts alone. Those teachers located away from the central classrooms have started to feel abandoned and afraid. They really do not know how much more snowfall they can stand.

In both schools, expenditures to deal with the snow have increased. Other programs are falling behind in funding as the administrators within the buildings focus instead on cleaning up after the snow storms. Everyone, in both schools, has stopped trying to prevent the storms. The snowfall is completely beyond their control. How can individual schools, so small and powerless, fight the hand of a giant whose sole purpose at times seems to be to seek entertainment by causing snowfalls within the two schools?

REFERENCES

- Adkinson, S. & Tchudi, S. (2001). Reading the data: Making supportable claims from classroom assessment. *The English Journal*, 91(1), 43-50.
- Alexander, K. & Alexander, M.D. (2001). *American school law* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Aurora Learning Community Association (2007, February). *Glossary of terms and concepts: Basic data analysis vocabulary*. Paper presented at meeting of Choctaw-Nicoma Park District Administrators Meeting, Choctaw, OK.
- Berg, B.L. (1998). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (3rd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Berliner, D. C. & Biddle, B. J. (1995). *The manufactured crisis: Myths, fraud, and the attack on America's public schools*. Reading, MA: Perseus Books.
- Boethel, M., Blair, L., Ritenour, D. & Hoover, W. (2006). 40 years of commitment to quality learning for all. *SEDL Letter*, 18(3), 3-16.
- Bolman, L. G. & Deal, T. E. (2003). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice and leadership* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Brimley, V. & Garfield, R.R. (2005). *Financing education: In a climate of change* (9th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Browning, R. (1855). Andrea del Sarto. In S. Applebaum and S. Weller (Eds.) (1993), *My last duchess and other poems by Robert Browning* (pp. 73-79). Toronto, Canada: Dover.

- Chance, P. L. & Chance, E. W. (2002). *Introduction to educational leadership and organizational behavior: Theory to practice*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.
- Collier, J. & Collier, M. (1986). *Visual anthropology: Photography as a research method*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Christenson, S.L. & Ysseldyke, J.E. (1989). Scientific practitioner: Assessing student performance: An important change is needed. *Journal of School Psychology, 27*, 409-425.
- Crist, P.J., & Shafer, G. (2001). Teacher to teacher: How do you test your students' knowledge of what you teach? *The English Journal, 91*(1), 27-28.
- DCSF. (2006). *DCSF history*. Retrieved November 2, 2006, from <http://www.dccf.org/engine/emw.exe/>
- Denzin, N. K. (1989). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods* (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Dewey, J. (1897). *My pedagogic creed: Number IX in the series*. In J.A. Johnson, V.L. Dupuis & J.H. Johansen (Eds.) (1991), *Reflections on American education: Classic and contemporary readings* (pp.157-160). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York: The Free Press.
- Diener, M.L. (2004). Test/Imonies of North Carolina elementary teachers searching for hope in a time of high stakes testing. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 65*(03), 814A. (UMI No. 3126777)

- Dingwall, R. (1997). Accounts, Interviews and Observations. In G. Miller & R. Dingwall (Eds.), *Context & Method in Qualitative Research* (51-65). London: Sage Publications.
- Donahue, D. M. (1993). Serving students, science, or society? The secondary school physics curriculum in the United States, 1930-65. *History of Education Quarterly*, 33(3), 321-352.
- Dow, P. B. (1991). *Schoolhouse politics: Lessons from the sputnik era*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Dunn, P.A. (1995). *Learning re-abled: The learning disability controversy and composition studies*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.
- Edelman, M. (1988). *Constructing the political spectacle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Elias, E.L. & Merriam, S. (1995). *Philosophical foundations of adult education*. Malabar, FA: Krieger Publishing Company.
- Ellis, D.E. (Ed.). (1993). *Choctaw Oklahoma centennial: 1893-1993*. Harrah, OK: Eagle Printing.
- Esposito, K.A. (2003). Massachusetts comprehensive assessment system (MCAS): Two districts' perspectives. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 65(02), 361A. (UMI 3124557)
- Gallagher, D.R., Bagin, D. & Kindred, L.W. (1997). *The school and community relations*. (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

