

Examining the Use of Federal School Improvement Grant Funds and Academic Outcomes in  
Schools Denied Accreditation and Priority Schools within the Commonwealth of Virginia

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EXAMINING THE USE OF FEDERAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FUNDS AND  
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SCHOOLS WITHIN THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to examine how federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds were allocated and what differences existed between allocation patterns and overall student achievement outcomes as measured by annual measurable objectives (AMOs) established by the Virginia Board of Education in schools denied accreditation and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions. School reform in K-12 education has seen many changes. The federal government has intervened, implementing stringent mandates for increased student achievement and sanctions for school divisions not meeting the required benchmarks. Within the Commonwealth of Virginia, schools not meeting annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in the content areas of reading and mathematics or graduation rates for high schools are identified in one of three categories: priority, focus, or as a Title I or Non-Title I school that has not met one or more of the AMOs (Virginia Department of Education, 2014). Schools designated as priority received 1003(a) and/or 1003(g) federal school improvement grant funding to implement research-based school reform initiatives.

The goal of this study was to provide a descriptive analysis of the relationship between SIG funding and overall student achievement that will add to the current research. The population studied was schools identified as denied accreditation within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Additionally, comparable data were examined from ten priority schools previously accredited with warning that became fully accredited while under school improvement sanctions. Accreditation ratings from the 2013-2014 school year were utilized. Descriptive statistics revealed differences existed among allocation patterns in the group of schools denied accreditation and the group of priority schools that achieved full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions. Descriptive statistics and independent samples t-tests revealed SIG funding had a positive impact on student outcomes in reading among the group of schools denied

accreditation and the group of priority schools that achieved full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions. Findings indicated mathematics student outcomes did not experience the same benefit from SIG funding.

## **Dedication**

*This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, the late  
Mr. and Mrs. Elbert and Deloise Bassett.*

*This dissertation is also dedicated to my daughter, Eboni.  
Everything that I do is because of you, I Love You!*

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **Background**

Prior to the 1960's "War on Poverty," the federal government held a minor role in the funding of education and the creation of educational policy (Kantor, 1991). Subsequent legislative bills have been enacted creating new mandates requiring the federal government to improve student achievement. President Lyndon B. Johnson addressed educational disparities of economically disadvantaged students with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), landmark legislation which was signed into law in 1965, expanding federal funding for education (Kantor, 1991). Title I of ESEA was specifically designated to provide support to students from areas of high poverty (Forte, 2010). Since that time, ESEA has been reauthorized several times under various presidential administrations.

Under the Reagan administration, U. S. Secretary of Education Terrel Bell appointed eighteen members to the National Commission on Excellence in Education with the charge of examining the following within the American education system:

- assessing the quality of teaching and learning in our Nation's public and private schools, colleges, and universities;
- comparing American schools and colleges with those of other advanced nations;
- studying the relationship between college admissions requirements and student achievement in high school;
- identifying educational programs which result in notable student success in college;
- assessing the degree to which major social and educational changes in the last quarter century have affected student achievement; and
- defining problems which must be faced and overcome if we are successfully to pursue the course of excellence in education. (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, pp. 4-5)

The Commission's report held, "We conclude that declines in educational performance are in large part the result of disturbing inadequacies in the way the educational process itself is often conducted" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 19).

In 1994, ESEA was reauthorized. The law became known as the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) under the administration of President Bill Clinton. The IASA required three mandates from the states. First, states were to establish and implement common statewide standards in reading and math; second, to establish and implement assessments aligned to the standards; and third, to establish and implement a statewide accountability system that will evaluate school level performance (Forte, 2010).

ESEA's next reauthorization, The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), came in 2001 under the administration of President George W. Bush, being signed into law in 2002. NCLB, as maintained by Forte, extended the concepts of IASA by adding the requirement of assessments and standards for science (Forte, 2010). The hallmark of NCLB, accountability measures were put in place to address gaps in achievement among historically underachieving subpopulations: minority students, students in poverty, and students with disabilities.

In the Commonwealth of Virginia, schools identified as a school in "school improvement" fall into three categories. The first category *priority schools* contain the lowest five percent of Title I schools. Priority schools receive federal school improvement funding classified as 1003(a) or 1003(g). The second category *focus schools* is comprised of ten percent of Title I schools that have been identified through student achievement data from three proficiency gap groups in the content areas of reading and mathematics. A third category contains both Title I and Non-Title I schools who have not met one or more of the AMOs.

Under NCLB, Title I, Section 1116 school improvement 1003(a) funding is provided to high poverty low-achieving schools. This funding provides support to teaching and learning and must be utilized to implement research-based federal, state, and local school reform initiatives. School Improvement Grants under section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 provides funding to the persistently lowest-achieving schools in a state. These funds are given to local educational agencies (LEAs) that demonstrate the "greatest need" and the "strongest commitment" to significantly increasing student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

Additionally, school divisions with priority schools receiving either 1003(g) and/or 1003(a) SIG funding must implement one of the four United States Department of Education (USED) intervention models. The intervention models include the following:

1. Turnaround Model—The school is required to replace the principal, adopt competencies to evaluate effectiveness of teachers, implement strategies to recruit and retain staff, provide on-going professional development, implement new governance structure, implement research based instructional program, utilize student data outcomes continuously, increase student learning time, and provide support services for students.
2. Restart Model—The school division must reopen the school under a charter.
3. School Closure Model—The school division must close the school and enroll former students into higher performing schools within the division.
4. Transformation Model—The school division must increase the effectiveness of teachers and building administrators, implement research based instructional reform strategies, increase learning time, and provide operational flexibility (Virginia Department of Education, 2014).

All schools within the study selected the Transformation Model.

Student achievement within the Commonwealth of Virginia is measured through assessments given in grades 3-8 and end-of-course based on the Virginia Standards of Learning. Assessments are given within the content areas of English, Mathematics, Science, and History. The Virginia Board of Education establishes the pass rates and benchmarks.

The focus of this study will include six schools that were denied accreditation in 2013-2014 based on the schools not meeting designated benchmarks as established by the Virginia Board of Education's federal annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in the content areas of reading and mathematics in grades 3-8 (Virginia Department of Education, 2014). The study will also include comparable data from ten schools that met full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions and received federal school improvement funding. Because SIG funding is for a three year award period, student achievement data will be examined from 2010-2011 through 2012-2013. Within the Commonwealth of Virginia, student pass rates for a current school year are based on the previous year's testing administration. For example, student pass rates from 2013-2014 are based on the 2012-2013 testing administration.

The Commonwealth of Virginia includes 133 school divisions and 1,828 schools contained in eight superintendent's regions. In 2013-2014, forty-one percent or 743 schools met all objectives (Virginia Department of Education, 2014). The Commonwealth also identified 37

priority and 73 focus schools. It should be noted that while a school can meet its AMOs, it can be designated as priority, focus or denied accreditation. Because of this, to narrow the sample for the study, the researcher first examined the six schools denied accreditation and then selected comparable data from ten schools meeting full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions. The study contained representation from five of the eight superintendent's regions. The schools and regions selected for the sample represent the regions that contained the largest number of divisions in Cohort I. For a given year, all priority schools are placed in a cohort.

### **Statement of the Problem**

School reform in K-12 education has sparked much debate among researchers, politicians, professional organizations, and educators. The federal government has intervened, implementing stringent mandates for increased student achievement and sanctions for school districts not meeting the required benchmarks. In June 2012, the Virginia Department of Education was granted a waiver from the United States Department of Education for certain mandates as outlined in the No Child Left Behind legislation (Virginia Department of Education, 2013). Within the flexibility waiver, the Commonwealth of Virginia was able to establish its own annual measurable objectives (AMO) for the content areas of reading and math. The established benchmarks would reflect a continuous decrease in the proficiency gap between the highest performing schools and the lowest performing schools in the Commonwealth. Within the Commonwealth of Virginia, sanctions have been imposed by the federal and state government to increase student achievement, but some schools have remained unsuccessful at achieving full accreditation.

