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EXPLORING TEACHERS' AUTONOMY, SELF EFFICACY, MOTIVATION, AND PERCEPTIONS OF STATE MANDATED TESTING IN THE CONTEXT OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

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EXPLORING TEACHERS' AUTONOMY, SELF EFFICACY, MOTIVATION, AND PERCEPTIONS OF STATE MANDATED TESTING IN THE CONTEXT OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my late Aunt Minnett Strother, my loving mother Janet Roberts, and my two sons Chase and Chandler Mickel.

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First, I would like to give all the praise to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. For without his grace, I would not have been able to complete this journey. Someone once said that God never gives you more than you can handle, I can surely testify to the truth of that statement.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined teachers' autonomy, teachers' motivation, teachers' self-efficacy, and teachers' perceptions of state mandated testing, in the context of NCLB. The research design included an online survey that combined Likert-type questions of each construct, followed by six one-on-one interviews that provided a greater depth to support the survey results. Participants included 561 Oklahoma Middle School teachers. The scales that measured each construct were correlated to identify whether any significant relationships were present. An independent t-test and ANOVA was also used to identify whether demographic variables affected teachers' perceptions of state mandated testing. Results indicated that significant correlations exist between teacher autonomy, teacher motivation, teacher self-efficacy, and teachers' perceptions of state mandated testing. Results also showed that participants who administered end of instruction exams reported significantly higher (more positive) perceptions of state mandated testing than those who did not. Additionally, the analysis indicated that among the constructs, the strongest correlation was found between teacher general autonomy and teacher perception of state mandated testing. Further research is necessary to learn more about the complex relationships between the constructs.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A considerable amount of research exists regarding The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002) and the impact this policy has on our educational system (e.g., Chapman, 2007; Booher-Jennings, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2004). Although ostensibly designed to create equal educational avenues for all students and diminish achievement gaps between diverse sets of students, research indicates NCLB has not improved the quality of education (Mintrop & Trujillo, 2007). Furthermore, policies like NCLB help perpetuate notions that educational responsibility resides with a single group of stakeholders, rather than requiring a collective effort between all responsible groups. This in turn has positioned schools and particularly teachers as the main targets for why students do not achieve academic success. Evaluating teachers' perceptions of NCLB in light of teachers' motivation, teachers' self-efficacy, and teachers' autonomy may result in an increased understanding of teachers' attitudes towards policies. This in turn, could also shift the way society views educational responsibility.

Throughout U.S. history, education has played a fundamental role in shaping society. Historically, responsibility has shifted from one stakeholder to another. Before the American Revolution, religious factions held substantial responsibility for education of the community, but influence and control shifted as most states began to develop common schools in which education was not religiously oriented, and incorporated more global educational lessons. Although children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds experienced a severe lack of opportunity to learn how to read and write, most affluent children learned not only the fundamentals of reading and writing, but

also acquired a diverse education. With the initial introduction of grade schools, the responsibility shifted from religious organizations to government, both locally and nationally.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the educational focus shifted to intelligence tests. The common schools movement resulted in greater numbers of students being taught and an increasing awareness of the need to determine whether students were learning. Intelligence tests were in the initial phase of development and educational theorists such as Edward Thorndike believed these tests could determine whether students were possibly learning new connections of information (Amrein-Beardsley & Barnett, 2012). John Dewey was also a popular educational theorist during this time frame. He believed education should be a place where people grow and learn to become critical thinkers (Samuel & Suh, 2012). He believed in the right of people to have an autonomous education so they can learn the tools to become better citizens within society. During this time, many viewed education as a privileged opportunity, and it was the student's responsibility to succeed in the classroom. If a student failed to learn and dropped out of school, the students themselves generally were considered responsible, rather the teachers who provided the lessons (Ravitch, 2002). As most states built numerous schools, the perception of accountability shifted slightly from the government towards the students.

By the Civil Rights era, there was an attitude shift amongst general society that regardless of race everyone should have a chance to obtain an education. The *Brown v. Board of Education* (1955) court case changed public education by declaring equal educational opportunities for all students. Although some states still tried to avoid

integration by establishing specific laws to benefit white only schools, this case is recognized as the foundation of public school integration. The overt presence of the Supreme Court, National Guard, and local police forced interventions brought the perception of responsibility for ensuring educational access and equality back to the government. During the 1970's, general perceptions of educational responsibility shifted from the government to schools. More specifically, school personnel and administrators were considered responsible for low student achievement and the reason why students would have problems competing in a global environment (Sloan, 2007). In the 1980s, the government issued a report, *A Nation at Risk,* which shifted the bulk of responsibility almost exclusively onto schools as the reason why students would not be able to compete in the global setting. The governmental responsibility started to diminish as most schools were established by this time, with responsibility shifting to those who delivered the education.

During the past decade or more, the major focus of educational policies has been to increase accountability by emphasizing student performance on state-mandated testing. The perception of responsibility has now shifted from schools in general, to the teachers specifically, both individually and collectively. NCLB's sharp emphasis on improving teacher quality and teaching methods has led to and reinforced perceptions that teachers are responsible for students' low performance on state-mandated testing. Many states began to create teacher accountability systems, in part to allow teachers to become more collaborative with lessons and materials, but accountability systems also serve to control teachers and their teaching (Booher-Jennings, 2005). Why are teachers the primary targets of culpability when students do not perform well on standardized

tests? How are parents and the communities dismissed from conversations about educational responsibility? With seemingly insurmountable amounts of blame cast on them, teachers still find motivation to continue teaching, even in an era in which educational policies restrict the amount of choice, flexibility, and control teachers can exercise.

Teacher's perception of NCLB is an important area to examine because teachers are a critical group of individuals who implement the policy (Stevenson, 2008). The findings from exploring teachers' perceptions of NCLB could help shape how future educational reform policies are constructed.

Problem Statement

During the past decade or more, NCLB has placed intense focus on teacher quality and improving teaching methods (Mertler, 2011). This has led to increased emphases on teaching accountability and growing frustration over NCLB (Abrams, Pedulla, & Madaus, 2003). As with educational reform policies generally, NCLB both reflects social and political influences on the evolving educational system, and shapes the direction of our educational system. Examining stakeholders' perceptions of these policies may result in better policy and better implementation. Specifically, examining teachers' perceptions of the current policy and issues surrounding it is important to determining the reception and success of existing policies. A substantial amount of research exists regarding teachers' reactions to educational reform policies (Grant, 2000; Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Louis, Febey, & Schroeder, 2005). Teachers can perceive educational reform policies as a threat to their autonomy in the classroom (Dymoke & Harrison, 2006). Educational reform policies also have contributed to

affecting teachers' motivation and attitudes (Leithwood, Steinbach, & Jantzi, 2002). This can impact whether or not teachers successfully implement reform policies (Abrams, et.al, 2003). Consideration of how instructors experience and react to educational change is imperative if reform policies and terms are to be deemed successful (Hargreaves, 2005).

As society moves to a more performance oriented education, in which teachers are obligated to provide lessons primarily based on what is measured on standardized testing, teachers have to balance their teaching autonomy with their teaching responsibilities (Hawthorne, 1986). Although some research suggests that autonomy is the key variable when examining educational reform initiatives, teachers are not always allowed much control or flexibility with the curriculum (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006). Educational reform policies can create conflict for teachers in terms of personal teaching autonomy on one side, and their obligations to their schools and students on the other (Haberman, 1992). Autonomy also has been identified as one facet of motivation (White, 1992). Deci and Ryan (1985) found that "intrinsic motivation will be operative when action is experienced as autonomous" (p. 29). Both autonomy and motivation are grounded within self-determination theory. Research suggests that teacher motivation determines why individuals teach, how long they stay in the profession, and how much they engage in professional development and the classroom (Sinclair, 2008).

Teacher motivation is the key piece to understanding why teachers join and remain in the profession despite limited autonomy in the classroom or personal opposition to current educational reform initiatives. Motivation here refers to the

reasons teachers choose the teaching profession and choose to stay in the profession. Most research in this regard suggests that a teacher's decisions to remain in the profession are highly motivated by personal factors (e.g., adoration of teaching, salary, and career) (Sears, Kennedy, & Kaye, 1997; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; and Manuel, 2003). However, only a limited amount of research has been conducted to examine how educational reform policies affect teachers' motivation.

Teacher motivation appears to be strongly linked with self-efficacy (Fernet, Senecal, Guay, Marsh, & Dowson, 2008). Self-efficacy is based on social cognitive theory and suggests that individuals function as self-evaluating, proactive regulators of their motivation and behavior (Bandura & Locke, 2003). Teacher self-efficacy has been defined as "a teacher's expectation that he or she will be able to bring about student learning" (Ross, Hogaboam-Gray, & Gray, 2004; p. 166). According to Bandura (1997), the daily challenges that can face teachers, over time, can affect a teacher's sense of efficacy. However, teacher self-efficacy may reflect how teachers recognize their capabilities and limitations in the classroom (Weiqi, 2007).

NCLB required all states to establish statewide assessment programs. If standardized testing is the primary means of determining school achievement, more research is warranted to consider the effects of testing on instruction, education, and institutions (Zancanella & Noll, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

The current research project is primarily concerned with exploring different constructs that may be related to how teachers perceive educational reform policies. Primarily focusing on the role of NCLB and the impact it has on teachers, this study

seeks to explore teacher autonomy, teacher motivation, teacher self-efficacy, and teachers' perceptions of state mandated tests. Legislators have focused attention on how students are affected by policies, but have often ignored how imposing policies on teachers may affect students in the long run. Empirical evidence indicates that there are a variety of reasons why teachers enter and stay in the profession (Manuel, 2003; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007; Sinclair, 2008; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). As perceptions regarding responsibility for student learning have shifted to teachers, it is increasingly imperative to understand how reform policies affect them before continuing to implement new policies.

Furthermore, a review of the literature indicates the previously identified constructs have all been studied individually, but an extensive research examination revealed a marginal amount of studies that looked at the connection between these constructs and how they might be related to teachers' perceptions of reform policies. Research shows that teaching to the test can affect teacher' autonomy (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006), teachers' motivation affects whether teachers are willing to implement new strategies sanctioned by reform policies (Jones & Egley, 2007), and teachers' self-efficacy affects teachers' motivation and confidence to continue teaching in adverse conditions, including the pressures of teaching in a high stakes environment (Weiqi, 2007; Fernet, Senecal, Guay, Marsh, & Dowson, 2008). Examining these constructs together may lead to influencing policies that more effectively address the needs of teachers, and concerns in their work to educate students in a high stakes environment.

This research study attempts to examine teachers' perceptions of NCLB by utilizing constructs of self-determination theory and social cognitive theory to

investigate the relationship between teachers' autonomy, teachers' motivation, and teachers' self-efficacy, to teachers' perception of state mandated testing.

Research Questions

1. How do teachers perceive and value educational reform policies?
2. In the current educational reform policy context,
    a. Are there relationships between teacher autonomy, teacher efficacy, teacher motivation, and teachers' perceptions of state mandated testing?
    b. What is the nature of those relationships?

DEFINITION OF TERMS

For this study, the following terms are used:

Teacher Autonomy: The ability of teachers to manage themselves and their job environment. This term is used to understand how much teachers have control over their classroom and teaching style.

Teacher Motivation: A teacher's drive to enter and continue in the profession of teaching. This term is used to understand how teachers are motivated to get into and remain in their profession while knowing they will endure increased accountability and pressure because of policy standards.

Teacher Efficacy: One's feeling of competence as a teacher and how well one believes that one can teach under any circumstances. This term is used to understand the extent to which teachers believe they can teach as well as the confidence they exude in their profession.

Perceptions of State Mandated Testing: How a teacher interprets the worth of state mandated testing in the school system. This term is used to understand the implications state mandated testing has on teachers in the classroom and/or school system.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter begins with a review of historical developments in public education in the United States, and the State of Oklahoma specifically, that are relevant to the present educational policy context, with particular attention to perceptions of accountability. Next, the literature related to teacher autonomy, teacher motivation, teacher efficacy, and teacher perceptions of state mandated testing is reviewed. The chapter concludes with a summary of the relevant literature, gaps that should be addressed, and the theoretical framework and warrant for the current study.

Accountability of the Nation

U.S. Origins of Public Schools

By the end of American Revolutionary War, education became one of the top priorities in the United States. Most of the students who were formally educated came from a middle or higher income class family. Rural children could not typically afford to go to school, not only because of monetary issues, but their families at the time depended on their assistance to either run the household or work (Vinovkis, 1992). Education was still generally narrow in terms of access; students who could afford and were allowed to go to school were generally White males. During the 19th century, slavery was still in effect and was not abolished officially until 1865. Although there was less opposition to educating poor Whites than before, the same was not the case for educating Black children. In fact, some states even made it illegal for free Blacks to be taught basic reading and writing skills (Rucker & Jubilee, 2007).

Horace Mann, who was appointed Massachusetts Education Board Secretary in 1837, was a prominent figure in developing nonsectarian common schools. He felt that public education should be universal and that children should strive to become respectable citizens. Mann particularly used his political influence to push his agenda that education could be the solution to other issues in America, such as: poverty, crime, ignorance, and greed (Baines, 2006). Mann felt there was a shared responsibility among all Americans, and in particular the wealthy, to educate all Americans. Mann considered slavery to be the greatest evil, and it did not end until several years after his death. Many considered him a pioneer not just for public education, but a pillar to teach children moral characteristics and civic virtue (Berkman, 2009).

Many poor children had to help support their families by working just to ensure survival; therefore, attending school was not an issue most poor children ever worried about. Before the civil war, most slave owners stopped African Americans from learning how to read because of their fear of rebellion against them. Since slavery was still openly practiced until 1865, the education of African American children came mostly from their parents, or from esteemed members of their communities. Schools for African American children during this time were not only limited, but were very small and often with few or no textbooks (Willie & Willie, 2005).

Around the 1800's, worldwide, most educational programs for children only served students until age 14. The U.S. government envisioned expanding education to set itself apart from other countries by developing high schools, colleges, and vocational schools. By 1910, 72% of White children attended school at some level (Thelin, 2004).

Over the next several decades, this led to a surge in enrollment and graduation rates at public institutions.

As discussed by Baines (2006), public school today is comparable to education during the 19th century. Similarly to the present, the most affluent families elected to put their children in private school to get the best education possible and, on that basis, these affluent members of the community resisted being taxed to help support public schools. Notably, there is not a widespread push to provide children with as much moral guidance as there was in the 19th century. Schools today generally rely on the parents to educate children about respect and morals. Public schools are free, as they were in the 19th century; however, responsibility for success in public schools today seems to have shifted from students and their families to teachers.

Contrasting Visions on Education

Two of the leading educational theorists during the early 1900's were John Dewey and Edward Thorndike. Dewey and Thorndike formulated radically different visions of education during this time period. Dewey theorized that children needed an authentic education. He proposed that children needed education to help them grow both mentally and physically, and through which students could become critical thinkers (Samuel & Suh, 2012). For Dewey, most importantly, education should begin with the experience a child already has (Dewey, 1963).

Dewey wrote extensively to promote the foundation of democracy in education. One of his goals was to make school a place where students learned how to become good citizens, in hopes to generate a better society. With regard to the student, Dewey emphasized that, "to prepare him for the future life means to give him command of

himself; it means to train him that he will have the full and ready use of all his capacities" (Martin, 2003, p. 93). A connection exists between self-determination theory and Dewey's position, because he was essentially describing a human's need for personal autonomy. In addition, he suggested that education and instruction are crucial in generating social change and reform. Educational reform policies are built upon the premise of also enacting social change and reform. NCLB and similar reform policies are based on forms of motivation shaped through external control methods. However, research shows that applying external controlling conditions on teachers is followed by their experiencing increased levels of stress, apprehension, or isolation (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009).