- Glaser, R. & Silver, E. (1994). *Assessment, testing, and instruction: Retrospect and prospect* (CSE Technical Report 379). Los Angeles: National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.
- Goertz, M. & Duffy, M. (2003). Mapping the landscape of high-stakes testing and accountability programs. *Theory into Practice, 42*(1), 8-12.
- Hattie, J., Jaeger, R.M., & Bond, L. (1999). Persistent methodological questions in educational testing. *Review of Research in Education, 24*, 393-446.
- Heinegg, J. G. (2005). Teaching to the test: Practice and policy implications. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 66*(05), 1733A. (UMI 3175695)
- Helwig, R., Rozekl-Tedesco, M.A., & Tindal, G. (2002). An oral versus a standard administration of a large-scale mathematics test. *The Journal of Special Education, 36*(1), 39-47.
- Herman, J. L. & Dietel, R. (2005). A primer on accountability. *American School Board Association, 192*(12), 26-28.
- Heward, W.L. (2003). Ten faulty notions about teaching and learning that hinder the effectiveness of special education. *The Journal of Special Education, 36*(4), 186-205.
- Jago, C. (2001). From the secondary section: The best of times, the worst of times. *The English Journal, 91*(1), 20-21.
- Kearney, K. S. & Hyle, A. E. (2004). Drawing out emotions: The use of participant-produced drawings in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Research, 4*(3), 361-383.
- Kozol, J. (1990). *The night is dark and I am far from home* (2nd ed.). New York: Touchstone.

- Lucey, M. (2005). Behind closed doors: Factors that influence a teacher to make changes in professional practices. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 66(04), 1280A. (UMI 3170692)
- Luna, C. & Turner, C.L. (2001). The impact of the MCAS: Teachers talk about high-stakes testing. *The English Journal*, 91(1), 79-87.
- Lutz, R. A. (2004). Response of selected middle schools to the accountability demands of no child left behind within mathematics curriculum and instruction. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 65(12), 4417A. (UMI No. 3158761)
- Mathers, J. K. (2000). Education accountability: Perceptions of teachers in selected Colorado school districts. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 61(08), 3013A, (UMI No. 9983080)
- McLeod, S., D'Amico, J. J., & Protheroe, N. (2003). *K-12 principals' guide to no child left behind*. Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.
- Mertens, D. M. (1998). *Research methods in education and psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *An expanded sourcebook: Qualitative data analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miller, G. & Dingwell, R. (Eds.). (1997). *Context & method in qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Montgomery, S.L. (1991). *Minds for the making*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Morgan, I.W. (1994). *Beyond the liberal consensus: A political history of the United States since 1965*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

- National Association of Secondary School Principals. *Perkins bills clear house committee and senate quick action bypasses Bush administration agenda*. Retrieved March 21, 2005, from http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/sec.asp?CID=32&DID=50026.
- National Clearinghouse of Educational Statistics. (2003). Digest of education statistics, Chapter 2. Elementary and secondary education. Retrieved March 16, 2005, from <http://www.nces.ed.gov>
- National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983, April). *A nation at risk*. Retrieved February 15, 2007, from The United States Department of Education Access: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/intro.html>
- Nossiter, V. & Biberman, G. (1990). Projective drawings and metaphor: Analysis of organisational culture. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 5(3), 13-16.
- NECTAC. *The individuals with disabilities education act*. Retrieved March 30, 2008, from [http:// http://www.nectac.org/idea/idea.asp](http://www.nectac.org/idea/idea.asp).
- Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education. (2005, February). *Innovative initiatives and services research office: Oklahoma at a glance*. Retrieved November 2, 2006, from the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education Web site: <http://www.okcareertech.org/ipr/ataglanc.htm>
- Oklahoma Educational Indicators Program. (2005, June). *Profiles 2005 state report*. Retrieved November 2, 2006, from the Education Oversight Board Office of Accountability site: <http://www.schoolreportcard.org>
- Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department. (2003). Cities and regions. Retrieved November 2, 2006, from <http://www.travelok.com/cities/city.asp>

- Ornstein, A.C. & Levine, D. U. (1981). *An introduction to the foundations of education* (2nd ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Pulliam, J. D. & Van Patten, J. J. (1999). *History of education in America* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Putnam, T. D. (2003). A comparative study of educators' perceptions of four cutting-edge school reform movements (The high stakes testing movement; the cognitive, social, and cultural constructivist teaching movement; the problem-solving movement; and the teacher research movement). *Dissertations Abstracts International*, 64(08), 2780A. (UMI 3101649)
- Reinhardt, E. (1960). *American education: An introduction* (Rev. ed.). New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers.
- Re'nyi, J. (1993). *Going public: Schooling for a diverse democracy*. New York: The New Press.
- Riner, P. S. (1989). Dewey's legacy to education. *The Educational Forum*, 53(2), 183-190.
- Russell, J. D. & Judd, C. H. (1940). *The American educational system*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- School Laws of Oklahoma (2006). § 70-1-108 *Chapter 1: Oklahoma school code*. Oklahoma City, OK: Author.
- Shakespeare, W. (1598). D. Bevington (Ed.) (1992), *The complete works of Shakespeare* (p. 305). New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc.
- Sheats, P. H. (1938). *Education and the quest for a middle way*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