Robert Slavin wrote, "From the perspectives of economics and justice, education is a national responsibility; from a legal perspective it is a state responsibility; yet in practice per pupil instructional costs within states vary widely... (Slavin, 1999)." Competitive school improvement grants are awarded to the lowest performing schools or priority schools in the Commonwealth based on the needs expressed in the grant application. Since 2009, the amounts awarded from the school improvement grants have decreased, but the number of schools falling into school improvement has increased. In an effort to provide effective and efficient support to schools not meeting state benchmarks, additional research is needed to examine the relationship

between federal SIG funding and overall student achievement data outcomes in reading and mathematics.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine how federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds were allocated and what differences existed between allocation patterns and overall student achievement outcomes as measured by annual measurable objectives (AMOs) established by the Virginia Board of Education in schools denied accreditation and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions. The allocation patterns of federal school improvement funding will be analyzed and compared to determine the relationship with student achievement. The findings of this study will add to the current body of knowledge on the relationship between federal SIG funding and overall student achievement. The findings will provide data for policymakers as they continue to develop legislation to support increasing student achievement. The findings of this study can mostly serve as a resource to educational leaders leading priority schools and schools denied accreditation with considerations for resource allocation.

### **Significance of the Study**

The goal of No Child Left Behind was “to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind (U. S. Department of Education, 2013)”. Much research has been conducted on the efforts of school reform. With the reauthorization of Title I in 1994, the National Center on Educational Statistics reported 16,658 schools utilized funding from Title I to implement school wide reform endeavors (Gross, Booker, & Goldhaber, 2009). Public-Law 105-78, which was embedded into NCLB, made it possible for school districts to apply for grant funding to implement comprehensive school reform programs (Gross, Booker, & Goldhaber, 2009). From 1998 to 2005, the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSR D) allowed school districts to utilize the grant funding to implement a designated CSR D design. Given the need for resources to implement change, investigating how federal SIG funds were allocated by schools denied accreditation and priority schools in school improvement and the relationship to overall student outcomes, this study may be useful to school leaders when allocating federal SIG funds.

## Definitions of Key Terms

Throughout the study, several key terms will be utilized. Here, the terms will be defined as they relate to the study.

**Accountability.** Holding schools and districts responsible for the mastery of state objectives, as measured by state assessments, including English language learners (ELL) and special education students (U. S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, 2010).

**1003(a) School Improvement Funding.** Grant awards given to high poverty low achieving schools to implement research-based federal, state, and local school reform initiatives. Grant awards are for a one year period (U. S. Department of Education, 2013).

**1003(g) School Improvement Funding.** Grant awards given to the persistently lowest achieving schools in a state. Funds are designated for local educational agencies demonstrating the greatest need and strongest commitment to increase student achievement. Grant awards are for a three year period (U. S. Department of Education, 2013).

**Accreditation Rating.** Designation that indicates whether or not a school has met overall benchmarks in English, math, history and science within the Commonwealth of Virginia (Virginia Department of Education, 2013).

**Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO).** As mandated by No Child Left Behind (NCLB), each state must set benchmarks in reading and math which reduce the proficiency gap between the highest and lowest performing school (Virginia Department of Education, 2013) .

**Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).** The minimum benchmark schools and school divisions were mandated to achieve under NCLB (Virginia Department of Education, 2013) . This benchmark is no longer used since the approval of Virginia's flexibility waiver by the U. S. Department of Education.

**High Poverty Low Performing.** A school which has an eligible free or reduced lunch population of 76-100 percent and fails to meet minimum state standards (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015)

**Highly Qualified Teacher.** A teacher, who holds a teaching license issued by the state, holds a bachelor's degree at a minimum and possesses the content knowledge for the subject of which they are teaching (Virginia Department of Education, 2013) .

**Instructional Spending.** Elements which support student learning requiring a purchase code of object 3000(purchased services).

**Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools.** A Title I school among the lowest five percent in a district or a high school with a graduation rate of less than 60 percent (Virginia Department of Education, 2014).

**Personnel Spending.** Elements that support student learning requiring a purchase code of object code 1000(personnel).

**Report Card.** Data provided online for each school and school division within the Commonwealth. Student achievement data is included by subject and grade as well as by subgroup (Virginia Department of Education, 2014).

**School Reform.** Research-based initiatives implemented to improve student outcomes (Johns Hopkins University, 2014).

**Standards of Learning (SOL).** The minimum expectations for what each student should know by the end of each grade and/ or course in every content area (Virginia Department of Education, 2013) .

## **Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to examine how federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds were allocated and what differences existed between allocation patterns and overall student achievement outcomes as measured by annual measurable objectives (AMOs) established by the Virginia Board of Education in schools denied accreditation and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions. The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How were federal school improvement grant (SIG) funds allocated for schools identified as denied accreditation and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions?
  - a. What instructional programs or strategies were identified in the SIG grant funding applications/reports?
  - b. What personnel positions were identified in the SIG funding applications/reports?

2. What, if any, differences in student outcomes were observed over the 3 year grant period for schools identified as denied accreditation and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions?
3. What differences, if any, were there in the percent of instructional spending between schools that became fully accredited and those that did not?
4. What differences, if any, were there in the percent of personnel spending between schools that became accredited and those that did not?

## **Limitations**

The data examined in this study represent the achievement levels of students and schools within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Overall student pass rates from the 2010-2011 through 2012-2013 reading and mathematics Virginia Standards of Learning assessments for cohorts of students in grades 3-8 were examined. The focus of the study was schools denied accreditation and priority schools achieving full accreditation in 2013-2014 within the Commonwealth of Virginia. The findings from this research should not be generalized beyond the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The second limitation was the SIG funding. Four schools within the study utilized 1003(a) funding which provided the schools with an additional year of school improvement funding. All four were elementary schools, but two were denied accreditation and two were priority schools. These four schools had four years of continuous funding when combined with the three year grant period of the 1003 (g) funding. With the four schools indicated, the examination of student outcomes and relationship with federal SIG funding will be reported for the 3 year award period. The additional year required a separate continuation application that was completed at the end of year three. The full impact of the findings may not be identified in the study.

The third limitation related to student outcomes. In 2009 and 2010, the Virginia Board of Education adopted more rigorous standards in mathematics and English. Students were assessed on the new standards beginning with 2011-2012 for mathematics and 2012-2013 for English. The changed assessments resulted in declined scores throughout the Commonwealth.

Former Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Patricia I. Wright stated,

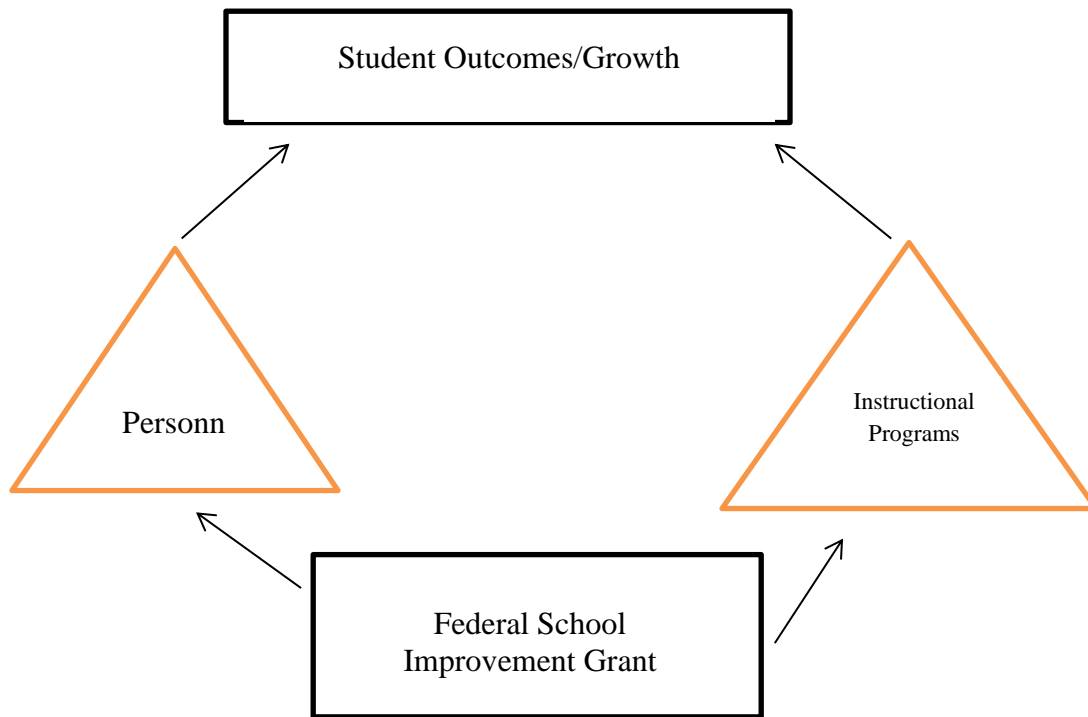
“Virginia's public schools are beginning a new trend line with the implementation of more challenging standards and assessments. The goal is to build on the progress already made under the Standards of Learning program and ensure that all graduates possess the knowledge and skills needed for success in college and the workplace (Virginia Department of Education, 2013)”.