In contrast to Dewey's focus on supporting development of self-control and autonomy, Thorndike strived to prove that education could become an exact science. Educators embraced Thorndike's Law of Effect, which implied that children would learn better if the act of learning brought them a sense of satisfaction (Shavelson, 2013). In conjunction with the U.S. Army, Thorndike supervised work on the world's first effort in the mass measurement of intelligence. Over the course of three years, approximately one million school-aged children took a test similar to the National Intelligence Test, which Thorndike helped develop. Throughout the years of the progressive education movement, tests were exclusively used for determining whether students were on the right curriculum track. Thorndike believed intelligence tests were simply a selective sample of all the possible learned connections that might be present (Amrein-Beardsley & Barnett, 2012). However, this thought process does not clearly align with the principles of self-determination theory. Additionally, Thorndike's efforts

to construct a science of education has muddled a clear understanding of the complexity of learning, by disregarding the creative, perceptive, and the socially rooted character of human experience (Tomlinson, 1997).

Prior to the 20th century, if students failed to learn they were perceived as the ones responsible and they suffered the consequences, usually by either dropping out of school or failing a grade level (Ravitch, 2002). After the 20th century, educational psychologists began to criticize tests written by school districts for lacking reliability and validity. Tests are still the primarily means of determining student academic achievement. The main difference between the past and present is that tests now also are employed to criticize teachers and structure curriculum.

U.S. struggles to Bridge Cultural and Socioeconomic Gaps

In the United States around the 1950's, the nation was engulfed in the Civil Rights movement. Pressure was increasing for everyone, regardless of the color of their skin, to have the right to a formal education. This pressure was not solely based in beliefs of equality and desire for equal opportunities. In his book *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, Woodward stated that the Brown decision was not a display of the nation's desire to provide equal opportunities for Black students, but perhaps more an indication of the country's urgent need to respond to Communist material that "had long used stories of racial discrimination and injustice to discredit American capitalism and democracy in the eyes of the world" (Woodward, 1955, p.131). The landmark Supreme Court case of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1955) concluded that state laws establishing separate public schools for black and white students were unconstitutional. However, equal opportunities specifically for black students did not improve overnight.

Several states, such as Virginia, used measures to avoid desegregation post *Brown v. Board of Education*. The Virginia General Assembly called a special government session to eliminate funding for public schools in which both White and Blacks students attended together (Horsford, 2011). They also provided state funded retirement benefits for the White teachers of the recently established private all-White schools. Some school boards implemented tuition vouchers to Whites only, who were then conveniently able to evade joining schools with Blacks. The response to the elimination of legal segregation exposed a new type of racism that included precise maneuvers to avoid school integration at any rate (Bell, 2004; Horsford 2011; Horsford & McKenzie, 2008).

The politics of education can be attributed to the desire to influence, perhaps even control, the flow of ideas and information inside the school's classrooms (Sloan, 2007). Much of the current controversy in education can be directly linked to the landmark report *Equality of Educational Opportunity* of 1966, also known as the Coleman Report. The Coleman Report was written to compare both the differences amongst children of varying races and the differences in achievement scores. However, this report was written during the Civil Rights movement, which only identified factors that influenced the gap between black and white achievements. The achievement gap between black and white students was thought to be directly attributed to the lack of school funding (Horsford, 2011). But Coleman found that the funding difference between schools of both white and black students was not the exact cause of the achievement gap. Coleman (1966) found that a student's own socioeconomic position was actually a stronger predictor of academic achievement. Interestingly, six years after

the Coleman Report was first distributed, Coleman reanalyzed the original data and determined that the original report miscalculated the impact of home environment and undervalued the effects of increased school funding (Horsford, 2011).

The state of Oklahoma is not without its own civil rights controversy. In 1961, a series of court cases developed during more than three decades over desegregation in Oklahoma City Public Schools. *Dowell v. Board of Education of Oklahoma City* (1969) was a court case in which several parents of African American children in the Oklahoma Public school system sued the city's Board of Education over school segregation. The initial federal trial court determined that Oklahoma City was indeed purposely using schools, as well as housing locations, to keep Oklahoma City Public schools separated by race. In 1972, the court ordered the city to implement a bus plan to include both blacks and whites together in school. By 1977, the court withdrew its enforcement of the bus plan and declared that the Oklahoma City Board of Education had reached adequate racial composition within the schools. Several years later, in the court case *Dowell v. Oklahoma City Board of Education* (1991), the board of education sought dissolution of the District Court-imposed school desegregation plan. Eventually the Oklahoma City Board of Education won the case through appeals due to concern about the lack of simplicity concerning the meaning of unitary status. The Supreme Court ruled that school boards are authorized to use precise statements of their obligations under desegregation decrees. If one were to observe the ethnic makeup of Oklahoma City public schools, it would be revealed that racial segregation still exist today (Cornell University Law School, n.d.).

In the 1970's, the National Assessment of Educational Progress was established

to provide collective statistics and trend lines to document the educational achievement of students. The increased availability of test scores provided the change of focus from resources to student achievement (Evers & Walberg, 2002). Soon, politicians were pressured to do something about low student achievement because parents and school communities began to focus more on students standardized testing scores. The release of the report in 1983 by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, gave rise to the crisis in public education. The report, called *A Nation at Risk,* stated that the decline in the quality of American schools had brought about a crisis in which the youth would have problems competing in the global economy. *A Nation at Risk* (1983) reported that professional teachers are not looked upon as valid professionals, and this discovery began a long standing argument on teaching as a profession (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). The aftermath to this report was that, "in the five years following the announcement of this 'crisis,' states created more educational laws and regulations than they had in the previous twenty years" (Sloan, 2007, p. 11).

Accountability as Policy

In 1989, during the National Education Summit of state governors, President George H. Bush called for all governors to create national educational goals to be met by the year 2000 (Walberg, 2003). In response, throughout the 1990s states developed curriculum standards and implemented tests to assess whether those standards were attained. The state of Oklahoma implemented the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) standards to comply with these goals. Oklahoma's PASS standards were generally accepted by teachers (York, 2004). However, there were no sanctions employed or standards put in place that held schools responsible when they grossly

underperformed or continued to show a decline in graduation rates. By 2000, not only had the nation failed to achieve any of the goals set forth by the governors at the summit, but some states had become even further behind (Walberg, 2003).

At the beginning of the 21st century, accountability was the word primarily used when describing educational responsibility. Accountability is derived from the adjective accountable, which means, "to be responsible to somebody else or to others, or responsible for something" (*Merriam-Webster Online*, n.d.). The government established several programs and standards to hold states accountable for students' academic achievement. However, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) brought about a type of accountability that had never been seen before. The government established this policy to hold states, in particular schools and teachers, accountable for meeting national academic standards.

No Child Left Behind Act

NCLB was brought about in 2001 by the federal reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. NCLB has been widely claimed as perhaps the most significant and ambitious piece of federal education legislation in our nation's history (Welner, 2005). The stated goal of the NCLB Act was to boost academic achievement for all students and to close the historic achievement gap among students from different racial and economic backgrounds. It included five basic education reform principles:

> (1) requiring states to create education plans that include standards for what a child should know and learn in each grade and testing to determine whether the student progressed toward those standards; (2) increasing public awareness of

> school performance by requiring public reporting of state education standards and test scores; (3) providing parents a variety of tools to hold schools accountable that continually fail to make adequate progress toward meeting the standards; (4) improving teacher quality and emphasizing teaching methods with a proven track record; and (5) providing states with greater flexibility to determine the allocation of federal education grants. The two central objectives of NCLB are to close the achievement gap between schools testing performance and students' racial makeup; as well as to intend to hold states and schools accountable for failing to meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) by imposing sanctions (Pub.L. 107–110, 115 Stat. 1425, enacted January 8, 2002).

Many states had to expand their testing programs in order to comply with the standards of NCLB, which means spending more money that could have been aimed at other expenses. NCLB required that Grades 3 through 8 be tested in both English and Mathematics, but at the time of implementation only about nine states had standards-based tests (Olson, 2002). The Center for Educational Policy (2006) found that "thirty-six states say they lack sufficient staff to implement NCLB requirements and 80 percent of districts report that they have absorbed costs of duties required by NCLB but not funded" (p. 15).

Kohn (2002) argues that because of high-stakes testing, the dropout rate is higher for low-income and minority students, burnout may exist among teachers, and testing has now become the norm for evaluating student achievement. Schools not achieving AYP by 2014 would experience increasing consequences, which would potentially put them at risk for a decrease in federal funding (Linn, Baker, &

Betebenner, 2002). Such schools could request a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education. The waivers were established to relieve states from meeting the requirements of NCLB that all students exhibit proficiency in reading and math by 2014 or else the school would be declared failing. Interestingly, since July 2014, the U.S. Department of Education has granted waiver extensions to 33 states (Rich, 2014). As leverage to get states to follow the act's provisions, the federal government threatened the flow of Title I funds if states and local school districts failed to comply with the various provisions of NCLB. Furthermore, if a district or school failed to achieve certain benchmarks as measured through tests, the act specifies where the federal money must be spent (Chapman, 2007).

According to Wagner (1989), demands for greater accountability in education have often been directed at teachers. Research continues to mount about teacher demoralization and attrition over frustration about the effects of mandated testing (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Wayne & Young, 2003). The current state and national accountability policies have pushed districts and schools to make significant changes. However, change may not always lead to the very best improvements in educational quality for which policies are founded. If students perform poorly on standardized tests, teachers face the increased possibility of losing their jobs. To boost test scores quickly, accountability policies have cornered teachers into dedicating large amounts of instructional time to preparing their students for the state's annual high-stakes test (Hamilton, Stretcher, Russell, Marsh, & Miles, 2008; Wills & Sandholtz, 2009). Some teachers have even resorted to cheating on high-stakes testing in order to receive extra pay from newly implemented merit-based programs (Keller, 2002). Accountability

policies raise questions about the ways in which teachers should be held accountable, to exactly what or whom they should be accountable, as well as the most appropriate consequences if they fail to meet the standards (Darling-Hammond, 2004).

Oklahoma Testing

Oklahoma had already established PASS standards by the time NCLB was recognized. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) partnered with American College Testing (ACT) in 1993 to fund an initiative called Oklahoma Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS). EPAS integrated assessment and reporting services for educators as they helped students prepare for life after high school (Oklahoma Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS), 2015). The assessments provide information about academic progress for students at the eighth grade, tenth grade, and end of high school. The assessments are also aligned closely with the already established Oklahoma PASS standards. The assessments measure different objectives at each level, which include:

- EXPLORE, the eighth-grade assessment, is the entry point to EPAS. EXPLORE includes objective assessments in English, math, reading, and science reasoning. It also includes activities that help young students begin the process of career and educational exploration. EXPLORE provides baseline data for monitoring student progress through the high school years.
- PLAN, the 10th-grade assessment, includes objective assessments in English, math, reading, and science reasoning. Its educational and career planning activities are tailored to the needs of students who are preparing to make decisions about life after high school. PLAN provides a midpoint review of

10th-grade students' progress toward their educational and career goals – at a point when there is still time to make changes.

- The ACT Assessment measures the overall outcomes of a student's high school education. Colleges use ACT Assessment results to make admissions, guidance and placement decisions. (Oklahoma Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS), 2015)

National reports in 2007 indicated that Oklahoma students were failing and ranked in the bottom 10% of states in the nation (Martin, 2010). The Achieving Classroom Excellence Act (ACE) was established to raise graduation and testing requirements for students in public schools. Students could follow either the curriculum for college preparatory standards or core standards to graduate high school in Oklahoma. Additionally, testing requirements for students entering ninth grade in the 2008-2009 school year were established to show mastery in several academic areas. All students were also required to take End-of-Instruction (EOI) exams for any course that has an EOI test (Achieving Classroom Excellence Act, 2015).

Common Core

The National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) sought to establish consistent educational standards for math and English across the country, by developing the Common Core State Standards initiative. States were awarded extra points on their Race to the Top grant application if they adopted the standards of Common Core (Saltman, 2012). Along with five other states, Oklahoma ultimately concluded not to join the Common Core initiative,

protesting that their state's academic standards were just as good as or better than Common Core's (Bidwell, 2014).

Race to the Top

In 2009, one of the first measures taken by President Obama within the framework of the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (ARRA) was named *Race to the Top* fund (RTTT). The ARRA provided $4.35 billion for the RTTT fund. According to the U.S. Department of Education website:

> The fund is a competitive grant program designed to encourage and reward States that are creating the conditions for education, innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, and ensuring student preparation for success in college and careers; and implementing ambitious plans in four core education reform areas:
>
> - Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy
> - Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction
> - Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most
> - Turning around our lowest-achieving schools (Race to the Top Fund, n.d.)

This federal grant is designed to reward states that have adopted and will continue implementing innovative reforms to improve student performance. Although

the grant seems to be providing an innovative competition for schools to receive funds, it still doesn't lay out a clear foundation for improving the lowest performing schools (Harris, 2012). Diane Ravitch, an educational analyst who is one of the grants most persistent critics has labeled it 'The Race to Nowhere'. Among her reasons to reject this initiative was that the test-based accountability of NCLB – a system which, according to her, is truly inadequate – will still be applied (Ravitch, 2010). Ravitch had come to a similar negative stance on NCLB, despite having initially endorsed the educational reform policy. In *The Death and Life of the Great American School System* (2010), Ravitch criticized NCLB while defending both public schools and the teachers within them (Lowe, 2011).

RTTT is essentially about two things: producing governmental insurance for states to increase educational innovations and providing a concrete administrative template to apply the innovations successfully. In addition, RTTT only supports specific states that have a robust documented trail and strategies for innovation and can provide essential stakeholder commitment to educational reform (Saltman, 2012). This is a drastic change from traditional educational federal grants by which funds are based solely on student achievement and progress.

The RTTT fund has also ushered in a new type of accountability parameter for teacher preparation programs (TPP). The RTTT fund requires that these programs be held responsible for creating influential teachers. The fund describes influential or effective teachers as those who produce a high increase in students' standardized testing scores. This has forced states to respond by creating substantial databases that have the ability to link a teacher's educational program to their students' standardized test gains.

However, problems have begun to occur because the RTTT grant doesn't specifically detail how to design and track estimates of the TPP to their students' testing achievements (Henry, Kershaw, Zulli & Smith, 2012). Still, the RTTT has moved the concentration of federal policy to now reward the states that are already succeeding in student achievement. This causes several challenges, one being that this reform only rewards the states that are already succeeding, and the other being that it may only discourage the states that need the motivation to do better (Saltman, 2012).

Accountability Systems

Sloan (2007) suggested that frequently used terms such as teacher accountability have relied on the assumption that increased pressure would force teachers to become more accountable for student achievement. However, there is an underlying assumption that the trepidation caused will successfully encourage teachers to improve their teaching practices. Accountability systems were introduced to motivate teachers and children to perform their best in the classroom. Some states have concluded that accountability systems have allowed teachers to become more collaborative instead of being a group of isolated practitioners. However, several researchers found that current policies eventually may work against teachers because of rigid curriculum controls, limited autonomy, and non-personal interactions with students (Finnigan & Gross, 2007; Mertler, 2011). Some researchers found that teachers' responses to accountability policies depend on their beliefs about their students and their teaching capabilities (Abelmann, Elmore, Even, Kenyon, & Marshall, 1999).