- Smith, M.L. (1991). Put to the test: The effects of external testing on teachers. *Educational Researcher*, 20(5), 8-11.
- Smith, M. L., Miller-Kahn, L., Heinecke, W. & Jarvis, P. (2004). *Political spectacle and the fate of American schools*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Sousa, D.A. (2003). *The leadership brain: How to lead today's schools more effectively*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Spring, J. (1990). *The American school: 1642-1990* (2nd ed.). New York: Longman.
- Stecher, B.M. & Klein, S.P. (1997). The cost of science performance assessments in large-scale testing programs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 19(1), 1-14.
- Thomas, P.L. (2001). Standards, standards everywhere, and not a spot to think. *The English Journal*, 91(1), 63-67.
- U. S. Department of Education, Office of the Deputy Secretary. (2004). *No child left behind: A toolkit for teachers*, Washington D.C.: Author.
- Viadero, D. (2003). Reports find fault with high-stakes testing: New research suggests tests may hamper achievement, but some experts say more detailed analysis is needed. *Education Week*, 22(16), 4-5.
- Viadero, D. (2005). Researchers compare Florida testing, NCLB, but critics pan study. *Education Week*, 24(31), 12.
- Vince, R. (1995). Working with emotions in the change process: Using drawings for team diagnosis and development. *Organisations & People*, 2(1), 11-17.
- Western Heights Independent School District Number I-41 v. State ex rel. Oklahoma State Department of Education, 169 P.3d 417 (OK Civ. App. 2007).

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Adequate Yearly Progress Components for Middle Schools in Oklahoma

The Department of Education for the State of Oklahoma utilizes four areas to determine Adequate Yearly Progress for middle schools. As seen in Table D below, these areas include math and reading scores as well as the percentage of students tested and student attendance.

Table D.

Adequate Yearly Progress Components for Middle Schools in Oklahoma

| Component | Measure | Benchmarks | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| | | 2005-2006 | 2006-2007 |
| Math Performance Target | Math API | 790 | 932 |
| Reading Performance Target | Reading API | 768 | 914 |
| % of Students Tested | Students Tested | 95 | 95 |
| Additional Indicator | Overall % of Student Attendance | 91.2 | 91.2 |

The benchmarks in both math and reading increase from the 2005-06 school year to the 2006-07 school year; however, benchmarks do not necessarily increase every school year.

Appendix B

Performance Benchmarks in Testing Areas

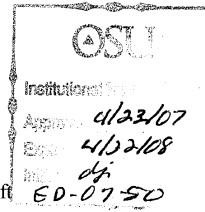
As seen in Table E below, after the initial year of implementation, benchmarks increase every three years until the last three years of the benchmark goals. During the last three years, benchmarks increase yearly.

Table E.

Performance Benchmarks in Testing Areas

| Testing Year(s) | Testing Area | |
|-----------------|--------------|---------|
| | Math | Reading |
| 2002-03 | 648 | 622 |
| 2004-06 | 790 | 768 |
| 2007-09 | 932 | 914 |
| 2010-11 | 1074 | 1060 |
| 2012 | 1216 | 1206 |
| 2013 | 1358 | 1352 |
| 2014 | 1500 | 1500 |

Although AYP is measured with not only math and reading scores, but also attendance rates for middle schools, attendance rate requirements remain at 95% during each year of AYP while math and reading scores increase until they reach a perfect 1500 during the year 2014.



CONSENT FORM FOR PHASES TWO AND THREE
Oklahoma State University

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the Title I sections of No Child Left Behind legislation on middle school teachers.

With your permission, the interview will be recorded using a handheld digital recorder. The length of the interview will be approximately one hour. Also, with your permission, field notes and digital photographs of your classroom will be taken.

There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. Participation is voluntary and you can discontinue the research activity at any time without reprisal or penalty.

As a participant, you will be assigned a pseudonym to protect your identity. You will be referred to by this pseudonym throughout the analysis and writing process. The digital recording of your interview along with field notes and digital photographs will be destroyed as soon as the original transcription is completed. Electronic files of the transcripts, field notes and digital photographs will be burned on CDs and kept for three years, or less if their usefulness is considered complete.