Any phenomena observed will be explained in the discussion.

The fourth limitation was the approved SIG application for School B. School B was located in Cohort I. A grant application for the grant award period of 2010-2011 through 2012-2013 was not located. Several attempts were made to the Virginia Department of Education to obtain this application, but all attempts were unsuccessful. The grant application included within the study for School B was an approved SIG application for 2013-2014 through 2015-2016. Because of this, the data for School B were considered incomplete.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Multiple variables impact student achievement including the variables of teacher quality, leadership and funding. Research has been conducted to determine the relationship between student achievement and teacher quality (Rivers & Sanders, 2002); student achievement and leadership (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Nettles and Herrington, 2007; Gieselmann, 2009); and student achievement and funding (Gross, Booker, & Goldhaber, 2009; Naraiian, Brown & Navarro, 2011; Neymotin, 2010; JLARC, 2014). This study will examine how federal school improvement funds were allocated and what differences existed between allocation patterns and accreditation outcomes as measured by AMOs established by the Virginia Board of Education. With the variables noted, a theory was formed of how the allocation of federal school improvement funding relates to student achievement through expenditures on personnel and instructional programs. The theory as illustrated in Figure 1 reflects how the allocation of federal school improvement funding on instructional programs and personnel can impact student achievement.



*Figure 1.* Relationship between funding and student outcomes.

This theory begins with federal school improvement funding. Federal school improvement funding is allocated at the division and school level. Allocations can be seen through budget narratives for each object code that delineates the school reform initiatives that will be implemented. Initiatives include instructional programs and personnel that enhance and improve teacher quality and leadership. The theory illustrated, federal school improvement funding impacts student achievement in the content areas of reading and mathematics.

### **Organization of the Study**

A background of the government’s role in education begins the introduction for Chapter 1 of this study. This is followed by a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study and research questions. The research questions along with the statement of the problem identify the need for further examination of the relationship between federal school improvement funding and student data outcomes in the content areas of reading and mathematics. The literature review presented in Chapter 2 begins with historical background of school reform followed by a review

of prior research of the variables of teacher quality, leadership, and funding and their effect on student achievement. An examination is also included of schools that received educational funding and federal school reform awards and their effect on student achievement. The methodology utilized in this study is explained in Chapter 3. The rationale for the research design, population, data needed, data gathering, and data analysis are included within Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents the data analyzed and the data collection process. The chapter continues with the results of the statistical analyses utilized to support the research questions. Chapter 5 concludes with findings and implications. This is followed by recommendations for future studies and a reflection.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of Relevant Literature**

#### **Introduction**

Student success is the goal of all educational institutions both public and private. Student achievement can be measured through the examination of multiple outcomes. NCLB requires student achievement to be measured through annual standardized assessments that are administered to all students statewide (U.S. Department of Education, 2014) . Even with set standards and objectives, many variables play a significant role in the outcome of student achievement. Federal school improvement grants provide additional resources for persistently low performing schools to implement research based school reform initiatives. Researchers have examined multiple variables and their effect on student achievement. The effects of the variables of teacher quality, leadership, and funding provide the groundwork for this literature review.

NCLB legislation placed stringent mandates on school divisions across the country. This led to some school divisions and schools being identified as meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and others labeled as in need of improvement. In June 2012, AYP in Virginia was replaced with Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). Virginia, with approval of its flexibility waiver by the United States Department of Education (USED), established AMOs in the content areas of reading and math (Virginia Department of Education, 2013).

The literature review begins with historical background, which details school reform through the adoption of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandates and sanctions. Teacher quality is examined through a study measuring teacher effectiveness (Rivers & Sanders, 2002). The relationship among school context variables, principal instructional leadership, instructional climate, and reading achievement in students is examined (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996). Leadership practices, principal behaviors, and principal factors which effect student achievement are also studied (Nettles and Herrington, 2007; Gieselmann, 2009). This will be followed by an examination of schools receiving educational funding and federal school reform awards and their effect on student achievement (Gross, Booker, & Goldhaber, 2009; Naraian, Brown & Navarro, 2011; Neymotin, 2010; JLARC, 2014). The literature review will conclude with a synthesis of the research findings.

## Search Process

*A Nation at Risk* (1983), a report of findings as examined by the National Commission on Excellence under the Reagan administration was read to provide background information and an understanding into the origins of modern school reform, as the findings of the report served as a catalyst for change within America's schools. The *Improving America's Schools Act* (1994) and the *No Child Left Behind Act* (2002) were also read to provide foundational knowledge of when and the degree to which federal accountability measures were implemented. With regard to specific accountability measures for Virginia's school divisions, the Virginia Department of Education's website provided extensive resources.

The Virginia Department of Education's website provided specific information on the accreditation ratings, federal annual measureable objectives, and accreditation benchmarks of Virginia's schools. The website also provided information on Virginia's Standards of Learning as they relate to the compliance of the No Child Left Behind mandates. Online research databases accessed through the Virginia Tech libraries were utilized to conduct a comprehensive search of the literature. "Summon," Virginia Tech's library search engine, which allows multiple sources to be explored within a single search, was utilized to search electronic databases for scholarly articles relevant to school reform. The specific search terms employed in Summon were "school reform," "school reform and student achievement," "school reform and NCLB," "teacher quality and student achievement," "leadership and student achievement," "school improvement and funding," "school funding," "student achievement and funding," and "school reform and funding".

## Historical Perspective on School Reform

**Creation of the Department of Education.** The transformation of school reform can clearly be seen through the transitions in presidential administrations and the reauthorization of policy. The Department of Education Organization Act, which was passed in 1979 under President James Earl Carter, led to the formation of a new federal department. This new department was the United States Department of Education. President Carter, as leaders before him, recognized the challenges and issues within education. During his administration, growing concerns were present in special education, busing, school funding formulas, federally funded programs, and accountability (New York State Education Department, 2009). Prior to the

formation of the new Department of Education, Congress approved the formation of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). The purpose of the OERI was to conduct scholarly research in the area of teaching and learning. One goal of the OERI was to “measure the inputs and outputs of public schools throughout the country” (New York State Education Department, 2009, p. 41).

**Concerning test scores.** Declining scores reported by the College Board on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), led state departments of education to focus on “basic skills competencies” in reading and mathematics (New York State Education Department, 2009). Research conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) showed innovative programs had “no discernible” effect on student achievement; however support for basic skills competency assessments continued to grow (New York State Education Department, 2009). With the implementation of comprehensive programs to improve basic skills, “states hoped to be able to assess the overall effectiveness of schools and hold both teachers and administrators publicly accountable for measurable results” (New York State Education Department, 2009, p. 42). According to the New York State Education Department, “The basic competency testing movement was considered an end in itself; testing *was* the reform, and other school- or social-reform strategies went largely undeveloped” (New York State Education Department, 2009, p. 43).

**Shift to state control.** A significant push for school reform occurred under President Ronald Reagan. Early within his administration, policy changes did not predict this shift. During his presidential campaign, President Reagan vowed to eliminate the newly created Department of Education. According to Strauss, Reagan considered the department, “President Carter’s new bureaucratic boondoggle” (Strauss, 2011, "Department of Education," para. 1). His reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) led to the consolidation of twenty-nine categorical programs and cuts to federal funding by approximately 1 billion dollars (New York State Education Department, 2009). The reauthorization also gave more control back to the state and local government and less to the federal government.

Despite the cuts in funding and shift of educational control, Secretary of Education Bell appointed the National Commission on Excellence in Education to research the American education system. The committee’s report, *A Nation at Risk*, asserted, “Average achievement of high school students on most standardized tests is now lower than 26 years ago when *Sputnik*

was launched” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 9). The report also declared, “Standardized tests of achievement ... should be administered at major transition points from one level of schooling to another and particularly from high school to college” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 24). Achievement and accountability were at the forefront of education and school reform.

**Expansion of federal efforts.** In an attempt to improve the nation’s school system, school reform became a major force in the federal government’s reform efforts. In 1994, Title I was reauthorized, providing more schools the opportunity to utilize Title I funding for school wide reform efforts (Gross, Booker, & Goldhaber, 2009). Congress passed new legislation, Public Law 105-78 or Obey-Porter, which provided grant funding to schools seeking to implement a comprehensive school reform program. School divisions had to apply for the three-year funding that could be used to purchase Educational Management Organizations (EMO). These EMO’s devised “research-based school designs that aligned school governance, curriculum, and instructional practice” (Gross, Booker, & Goldhaber, 2009, p. 112). Between 1998- 2005, the Department of Education continued to support schools implementing comprehensive school reform programs.