Currently, the state of Oklahoma has established its own teacher accountability system. The system is called the Oklahoma Teacher and Leader Effectiveness

Evaluation System and it is intended to encourage professional development that will lead to increased student academic achievement. By the 2013-2014 school years, all local board of education panels in Oklahoma were to be aligned with this system. Once implemented, it had to contain the following parameters:

- 50% Qualitative Measures (observable characteristics of teacher and leader performance that are correlated to student achievement)
- 35% Quantitative Measure of Student Academic Growth (based on multiple years of standardized test data)
- 15% Quantitative Measures of Other Academic Factors (Oklahoma Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Evaluation System, 2013)

Since its implementation, there is a lack of research available to determine whether the Oklahoma teacher accountability system is effective. Many stakeholders were concerned about meeting the 2013-2014 deadlines set forth by this new system. In response, a bill was passed to delay the full implementation of the entire TLE system until the 2015-2016 school years (TLE Report to the Oklahoma State Board Of Education: Implementation Update).

Some studies have found accountability policies and systems are effective and lead to increased standardized test scores for students (Jacob, 2005; Winstead, 2011). However, the emphasis on exclusively using standardized testing to measure student learning doesn't allow teachers to have as much control to teach creatively. The question becomes, do accountability systems and policies affect teachers' autonomy and motivation to continue teaching?

Accountability of the Teachers

Teacher Autonomy

There has always been some form of accountability for teachers and students in education. Yet, over the last decade with the implementation of NCLB there seems to be an increased focus on accountability for teachers. The federal and state demands created from NCLB and similar educational reform policies have created a trickle-down effect that has put an increased amount of pressure on teachers (Mertler, 2011). Teachers have been forced to teach to the test to maintain their jobs and, optimistically, hope for an increase in student achievement. However, policies have yet to take into account the outside conditions that may make it impossible for teachers to increase student achievement on standardized testing. Also, it appears that teachers' freedom for originality in the classroom is being constrained by their worries about whether or not the standardized test content has been taught (Hamilton et.al, 2008). A survey of teachers in states with high-stakes testing indicated that 41% of teachers responding reported that they received substantial pressure to increase test scores, and that they concentrated the majority of their instruction on teaching to the test (Abrams, Pedulla, & Madaus 2003). Teacher autonomy is an important construct when examining educational reform policies (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). However, there is not a generally accepted, clear definition of what teacher autonomy means in teacher education (Aoki, 2002; Huang, 2005; Smith, 2008). One of the clearest definitions is provided by Pearson and Hall (1993, p.172), which defines teacher autonomy as "….the right of teachers to manage themselves and their job environment."

Teacher autonomy is grounded in self-determination theory. Self-determination

theory is highly tied to the study of human motivation and personality. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), there are three basic needs that need to be satisfied: autonomy, competence, and psychological relatedness. If all three needs are met, human functionality and growth can occur. The need for autonomy implies that there is an individual need for humans to experience choice in all aspects of their own behavior. Deci and Ryan (1985) also proposed that there are different types of motivation reflecting different levels of autonomy. One type of motivation is described as intrinsic motivation, which is grounded in a high level of autonomous regulation because an individual is motivated by their own pleasure and satisfaction. Another type is extrinsic motivation which is invoked when an individual completes a task without any internal satisfaction or, in essence, it is simply a means to an end (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Pearson and Hall (1993) developed a scale to measure perceptions of teacher autonomy. Upon the initial study they collected data from 74 teachers from all grade levels on a 35-item scale. The researchers wanted to develop a scale on teacher autonomy that would be reliable and would be functional for research purposes. The total scale internal consistency coefficient was 0.93. The items on the scale with the highest item correlations were used to form a new 20-item scale. The new 20-item scale still had a good internal consistency coefficient of 0.91. In addition, all of the items on the new modified 20-item scale each had high item-total correlations with coefficients of at least 0.44 or higher (Pearson & Hall, 1993).

In a second study, Pearson and Hall (1993) refined their teacher autonomy scale to look at the degree to which teachers perceive they have autonomy in the following areas: (a) selection of activities and materials, (b) classroom standards of conduct, (c)

instructional planning and sequencing, and (d) personal on-the-job decision making. Approximately 204 teachers participated in the study. This group included 22 elementary teachers, 37 middle school teachers, and 145 high school teachers (Pearson & Hall, 1993). The scale had an internal consistency of 0.78 for the 20-item instrument. The results of their study indicated that teacher autonomy is composed of two dimensions: general teaching autonomy and curriculum autonomy. General teacher autonomy deals with the need for teachers to have autonomy to ensure creativity, and curricular autonomy is the need for teachers to have autonomy in decisions regarding teaching and learning (Pearson & Hall, 1993). The results also indicated that the perceptions of teaching autonomy did not differ by gender or degree, and that middle school teachers had significantly higher autonomy than either elementary or high school teachers. Furthermore, the researchers decided to drop two of the items because of a poor item-total correlation, which resulted in the final 18-item scale. Overall, the study showed that the teacher autonomy mostly differed with participants on the grade level taught, as opposed to the correlation between teacher autonomy and age or teaching experience, as suggested in prior research studies.

Numerous researchers have conducted studies that specifically focus on autonomy by looking at variables such as school policies (Olsen & Sexton, 2009), work environments (Pearson & Moomaw, 2006), and classroom curriculum (Dymoke & Harrison, 2006). Pearson and Moomaw (2005) examined the relationship between teacher autonomy and several variables, which included: stress, work satisfaction, empowerment, and professionalism. The participants included 171 teachers in Florida and the results of the study showed that as curriculum autonomy increased, on-the-job

stress decreased. The study also found that as general teacher autonomy increased, empowerment and professionalism improved as well. Teachers, who exhibited higher levels of job satisfaction, perceived empowerment, and professionalism, reported less stress related to their job (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). Generally, teachers who are more autonomous in the classroom tend to remain at their jobs longer (Pearson & Moomaw, 2006).

In addition, teacher autonomy has been found to be one facet of teacher motivation. Davis & Wilson (2000) conducted a study that looked at autonomy and motivation. The participants included 44 principals and 660 elementary teachers. The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire that measures job stress, motivation, and job satisfaction. They found that in regards to teacher motivation and autonomy, the more intrinsically motivated and the more satisfied the teachers were in their jobs, the less stress they experienced (Davis & Wilson, 2000).

The pressure of NCLB has pushed some school districts to create “teacher proof” curriculum that is scripted by time. While this may be insulting to more effective teachers, it may provide an improvement for teachers in high-poverty environments (Aoki, 2002). Generally, teachers in high poverty environments lack the funding to participate in professional development that could be beneficial in developing more effective and dynamic curriculum. Although a time-scripted curriculum conflicts with the ability to have a higher level of teacher autonomy in the classroom, it could be considered by some to essentially level the playing field of how teachers are evaluated. Still, to really make a change in educational reform policies, there needs to be a better

understanding of teacher autonomy, and teacher's motivation to continue teaching while sustaining high stakes pressure from NCLB.

Teacher Motivation

Motivation determines the level of engagement, the length of time, as well as the depth to which someone participates in an activity (Dowson & McInerney, 2003; McInerney, Maehr, & Dowson, 2004). Although motivation has been studied intensely throughout the years, teacher motivation as a research construct is fairly new, and is usually studied through the self-determination and social learning theories. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), self-determination theory begins with the presumption that human beings are inherently proactive and have a natural tendency to learn and develop in their environment, as well as learn from their personal needs, and experiences. The two types of motivation are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to motivation coming from the internal rewards of an individual rather than from any external or outside rewards (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). Intrinsic motivation is clearly "based upon the value received from the work itself" (Sergiovanni, 2007, p.128). In contrast, extrinsic motivation refers to motivation based on external factors and can have an impact when teachers or students are resistant or disinterested in the task or behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

There is a considerable amount of time and money invested in teacher programs, and professional development of teachers within schools. Many beneficial outcomes can result from understanding why teachers decide to leave or stay within the teaching profession. Motivation to stay as a teacher can be altered by numerous professional or personal factors, which include: money (Margolis & Deuel, 2009), job satisfaction

(Szecsi & Spillman, 2012; Wagner & French, 2010), students (Pelletier, Séguin-Lévesque, & Legault, 2002; Atkinson, 2000), school culture (Kersaint, Lewis, Potter, & Meisels, 2007) or even a combination of issues (Sinclair, Dowson, & McInerney, 2006; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). In two Florida districts, Kersaint et al., (2007), extensively studied all teachers who resigned over a two year period against a randomized sample of continuing teachers. They discovered that family responsibilities account for why most teachers decide to either stay or leave their jobs. Teachers who resigned specifically cited time with family and financial issues as the reasons why they are more likely to leave the profession. Teachers who stayed cited salary and administrative support as the reasons they were more likely to continue teaching (Kersaint et al., 2007).

As suggested earlier, high stakes testing is purportedly intended to hold teachers and other pertinent educational stakeholders accountable to improve students standardized testing results. The government policy makers hold the notion that making parties, particularly teachers, accountable for student performance should motivate them to improve standardized testing scores. However, research suggests that high stakes testing negatively impacts teachers' motivation in the classroom (Abrams et.al, 2003). In a study of teacher's beliefs about test-based accountability, Jones and Egley (2007) found that nearly all of the 708 Florida teachers who participated in the research believed that the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Tests (FCATs) had a negative impact on their ability to use effective teaching methods in reading. Results showed that teachers were generally negative about FCAT because children's different developmental rates were not considered. They also showed that nearly half of the

teacher's instructional time was aimed at teaching test-taking strategies, specifically aimed at passing the FCAT (Jones & Egley, 2007).

Research exists that indicates that teacher and student motivation are correlated (Pelletier et al., 2002; El, Tillema, & van Koppen, 2012). Siegle, Rubenstein, and Mitchell (2014) investigated how much influence teachers had on student motivation. They conducted a focus group with 28 college freshman and investigated the correlation between their motivation in high school and interactions with their teachers. The results indicated that teachers can not only influence student motivation, but also influence students' self-efficacy. Further, they reported that students credited their motivation to their teacher's ambition and strong work ethic (Siegle et al., 2014; Atkinson, 2000).

Ferrell and Daniel (1993) developed a scale to measure teacher motivation. The Orientations for Teaching Survey (OTS) was designed to measure an individual's orientation for entering the teaching profession. The researchers based their 58-item survey design on previous instruments and theories of career motivation. The participants included 255 teacher education students and in-service teachers, of which 84% were females. The researchers proposed eight thematic categories that orient individuals to select teaching as a career, which include: interpersonal, service, continuation, material benefits, time compatibility, stimulation, influence of others, and psychological. Upon analysis of the survey, results indicated that six out of the eight categories were valid. Those valid categories included: security-based orientations, service-based orientations, interpersonal-based orientations, stimulation-based orientations, benefit and convenience-based orientations, and continuation-based orientation. The instrument showed desirable properties with high factor loading and

relatively low cross loadings to effectively identify both pre service and current teachers' motivations for entering the profession (Ferrell & Daniel, 1993).

Sinclair, Dowson, and McInerney (2006) developed a modified version of the OTS survey called Modified Orientations for Teaching Survey (MOTS). The 80-item scale measured 10 motivations to teach, which include: (a) provides opportunities to work with children; (b) is a worthy and worthwhile occupation; (c) is an occupation that provides intellectual stimulation; (d) is an easy occupation and an easy occupation into which to gain entry; (e) provides an alternative to previously dissatisfying employment; (f) is a good career or may provide other options for career change or advancement; (g) provides opportunities to help others; (h) is an occupation with good conditions attached to it; (i) is an occupation valued or recommended by significant others; and (j) provides varied opportunities for working autonomously and with others (Sinclair, Dowson, & McInerney, 2006). The scale was comprised of the original 58 items from the OTS and an additional 22 items the researchers constructed. Participants for the study included 98 preservice teachers in Australia that were enrolled in a teacher education program. Results indicate that the MOTS scale produced good fit and alpha reliabilities to measure teachers' motivation.

Teachers' commitment to education remains linked to their motivation to go into the teaching occupation. However, considering the amount of responsibilities teachers carry simultaneously, it may not be possible to determine exactly what stimulates each individual task. Thus, an analysis of teachers' self-efficacy is discussed to explore the connection between motivation and autonomy.

Teacher Self-efficacy

One of the premises of NCLB is that in order to educate children, every classroom should contain highly qualified teachers. In the heightened urgency for teachers to succeed under the parameters of educational reform policies such as NCLB, it is important for researchers to find a connection between teachers and student achievement. A construct initially explored in social cognitive theory, teacher self-efficacy has been defined as a teacher's "judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated" (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, p.783). Teacher self-efficacy has been researched for nearly two centuries and has been linked steadily to student success (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). Research also shows that teachers with high self-efficacy are more open minded to new ideas and are more likely to try different teaching methods to maximize student potential. Highly efficacious teachers are also more persistent when problems occur and tend to be less critical of students who may be struggling in the classroom. This section explores the theoretical foundation of teacher self-efficacy as well as outlines the connection between teacher self-efficacy research and NCLB.

One first can see mentions of teacher self-efficacy, or teacher efficacy, in a study conducted by the RAND Corporation in 1976 (Armor et al., 1976). The RAND researchers applied Rotter's (1966) social learning theory as the theoretical basis to examine the success of various reading programs and interventions. Specifically, the Rand study used the locus of control in Rotter's social learning theory to understand whether teachers believed they could control the reinforcement of their actions in their

environment. Locus of control describes a person's characteristic way of perceiving the world and indicates the extent of control individuals perceive they have over the expectancies of reinforcement in their lives (Rotter, 1966). Rotter also theorized locus of control as a generalized expectancy of internal versus external control over behavior outcomes.

The RAND study asked teachers to indicate their level of agreement on a five-point Likert-type scale on two statements:

- When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment.
- If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students.

Teacher efficacy was determined by looking at the sum of scores for the two items on a scale. Results showed that teacher efficacy is strongly connected to variations in reading achievement among minority students. The two items also consistently predicted increases in achievement for students with teachers who possessed elevated levels of teacher efficacy (Armor et al., 1976). In other words, it indicated the extent to which a teacher believed that the amount of knowledge a student gained and their direct motivation were under their control.

Self-efficacy is grounded in social cognitive theory, which posits that portions of an individual's knowledge can be directly related to observing others within the context of social interactions and experiences (Bandura 1986; Bandura, Adams, & Beyer, 1977). Self-efficacy suggests that individuals function as self-evaluating, proactive

managers of their own motivation and behavior (Bandura & Locke, 2003; Bandura, 2006). For teachers, self-efficacy is the confidence to withstand the demands associated with teaching. Teachers' self-efficacy is particularly important to explore because it is critically significant to attaining the goals specified by NCLB (Bandura & Locke, 2003).

Teachers bring their personalities, personal history, and experiences every time they step into the classroom. Some teachers assume the responsibility for motivating students and themselves to succeed academically. Bandura (1977) theorized that teacher's self-efficacy beliefs are connected to the amount of time they put into teaching, the objectives they establish, and their persistence to move forward when things are out of their control. Teachers with elevated levels of efficacy tend to make several more attempts to succeed than teachers with decreased amount of efficacy. Bandura and Locke (2003) also found self-efficacy directly affects motivation and performance of teachers. Still, the most influential factor in developing self-efficacy has been shown to be performance accomplishment (Bandura & Locke, 2003). Teacher self-efficacy predicts:

> (a) student motivation and achievement, (b) student self-efficacy and attitudes, (c) teachers' goals and aspirations, (d) teacher attitudes toward innovation and change, (e) teachers' tendency to refer difficult students to special education, (f) teachers' use of teaching strategies, and (g) the likelihood that teachers will stay in the teaching profession (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, p. 2).

Teachers with increased levels of self-efficacy are more likely to persist longer in the achievement of valued goals than teachers with decreased self-efficacy. This notion could be particularly useful for individuals developing teacher centered strategies to meet the goals of NCLB.