There will be no compensation for participation in this study.

For questions about the research and your rights, feel free to contact either member of the research team listed below. If at any time you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant, you may contact Dr. Sue Jacobs, IRB Chair 219 Cordell North, 405-744-1676 or at irb@okstate.edu.

| | |
|---|---|
| JeanAnn Gaona – Principal Investigator | Judith Mathers, EdD – Dissertation Advisor |
| 17558 East Memorial Road | School of Educational Studies |
| Luther, OK 73054 | Oklahoma State University |
| jgaona@cnpschools.org 405-414-8732 | 314 Willard |
| | Stillwater, OK 74078 |
| | judith.mathers@okstate.edu 405-744-1480 |

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this for has been given to me.

Signature of Participant

Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

JeanAnn Gaona, Principal Investigator
Appendix A

Date

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

- How do you define NCLB?
- How would you describe the policy intent of NCLB?
- What has the greatest influence over your instructional practices?
- How do you select curriculum and activities for use in your classroom?
- How have your instructional practices been modified or selected because of NCLB?
- How have you changed professionally because of NCLB?
- What has changed for you personally because of NCLB?
- How do you describe NCLB to non-educators?
- How has NCLB affected your classroom?
- How has NCLB affected you district?
- How has NCLB impacted your city or community?
- Is there anything you would like to add?

Contact Summary Sheet

Date: _____ Interview: _____

Location: _____

1. What were the main issues or themes that struck you in this contact?

2. Summarize the information you got on each of the target questions you had for this contact.

| Research Questions | Information |
|--|-------------|
| <i>Educational changes resulting from NCLB</i> | |
| <i>Work environment changes resulting from NCLB</i> | |
| <i>Changes made in educational practices resulting from NCLB</i> | |
| <i>Changes made in personal city or town from NCLB</i> | |

3. Is there anything else that struck you as salient, interesting, illuminating or important in this contact?

4. What new or remaining target questions do you have in considering the next contact with this person?

(adopted from Miles and Huberman, 1994)

Appendix F

First students utilized preprinted “FBI Fingerprint Cards” seen below in Figures 105 and 106. These fingerprint cards were collected from each student within the classroom. Students took turns filling out the information and taking fingerprints of one another. Ms. Monroe pre-selected the true “perpetrator” of the crime and notified that student at the beginning of the project. The students then used the scientific method to work their way through a series of projects including determining the weight and height of an individual through shoe tread measurements in mud. The students with partners investigated the “crime scene” set up in the computer lab as seen below in Figure 107. Students never knew until the end of the assignment if their partner was actually the “perpetrator.”



Figure 105. The fingerprint cards are displayed on a wall of the classroom. Students could analyze data from all the students as they made deductions as to the perpetrator of the “crime.”

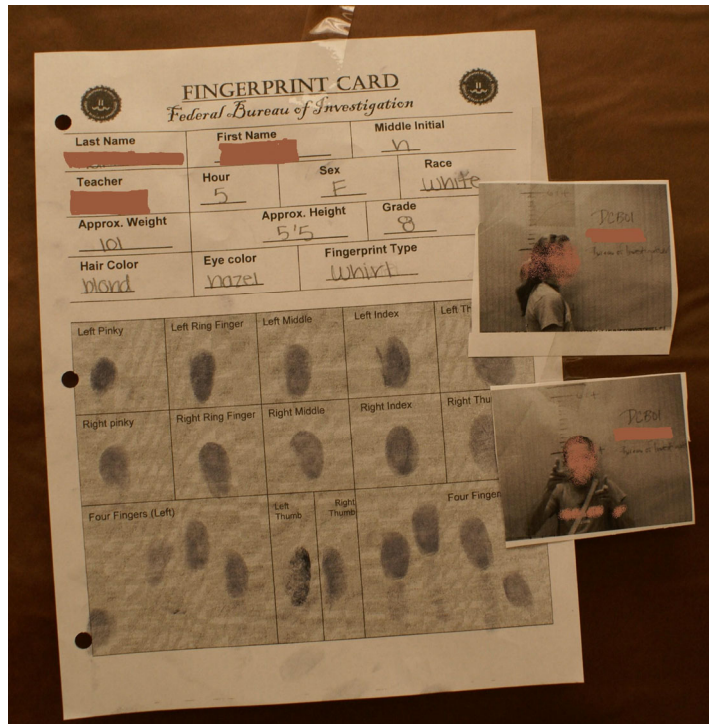


Figure 106. Individual fingerprint cards were made of all students. Students used deductive reasoning along with various “clues” to determine the perpetrator.