**Inequities in state funding formulas.** While many schools sought federal funding to support reform efforts, some districts relied on state funding. In *Abbott v. Burke*, a court case that challenged the funding formula in the state of New Jersey, the Supreme Court held the state’s method of funding education was unconstitutional (Education Law Center, 2013). The ruling required a comprehensive set of improvements for poor and minority children. This landmark case would “assure” funding that was “substantially equivalent” to that of successful divisions in suburban areas and “adequate” to provide the necessary supplemental programs to support urban students (Education Law Center, 2013). According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2005), of the nation’s 11 largest urban districts, 84% and 85% of low-income fourth grade students scored at or below the basic level in reading and math respectively (Greene & Anyon, 2010). Greene and Anyon asserted, “these percentages demonstrate that the current education system is not assisting the vast majority of students living in urban poverty attain high, or even proficient, levels of achievement in reading” (Greene & Anyon, 2010, p. 224). The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) now NCLB ensured

urban and rural school districts would have access to resources to implement school reform and increase student achievement (Naraian, Brown, & Navarro, 2011).

## **Teacher Quality**

NCLB implemented accountability measures throughout many facets of education to improve student achievement. According to the NCLB legislation, all teachers were required to be “highly qualified” by 2005-2006. In order to be deemed highly qualified, a teacher must possess a bachelor’s degree, full state licensure or certification, and knowledge of subject matter (New No Child Left Behind Flexibility: Highly Qualified Teachers, 2013). Teacher quality has led to much debate among researchers, educators and teacher unions.

Rivers and Sanders examined data obtained from the Tennessee Department of Education, which utilized the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) as a tool to measure student growth over time (Rivers & Sanders, 2002). Tennessee has housed student achievement data within the TVAAS database since 1991. The TVAAS provided school leaders with the ability to “see, report, and act” upon the student growth data (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013). Utilizing a longitudinal approach, Rivers and Sanders conducted a study to examine how teachers could be evaluated based on student growth. The researchers conducted their study without controlling for external variables. Standardized tests that were implemented on a consistent and sustained interval provided the researchers with not only achievement data, but individual student gains made from one academic year to the next.

Rivers and Sanders reported, “Differences in teacher ability are substantial, and if students are assigned to consecutive ineffective teachers, the impact on student achievement in the short and long terms can be devastating” (Rivers & Sanders, 2002, p. 13). Utilizing a longitudinal approach, Rivers and Sanders conducted a study to examine how teachers could be evaluated based on student growth. The researchers conducted their study without controlling for external variables. Standardized tests that were implemented on a consistent and sustained interval provided the researchers with not only achievement data but individual student gains made from one academic year to the next.

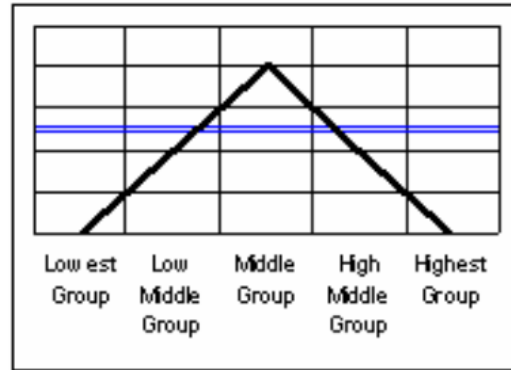
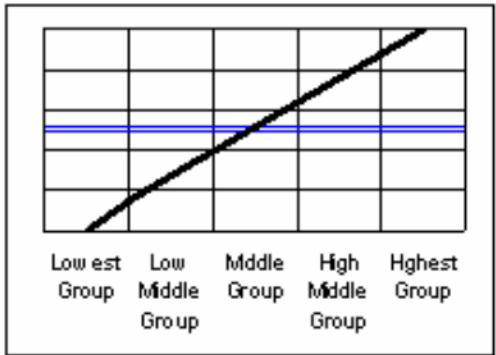
Data examined by the researchers were obtained from the Tennessee Department of Education. The state of Tennessee uses the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) as a statistical analysis tool to measure student growth over time (Rivers & Sanders,

2002). Tennessee has housed student achievement data within the TVAAS database since 1991. The TVAAS provides school leaders with the ability to analyze results from student tests composed of multiple-choice and open-ended response questions. The statistical reports from TVAAS provide school leaders and districts with the ability to “*see, report, and act*” upon the student growth data (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013).

Within the study, researchers included tests that had repeatability and a strong correlation to curricular objectives. Student achievement data were then analyzed by the TVAAS. By design, the TVAAS applies, to its student achievement database, mixed model methodology. A typical TVAAS report might reflect the following patterns as shown in Figure 2.

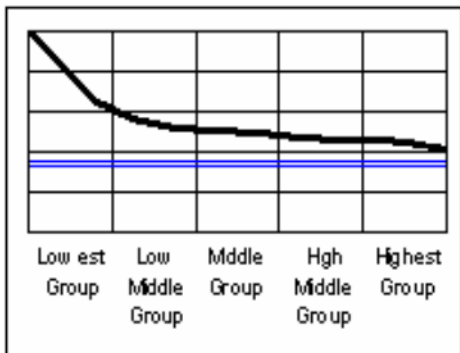
The multivariate longitudinal model utilizes all student information to measure academic gain. This methodology allows student achievement data to be used to assess the effectiveness of schools and teachers. Rivers and Sanders identified four factors that eliminate prior concerns with utilizing student data to measure student growth (1) students serve as their own control, thus eliminating exogenous influences; (2) estimates of the model parameters are improved with the application of longitudinal student data across years and subjects with repeated measures; (3) all student data are applied; and (4) erroneous categorization of teachers is minimized by estimation of shrinkage (Rivers & Sanders, 2002).

Rivers and Sanders (2002) asserted, “The cumulative and residual effects of teachers on the academic progress of students are huge” (Rivers & Sanders, 2002, p. 18). The researchers found the variability of teacher effectiveness has an impact on student achievement. The researchers further concluded policy implications were necessary to ensure equity in education. The three areas of focus were (1) implementation of a measurement system which allows school districts to monitor variability among schools and teachers; (2) diminish variability which currently exists among teachers; and (3) review teacher assignments by school and across the district to reduce teacher effectiveness inequities (Rivers & Sanders, 2002).



**The Reverse Shed Pattern**  
 This pattern reveals more than a year's growth for high performing students, while the low achieving group has not maintained a year's growth.

**The Tent Pattern**  
 This pattern shows more than a year's growth for average students, while both high and low performing groups are not maintaining a year's growth. Low Performing students are falling further behind.



**The Optimal Pattern**  
 This is the optimal pattern with all students making positive gains. Low achieving students are making the most gains. Over time this pattern has the potential to close the achievement gap.

Figure 2. Potential patterns of academic growth over time. Reprinted from *TCAP and TVAAS Scores-Tennessee Department of Education*. Retrieved December 13, 2013 from <http://www.tn.gov/education/assessment/test results.shtml>. Copyright 2013 by Tennessee Department of Education. Reprinted with permission.

According to Rivers and Sanders, meaningful measurement of teacher effectiveness allows for the absence of biased measures such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and parental influences. Removing the biased measures created an evaluation of teachers that exposed those that are truly ineffective (Rivers & Sanders, 2002). Rivers and Sanders (2002) noted accountability and diagnosis are two measures that must be apparent in teacher evaluation. A fair evaluation includes diagnostic information that leads to the development of a plan to improve

teacher effectiveness. The researchers' contended that once teachers realize evaluations are based on student growth, an increase will be seen in the perception of fairness thus leading to teachers seeking methods of improving instructional practices (Rivers & Sanders, 2002).

In 2011, the Virginia Board of Education adopted *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* (Virginia Department of Education, 2015). The adoption of the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* created a set of standards for all teachers within the Commonwealth. The new evaluation tool included seven standards in which all teachers would be evaluated. The performance standards included the following domains: Performance Standard 1: Professional Knowledge, Performance Standard 2: Instructional Planning, Performance Standard 3: Instructional Delivery, Performance Standard 4: Assessment of and for Student Learning, Performance Standard 5: Learning Environment, Performance Standard 6: Professionalism, and Performance Standard 7: Student Academic Progress. Performance standards one through six accounted for ten percent of the teachers' evaluation while performance standard seven accounted for forty percent of the teachers' evaluation (Virginia Department of Education, 2015). According to the Virginia Department of Education, "Teaching standards provide a conceptual model for effective teaching and establish a foundation upon which all aspects of teacher development from teacher education to induction and ongoing profession[al] development can be aligned (Virginia Department of Education, 2015)."