Gibson and Dembo (1984) developed a scale to measure teachers' self-efficacy. The scale was developed by using Bandura's social cognitive theory to measure teachers' efficacy expectations and outcome expectations. The scale yielded two independent factors (1) outcome expectations about the consequences of teaching and (2) efficacy expectations of one's own teaching (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). Factor analysis of the Gibson and Dembo (1984) teacher efficacy scale confirmed the existence of general and personal teaching efficacy, in which general teaching efficacy (alpha=.79) seemed to capture expectancy results and personal teaching efficacy (alpha=.75) captured self-efficacy (Gibson and Dembo, 1984). Hoy and Woolfolk expanded on the results of the previously discussed scale to create their own version of the teacher efficacy scale (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990), and in 1993 conducted research that surveyed 179 instructors in New Jersey to gain a better understanding of the correlation between teacher efficacy and healthy school climate. In the study, a short form of the original Teacher Efficacy scale (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990) was used to assess the participant's personal and general teaching efficacy. Results indicate alpha coefficients of .77 for personal teaching efficacy and .72 for general teaching efficacy, which indicate good reliability. Furthermore, results also indicate that teachers perceptions of their school directly affect their personal teaching efficacy and, in turn, their ability to motivate students (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993).

Research has shown that teacher self-efficacy not only relates to outcomes for teachers, such as: motivation (Sinclair, 2008), engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), and commitment to teaching (Weiqi, 2007), teachers self-efficacy also affects students. In turn, instructors who have lower stress and higher teacher efficacy can inspire academic achievement (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006) and self-efficacy (Ross, Hogaboam-Gray, & Hannay, 2001) among their students.

Additionally, one research study looked at classroom value and student academic attainment in the span of a school year. The participants included 328 preschool children and approximately 67 preschool teachers. They found that teacher self-efficacy can serve as a predictor of academic achievement amongst students. It was also established that teacher self-efficacy can be directly associated with academic development, particularly vocabulary gains (Ying, Piasta, Justice, & Kaderavek, 2010).

One researcher found that instructors with an elevated level of self-efficacy are more prone to search for better ways to teach (Henson, 2001). Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2004) reported that there is a positive relationship between a school's socio economic status (SES) and collective teacher efficacy. Their study revealed that instructors within a low SES school did not experience student success at the same rate compared to those teaching in wealthier schools. In those schools, teachers' self-concept concerning their effectiveness was significantly lower. Instructors in classes with students that come from wealthier homes were more likely to report that they found their professional duties to be a lot easier and ultimately felt more secure (Woolfolk Hoy, 2004).

Greater efficacy enables teachers to be more confident in their ability to handle students when they have problems. According to Bandura (1997), among the

mechanisms of self-influence, none is more important than belief of personal efficacy. In addition, several studies have found that teachers' sense of efficacy has been related to their ability to influence student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2006, as cited in Shahid & Thompson, 2001). "Teachers' self-efficacy also has been related to student outcomes such as students' self-efficacy beliefs and student engagement, motivation, and achievement" (p. 3). Self-efficacy will differ among teachers depending upon the subject area taught, whether they are teaching within their subject matter expertise, and the type of student makeup (Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2004). In addition, Tschannen-Moran and McMaster (2009) indicated that it would benefit administrators to be knowledgeable about teachers' self-efficacy because it plays an important role in their implementation of new strategies.

There is a gap in the literature between perceptions of NCLB and teacher self-efficacy. It is common knowledge that education reform policies like NCLB have resulted in significant changes in our educational system. The next section examines perceptions of NCLB found in the literature and seeks to understand how perceptions can influence different facets such as motivation, autonomy, and self-efficacy.

Perceptions of State Mandated Testing

While state mandated testing has been in place prior to the NCLB Act, NCLB has been one of the reasons for the rise in state-mandated testing during the past 15 years. The requirements of NCLB have resulted in significant curriculum changes in both what is taught and how it is taught in schools across the United States. NCLB not only requires schools to participate in state-mandated testing but the stakes are high since lower results carry the threat of reducing the amount of money schools may

receive from the federal government. It appears that testing is something that districts do because they are required to do so, rather than serving as a useful tool to gauge how well students are learning in order to make sure students succeed in the future. One researcher posed the thoughtful question, "how do we educate students for the jobs of tomorrow when our priorities are focused narrowly on elementary reading skills and arithmetic?" (Beveridge, 2010, p. 5).

According to the study conducted by Mertler (2011), teachers had a negative viewpoint on NCLB and the impact it has on instruction and classroom-based assessments. The intent of this research was to determine how K-12 teachers perceived NCLB and what influence it had on their teaching and classroom structure. Distinct demographics were also examined to be able to analyze the correlations further. Participants in this study were 1,534 teachers. Findings indicate that teachers expressed unfavorable outlooks of NCLB as it relates to instruction, and elevated levels of stress associated with increasing student academic performance (Mertler, 2011). Results further indicated that teachers do condense the amount of time on content that is not part of standardized testing, and thus they ultimately teach to the test.

One research study analyzed teachers', administrators', and educational staffs' perceptions of how NCLB influenced and affected their view of the reform policy in four specific areas: accountability, flexibility, communication with parents, and teaching methods (Vannest, Mahadevan, Mason, & Temple-Harvey, 2009). The study included 248 participants who worked with specially educated children throughout Texas. Almost half of the participants (48%) taught up to the 4th grade and the rest (52%) taught Middle School. All participants took a 27-item survey regarding the

impact of NCLB. The range of Cronbach's alpha for all four areas (α = .773 to .861) indicates acceptable reliability for the survey. This indicates a high reliability to use the survey to measure perceptions of NCLB. This study also found that teachers have an overall undesirable perception of assessment in general and parent involvement (Vannest et al., 2009).

The Civil Rights Project at Harvard conducted a study of teachers in two school districts in two different states. One of the school districts was located in Fresno, California, and the other was located in Richmond, Virginia. Of the 1,866 teachers who actively taught in the school districts, a total of 1,445 teachers completed the survey about their perception of NCLB (Sunderman, Tracey, Kim, & Orfield, 2004). The researchers found:

> (a) they had altered their instructional practices in response to NCLB, (b) there were unintended negative consequences to NCLB, (c) they ignored important parts of the curriculum, (d) they reduced time spent or ignored parts of the curriculum that they knew was not tested, and (e) they tended to overemphasize tested parts of the curriculum. (Sunderman et al., 2004, p. 22)

They also found that NCLB influenced instructional practices in the classroom. Additionally, rather than improve teacher performance, most teachers who didn't make adequate yearly progress teachers would just leave their school and get a job teaching at another school (Sunderman et al., 2004).

There has been a large increase in emphasis on mathematics and English Language Arts in a majority of K-12 schools across the United States (Chapman, 2007). The courses that are not a part of the state-mandated testing have begun to suffer

because of the emphasis NCLB put on some core subjects. Some have argued in the past several years that the creative arts have also suffered tremendously from the budget cuts (Pederson, 2007). Sometimes the teachers of the arts have been asked to incorporate testing subjects into their curriculum (Chapman, 2004). McMurrer (2008) conducted a survey of 349 public school districts and found that 58 percent of districts have increased instructional time for reading and language arts, and that 45 percent have increased instructional time for math, while arts education instructional time has decreased by 16 percent since the inception of NCLB. Abrams et al. (2003) summarized research in which teachers reported giving greater attention, with regard to instruction and assessment, to content areas they knew would appear on a state test.

How can teachers support state mandated testing if they do not use it as a tool for improving their class? Teachers have always used some form of testing to assess students' knowledge of the content. But the pressure of NCLB seems to have pushed teachers to feel a need to guarantee that their students will pass the state mandated tests. Although the current government administration has already made changes in our current national educational reform policies, many aspects of the NCLB act are still in effect. Therefore, it remains important to address the perceptions of teachers regarding the NCLB act.

Summary

NCLB established requirements for all states to develop standardized testing to measure the progress of student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The goal of NCLB was to increase academic achievement for all students and close the achievement gap amongst students from different ethnicities and socioeconomic

upbringings. As a result of the focus on accountability, teachers experience a heavy burden to ensure state mandated standards are incorporated within their lessons, leaving little room for professional autonomy (Davis & Wilson, 2000; Hamilton, Stretcher, Russell, Marsh, & Miles, 2008; Wills & Sandholtz, 2009). The loss of teachers' autonomous control over their curriculum has led teachers to question their ability to teach in a high stakes testing environment, as well as impeded on their motivation to remain in their jobs (Sinclair, Dowson, & McInerney, 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). Numerous theoretical frameworks have been utilized in research to study and measure how teachers perceive state mandated testing (Overbaugh & Lu, 2008; Tucker et al., 2005; Kersaint, Lewis, Potter, & Meisels, 2007; Jones and Egley, 2007; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Jabob, 2005). However, a lack of research exists that demonstrates how a relationship between teacher self-efficacy, teacher motivation, and teacher autonomy, may affect teachers' perceptions of state mandated testing.

Self-determination theory provides the foundation to contend that using external control contingencies to alter behaviors or improve outcomes is typically unsuccessful over time (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Amerin & Berliner, 2002). NCLB and similar educational reform policies use external control contingencies (e.g., threatening monetary support and tying results to incentive pay for teachers) to instill compliance. However, research shows that the policies and sanctions surrounding NCLB has impacted teachers' motivation, resulting in negative opinions about state mandated testing (Sunderman et al., 2004; Mertler, 2011).

Social cognitive theory provides a foundation to understand one's persistence to remain engaged in specific behaviors in settings that may be influenced by outside

factors (Bandura, 1997). Research shows that teacher self-efficacy impacts the extent to which a teacher will remain in their jobs when faced with challenges. Teacher self-efficacy was also shown to play an important role in teachers' implementation and expansion of new strategies (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009; Henson, 2002). This measurement could prove to be a practical tool to understand whether teachers will not only rise to the challenge of professional expectations, but also implement new strategies set forth by policies.

Using self-determination theory and social cognitive theory as a basis to examine teachers' perception of state mandated testing, could show that relationships exist between the variables. Investigating these constructs together could support prompting of policy makers to effectively address teachers' needs, and concerns related to their work to educate future generations of students. The current research study uses constructs of self-determination theory and social cognitive theory to explore whether relationships occur between teacher autonomy, teacher motivation, and teacher self-efficacy in connection to teachers' perceptions of state mandated testing.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This research study investigated the relationship between teacher autonomy, teacher motivation, and teacher self-efficacy with teachers' perception of state mandated testing, in the context of the educational reform policy, No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The following sections present the research questions and study design including participants, materials, instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis for the study.

Research Questions

1. How do teachers perceive and value educational reform policies?
2. In the current educational reform policy context,
    a. Are there relationships between teacher autonomy, teacher efficacy, teacher motivation, and teachers' perceptions of state mandated testing?
    b. What is the nature of those relationships?

Research Design

The research questions and attendant methodologies are summarized in Table 3.1. This research study has both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The research study occurred in two distinct phases; the first phase was quantitative and consisted of an online survey of Oklahoma public school teachers who taught in the middle school grades. The survey targeted middle school teachers who typically taught between the 6th and 8th grade levels. Some middle schools also included the 5th year grade level.

Table 3.1

Research Questions, Study Design, Instruments, Data Sources, and Analysis

Research Question	Study Design	Task/Material/Instrument	Data Source	Data Analysis
How do teachers perceive and value educational reform policies?	Descriptive	Demographics, Perceptions of State Mandated Testing Scale	Survey Interview Transcripts	Correlation (Mean, Median, Standard Deviation)
Are there relationships between teacher autonomy, teacher efficacy, teacher motivation, and teachers' perceptions of state mandated testing?	Descriptive, Quasi Experimental	Demographics, Perceptions of State Mandated Testing Scale, Teacher Autonomy Scale, Teacher Motivation Scale, and Teacher Efficacy Scale	Survey Interview Transcripts	Bivariate Correlation (Mean, Median, Standard Deviation), ANOVA (Significant or Non-Significant)
What is the nature of those relationships?	Descriptive	Perceptions of State Mandated Testing Scale, Teacher Autonomy Scale, Teacher Motivation Scale, and Teacher Efficacy Scale	Survey Interview Transcripts	Correlational Direction (Significant or Non-Significant)

The purpose of the survey was to see whether there were correlations among the constructs that would support the research questions.

The second phase was qualitative and consisted of six follow-up interviews with participants who completed the first phase of the research study. The participants were selected based on their availability and subjects they taught. This data collection method was chosen as a way to triangulate the quantitative data discovered in the first phase of the study.

Participants

The participants for this research study were 561 Oklahoma public school teachers who taught in various middle schools (see Table 3.2 & 3.3). Middle school teachers were utilized because they taught in the grade levels where Oklahoma standardized testing is primarily conducted. There are three types of assessments within the Oklahoma Student Testing Program for Grades 3-8. All assessments are aligned to the state-mandated PASS standards as well as the ACE requirements established for graduation from public schools, which have been adopted by the Oklahoma State Board of Education (Oklahoma Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS), 2015; Achieving Classroom Excellence Act, 2015).

The researcher chose these participants because they are in the teaching group in which testing is heavily engaged by students across the state. While testing in the state of Oklahoma begins in the 3rd grade, significant testing for students begins to occur in the middle school grade levels. The researcher sought to understand the perspectives of teachers working with students who are just beginning extensive testing, versus a high

school settings were testing has been in place for several years. Beyond selecting for grades taught, convenience sampling was used.

Within this group of participants, 339 (60.4%) reported that they were teaching before 2001, when the NCLB act was established. In middle school settings, many teachers instruct more than one grade level. In this study, 245 participants taught one grade, 113 participants taught two grade levels, 92 participants taught three grade levels, and 37 participants taught four or more grade levels. Of the 561 participants, 130 were identified as teaching in a low socioeconomic school, and 266 were identified as teaching in a school wherein at least half the grade levels were performing proficiently on the Oklahoma standardized tests.

Table 3.2
Demographic Data

Gender	**N (%)**	**Age**	**N (%)**	**Ethnic Group**	**N (%)**
Female	411 (73.3%)	20-30	70 (12.5%)	American Indian or Alaskan Native	40 (7.1%)
Male	118 (21%)	31-40	111 (19.8%)	Asian	3 (.5%)
		41-50	169 (30.1%)	Black or African American	15 (2.7%)
		51-60	149 (26.6%)	Hispanic or Latino	3 (.5%)
		61 or above	30 (5.3%)	White	454 (80.9%)
				Other	14 (2.5%)

Materials/Instruments

This section describes the instruments utilized for this study. Beyond the demographics portion of the survey and the qualitative interview protocol, this study utilized four instruments that have been used in previously published studies.

Survey

The survey used for this mixed methods study is comprised of different sections intended to measure the constructs of teacher autonomy, teacher self-efficacy, teacher motivation, and perception of state mandated testing, as well as collect participants' demographic information.

Demographics

A demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A) was used to collect general information about the participants, including: age, gender, race, highest level of education completed, teacher experience under NCLB, general years of teaching experience, and current teaching position.

Teacher Autonomy

Perceptions of teacher autonomy were measured using the Teacher Autonomy Scale (Pearson & Hall, 1993) (see Appendix B). The 18-item scale was designed to elicit the degree to which teachers perceive they have autonomy in the following areas: (a) selection of activities and materials, (b) classroom standards of conduct, (c) instructional planning and sequencing, and (d) personal on-the-job decision making. The scale comprises two subcomponents, which include general teacher autonomy and curriculum teacher autonomy. General teacher autonomy is measured by 12 items and the other six reflect curriculum teacher autonomy. Pearson & Hall (1993) have found internal consistency of this scale to be .80. The scale is consistent with the principals of self-determination theory, which posits that autonomy is necessary for human growth.

Teacher Self-efficacy

The theoretical basis for this scale is social cognitive theory, not internal-external locus of control. Tschannen-Moran (1998) noted, "Bandura (1997) distinguishes between the two as beliefs about whether one can produce certain actions (perceived self-efficacy) and the belief whether actions affect outcomes (locus of control)" (p.211). According to Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998), self-efficacy has to do with self-perception of competence rather than actual level of competence. This is an important distinction, especially when trying to measure levels of teacher self-efficacy.