Students investigated a “crime scene” set up in a computer laboratory located across the building from Ms. Monroe’s classroom as seen below in Figure 18. Each student had the opportunity to visit the crime scene to take notes of their observations. Individual students would later be questioned by their peers as suspects were narrowed. Ms. Monroe indicated that students from other science classes often asked their teachers to allow them to participate in the assignment, particularly after the “crime scene” was taped up in the laboratory. However, the other teachers preferred to teach more traditional lessons using lectures as a primary form of instruction.



Figure 107. The exterior door from the hallway leading into the computer lab where the crime scene was set-up was blocked with tape. The tape across the door was actual Sheriff's department crime scene tape used to block off an area of investigation.

One evening, after the crime scene had been created by Ms. Monroe, the nighttime custodian called the principal. He was worried about the crime scene, but particularly perturbed that the “broken” window seen below in Figure 108 and the victim’s “body” seen below in Figure 109 had been left for him to discover. He expressed concern that he would be expected to take care of the “mess” left in the computer lab. He was quite relieved when told that it was only part of a class assignment.



Figure 108. The “broken” glass of the window is actually created with a decal purchased at a novelty store by Ms. Monroe. This allowed students to determine an entry point of the “perpetrator”; a later lesson took place outside under the window as students measured foot imprints in mud to determine the weight and height of their suspect.



Figure 109. The victim's "body" is actually empty clothing stuffed to resemble a human. The "blood" seen in handprints and drips down the whiteboard wall and underneath the "body" is also a novelty product purchased by Ms. Monroe. Note the plastic floor covering used to protect the carpet. Apparently the custodian did not question why the "perpetrator" of the crime took the time to tape plastic covering under the "victim."

The applications of scientific methods utilized by Ms. Monroe in her classroom require very exact skills to be applied by her students. She expressed concern regarding the validity of testing measurements that rely upon multiple-choice selection of correct answers by students on state mandated tests. Her inquiry-based classroom is a striking contrast to the science classrooms of Jackson Middle School that now test students every few weeks in model OCCTs using multiple-choice questions in an attempt to raise test scores.

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Monday, April 23, 2007
IRB Application No ED0750
Proposal Title: Policy to Practice: the Impact of NCLB on Middle Schools

Reviewed and Expedited
Processed as:

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 4/22/2008

Principal Investigator(s)

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| JeanAnn McWherter Gaona | Judith Mathers |
| 17558 East Memorial Road | 314 Willard |
| Luther, OK 73054 | Stillwater, OK 74078 |

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Sue C. Jacobs, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

JeanAnn McWherter Gaona

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: POLICY TO PRACTICE: THE EFFECT OF NCLB ON MIDDLE SCHOOLS
THROUGH THE VOICES OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Major Field: Educational Administration

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education in Educational
Administration at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in
May, 2008.

Masters of Education, Educational Leadership, Southern Nazarene University,
Bethany, Oklahoma, May 1999

Bachelors of Arts, English Education, University of Central Oklahoma,
Edmond, Oklahoma, December 1993

Experience:

Principal, Choctaw Junior High School, Choctaw, Oklahoma
July, 2001-Present

Assistant Principal, Star Spencer Communication Technology Magnet School,
Oklahoma City Public Schools, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
July, 2000-July, 2001

Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, Star Spencer Communication Technology
Magnet School, Oklahoma City Public Schools, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
August, 1999-July, 2000

Educational Software Lesson Author and Editor, American Education
Corporation, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
January, 1999-June, 2001

Professional Memberships:

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
National Association for Secondary School Principals
Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration

Name: JeanAnn Gaona

Date of Degree: May, 2008

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: POLICY TO PRACTICE: THE EFFECT OF NCLB ON MIDDLE
SCHOOLS THROUGH THE VOICES OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Pages in Study: 256

Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major Field: Educational Administration

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of the Title I sections of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation on middle school teachers. Four research questions guided the study: in the perception of middle school teachers, how has education been changed by the implementation of NCLB?; What changes do middle school teachers perceive have been made in their working environment as a result of the implementation of NCLB?; What changes do middle school teachers perceive that they have made in their practice as a result of the implementation of NCLB?; and, what changes or impact do the teachers perceive in their city or community from NCLB?.

Three phases of data gathering were used in the research: teacher drawings, teacher interviews and classroom observations. Five primary themes were discovered during the study: concerns of validity of high-stakes testing, loss of creativity, NCLB impact on marginalized students, NCLB impact on special education students and teacher shortages.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. Judith Mathers