Whereas teacher evaluations can be very subjective, the uniform standards adopted by the Virginia Board of Education created a tool that not only included objective measures but also addressed issues raised by Rivers and Sanders of teacher effectiveness and variability. As a requirement of the flexibility plan approved by the United States Department of Education with the Commonwealth's Flexibility Waiver, school divisions with schools receiving SIG awards must also complete the Teacher and Principal Evaluation Collection (TPEC) Survey. The TPEC survey collects data to ensure the approved standards in the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria* are consistent among schools across the Commonwealth. The TPEC survey also collects data to ensure an overall summative rating of which student academic progress must account for forty percent is consistent.

## Leadership

Leithwood, Begley, and Cousins (1990) conducted research to examine the correlation between principals and their effect on increased student achievement. Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996) examined the relationship among school context variables, principal instructional leadership, instructional climate, and reading achievement in students. Other researchers have taken a closer look at the leadership practices of principals and student achievement (Nettles & Herrington, 2007).

Gieselmann (2009) utilized multiple regression to analyze nine factors which included three subscales to determine their effect on student achievement: (1) years of principal experience, (2) years of teaching experience by the principal, (3) years of principal experience at present site, (4) highest level of education by the principal, (5) principal gender, (6) principal leadership as measured by the *three* subscales of the *Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale*, and (7) free/reduced lunch population at the school, to determine the principal and school factors which predicted student achievement (Gieselmann, 2009). Utilizing student achievement on state assessments as the criterion variable, this was matched with the principal participating in the study. The assessment data utilized were the *Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS/5 Survey Edition)* and the state's standards-based test.

The instrumentation tool applied in this study was the *Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS)*. The *PIMRS* contains three dimensions of instructional leadership. The three dimensions are: *Defining the School's Mission*, *Managing the Instructional Program*, and *Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate*. The dimensions are further expanded into 10 subgroups which reflect instructional leadership functions. The first dimension, *Defining the School's Mission*, contains the subgroups of Framing the School's Goals and Communicating the School's Mission. Within this subgroup, the principal is responsible for communicating clearly the mission of the school (Hallinger, 2011).

The second dimension within *PIMRS* is *Managing the Instructional Program*. Supervising and Evaluating Instruction, Coordinating the Curriculum, Monitoring Student Progress are the three subgroups contained within this dimension. Principal as manager is the focus of this dimension. This includes management, coordination and implementation of the academic programs.

*Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate* is the third dimension. Protecting Instructional Time, Promoting Professional Development, Maintaining High Visibility, Providing Incentives for Teachers, and Providing Incentives for Learning are the subgroups that are encompassed within this dimension. This dimension holds the expectation that success comes through, “an “academic press” [of] the development of high standards and expectations and a culture that fosters and rewards continuous learning and improvement” (Hallinger, 2011, p. 277)

The data collected from 180 of the 340 principals surveyed, revealed (a) *Defining the School’s Mission* (.90), (b) *Managing the Instructional Program* (.92), and (c) *Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate* (.94) (Giesemann, 2009). Within the study, the coefficient alpha was .97 for the composite score of the survey, indicating reliability of the PIMRS. The researcher utilized multiple regression to answer the question “What were the significant predictors of student achievement measured by the state assessment” (Giesemann, 2009)?

According to Giesemann, a statistical significance was not found between variables related to the principal and increased student achievement (Giesemann, 2009). This study was in contrast with research conducted by Bista and Glasman (1998). One variable which held true to previous research (Bista & Glasman, 1998) but was also not related to the principal was free and reduced lunch. Schools with higher populations of free and reduced lunch were found to have student achievement data that was lower (Bista & Glasman, 1998; Giesemann, 2009). Nettles and Herrington (2007) examined the direct effects of principal leadership on student achievement. The researchers explained,

Effective educational leadership makes a difference in improving learning; there is nothing new or especially controversial about this idea. What’s far less clear, even after several decades of school improvement efforts, is just how leadership matters and how important those effects are in promoting the learning of all children (Nettles & Herrington, 2007, p. 725).

Much research has been conducted on the effects of administrative practice on student achievement. Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996) explored principal effects on students’ reading achievement. The researchers attempted to address the direct and indirect effects of principal instructional leadership on student achievement with the following research questions:

(1) How do selected school context variables and personal characteristics influence the instructional leadership behavior of principals who make a difference in students' learning? (2) What is the nature of principal effects on school climate variables and the subsequent achievement outcomes of students? (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996, p. 529).

A comprehensive framework was utilized to examine organizational and environmental contexts of the principal's role in student achievement. The researchers employed direct-effects and indirect-effects models both with an antecedent. The model incorporated four aspects of principal leadership: (1) contextual and personal antecedents of principal leadership, (2) a principal leadership construct, (3) in-school factors related to teaching and learning, and (4) student achievement outcomes (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996).

Within their study, the researchers collected data from 87 Tennessee schools that participated in the School Incentives Improvement Program (SIIP). The SIIP was a study conducted over four years that evaluated the effects of incentive pay on student achievement. To assess the principal's role in the efficacy of the school, data were collected on school context factors, the principals' personal characteristics, leadership, and student achievement. With the completion of a School Information Form, the researchers were able to gain contextual and demographic information for the antecedent variables. Students receiving free and reduced lunch, principal's gender and parental involvement were all variables examined.

School organizational variables were obtained by utilizing the questionnaire completed by teachers in years one and three of the SIIP program. The questionnaire focused on:

(1) factors associated with effective schools, (2) organizational variables hypothesized to be related to student performance, (3) faculty attitudes toward their own ability to improve student performance, (4) the valence of various incentives to school personnel, and (5) selected context variables potentially affecting faculty effectiveness (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996, p. 536).

The questionnaire allowed the researchers to draw several constructs, including the principal leadership construct, instructional climate, and instructional organizational.

The data gathered for student achievement in reading were obtained from results of the Basic Skills First Test, a criterion-referenced assessment developed by the Tennessee State Department of Education (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996). Students in grades 6 and 8 were administered the assessment in the fall and spring as pre- and post- tests. Researchers noted the final achievement gain variable was obtained through the residual regression of the posttest minus the pretest scores (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996).

The researchers summarize their findings in two categories: (a) the utilization of models to account for effects of principal leadership on school context; and (b) principal leadership and the effects on student achievement while examining interceding variables and school outcomes (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996). Results indicated that principal leadership had a significant effect on principal gender, student SES, and parental involvement. This supports the argument that both independent and dependent variables should be examined with regard to principal leadership. Thus, indirect effects should also be examined with outcomes.

Within the Commonwealth of Virginia, instructional leadership is a leadership attribute examined of principals leading schools in school improvement. Hallinger (2012) identified four obstacles which limit principals' instructional leadership. The identified obstacles were lack of expertise in curriculum and instruction, professional norms, system expectations, and role diversity (Hallinger, *A Data-Driven Approach to Assess and Develop Leadership with the PIMRS*, 2012). It was found that teacher preparation programs do not prepare administrators to lead learning organizations or develop pedagogy and knowledge in curriculum and instruction. Hallinger asserts, "many principals lack the expertise and confidence to focus on this part of the job (Hallinger, *A Data-Driven Approach to Assess and Develop Leadership with the PIMRS*, 2012, p. 54)." Regarding professional norms, Cuban (1988) maintains they are comprised between the teacher and principal. The principal often relinquishes control to the teacher for educational decision-making. In examining system expectations, it was found that systematic practices tend to emphasize managerial responsibilities and political decision-making instead of focusing on instructional leadership. A lack of focus on curriculum and instruction based on the identified obstacles would lead to no sanctions or reprimand. The role diversity presents an on-going challenge. A principal's time within the course of a school day is filled with multiple interactions. One area neglected during the day is appropriate time for planning, observations, and providing feedback to teachers. "This multicuity of roles and expectations tend to act as a

counterforce, fragmenting both the principal's vision and allocation of time, explained Hallinger (Hallinger, *A Data-Driven Approach to Assess and Develop Leadership with the PIMRS*, 2012, p. 55).”