This study utilized the 10-item Teacher Efficacy scale developed by Hoy & Woolfolk (1990) (See Appendix C). The scale measures two independent factors, which were teacher efficacy and personal efficacy. Results indicate alpha coefficients of .77 for personal teaching efficacy and .72 for general teaching efficacy, which indicate good reliability.

Teacher Motivation

The theoretical basis for this scale is also self-determination theory, specifically examining whether teachers' intrinsic motivation to teach affects their perception of state mandated testing. Perceptions of teachers' motivation were measured by using items from the Orientations for Teaching Survey (OTS) and the Modified Orientations for Teaching Survey (MOTS) (Ferrell & Davis, 1993; Sinclair, Dowson, & McInerney, 2006). The scales measured 10 motivations to teach, which included: (a) provides opportunities to work with children; (b) is a worthy and worthwhile occupation; (c) is an occupation that provides intellectual stimulation; (d) is an easy occupation and an

easy occupation into which to gain entry; (e) provides an alternative to previously dissatisfying employment; (f) is a good career or may provide other options for career change or advancement; (g) provides opportunities to help others; (h) is an occupation with good conditions attached to it; (h) is an occupation valued or recommended by significant others; and (i) provides varied opportunities for working autonomously and with others (Ferrell & Davis, 1993; Sinclair, Dowson, & McInerney, 2006).

The scale used in this study to measure teachers' motivation included a modified version of both the original OTS and MOTS scales, in which 10 items were chosen from the OTS scale and five additional items were chosen from the MOTS scales. The 10 items from the OTS scale were chosen because they covered the ten motivations the scale was originally designed to measure. The five additional items chosen from the 85-item MOTS scale were contextually relevant for the study. Statistical analysis will be performed to assess the reliability of the scale (see Appendix D).

Perceptions of State-Mandated Test

A scale constructed by Pedulla et al. (2003) to measure teachers' perceptions of state-mandated tests was used (see Appendix E). This scale consists of 13 items that ask teachers a series of questions related to their perception of the stakes for districts, schools, teachers, and students in relation to state mandated testing. Each item on the questionnaire asks participants to respond to a statement about the value of state-mandated test. Additionally, items 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12 specifically were reverse coded to account for the negative direction of the questions administered.

For consistency, all scales used in this current research study were modified to a six-point Likert-type scale from 1 "strongly disagree" to 6 "strongly agree".

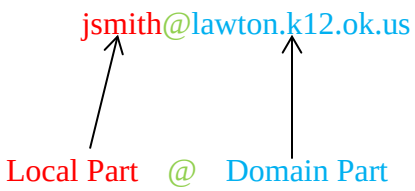
Procedures

Survey

Data were collected by means of a survey containing 65 items. The items were combined from both demographic questions and the four scales that measure the variables related to this research study. The majority of these items within this survey were Likert-type items based on a continuous scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. Other demographic questions asked about factual information, such as age, gender, race, and teacher centered questions. The instrument was administered to teachers based on voluntary participation and the participants were asked to answer the questions based upon their experience with the NCLB act.

The online survey was sent to 4,613 email addresses of Oklahoma public middle school teachers. The emails were retrieved from a list obtained from the Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE). The SDE list contained over 50,000 names of middle school teachers across the state. Because the email addresses were not included in the information obtained in the SDE file, the researcher used the following process to obtain email address. The list was first sorted by first name, last name, and name of school. The researcher identified the local part and domain part of email addresses in all the schools included in the list (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1
Example of e-mail address breakdown



Then the researcher identified the email addresses of teachers at each school to obtain the domain part of each school's email address. The domain part of the email addresses differed according to which student information system (SIS) the schools were utilizing. The researcher was careful to note which pattern the local part of the email followed. Most local parts of the email addresses identified included first initial followed by last name but there were exceptions depending on the SIS. There are a total of eight SIS used amongst Oklahoma schools. Most schools in Oklahoma use the services of a company that uses a SIS called municipal accounting system (MAS). Once the researcher obtained the domain part of the email addresses used by all the middle schools in the list, a sort feature in Excel was used to link the school email addresses with the teacher's name. This included making a column of the school name, local part of the email addresses, the "@" symbol, and the domain part of the email addresses in separate columns. The last step included merging all the columns together, excluding the school name column to make a working email to use for the online survey. The process helped create 4,613 Oklahoma middle school teachers' email addresses. From these emails sent out, 589 teachers responded to the online survey in October 2011.

The survey was conducted over an eight-week period in the fall of 2011. The survey was first emailed out October 6, 2011 and was closed on December 1, 2011. Once the data were retrieved and cleaned from Survey Monkey, the results included a total of 561 participants whose responses could be utilized.

Interviews

The semi-structured interview questions were developed by the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of each construct in this study. The interview protocol

contained five questions for each construct except teacher motivation, which contained four questions. The researcher asked each participant in the beginning of the survey if they were willing to participate in a short semi-structured interview about the study (see Appendix F). The researcher had the participants select yes or no and give their consent to be contacted after the survey was complete. An email from Survey Monkey went out to the participants who responded that they were willing to take part in the interview portion of the study. The interviews were conducted in person with six individual participants, by reading each question out loud and recording their verbal response with both a digital recorder and transcription notes. To remain consistent, the researcher asked all participants the same 19 questions in the semi-structured interviews.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed first, followed by qualitative data. The quantitative data consisted of an online survey and the analysis of the data retrieved from the school report cards. The qualitative data included the audiotaped semi-structured interviews. The following described the analysis procedure and methods for both the quantitative and qualitative data.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using the SPSS statistical software package to determine how teachers perceive educational reform policies. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to measure the demographic grouping items of three or more levels. An independent T-Test was used to measure the demographic grouping items of two levels against the perceptions of state mandated testing scale. The ANOVA and independent T-Test was used to test for mean differences between groups on the survey

(see Appendix A). A bivariate correlation analysis was utilized to measure the relationship, as well as the direction of the relationship that existed between the variables.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis provides ways of interpreting participants' meaning structures and of examining, comparing, and interpreting meaningful themes from the collected data. This research study utilized a triangulation design mixed methods approach to interpret the results (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). The design was selected because the purpose was to obtain diverse but complimentary data on same topic to interpret the research findings (Creswell, 2005).

Creswell's (2005) sequence for qualitative data analysis was used, which included: storing and organizing files, searching for themes, crossing themes, diagramming (creating visual picture of categories), interpreting, and presenting themes. These steps show the relevant patterns within the data as well as significant relationships. The goal was to create descriptive, multi-dimensional categories, which form a preliminary framework for analysis. Audio recordings of each participant of the interviews were transcribed and put into a *Word* document. The teachers were only identified through the subjects they taught and the schools at which they were employed. All other identifiable information was not stored in the *Word* files but stored in a notebook that was secured in a locked cabinet when not in use by the researcher.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the survey conducted with participants who agreed to take part in this research study. The analysis of the study is reported by each research question. Findings from the qualitative analysis also are presented. The qualitative results provide a deeper understanding into the quantitative analysis.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Almost every scale used in this study has been used in prior research studies (Pearson & Hall, 1993; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990; and Pedulla et al, 2003). However, the teacher motivation scale was adapted from the original Orientations for Teaching scale (OTS) and the Modified Orientations for Teaching (MOTS) scale to reduce the overall length of the survey used for this research (Ferrell & Daniel, 1993; Sinclair, Dowson, and McInerney, 2006). Before the data could be considered and discussed in relation to the research questions, descriptive and reliability statistics were performed across every scale utilized in this research study (see Table 4.1). The internal consistency, as indicated by Cronbach's α, ranged from .557 to .795. The teacher efficacy subcomponent of the Teacher Efficacy scale and curriculum teacher autonomy subcomponent of the Teacher Autonomy scale were most internally consistent (.795 and .794 respectively). The General Teacher Autonomy subcomponent of the Teacher Autonomy scale yielded the lowest internal consistency of $\alpha = .557$. This is considered a poor internal consistency, but if rounded up would .600, which would be acceptable.

Table 4.1
Descriptive statistics of measured variables

Scale	*M*	*SD*	*Cronbach's alpha*
Perceptions of State Mandated Testing	31.328	9.378	.763
General Teacher Autonomy	41.830	5.649	.228
Curriculum Teacher Autonomy	22.700	6.709	.794
Teacher Efficacy	17.060	5.345	.795
Personal Teacher Efficacy	11.313	3.990	.785
Teacher Motivation	42.527	5.924	.658

1. How do teachers perceive and value educational reform policies

A between groups analysis was conducted to look at whether teachers perceive and value educational reform policies according to various demographic group variables (see Table 4.2). The intention was to see whether perceptions of state mandated testing were related to various levels of demographic characteristics of the teachers' age, gender, teaching experience, ethnicity, educational level, bachelor's discipline, years of teaching, administered EOI tests, pathway to teaching, or the subjects they currently taught. An ANOVA (for grouping variables with 3+ levels) and independent t-tests (for grouping variables with only 2 levels) was conducted to explore possible group differences on the Perceived Value for State Mandated Testing scale (PVS). Across all two-level demographic characteristics (variables with only two grouping levels), an independent t-test indicated that significant differences existed only for EOI (No, M=36.547, SD = 7.076, N = 230 and Yes, M = 38.635, SD = 8.210, N = 148) at p = .009.

Table 4.2

Means and SD's on PVS Scale by group

Source	*M*	*SD*	*N*	Source	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Gender				**Bachelor's Discipline**			
Male	38.936	7.217	79	Hard Science	39.555	8.736	27
Female	36.949	7.654	299	Social Science	37.104	7.426	287
Age				Art & Humanities	37.745	7.888	59
20-30	37.911	7.073	45	**Before 2001 (Taught)**			
31-40	37.259	7.643	81	Yes	37.136	7.892	241
41-50	37.608	7.459	115	No	37.766	7.063	137
51-60	37.008	7.911	114	**Years Teaching**			
61 or above	37.217	8.095	23	1-5 years	36.888	6.731	72
Ethnic Group				6-10 years	39.402	8.219	72
American Indian or Alaskan Native	39.176	8.397	34	11-15 years	37.044	7.683	67
Asian	44.666	10.598	3	16-20 years	36.389	7.232	59
Black or African American	37.545	10.801	11	21 or more years	37.055	7.755	108
Hispanic or Latino	35.500	.707	2	**Pathway**			
White	37.104	7.360	317	Regular Licensure	37.341	7.913	302
Other	37.454	7.941	11	Alternative Licensure	37.460	6.240	76
EduLevel				**Interrupt**			
Bachelor's Degree	37.073	7.343	204	No	37.914	8.066	94
2 or more Bachelor's Degrees	39.550	11.264	20	Yes	37.183	7.443	284
Master's Degree	37.661	7.683	118	**Subject Current Teach**			
2 or more Master's Degrees	36.625	6.300	8	Non-Teaching Position	33.250	5.849	8
Doctoral Degree	37.333	6.027	3	Hard Science	37.850	6.402	114
Bachelor's and Master's Degree	37.705	5.924	17	Social Science	38.851	8.727	54
Bachelor's & 2 or more Master's Degree	34.500	10.606	2	Arts and Humanities	36.826	8.347	161
2 or more Bachelor's and Master's	38.500	6.658	4	Mixed: HS, SS, AH	36.975	5.867	41
EOI				**Taught Current School**			
No	36.547	7.076	230	1-5 years	36.981	7.294	159
Yes	38.635	8.210	148	6-10 years	38.858	8.994	106
Grade Current Teach				11-15 years	36.411	6.862	51
5th grade	41.100	13.803	10	16-20 years	37.480	6.232	25
6th grade	35.727	5.788	44	21 or more years	35.973	5.780	37
7th grade	36.254	6.319	63				
8th grade	39.187	8.236	64				
7th & 8th grade	38.169	7.311	65				
6th, 7th, & 8th grade	36.460	6.944	63				
6th grade to 12th grade	37.090	7.006	11				

This indicates that teachers who administer the end of instruction tests are more likely to have an increased perception of state mandated testing than teachers who do not administer end of instruction tests. Of the between groups analysis for variables with three or more levels, an ANOVA revealed no statistically significant group differences

on the PVS for age $p = .870$; education level $p = .978$; Bachelor's discipline $p = .349$; years of teaching $p = .146$; subject currently taught $p = .142$; grade currently taught $p = .096$; and how long they have taught at their current school $p = .624$. Because no significant differences existed between the groups analyzed above, further analysis (Tukey's post hoc analysis) was not warranted.

2. In the current educational reform policy context,

A. Are there relationships between teacher autonomy, teacher efficacy, teacher motivation, and teachers' perceptions of state mandated testing?

B. What is the nature of those relationships?

General Teacher Autonomy and Curriculum Teacher Autonomy are the two subcomponents within the Teacher Autonomy scale. Teacher Efficacy and Personal Efficacy are the two subcomponents within the Teacher Efficacy Scale.

Pearson's product moment correlations were computed to determine if there are differences in correlations among Teacher Autonomy (General & Curriculum Autonomy), Teacher Efficacy (Teacher & Personal Efficacy), Teacher Motivation, and the Perceptions of State Mandated Testing scales (see Table 4.3). Results indicated that General Teacher Autonomy (GTA) was positively and significantly correlated to Curriculum Teacher Autonomy (CTA) ($r = .483$, $p < .01$), Teacher Motivation (TMS) ($r = .153$, $p < .01$), and Perceptions of State Mandated Testing (PVS) ($r = .171$, $p < .01$). The *r* values indicate that GTA and CTA exhibit the strongest relationship between the scales measured, which was expected because they are variables within the same scale. The results also show that as teachers felt more autonomous generally, they also felt more autonomous within the curriculum, more motivated overall and valued state mandated tests. These findings are consistent with research that indicates relationships

exist between teacher autonomy, teacher motivation, teacher efficacy, and perceptions of state mandated testing (Mertler, 2011; Sunderman et al., 2004; Davis & Wilson, 2000).

Table 4.3
Bivariate Correlation Between Scales

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. General Teacher Autonomy (GTA)	1	.483**	.153*	- .023	.261**	.171**
2. Curriculum Teacher Autonomy (CTA)		--	-.031	-.173**	.231**	034
3. Teacher Efficacy (TES)			--	.268**	-.087	-.139**
4. Personal Efficacy (PES)				--	-.223**	-.051
5. Teacher Motivation Scale (TMS)					--	.126*
6. Perceived Value Testing Scale (PVS)						--

Note: Pairwise numbers ranged from 378-437
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Results also indicated positive significant correlations between Teacher Efficacy (TES) and Personal Efficacy (PES) ($r = .268$, $p < .01$) as well as between CTA and TMS ($r = .231$, $p < .01$). This means that strong significant relationships exist between the variables of teacher and personal efficacy as well as between curriculum teacher autonomy and teacher motivation. Results did not indicate a significant relationship exists between teacher self-efficacy to teacher motivation, but a strong significant relationship exists between personal teacher efficacy and teacher motivation. These findings are consistent with the existing literature that shows these constructs are related (Bandura & Locke, 2003; Sinclair, 2008; Henson, 2001).