As some schools continue to struggle, it is necessary to explore a principal's instructional leadership, implementing methods to strengthen this area. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, the PIMRS is utilized to measure instructional leadership in principals leading schools identified as a focus or priority school in school improvement. The PIMRS survey is utilized in a manner consistent with its design. The instrument includes a principal self-assessment, a teacher form, and a supervisor form. All of the components of the instrument provide various points of data that allow principals self-reflect, identifying strengths and weaknesses.

## **Funding**

Few researchers have examined the effects of federal funding designated for school reform on student achievement. Gross, Booker, and Goldhaber (2009) conducted an analysis of schools receiving federal Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) awards and its effect on student achievement in reading and math within the state of Texas. Naraian, Brown and Navarro conducted a qualitative study to examine the relationship between a school's ability to contextualize realities and appropriate resources to promote increased student achievement (Naraian, Brown, & Navarro, 2011). Neymotin (2010) performed an analysis of the “Relationship between School Funding and Student Achievement in Kansas Public Schools”.

The analysis conducted by Gross, Booker, and Goldhaber (2009) utilized data from the school years 1996-1997 through 2003-2004. Data were collected from 231 elementary schools, observations of all public school students in Grades 3 through 8, and assessment scores from the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) and the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) exam. The researchers normalized the students' raw assessment scores to a standardized z score within grade and year.

The results for students' math achievement showed a significant negative award effect when compared with a random sample of non-CSR schools. To ensure the findings did not represent bias from “attractiveness of CSR awards to high-poverty and low-performing schools in need of improvement,” the researchers estimated school fixed effects variants of the models (Gross, Booker, & Goldhaber, 2009, p. 119). Again, results showed award effects were not

significant. Little change within the estimates was seen between results of schools with fixed-effects models and those with no fixed effect.

The effects of CSR funding on five subgroups within reading and math achievement was also examined. The five subgroups examined were African American, Hispanic, special education, LEP, and students who received free and reduced lunch. Here, results showed no significant effects on reading assessments, but significant effects within math gains (Gross, Booker, & Goldhaber, 2009). After receiving the CSR, the baseline students saw an increase in math scores of approximately 2.5% of a standard deviation. Post award, this gain increased to approximately 4% of a standard deviation. It should be noted that African American and Hispanic students showed lower gains than the baseline group. These lower gains were also evident in the post award period. Each period showed negative gains of approximately 2% of a standard deviation.

The researchers concluded some students had seen effects from CSR funding (Gross, Booker, & Goldhaber, 2009). All student subgroups, however, had not seen improvement in student achievement. Consistent with other researchers, Gross, Booker, and Goldhaber (2009) found award schools and all non-award schools cannot be compared by controlling for demographic and performance indicators alone. In an effort to obtain a suitable comparison, researchers controlled for school fixed effects and matched award schools to similar non-award schools.

Researchers found varied effects among achievement with student subgroups when CSR awards were examined. Student achievement on math assessments yielded gains across award and post award periods for non-minority, non-free and reduced lunch, general education students (Gross, Booker, & Goldhaber, 2009). Lower gains and negative gains were yielded among African American and Hispanic students on the same math assessments. The researchers did note the limitation of their findings. The findings were limited to the state of Texas. The researchers held that, “further study in additional states is warranted” (Gross, Booker, & Goldhaber, 2009, p. 122).

Naraian, Brown, and Navarro performed a qualitative study to examine the appropriation of grant resources. The researchers utilized a narrative approach to reveal a deeper understanding of the implementation of partnership initiatives and urban education reform (Naraian, Brown, & Navarro, 2011). The researchers discovered the success of some schools and their willingness to

support and engage in community partnerships, while others displayed a reluctance to receive and develop community partnerships. The study involved the analysis of two middle schools that received resources from the federally funded Gear Up (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) grant. The Gear Up grant was a six year project that provided resources to support low income middle school students with preparation to enter and succeed in college (Naraian, Brown, & Navarro, 2011). Of the two schools examined, Lincoln Magnet was identified as having high levels of engagement. The researchers defined high levels of engagement as significant utilization of resources. The second school, Douglas Middle, was identified as having low levels of engagement. The researchers defined low levels of engagement as slow or inadequate use of resources.

Data were collected between March and May 2007. The triangulation of (a) in-depth interview of key stakeholders, such as building principals, teachers, parent surveys, building level program liaisons, and Gear Up officials; (b) participant observations; and (c) assessment of building and Gear Up records data sources comprised the research methodology. Within the three month period, the researchers visited each school two to three times per week. In addition, the researchers attended meetings at the Gear Up office to obtain data related to Gear Up and their activity. The researchers noted micro ethnographies of school cultures of the two schools examined were produced from the triangulation.

Both Lincoln Magnet and Douglas Middle, schools selected for the study, were from the St. Louis Public School district. In 2006-2007, St. Louis Public School district was comprised of 93 schools. Of the 32,833 students enrolled, the demographic breakdown was 81% Black, 14% White and 5% other. Approximately 81% were eligible for free/reduced lunch.

The researchers defined four elements within their findings. The first element identified was “The Presumption of School Structure.” This element found an assumption existed in which the selected recipients of the federal funding possessed the structural capacity to implement the Gear Up program. As noted, “the very schools that are in dire need of external resources to sustain a basic level of school integrity are also the schools that may not be characterized as having a strong internal structure” (Naraian, Brown, & Navarro, 2011, p. 59).

The second element identified was “Taking Responsibility.” Gear Up, by design, supported the needs of each individual school. The responsibility to identify critical needs within the building fell to the principal/school and not the program itself. Within the study, it was found

that an interconnected relationship did not exist between Gear Up and the school (Naraian, Brown, & Navarro, 2011).

The third element identified was “The Mantra of ‘Resource Utilization.’” The researchers noted that during an interview, the director of Gear Up articulated the words “utilization of resources” approximately 17 times (Naraian, Brown, & Navarro, 2011). While the design of the program provided for variances which may have existed from one school building to the next, this narrow program focus, as concluded by the researchers, may have diminished Gear Up’s ability to comprehend their role in the efforts to bring about change to the populations served.

The last element identified was “Ambiguities Within the Role of Liaison.” The goal of the Gear Up program was to provide resources and support to schools within urban communities. Each school building awarded the Gear Up grant received a Gear Up liaison placed in their building. The study revealed the perceived role of the liaison in the school building did not always align with the Gear Up mission (Naraian, Brown, & Navarro, 2011). Gear Up guidelines delineated the expectations of both the school and the liaison. This delineation did not account for “a systematic assessment of building needs and effective interpersonal skills to bridge Gear Up goals with the building variables” (Naraian, Brown, & Navarro, 2011, p. 64).

The researchers concluded, while differentiation is reflected in the two schools, “this is not necessarily a sign of program failure or ineffectiveness” (Naraian, Brown, & Navarro, 2011, p. 67). In an effort to meet societal goals, researchers noted an evaluation of the schools’ needs should be performed followed by a hunt for resources. Partnerships, as explained, in rural and urban settings can provide support to schools through a shared vision to improve student achievement. Federal funding could yield short term results without structural knowledge of the implementation process and the organizational skills necessary to cultivate partnerships to seek the resources necessary for success (Naraian, Brown, & Navarro, 2011). These short term results would not address the systemic issues which may exist. Within the two cases examined, it was found that building climate and priorities play a major role in the utilization of funding.

Whereas Naraian, Brown, and Navarro (2011) suggest funding impacts student achievement, Neymotin (2010) provides an opposing view. Neymotin (2010) found within the state of Kansas, changes in the finance structure had “little positive effect on student educational achievement” (Neymotin, 2010, p. 88). During 1997-2006, the state of Kansas based

amendments to the School District Finance and Quality Performance Act moved towards a “redistributive system of financing education.” Increased funding based on the identified at-risk population was an example of the redistribution. Utilizing data both before and after 2005, Neymotin analyzed the amendments to the School District Finance and Quality Performance Act and their effect on student outcomes.

Student achievement data used in the study was obtained from the Kansas State Department Board of Education. The achievement data used included graduation and dropout rates and student outcomes from core content test scores which indicated percent proficient. Additionally, data was gathered from the National Center for Education Statistics on district characteristics, diploma rate, and revenues per student. All districts in the state of Kansas served as the population.

To examine the effect of revenues per student on measures of persistence, the researcher employed a cross-sectional Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis. The researcher termed “persistence” as the level of educational attainment thus persistence was equal to dropout rate, fraction receiving diplomas or graduation rate (Neymotin, 2010).