Finally, results indicated stronger negative correlations between CTA and PES ($r = -.173$, $p < .01$), PVS and TES ($r = -.139$, $p < .01$), as well as between PES and TMS ($r = -.223$, $p < .01$). This indicates that when teachers' personal self-efficacy for teaching increases, feelings of autonomy within the curriculum and motivation decrease. These findings are inconsistent with the literature that shows increases in self-

efficacy should also demonstrate increased levels of autonomy and motivation (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009; Henson, 2001 Bandura, 2006; Bandura & Locke, 2003). The findings also indicate a strong negative correlation between perceptions of state mandated testing and teacher efficacy. This shows that teachers who are more confident place less significance on state mandated testing.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The purpose of the qualitative portion of the study was to gain deeper understanding of each construct (teacher autonomy, teacher motivation, and teacher self-efficacy) from the teacher's perspective, and to provide further insight regarding how teachers perceive and value educational reform policies. Individuals included in the second part of the study had indicated interest on the initial survey to participate in a one-on-one interview with the researcher. Participants selected for interviews included a total of six Oklahoma public school teachers who taught at different Middle Schools around the state. Interview participants were selected based on their geographic location and ability to be interviewed. The researcher also intentionally selected teachers to represent a variety of teaching subjects. Two of the participants were located in the Tulsa metro area, two were located in the Oklahoma City metro area, and two were located just outside the Oklahoma City metro area. For further information about the participants, see Table 4.11. The interviews were conducted in person with each participant in the participant's town. The researcher intentionally selected teachers who taught a variety of subjects in the classroom to ensure diverse opinions. The interviews were organized and coded thoroughly for common themes and categories. Final analysis revealed four themes that were consistent amongst the interviews, with several sub-themes or categories identified (see Table 4.12).

Initial Organization and Coding of Interview Data

The triangulation mixed methods design approach was utilized to compare or expand quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The analysis followed Creswell's (2005) sequence for qualitative data analysis, which included: storing and organizing the files, searching for themes, crossing themes,

diagramming, and interpreting and presenting themes. Individuals were instructed on the survey to indicate interest in conducting a one-on-one interview with the researcher. The interested participants were emailed by the researcher to set up individual interviews. The researcher chose to select teachers from various subjects and curriculum (e.g., special education) to provide diversity.

The interview protocol script was used for continuity and to ensure sufficient questions were addressed for each construct. The participants were instructed to attempt to elaborate their responses to each question, beyond simply providing an agree or disagree response. Upon completion of the six audio recorded interviews, the researcher transcribed the interviews for each participant. Since the interview questions were asked in a sequential manner by each construct (e.g., teacher autonomy, teacher efficacy, teacher motivation, and value of state mandated testing), the initial coding process revealed themes categorized by the constructs. A total of 20 themes emerged from the initial coding process. The initial group of themes was cross referenced for each participant to search for additional themes that didn't emerge in the preliminary coding. The researcher created tables to visually diagram each participant's response to the interview questions and manually color coded the themes to ensure all themes were identified. The cross reference yielded an additional two themes that did not emerge in the initial coding process. The 22 themes were cross referenced with each participant's response several times in an effort to exhaust the possibility of overlooking fundamental themes. Next, the researcher looked at the patterns within the themes to identify if they could be categorized and sorted for better interpretation. The process yielded

naturalistic generalizations from analyzing the themes, in which four main themes and 13 sub-themes or categories were identified (Creswell, 2007).

Table 4.4
Participant Demographics

	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D	Teacher E	Teacher F
Subject Taught	English	Math	Social Studies	Special Ed	Science	Social Studies
Years Taught	6-10 years	21 or more	6-10 years	21 or more	10-15 years	1-5 years
Sex	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female

Although qualitative research analysis is an inductive process involving the encoding of data and a search for common themes in the responses of the participants, the ultimate purpose, like other research methodologies, is to attempt to answer the research questions. The questions for this study most conducive to qualitative analysis involved teachers' perceptions and valuing of educational reform policies. In general, the data suggest that the interviewees perceived educational reform policies as constituting evolving pressures, creating unclear educational expectations, requiring shared responsibility, and creating increased mindfulness, including critical questioning regarding the purposes of high-stakes testing and how to cope with the challenges they present.

Table 4.5
Qualitative Themes and Sub-Categories

Evolving Pressure	Unclear Educational Expectations	Shared Responsibility	Mindfulness
AYP Pressure	Idea of NCLB good, single measurement bad	Holistic	Collaborative Teaching
Uninvited Change	Common Core	Teacher's Guilt	Teaching Style
Teaching to the test	Guidelines are key	Religious Communities	Curriculum Autonomy Illusion
		Parental Effect	

Evolving Pressure

One theme emerging from the interviews appeared to be a perception that state mandated testing generates evolving pressure. The data indicates that teachers did not feel as much pressure to follow a script in the classroom or show an increase in standardized test scores before NCLB was established. Analysis of the data revealed several emerging subcategories, which include: AYP pressure, uninvited change, and teaching to the test.

AYP Pressure

Each state chooses its own test and standards of proficiency. Schools that don't show that students are making "adequate yearly progress" toward achieving proficiency are subject to federal sanctions. Those sanctions include loss of federal funds, mandates to provide free tutoring, allowing students to transfer to another school, and, if all else fails, a complete restructuring of the school. Research indicates the pressure of testing has caused teachers to cheat on standardized tests as well as quit the profession (Keller,

2002; Mertler, 2011). The participants interviewed were split evenly on how they have experienced the pressure of testing. Three out of the six participants made statements similar to the following about feeling pressure from testing:

> Yes, I mean we've all felt it. But we know I think we just changed. We changed our focus is to, we still want them to know the information but we need them to process the information into a test instead of just knowing the information. I actually don't have a problem with that because in real life like you have to take test. I need to teach them how to take a test and that's part of life. (Teacher C)

> Yes, I will tell you this, they have been really nice to us up until this point. We have been hearing it's more like the pressure coming from the outside on them and they're kind of having to push it down on us. But it's my 11th year with (Redacted) and my 14th school year. (Teacher D)

Interestingly, one teacher described the pressure of just teaching in general whether or not it's coming from NCLB or any other type of educational policy. She stated:

> Really I can't answer that. Just being here for two years I always feel like there's pressure in the sense of "You've got to do this and this is what the state is telling us and you've got to get the students ready". So yes there's that pressure but I don't think it was per se because of No Child Left Behind. But there is still that pressure of we've got to perform as a teacher … yep. (Teacher E)

In contrast, three participants described that they either have not felt or experienced pressure from administrators or, if there was pressure, it did not change their approach

to teaching. In some cases teachers' responses to assessment pressures may have involved teacher autonomy and critical resistance to official expectations. As one teacher stated:

> Let me think (laughs). Increased pressure…umm I don't yield to that type of pressure. Has there been a lot of pressure, certainly. I've probably been at the state level numerous times telling them that these test are unfair to not only my kids but regular ed (education) kids too that struggle in the classroom. For them to say they should know the causes of the civil war when they don't know the difference between a cup and a light that's silly. I never taught science. I have certification in all subject areas. I can teach math, science, social studies, I could teach any of those. I never taught the way the book said. I taught more from what in heaven's name is going on here. Look at how they're dressed. Look at what they're singing. Look at what they're doing and then eventually those causes just kind of creep in there. But I'm not, because I wasn't a structured teacher like that. Mine was a little more … those kids could tell you more about the civil war and what was happening around them rather than factual data. June 9th was when they fought this battle. You know I just didn't give into that. So pressure … no because I taught my way. I did it my way. (Teacher B)

Uninvited Change

As with many other jobs a teacher doesn't have the choice to remain in their job and not adhere to the stipulations that are set forth by educational reform policies. Changes that are made in education will always affect teachers in some capacity.

Teachers understand when they choose the profession they have to adhere to the policies set forth by their state. Teachers were invited to discuss their feelings about NCLB as well as the influence it has made in their school. One teacher had mixed feelings about NCLB and the changes it imposes. She noted:

> I think it was more positive than negative as a whole. I think it made teachers more accountable. You know use their time more wisely. Yea I think it made them all nervous wrecks too. I think they were really glad when it was downplayed. It was sad to see schools like Grant that were forced into a whole new faculty. I had a friend who taught there and she was great. They had to get rid of everybody, even the good teachers. So there are a lot of mixed feelings with what that aspect of No Child Left Behind did. There were some good things too – it did hold the mark. I think there was a lot of negativity in special education. Every year when I would see my kids should be on grade level, I would think I'm so glad I'm retiring. But as far as a whole negative thing … no. I think everybody breathed a sigh of relief when it was going away. But now something else will take its place. Now we have more curriculum meeting, you left one and picked up another. (Teacher B)

The five remaining participants all agreed that NCLB left a negative influence. One teacher explained their frustration with the policy:

> I would have to say more of a negative. I really don't see that's it's helped any kids. We've had the classes slow down so the lower kids don't feel like they're getting left. Then that means it's kind of water in the lemonade instead of

> pushing them as much as you should be able to push them. Then you don't want to make anyone feel like they they're not smart or they can't do it, it's just going to take you longer. As packed as we are in our classrooms there's no way somebody sitting next to you doesn't notice that you only have a choice of two and they have a choice of four on a test[1]. (Teacher F)

Another teacher noted sarcastically that people only care about test scores, even when teachers put themselves in harm's way. She explained:

> There was a recent school shooting where one of the teachers basically chased the kid with a gun out of the building and I kind of sarcastically said "I wonder what their test score is." That's a teacher right there who puts herself in the way. So but you know what's their test scores, because that's all that some people care about, unfortunately. (Teacher D)

Teaching to the test

All of the participants interviewed discussed in some way how they are teaching to the test. NCLB has caused schools to be accountable by focusing more attention on standardized testing and results. Whether not they are following the PASS objectives set forth by the state that serve as a guideline, or specifically teaching test taking skills, research shows teaching to the test has caused instructors to lose creativity in the classroom (Abrams et al., 2003). Teacher A stated:

> Probably the first 7 out of 10 years that I taught at (Redacted), yes I was able to have control over my classroom. The last 3 years I would say I taught mainly to

[1] Teacher F referenced to the difference between a regular exam and a modified exam given to students with learning disabilities.

> the test because I needed the test scores up. That took out the creativity of teaching, it took out all about my connecting with the kids and that was in part one of the reasons I left the classroom. I was tired of teaching to a mandated test.

Unclear Educational Expectations

Another theme that emerged from the qualitative data relates to teachers' perceptions of NCLB and unclear educational expectations. Several participants discussed how they see the value in testing but didn't agree with how the results are used to punish individuals. Overall, all participants agreed that testing results should only be used a guideline to help students. The data displays several emerging subcategories, which include: idea of NCLB good, single measurement bad, common core, and guidelines are key.

Idea of NCLB Good, Single Measurement Bad

Whether it is NCLB or any other educational reform policies, it seems most teachers have a negative perspective about it. This may come from the fact that most policies are formed without direct input from teachers. Nevertheless, teachers are expected to buy into new educational policy standards that immediately affect their jobs. Research shows teachers have an unfavorable views of NCLB because it uses a single measurement to determine school funding (Mertler, 2011; Sunderman et al., 2004). The following are the interview participants' thoughts specifically regarding NCLB:

> You know, I think the concept of it was good, and that's the thing with education, so many things look good on paper and they never put any money

behind it. So none of those children ever even benefit, then they have just another label put on them. (Teacher A)

I'm glad that it's gone. It was more painful to the regular education than it was to the special education because we had a few dispensations in there. Our kids did not do well last year as a whole with the district and so they were after us to implement more reading and implement more math. (Teacher B)

I think the idea of it was a good idea but the way they implemented it was not good. I really think putting schools – this school is at risk blah blah blah – is ridiculous. I know that for the most part teachers really, really try to do their jobs. Everybody wants children to succeed. Now I do think it helped us in seeing that we can help, you know the kids that are kinda struggling. I think the testing lets us see which kids are kind of struggling so we can help them. But all the rules with it were just … to pull funding from the schools that's not doing well. If anything, if they're not doing well, then give them more money. (Teacher C)

I don't know if I have much respect for it. I don't see – now I can understand the words are good of No Child Left Behind, that's really great. Let's not leave any child behind. But I have seen a lot of things from it. First of all these kids are being tested beyond themselves. Then, also, in our focus to try and bring up the bottom we're forgetting about the top. So I think it's a good idea but it's not the answer. It's not the answer and I don't think I see how the pressure has helped (Redacted). (Teacher D)

> I personally am not an advocate of it, I think it's this philosophy of no child's left behind, so everybody's gonna end up staying behind. I think what it essentially did, and I think it was detrimental because it's this mind set you know you've got to keep, umm, umm, you have to teach to make sure that every student is accomplishing this certain objective and you can't do it because there is gonna to be some students that … either they don't have the intelligence to grasp it at that point in time, or the maturity, or there's discipline issues and or it's a learning disability. (Teacher E)

> I'm glad it's on its way out. But I have a feeling it's going to be replaced by something that's very similar. I really feel sorry for the children that are being brought into the classroom that can't keep up because I think they notice it more that way. (Teacher F)

Common Core

Getting the educational system back on track has been a national goal. Common Core was one of the avenues many state educational agencies were adopting to better evaluate students' progress. However, teachers have mixed feelings about whether to implement Common Core. One teacher stated:

> I think it's important that there's standardization, so umm … I know they just came out with new common core and I really like what the state has done with that, umm … it's a little bit more specific and I think that's important that, ummm … there's a standard that were going by, but I think that teachers should have the flexibility in how they, ummm, teach that. (Teacher E)

One teacher noted a positive view of Common Core, stating:

> Even though the common core is taking a kid across the board, I think it's one of the best things that's happened to teaching. To go and have a curriculum that is the same from one state to a next state is awesome. (Teacher A)

In contrast to the positive outlooks about the future of education, one teacher noted:

> I think it's going to be a new day every year. I think it's going to be a little different every year until they figure something out. I don't know, I mean, education has always been a "lets change it" type of field. It's changed dramatically, even in the years that I've been. Just in these few short years we have some teachers retiring after 30 years of teaching experience and it's changed night and day since they started. Education has always been changing, no matter what, but I think the change will be even more dramatic over the next few years. I'd hate to think teachers would lose their job based over state test scores but I can see it happening in some places. Unfortunately, I think it's just going to get more stringent. (Teacher D)

Guidelines are Key

All educational reform policies are focused on results. Unfortunately, in the era of NCLB, those results have been used to the detriment of teachers. Relevant to gaining teacher buy-in for future policies, most teachers interviewed seemed to believe that the results should only be used as a guideline, using scores to understand what may not have been thoroughly taught in their classrooms. For example, one teacher stated:

> A guideline or information to see how we can better our students. What areas we need to work on. But I also think that state mandated test needs to reflect what our kids need to know. I mean, in the future, what they need to know for college, what they need to know for the business world. I think that we really need to look at our questions. I would also really like it to have the state say, this is the way we're going to ask this question. So that we can prepare our student to understand this is the way were going to ask it. They need to, the tests need to reflect what the kids need to know and then we need to know what we need to teach them. (Teacher C)

Additionally, Teacher B insisted:

> Maybe as a guideline, certainly not like this child shouldn't move forward or this teacher should be fired. If they're all missing, say the whole 6th grade class doesn't understand how to subtract fractions with uncommon denominators, then you try it again, you try a different way to teach it. But you don't brow beat the child because he doesn't know it, or brow beat the teacher because they didn't teach it. Use it as a guideline; tell the teacher why they didn't do too well in this area last year, let's really push it a little more this year or find a different way to present it.

Shared Responsibility

Another emerging theme consistent in the qualitative data was the perception that all educational stakeholders should share responsibility for academic success. Teachers discussed extensively how it takes the government, administrators, parents, communities, and even students working together to gain academic success. Several

participants also deliberated over the guilt they feel as a teacher during NCLB. The data displays several emerging subcategories, which include: holistic, teacher's guilt, religious communities, and parental effect.