In conducting the regression analysis, data initially reveals total revenues per student acts to increase persistence (Neymotin, 2010). When implementing district controls, the positive effect does not continue. This was also noted among student test scores. The researcher commented at the cross-sectional level, a significant effect does not exist between total revenues per student on test scores (Neymotin, 2010). The researcher also observed that pupil-teacher ratio, student enrollment or full-time equivalent teachers did not significantly relate to student outcomes. Free lunch was the only variable that related significantly to student outcomes (Neymotin, 2010).

Neymotin (2010) concluded amendments to the School District Finance and Quality Performance Act over 1997-2006 yielded little effect on student outcomes and persistence. The researcher included three points of consideration; first, the possibility of a lag occurring between the amendments and their effect. Second, the availability and allocation of funding does not equate to effective utilization to increase student achievement. Third, the demographic composition of the school should be considered as the cross-sectional regressions show slight evidence exists which suggest the characteristics other than funding have a significant relation to student outcomes (Neymotin, 2010). Lauen and Gaddis (2012) asserted, “Educational

accountability policy seeks to increase pressure on teachers, administrators, and students to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and equity in a system assumed to be in dire need of reform” (Lauen & Gaddis, 2012, p. 185) .

### **Joint Legislative Audit and Review**

Item 31, 2013 Appropriation Act provided the study mandate for the Joint Legislative Audit and Review (JLARC) to examine options for the restructuring of the lowest performing schools or divisions within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Specifically, the study mandate directed JLARC to

- Analyze reasons for low school performance;
- Consider restructuring options and the outcomes of these efforts in other states;
- Assess school improvement efforts in Virginia; and
- Consider appropriate criteria for state intervention decisions, and estimate the state resources and expertise required to implement various restructuring alternatives (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 2014).

JLARC’s Report Summary: *Low Performing Schools in Urban High Poverty Communities* (2014) was presented to the Governor of Virginia and the General Assembly.

The report acknowledged the importance of an effective teacher, but also noted the importance of an effective principal to “recruit and guide” teachers (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 2014, p. 13). The report continued to state schools deemed high poverty and low performing have a harder time attracting and retaining good staff. As conveyed by JLARC staff seven out of the 11 underperforming schools visited contained an insufficient number of effective, committed teachers. One high school, in particular, explained the following in a grant application, “systemic change to reverse deeply embedded patterns of dysfunction among some of our staff (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 2014, p. 13).”

The report also acknowledged the reluctance of low performing schools to implement recommended instructional practices (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 2014). In an effort to address the needs of all students, the recommendation was made to utilize student data to identify individual skill level and area of improvement. The researchers noted these strategies can then be utilized to adapt lesson plans and teaching methods. Additionally, the

researchers found that timely remediation and extended learning time are instructional strategies which have not been consistently implemented. Consultants hired to support lower performing schools also informed the researchers (1) teachers needed to integrate technology into their lessons (2) professional development was needed in differentiated instruction and (3) “rules and procedures need to be established for group work and using small groups for differentiated instruction (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 2014, p. 14).”

With regard to federal school improvement funding, the JLARC report found, Virginia to be consistent with other states (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 2014). The report held that after receiving federal school improvement grants, one-third of schools nationwide observed no change in reading and math proficiency or experienced decreases within outcomes. The report did note that considering changes within the reading and mathematics standards, among schools receiving SIG funding, Virginia’s schools increased its ranking in math proficiency 20 percentile points.

### **Summary**

Education and student achievement have been and will continue to be discussed and debated by educators, politicians, parents, and the American people for years to come. Researchers will continue to conduct studies examining the numerous variables that affect student achievement and variables that have a significant impact on increasing achievement for all students.

The implementation of No Child Left Behind increased accountability measures in multiple domains. Within the domain of teacher quality, Rivers and Sanders (2002) conducted research to examine holding teachers accountable through measuring student growth. The methodology utilized allowed the effectiveness of schools and teachers to be measured by the data collected through student growth on assessments. Researchers (Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis, 1996; Nettles & Herrington, 2007; and Gieselmann 2009) also examined the effects of principal leadership on student achievement and principal behaviors on student achievement. Results indicated similarities within some variables and student outcomes. Funding has also been examined to determine its effect on student achievement in reading and math. Funding increases yielded improvements seen in some student subgroups but not all. Additional research conducted

by Neymotin, 2010, reports that educational finance has shown little positive effect on student achievement.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine how federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds were allocated and what differences existed between allocation patterns and overall student achievement outcomes as measured by annual measurable objectives (AMOs) established by the Virginia Board of Education in schools denied accreditation and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions. Overall student pass rates from 2010-2011 through 2012-2013 on the reading and mathematics Virginia Standards of Learning assessments for cohorts of students in grades 3-8 were examined and compared with the allocation of federal SIG funding.

This chapter describes the methodology utilized within the study. A discussion will be included that delineates the rationale for the research design, population, data needed, data gathering, and data analysis.

#### **Research Design**

In quantitative research, the researcher utilizes a narrow focus as a means to test objective theories through exploring relationships among variables (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative research can be completed by an experimental or non-experimental study. Within the experimental study, the researcher has control over the interventions applied to the participants that may alter the outcome. Because the data come from preexisting sources, this study is non-experimental, as the researcher did not implement interventions, but rather examine documents after-the-fact.

In this study, a non-experimental descriptive research methodology was utilized to examine the relationship between federal school improvement grant funding and student achievement in the content areas of reading and mathematics. Overall student pass rates from 2010-2011 through 2012-2013 on the reading and mathematics Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments were obtained for cohorts of students in grades 3-8 within schools denied accreditation and priority schools. Additionally, comparable data were collected from 10 schools that attained full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions.

## Research Questions

The research questions addressed within the study are:

1. How were federal school improvement grant (SIG) funds allocated for schools identified as denied accreditation and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions?
  - a. What instructional programs or strategies were identified in the SIG grant funding applications/reports?
  - b. What personnel positions were identified in the SIG funding applications/reports?
2. What, if any, differences in student outcomes were observed over the 3 year grant period for schools identified as denied accreditation and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions?
3. What differences, if any, were there in the percent of instructional spending between schools that became fully accredited and those that did not?
4. What differences, if any, were there in the percent of personnel spending between schools that became accredited and those that did not?

## Population and Sample

In the Commonwealth of Virginia, a school can be classified as *fully accredited*-meeting all benchmarks; *accredited with warning*-not meeting a benchmark in one or more core content areas; *provisionally accredited*-meeting benchmarks with graduation and completion index of 81-84; *conditionally accredited*-applies to new or reconstituted schools; or *accreditation denied*-not meeting benchmarks for the current year and three years prior. All 1,828 schools within the Commonwealth were reviewed to ascertain those with the rating of denied accreditation. For the 2013-2014 academic year, based on the 2012-2013 assessment results, 1,414 were fully accredited, 393 were accredited with warning, 10 were provisionally accredited, 10 new schools were conditionally accredited, 1 new school was conditionally accredited and 6 were accreditation denied.

The 2013-2014 accreditation ratings were utilized to narrow the focus to those with the rating of denied accreditation. Upon identifying the schools with the rating of denied

accreditation, the cohort was ascertained. Cohorts for a given year are comprised of priority schools and school divisions that receive federal school improvement funding. Of the schools identified as denied accreditation, five were contained in Cohort I and began in the school year 2010-2011. Cohort I was comprised of 59 schools from 33 school divisions. The last school was contained in Cohort II and began in school year 2011-2012. Cohort II was comprised of nine schools from five school divisions.

Within the Commonwealth of Virginia, the 133 school divisions are contained in eight superintendent's regions. Schools selected for the study sample represented five of the eight superintendent's regions. The selected schools and regions represent the regions that contained the largest number of divisions in Cohort I.

### **Data Needed**

Data utilized for the study included overall student pass rates from the reading and mathematics Standards of Learning assessments from grades 3-8 in six schools denied accreditation and ten priority schools achieving full accreditation while receiving federal school improvement funding. Federal 1003(g) and 1003(a) school improvement grant applications were utilized to obtain allocation patterns including expenditures on personnel and instructional programs. In this study, student achievement data were gathered from the school years of 2010-2011 through 2012-2013. Approved grant applications were reviewed from 2010, the beginning of the grant award period. All data utilized were collected from the Virginia Department of Education's website, as the information is publicly available. It should be noted, that while accreditation ratings were utilized from 2013-2014, the federal SIG application covered the 3 year award period of 2010-2011 through 2012-2013.