Holistic Responsibility

There was an overall consensus from the teachers that the ultimate goal of academic success should be a shared responsibility amongst the involved stakeholders. One group should not be penalized for unsatisfactory test results. One teacher stated:

> Only if they hold the parent, the child, and the community responsible, too because they all have to work together. It takes a village to raise a child and it certainly does. So if you want them to perform well they have to see well all over the place. (Teacher B)

Teachers' Guilt

All of the participants in this study either wanted to be a teacher or enjoyed the profession once they were working with students. The question of who is responsible for student success has always been a touchy subject. Even though most teachers didn't directly blame themselves for their students' academic performance, all participants mentioned some type of responsibility as teachers. They all wanted to do their job well but not be held accountable for their students' standardized testing scores. Teacher A mentioned:

> I don't feel directly responsible but I feel a sadness within me as a teacher, as an individual, that I could not impart my knowledge that made it interesting enough that they were able to grasp it. That is the let down for me and I would have kids

> that would go and take their test because it was computerized. You know they would say (Name Redacted), I made so and so out of so and so well some of those scores weren't good. But when I would go and look over their shoulder at their computer and see that they were missing certain questions I would think well how are you missing that? That was like one of the same questions we have gone over and over. So yeah, I don't hold myself accountable, but still there was a sadness as a teacher that makes you feel bad. That would be in any profession it's just not happening.

Similarly, Teacher C expressed:

> I don't blame myself, you know I want them to do well. I am very disappointed the ones that I know have worked really hard and they don't do well. I just try to figure out what can we do differently to help them. I know I do my job well and I know I give them all the information that I can. Just some of them don't process it and most of the time they'll process it eventually, it just may not be on that test.

Religious Communities

Interestingly, religion was mentioned several times throughout the one-on-one interviews with four of the participants. They mentioned that religion played a huge part in their schools when asked to identify how the community affects their teaching. Religion is still a touchy subject in schools and there are ongoing battles about the role religion plays in our schools today. One teacher asserted:

> We are go to church on Wednesday night kind of people. Our youth groups are very, very strong in our community. We always tell our children if you have a

> church activity – like on Wednesday nights we don't have ball games because of church. Most of our kids are, you know, Christian. But we have a few that aren't. As far as I know, I don't know if there's been anything that's come up where there religion would be not accepted. For the most parts, everyone's just … whatever you need for your beliefs is fine. We have a moment of silence in the morning everybody can pray or meditate or do any silent activity that does not interfere with others. A lot of our churches open their doors to anything the school needs. They do not dictate any curriculum. They don't tell us we tell them. I know a lot of teachers that don't give homework on Wednesday nights. (Teacher C)

Parental Effect

Parental involvement has usually been an issue within the school systems. Some schools excel with getting parents involved, while other schools could improve in this area. Research indicates that teachers believe parents aren't involved enough in the school or communicate enough with them (Vannest et al., 2009). All six teachers mentioned parents when discussing the issues surrounding NCLB. Specifically, one teacher emphasized the pressure from parents:

> (Redacted) is a very clique town so our parents do affect my teaching, in the way that if they think their child should get an A, sometimes it comes down to their child getting an A because of the position they have in the community. So I'd rather not fight that battle … somebody can take it after they have finished 7th grade. Umm, but a lot of time you have your students that do real well and their parents are usually real supportive and will back you. You have the kids

that cause problems in class and those are the parents that won't support you. It just seems like it equals that way and you can kind of tell there is no discipline at home. SO the parent wants to blame me because the child is not behaving here. (Teacher F)

Some teachers also mentioned the negative side effects of parental or non-parental involvement.

Right now it looks scary, it really does. I don't see educational problems I see discipline. I see a severe lack of discipline in the home because the school is just a reflection of the home. If things aren't doing well in the home things probably aren't doing well in the school because the parent, the child brings that to school. It's not going to be we're not teaching Johnny how to add 2 and 2. It's going to be Johnny isn't disciplined enough to add 2 and 2. I really feel it's aligned more with the family than it is with the actual teaching of an education. (Teacher A)

I work with parents as best I can. We've had some that we have to report and some that we would like to report, and then some that are award winning. Just work with what you can. I can tell a difference more in manner than in the actual educational aspect. You can tell the kids that come from homes where the parents are concerned with how their kids are going to be in society and they are well mannered, well groomed. The work just follows and it comes with the territory, more or less. I can't think of too many kids that dressed sloppy and do well in school. But I can think of a lot of kids that dress well and do well. So add 2 and 2 and that's what you get. (Teacher B)

Mindfulness

Another finding suggested by the qualitative data is that teachers' have become mindful of a variety of issues in their efforts to cope with reform policies. Teachers have become more collaborative amongst each other while also experiencing delusions about the amount of control they have over curriculum. The data conveyed several emerging subcategories, which include: curriculum autonomy illusion, collaborative teaching, and teaching style.

Curriculum Autonomy Illusion

Educational reform policies have long been part of the educational system in the U.S. However, the educational policies over the past couple of decades have focused significant pressure on teachers. As evidenced by research, NCLB has been criticized specifically for forcing teachers to teach to the test (Hamilton et al., 2008; Wills & Sandholtz, 2009). Two of the teachers interviewed for this study indicated that they had curriculum autonomy; however, they acknowledged they still follow the PASS standards to create their curriculum. They stated:

> Ummm…we are given a curriculum map and we have our text book that we work out of but then we are giving freedom as to how we present our lessons. Just as long as we cover what's on the states objectives then that's how I base my lessons. (Teacher E)

> Yes because I am the Title 1 Math teacher and that's kinda what we do. Our regular classroom teachers have to kind of …well they kinda create theirs too. We have to follow the PASS skills guidelines and that's really what they do. (Teacher C)

Other teachers recognized that they did not actually have autonomy because they had to follow the PASS standards. They felt that following the PASS standards didn't allow them to have curriculum autonomy.

> No, not really. We follow umm PASS and now next year we'll bring in common core. But, as far as the resources we use, those are open. (Teacher F)

> I think at this point we've been allowed to do it. I know we have the PASS objectives from the state and then we take of course what we've traditionally done. We've done a lot of re-vamping especially in the science department. We've been allowed to develop our own set of central skills and I think we've had guidance from our district person. From our district science coordinator here, and also from our administrator. I teach 6th grade general science so…life, earth, and a little bit of physical science. Like right now we're doing water and that's fun. (Teacher D)

Collaborative Teaching

Current educational reform policies require professional development activities to be evaluated to determine the impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement (Henry et al., 2012). Specifically, the legislation defines "high-quality" professional development activities as those that are developed through the extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents, and administrators of schools. One goal of professional development is to improve and increase teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects they teach. Teachers were asked whether they worked collaboratively in their school, as well what was their involvement in planning curriculum. Five participants involved in this study indicated that they do

work collaboratively with other teachers and had positive things to discuss about their colleagues. As one teacher stated:

> Yes, and that's 6th, 7th, and 8th. We try to work together and then we try to work, um horizontally also within our grade. If there's anything that we can bring in at the start of school - Science was doing hurricanes and weather and we brought in a book that had a hurricane in it so the kids could relate. We try. We have two planning periods. We are one of the lucky schools that get two planning periods. (Teacher F)

In contrast, one participant indicated the teachers in her school do not work collaboratively. She explained:

> No they don't. It was such a division there with the magnet and the community. There was such a division and not only a division with the teachers I guess to put it as a hierarchy they feel they had the best kids. Which in some ways was true but you know I still had a lot of kids that could have been in the magnet program but choose not to. They didn't want the pressure of all the work that was given. (Teacher A)

Teaching Style

Teacher efficacy is an important factor when trying to understand the perceptions of teachers. It can give researchers an insight to how confident and competent teachers feel in their profession (Henson, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). Those interviewed for this study were very clear about how they viewed their own teaching style, which may indicate they perceive themselves as competent teachers. The results were split evenly with half the participants preferring a

hands-on approach and the other half preferring to give lectures to their students. As an example of how far a teacher will go to make sure their students understand the material, one teacher stated:

> I help the kids that struggle in math so my biggest goal is to make them feel comfortable doing that. I myself need quiet when I'm working so I kinda make sure they're quiet. I do some hands-on and pictures. You know drawing them a picture or showing them what it looks like. Like I said, a little bit of hands on but not tons of that. Then we, mostly, we go to the concrete after the hands-on and pictures. I try to relate it to real life but what I do is I usually don't present the lesson. I'm getting them after the teacher has shown it to them and I try to explain it in a different way. I do a lot of pictures especially with fractions, you know it's like let me show you what this is. I break it up and that sort of thing. I find that some kids use manipulatives really well but some of them it just confuses them. It's like yeah, I can do it there but I don't see how this has any relation to what I'm doing mathematically. I also try to explain the algorithms; I don't just say this is how you do it. I always want to explain to them why, like borrowing and carrying, I say this is why you're doing this not just this is what you do. I want them to understand why they're doing what they're doing. (Teacher C)

Overall, the findings indicate that teachers do not have a favorable view of NCLB. This is consistent with the literature that indicates teachers have a negative perception of NCLB (Mertler, 2011; Vannest et al., 2009; Chapman, 2004; Sunderman et al., 2004). Although most indicate they understand why educational reform policies

are necessary, the way they are utilized is disputed. Five of the six teachers interviewed also indicated that they also have a negative view of parents, which is consistent with existing literature on teachers' perceptions on NCLB. Most of these interviewed teachers also indicated that they feel concern and some responsibility for students' performance on state mandated testing, but not in the sense that the teachers had not adequately done their job, more in the sense of wanting to understand way students did not learn the material covered in class. Additionally, the teachers expressed sentiment for their students because they wanted students to understand the material and pass the standardized test.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Overview of the Findings

This study investigated Oklahoma Middle School teachers' views about teaching as related to the current educational reform policy, which was NCLB. The research study was based on the theoretical foundations of self-determination theory and social cognitive theory and sought to examine whether a relationship exists between teachers' self-efficacy, motivation, and autonomy, and teachers' perceptions of state mandated testing (Abelmann et al., 1999; Mertler, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Caprara et al., 2006; Finnigan & Gross, 2007; Szecsi & Spillman, 2012; Siegle et al., 2014). Prior research suggests that a combination of both internal (i.e., job satisfaction, stress, autonomy, efficacy, motivation) and external (i.e., parents, administrators, community) factors can influence teachers' perceptions regarding educational reform policies (Davis & Wilson, 2000; Sinclair et al., 2006; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Vannest et al., 2009; Mertler, 2011). Discussions of the findings are summarized below, organized by research questions. That section will be followed by implications and related issues, future research, limitations of the study, and conclusion of the chapter.

1. *How do teachers perceive and value educational reform policies?*

In this research study, quantitative analysis resulted in a lack of statistically significant differences among any of the demographic characteristics (grouping variable) on perceptions of state mandated tests, with one exception. Teachers who administered EOI tests, as a group, reported more positive perceptions of state mandated tests than teachers who did not. This finding does not mean that these

teachers like testing more than teachers who do not administer EOI tests, it simply implies that they have a higher perception of the value of the test. The results could mean that participants understand the significance of state mandated tests or that these tests are simply more relevant to their daily work; they are not necessarily indications of approval or value. Further inquiry into perceptions of state mandated tests is necessary.

The qualitative results revealed that the participants perceive NCLB generates: pressure, unclear educational expectations, need for shared responsibility, and mindfulness. The participants indicated that in order to produce academic success for all students, shared responsibility of each educational stakeholder (e.g., parents, teachers, students, community, and government) needs to occur. These findings are consistent with existing literature that indicates NCLB causes increased stress, pressure, and need for shared responsibility (Vannest et al., 2009; Mertler, 2011; Sunderman et al., 2004). During the interviews, the participants indicated that state mandated testing should only be used as a guideline for how to help students. It was important to point out that only one of the six participants interviewed had a positive view of NCLB. All of the other participants used phrases to describe NCLB, such as: “Glad it’s going away”, “Everybody’s gonna end up staying behind”, and “It’s not the answer”. This finding is also consistent with existing literature that shows teachers have an overall negative view of NCLB (Mertler, 2011; Pederson, 2007). Overall, the sentiment that came across when speaking to the participants in this study is that they see the value in NCLB but think that relying on a single measurement to label schools and students is bad. This finding adds to the existing literature on teachers’ negative views about NCLB (Jones & Egley, 2007; Vannest et al., 2009; Sunderman et al., 2004).

2. *In the current educational reform policy context,*

    a. *Are there relationships between teacher autonomy, teacher efficacy, teacher motivation, and teachers' perceptions of state mandated testing?*

    b. *What is the nature of those relationships?*

In this research study, statistically significant correlations were found among the constructs. Results indicated that general teacher autonomy was positively correlated with curriculum teacher autonomy, teacher's motivation, and perceptions of state mandated testing. The two subcomponents of the teacher autonomy scale (general teacher autonomy and curriculum teacher autonomy) were shown to have the strongest significant relationship between the scales measured. This finding is consistent with principles of self-determination theory and means teachers with higher general autonomy are more likely to have higher autonomy over their curriculum. These results are consistent with existing literature that indicates middle school teachers have higher autonomy than teachers at high schools (Pearson & Hall, 1993). General teacher autonomy and teacher motivation showed a strong significant correlation, which means teachers who have more autonomy in general, are more likely have a higher motivation to teach. Results also indicate that teachers, who have higher general teaching autonomy, also indicate higher positive perceptions of state mandated testing. That is, the more general teacher autonomy a teacher has, the more likely they are to have positive perceptions of state mandated testing.

The results also showed a positive, strong significant correlation between curriculum teacher autonomy and teacher motivation. Existing literature shows a high correlation between teacher autonomy and teacher motivation (Pearson & Moomaw,

2005; Davis & Wilson, 2000). Both variables are grounded in self-determination theory, therefore a relationship was expected. Additional research is necessary to conclude what type of control over curriculum motivates teachers to remain in their profession. During the interviews with the participating teachers, it became evident that most participants have a false sense of their own curriculum autonomy in the classroom. All the teachers interviewed indicated that they could create their own curriculum, but cited using the PASS objectives to help develop their lesson plans. Further analysis is necessary to understand how teachers specifically define curriculum autonomy.

Additionally, results indicated strong, negatively significant correlations between personal teacher efficacy and curriculum teacher autonomy, perceived value of state mandated testing and teacher efficacy, as well as between personal teacher efficacy and teacher motivation. This shows as teachers' personal efficacy increases, their motivation and curriculum teacher autonomy decreases. This could indicate when teachers rely on their personal teacher efficacy to remain in their jobs; they aren't motivated or have a need for curriculum control because they already have a higher confidence in their ability to teach. This finding could also indicate that teachers may be basing their perceptions of self-efficacy on their ability to teach information deemed important by others, such as that which is required for standardized tests, rather than information they personally believe to be valuable or important. This finding is partially inconsistent with social cognitive theory in that an increase in teacher self-efficacy should result in an increase in teacher motivation (Bandura 1986; Bandura, Adams, & Beyer, 1977). Teacher self-efficacy was also shown to be negatively correlated to teachers' perceptions of state mandated testing. This could indicate that teachers, who

are confident and competent in their jobs, have a tendency to have a negative perception of state mandated testing.

Interestingly, not all subcomponents of the variables measured showed significant relationships between the variables. The subcomponent curriculum teacher autonomy on the teacher autonomy scale did not indicate a significant relationship exists with teachers' perceptions of state mandated testing. This could mean that teachers have an increased perception of state mandated testing as long as they have general teacher autonomy, but not necessarily control over the curriculum. This finding is consistent with the qualitative data that showed participants felt a great sense of autonomy, even though they closely follow Oklahoma PASS standards for their curriculum. The participants' sense of autonomy came with the freedom to teach in the manner they preferred, not from selection of curriculum lessons. The subcomponent personal efficacy on the teacher efficacy scale also did not indicate a significant relationship exists between teachers' perceptions of state mandated testing. This could mean that teachers' personal efficacy isn't related to their perception of testing as much as it is related to their teacher self-efficacy. In other words, the more confident teachers feel in their jobs and their ability to teach, the more likely they will have a higher perception of state mandated testing.

Overall, results showed that there is a significant relationship between teacher autonomy, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher motivation, and teachers' perception of state mandated testing.

Implications and Related Issues

After the American Revolution, the new United States strived to be more progressive than colonial Americans. The intent of public education after the war was to provide education to build a better society. But this didn't mean that all people regardless of ethnicity or class were afforded an education. Nevertheless, despite the fact that education was limited to certain categories of individuals, the premise behind public education was to provide education for children, for the good of the nation. Educational enthusiasts, such as Horace Mann, promoted public education as a way to teach children about having good morals and becoming respected citizens. But it appears the historical emphasis on issues of morality, respect, and values have been replaced in current time by a focus on the scores on standardized tests (Baines, 2006).

During the progressive era, John Dewey continued to emphasize the position that children should be taught to be critical thinkers and not just complacent members of society (Samuel & Suh, 2012). Dewey promoted education for all citizens and believed it was the path to generating reform in our society. He also believed that education worked best when it was autonomous in nature, not only for student, but for teachers as well (Martin, 2003).

In contrast, Edward Thorndike emphasized precision in measuring educational achievement (Amrein-Beardsley & Barnett, 2012). The ideas of Thorndike could be linked to the stipulations surrounding NCLB, where standardized tests have become the accepted way to determine whether students are learning and schools are achieving. This leads to other questions about control and autonomy. At what point(s) did society shift to focus primarily on tangible results? Society seems to have lost focus on

promoting an autonomous culture in which citizens treat each other with dignity and respect.

Regardless of positive or negative perceptions of NCLB, research has shown that the reform policies that mandate standardized testing have been shown to increase test scores (Winstead, 2011). However, there is not a simple way to determine whether policies are the sole reason test scores have increased. Schools also have more tutoring programs, professional development for teachers, and increased technology in the classroom. Additionally, some would argue that even with achievements educational reform polices obtain, standardized testing historically favors the dominant culture (Horsford, 2011).

In 2015, NCLB sanctions are still flourishing and continue to be enforced on schools. There also continues to be headlines across the country about teachers so desperate to achieve high tests scores, they resort to cheating (Brumback, 2015). Yet, as a society, the responsibility of education is still passed around to each stakeholder. The government wants to blame the schools, the schools want to blame the teachers, and the teachers want to blame the students, until there is no one left to blame. Is it possible to look optimistically to the future of education when current policies continue to promote everything schools are doing wrong? Perhaps the conversation about education in the United States begins with a simple question: Do you want a better society or better test scores?

Future Research

At the time the data was collected, the researcher and teachers had assumptions about NCLB going away. However, NCLB is still impacting policy and practice.

Therefore, future research should examine the constructs from this study in the current context of uncertainties regarding NCLB, Common Core, and Race to the Top. Similarly, state-specific issues and contexts (Oklahoma's A-F school report card system, PASS standards, EPAS for example) could be explored in terms of how they relate to teacher motivation, teacher self-efficacy, teacher autonomy, and teachers' perceptions of state mandated testing.

Findings from the current study of teacher autonomy and accountability can be connected to several other issues and trends in education in the United States. Future studies could explore how the constructs of this study connect to value added data, privatization, corporate influences on and in schools and control of curriculum, and charter schools. Arguments have been made, for example, that charter schools are not held to the same federal mandates as public schools. Charter schools vary in purpose and design, and are essentially subjected to different laws in each state. Often charter schools are not held to the same stipulations of public schools because they are viewed as individual reform projects. An interesting project would involve comparing perceptions of state mandated testing among teachers at charter schools with those of teachers in public schools. Might teachers value testing more if their job security is not contingent on test results? A review of articles about charter schools indicates teachers in such schools are more likely to be terminated than public school teachers because parameters such as teacher unions tend not to exist in the private sector (Cowen & Winters, 2013).

Value added data is currently a hot topic discussed in education. Enough individuals now understand that no single measurement can determine whether a

teacher is effective. Value added data allows schools to get a snapshot of academic progress rates from year to year. This helps teachers who struggle with students who come into their classroom testing below their current grade level. However, even though value added data is a promising way to measure student growth, outside factors that hinder students' progress still are not taken into account. There remain many under acknowledged factors that can determine how well students perform on standardized testing. The teachers interviewed for this study indicated one of the biggest issues they have at school is with parents. Teachers complained about the lack of involvement and overall frustration with regard to parents disciplining their own children. Value added data is now tied to some incentives for teachers, but what happens when teachers work in communities where most students live in poor conditions? Should they be punished when they show little to no growth or should the community they work be held accountable? A cycle of the inability to consider outside influences that may affect a student's academic progress continues to put the responsibility for academic improvement on teachers.

Among all the problems surrounding public education, corporate influence on schools and curriculum is a topic worthy of deep consideration and research. Can partnership with corporations provide the right support and agenda for schools struggling to meet academic progress? As schools become increasingly desperate for funding, and federal money is reduced, it seems inevitable that corporations will step in to fill the void. Corporations such as Coca Cola have already infiltrated public education with lucrative contracts that make it impossible for struggling schools districts to refuse (Kaufman, 1999). Some have argued that if education were treated as

a business, most problems with funding would dissipate (Lineberry, 2012). However, when public education evolves into a for-profit industry, the benefits to and privileging of the wealthiest and most powerful are perpetuated and increased, while the needs of children from impoverished communities are further neglected (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Limitations of the Study

This study has limitations. The majority of respondents identified themselves as White and female. Different results may exist amongst populations with different distributions in terms of ethnicity and sex. The researcher only had access to participants who volunteered to be interviewed and could not choose participants whose results on the survey might have provided better or different knowledge about teachers' perceptions. Although not intentional, all the participants who were interviewed for the second part of the study were female. Females are known to dominate the teaching profession, but the study may have been more robust if insights also were provided from male teachers' perspectives. Also, the interviews represented two teachers who taught subjects covered on standardized tests. When selecting teachers to be interviewed, cross referencing should have been done to ensure at least one school was represented from each category of student performance. Once the research was analyzed, it became clear that no participants taught at a school that was proficient and advanced. Selecting a participant from a proficient and advanced school may have provided a unique view of how teachers feel when they have to maintain higher student performance. The researcher also did not collect each individual's self-identified ethnicity from those who participated in the interviews. Knowing the ethnicity of each

interview participant might have provided more insights between the quantitative and qualitative data.

The teacher motivation scale used in this study is a variation of the original Modified Orientation for Teaching scale (MOTS). The original 85-item scale was too large to use in this study. Consequently, 10 items were chosen that represented each motivation measure in the MOTS, plus an additional 5 items that were contextually relevant for the purpose of this study. Based on the sample in this study, results indicate a Cronbach's Alpha score of .658, which indicates acceptable reliability and performance. However, future use of this scale could benefit from further scale development to improve reliability.

The content of the survey only referenced NCLB and failed to identify Oklahoma-specific state mandated tests such as EXPLORE, PLAN, or ACT. This could have affected how teachers responded to the survey questions as well as confused discussions in the interviews. In the future, care should be taken to modify the language of testing based upon state specific tests.

As a final point, the questions used in the interview needed to be more open ended. Results indicated an increased amount of small or one-word answers because of the way questions were asked. The use of a pilot study or focus group would have been ideal to ensure the questions were robust and had the ability to open up a richer dialogue.

Conclusion

Further research needs to be conducted to understand why teachers have a false sense of curriculum autonomy. From the interviews conducted in this study, it seems the teachers' perceptions of autonomy are based on the way they presented the

curriculum, rather than on the topics and nature of the content included. Most teachers interviewed did not challenge or raise issue regarding the content they were expected to teach, only the manner in which they were able to instruct the curriculum.

Additionally, a perspective that was consistently echoed among the teachers interviewed with regard to NCLB was the lack of parental involvement. Additional research needs to be conducted to explore whether and how parents can affect teachers' perceptions of NCLB. The teachers interviewed in this study all felt that parents should be held accountable. They emphasized that students' academic achievement relies not only on them as teachers, but also on the parents. This finding aligns with existing research that indicates parent involvement affects teachers' perceptions of NCLB (Vannest et al., 2009).

In conclusion, the intent of this research study was to utilize constructs of self-determination theory and social cognitive theory to determine whether there was a relationship between teachers' autonomy, teachers' motivation, teachers' self-efficacy, to teacher's perception of state mandated testing. Significant correlations were found between teachers' motivation, teachers' self-efficacy, and teachers' autonomy, and teachers' perception of state mandated testing. However, given the magnitude of potential findings and recognizing further analysis is necessary to understand the intricate relationships between the constructs, the constructs should be further examined individually as they related to specific teacher concerns and issues surrounding state mandated testing.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A-Demographics Survey

Appendix B-Teacher Autonomy Scale

Appendix C-Teacher Efficacy Scale

Appendix D-Teacher Motivation Scale

Appendix E-Perceptions of State Testing Scale

Appendix F-Interview Protocol

APPENDIX A
SURVEY

Name: _____

Date: _____

School:_____

Please be sure to fill in the bubbles completely and answer questions legibly.

1. **Age**
   - ☐ 20-30
   - ☐ 31-40
   - ☐ 41-50
   - ☐ 51-60
   - ☐ 61 or above

2. **Gender**
   - ☐ Male
   - ☐ Female

3. **Ethnic group** (please mark one as predominant)
   - ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
   - ☐ Asian
   - ☐ Black or African American
   - ☐ Hispanic or Latino/a
   - ☐ White
   - ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
   - ☐ Other

   If other please specify: _____

4. **Education Level (**Please mark ALL degrees you have obtained**)**

☐ Bachelor's Degree

☐ 2 or more Bachelor's Degrees

☐ Master's Degree

☐ 2 or more Master's Degrees

☐ Doctoral Degree

5. **What discipline did you get your Bachelors in?_____**

6. **Did you begin teaching before 2001?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

7. **How many years have you been teaching?**

☐ 1-5 years

☐ 6-10 years

☐ 11-15 years

☐ 16-20 years

☐ 21 + years

8. **What was your pathway to teaching?**

☐ Regular Licensure

☐ Alternative Licensure

9. **Have you taught consistently throughout your career without interruption? If not please briefly explain.**

☐ Yes

☐ No_____

10. **What subject areas are you currently teaching?**

_____

_____

_____

11. **What grade level(s) do you currently teach? (Please mark ALL that apply)**

☐ 6th

☐ 7th

☐ 8th

☐ 9th

☐ 10th

☐ 11th

☐ 12th

12. **How long have you taught at your current school?**

☐ 1-5 years

☐ 6-10 years

☐ 11-15 years

☐ 16-20 years

☐ 21 + years

APPENDIX B
TEACHER AUTONOMY SCALE

This scale was established to measure perceptions of teaching autonomy. Please read the following statements and give your responses on a 1-6 scale.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree More than Agree	Agree More than Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

1. I am free to be creative in my teaching approach.
2. The selection of student-learning activities in my class in under my control.
3. My teaching primarily follows approaches that are specified by the school.
4. I seldom use alternative procedures in my teaching.
5. My instructional planning is dictated by district needs.
6. My job does not allow for much discretion on my part.
7. In my teaching, I use my own guidelines and procedures.
8. In my situation, I have little say over the content and skills that are selected for teaching.
9. The scheduling of use of time in my classroom is under my control.
10. My teaching focuses on those goals and objectives I select myself.
11. In my situation, I have only limited latitude in how major problems are resolved.
12. What I teach in my class is determined for the most part by myself.
13. In my class, I have little control over how classroom space is used.
14. The materials I use in my class are chosen for the most part by myself.
15. The evaluation and assessment activities used in my class are selected by people other than myself.
16. I select the teaching methods and strategies I use with my students.
17. I have little say over the scheduling of use of time in my classroom.
18. The content and skills taught in my class are those I select.

APPENDIX C
TEACHER EFFICACY SCALE

This scale was established to gather information regarding the perceptions of teachers concerning the following statements. Please read the following statements and give your responses on a 1-6 scale.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree More than Agree	Agree More than Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

1. The amount a student can learn is primarily related to family background.
2. If students aren't disciplined at home, they aren't likely to accept any discipline.
3. When I really try, I can get through to most difficult students.
4. A teacher is very limited in what he/she can achieve because a student's home environment is a large influence on his/her achievement.
5. If parents would do more for their children, I could do more.
6. If a student did not remember information I gave in a previous lesson, I would know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson.
7. If a student in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I feel assured that I know some techniques to redirect him/her quickly.
8. If one of my students couldn't do a class assignment, I would be able to accurately assess whether the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty.
9. If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students.
10. When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment.

APPENDIX D
TEACHER MOTIVATION SCALE

This scale was established to gather information regarding the perceptions of teachers concerning the following statements. Please read the following statements and give your responses on a 1-6 scale.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree More than Agree	Agree More than Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

1. I like to work with children.
2. Teaching is an important profession.
3. Teaching is an intellectually stimulating occupation.
4. Teacher is an easy job to train for.
5. I was dissatisfied with work I had done in other fields
6. Teaching offers me a good opportunity for career advancement.
7. Teaching gives me a chance to help the less fortunate
8. I like the work hours and vacation time.
9. My parents thought it would be a good career for me.
10. Teaching gives me an opportunity to meet a lot of people
11. I decided to teach because I was told about a scholarship or tuition reimbursement program available to persons entering teacher education programs.
12. Teaching gives me opportunity to promote respect for knowledge and learning.
13. Teaching gives me a chance to be in authority.
14. Teaching allows me to solve some of the problems in the educational system.
15. I decided to enter teaching because I have an affection for a particular subject matter.

APPENDIX E
PERCEPTIONS OF STATE MANDATED TEST SCALE

This scale was established to ask teachers a series of questions related to the value of state-mandated tests. Please read the following statements and give your responses on a 1-4 scale.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree More than Agree	Agree More than Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

1. Media coverage of the state-mandated test accurately reflects the quality of education in my state.
2. Scores on the state-mandated test accurately reflect the quality of education students have received.
3. The state-mandated test has brought much-needed attention to education issues in my district.
4. The state-mandated test is as accurate a measure of student achievement as a teacher's judgment.
5. The state-mandated test motivated previously unmotivated students to learn.
6. The state-mandated test measures high standards of achievement.
7. The state-mandated testing program in just another fad.
8. Media coverage of state-mandated testing issues has been unfair to teachers.
9. Media coverage of state-mandated testing issues adequately reflects the complexity of teaching.
10. Teachers in my school have found ways to raise state-mandated tests scores without really improving student learning.
11. The state-mandated test is not an accurate measure of what students who are acquiring English as a second language know and can do.
12. Score differences from year to year on the state-mandated test reflect changes in the characteristics of students rather than changes in school effectiveness.
13. Overall, the benefits of the state-mandated testing program are worth the investment of time and money.

APPENDIX F
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Teacher Autonomy

- Are you able to create your own curriculum for your subject?
- Should teachers be free to develop their own curriculum?
- Do teachers in your school work collaboratively?
- What opportunities are there in your school for leaders to be involved in the planning of curriculum development?
- Tell me about your teaching style.

Teacher Efficacy

- Have you always wanted to be a teacher?
- Have you ever blamed yourself for a student's inadequate performance on a standardized test?
- Since the implementation of NCLB have you experienced increase pressure from the school administrators?
- How do administrators, parents, and the community affect your teaching?

Teacher Motivation

- How do you feel about No Child Left Behind?
- Do you feel as if No Child Left Behind created a positive influence in your school? Do you feel as if No Child Left Behind created a negative influence in your school?
- Do you feel pressure from administrators for your students to perform well on standardized tests?
- What motivates you to continue teaching?
- Are you able to teach in the manner you prefer?

State Mandated Testing

- Should teachers be held accountable when it comes to students' performances on standardized tests? If yes, How?
- Do you feel responsible for your students' performance?
- How do you think the next 10 years of education will look?
- How are state mandated test results used in your school?
- How should state mandated test results be used in general?