### **Data Gathering**

A research proposal was submitted to Virginia Tech's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to gain permission to conduct the study. The IRB approved the proposal as exempt (see Appendix A). This study utilized many data sets collected by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). To narrow the focus from all 1,828 schools in the Commonwealth, the VDOE's website was utilized to obtain school accreditation ratings. Schools identified for this

study were those with the rating of accreditation denied and ten meeting full accreditation while receiving federal school improvement funding.

For the identified schools, school improvement grant applications were also examined. Under NCLB, school improvement grant funding was available to high poverty low-achieving schools. The federal funding was intended to support teaching and learning with research based federal, state, and local school reform initiatives. The federal 1003 (g) and 1003 (a) school improvement grant applications were obtained from the “*Priority Schools: Cohort Applications*” page on the Virginia Department of Education’s website. In this study, allocation patterns were examined and compared to determine the differences between expenditures on personnel and instructional strategies/programs and the impact on reading and mathematics student achievement.

It should be noted that while School B was located in Cohort I, a grant application was not found for the grant award period of 2010-2011 through 2012-2013. Several attempts to gain this grant application were made, but all unsuccessful. The grant application included within the study for School B will utilize allocations for 2013-2014 through 2015-2016.

Student achievement data were collected from overall student pass rates on the grades 3-8 Standards of Learning assessments in reading and mathematics. Pass rates were obtained from each school’s *Report Card* (Virginia Department of Education, 2014). Student data outcomes were examined during the grant award period of 2010-2011 through 2012-2013.

## **Data Analysis**

In this descriptive non-experimental study, overall student pass rates, budget allocations, instructional programs, and personnel positions were compiled in table format or collected and entered into an Excel spreadsheet. The researcher utilized simple statistics such as percentages, averages, and others to describe phenomena or examine relationships among variables (McMillan & Wergin, 2010). Approved school improvement grant applications and budget summaries were analyzed to determine budget patterns. The percentage of expenditures allocated to instructional programs and the percentage of expenditures allocated to personnel were also examined between schools identified as fully accredited and those denied accreditation. Overall student pass rates from the Virginia Standards of Learning assessments were analyzed pre-SIG implementation and over the three year award period to determine any gains or losses in student

performance. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to address research questions 3 and 4 involving differences between percent of instructional spending and personnel spending in schools fully accredited and those denied.

The sample size for the statistical test was small. However de Winter (2013) conducted research that found applying the t-test to a smaller sample size is feasible (de Winter, 2013 ). De Winter's study investigated the behavior of two-sample t-test for small sample sizes among the various settings: unequal variances, unequal sample size, unequal sample sizes and unequal variances and non-normal distribution. Results held there was "no fundamental objection to using a regular t-test with extremely small sample sizes" (de Winter, 2013 ). De Winter continued that a sample size of two would be sufficient.

## **Summary**

This study included a collection of data gathered mainly from the Virginia Department of Education. The population included was comprised of schools denied accreditation and priority schools attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions. The data were used to examine the relationship between federal school improvement funding and academic outcomes in the content areas of reading and mathematics. The data collected were used to summarize, describe, and explore relationships among variables. The data were analyzed and the findings of this study will add to the current research utilized when determining funding for student achievement. Educational leaders will be provided data to support decisions made regarding resource allocation that will lead to increased student achievement.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results of the Study**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine how federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds were allocated and what differences existed between allocation patterns and overall student achievement outcomes as measured by annual measurable objectives (AMOs) established by the Virginia Board of Education in schools denied accreditation and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions. Student data outcomes were examined from overall student pass rates on the Virginia Standards of Learning assessments in reading and mathematics grades 3-8 within the grant award period of 2010-2011 through 2012-2013.

This chapter presents findings from the analyzed data collected in this study, results of the data collection process, and the results of the statistical analysis utilized to support the research questions (1) How were federal school improvement grant (SIG) funds allocated for schools identified as denied accreditation and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions? (a) What instructional programs or strategies were identified in the SIG grant funding applications/reports? (b) What personnel positions were identified in the SIG grant funding applications/reports? (2) What, if any, differences in student outcomes were observed over the 3 year grant period for schools identified as denied accreditation and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions? (3) What differences, if any, were there in the percent of instructional spending between schools that became fully accredited and those that did not? (4) What differences, if any, were there in the percent of personnel spending between schools that became accredited and those that did not? Lastly, a summary of the chapter will be presented.

#### **Procedures**

The Virginia Department of Education's website was utilized to determine the accreditation ratings of Virginia's 1,828 public schools from its 133 school divisions during the 2013-2014 academic school year. Upon obtaining the accreditation ratings, the selection was narrowed to those denied accreditation. The schools denied accreditation were located in 3 of the 133 school divisions. Accreditation ratings were then utilized to identify cohorts. Cohorts for a

given year were comprised of schools and school divisions that received federal school improvement grant funding. Five of the schools denied accreditation were located within Cohort I. Ten priority schools that attained full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions were also selected for comparable data in the study.

Upon obtaining the cohort for the six schools denied accreditation, the remaining schools and divisions in Cohort I were examined. Utilizing the 2013-2014 accreditation ratings, 59 schools were in Cohort I with 23 schools achieving full accreditation, 25 accredited with warning, four denied, two conditionally accredited and three schools closed. One school contained in the study was among those closed in 2013-2014 and another school contained in the study was contained in Cohort II. School B was closed for the 2014-2015 school year. The school was included in the study because it was a part of Cohort I. The study included schools from 11 divisions across the Commonwealth.

A second search of the Virginia Department of Education's website was conducted to obtain approved federal 1003(g) school improvement grant applications from the identified school divisions and schools. The data gathered from the Virginia Department of Education's website is accessible to the public. Budget allocations for the 3 year award period were obtained for each identified school. To determine allocation patterns, budget summaries for schools denied accreditation and priority schools that included expenditures codes for personnel (1000), employee benefits (2000), purchased services (3000), internal services (4000), other charges (5000), materials and supplies (6000), and equipment/capital outlay (8000) were examined.

Overall student pass rates from the Virginia Standards of Learning assessments for cohorts of students in grades 3-8 were obtained from the VDOE's website. Student data outcomes were placed in an excel spreadsheet. Student data outcomes were examined during the SIG award period of 2010-2011 through 2012-2013.

For this study, budget narratives were examined to determine specific expenditures on personnel that would support increased student achievement and instructional programs that would support increased student achievement. Budget narratives that included substitutes, literacy coaches, reading specialists, etc. required the budget code 1000 (personnel). Lead Turnaround Partners (LTPs), required a code of 3000 (purchased services) as they were considered services from outside of the school division. Additionally, LTPs also referred to as

Educational Management Organizations (EMOs) brought their own instructional programs into the school and school division.

In determining the relationship between the federal SIG funding and overall student achievement data outcomes in reading and mathematics, an independent samples t-test was conducted. This analysis was conducted on both the six schools identified as accreditation denied and the ten schools that received federal SIG funding and achieved full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions.

### **Answering the Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to examine how federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds were allocated and what differences existed between allocation patterns and overall student achievement outcomes as measured by annual measurable objectives (AMOs) established by the Virginia Board of Education in schools denied accreditation and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions. The processes described in the *Procedures* section was utilized to support the research questions (1) How were federal school improvement grant (SIG) funds allocated for schools identified as denied accreditation and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions? (a) What instructional programs or strategies were identified in the SIG grant funding applications/reports? (b) What personnel positions were identified in the SIG grant funding applications/reports? (2) What, if any, differences in student outcomes were observed over the 3 year grant period for schools identified as denied accreditation and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions? (3) What differences, if any, were there in the percent of instructional spending between schools that became fully accredited and those that did not? (4) What differences, if any, were there in the percent of personnel spending between schools that became accredited and those that did not?

#### **Research question one**

Research question one read: How were federal school improvement grant (SIG) funds allocated for schools identified as accreditation denied and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions?

**School Improvement Funding Allocations for Schools Denied Accreditation.** The budget summaries for each identified school were examined to determine allocation patterns. Table 1 reflects the total grant allocation by budget code for each school. Of the identified denied accreditation schools, two were elementary schools, three were middle schools and one was combined grades K-8. All three middle schools received only 1003(g) federal school improvement funding. The funding for each school varied in amount. School D with a total student enrollment of 839 received \$4,055,672 for a per pupil expenditure of \$4,833 and School F with a student enrollment of 570 received \$1,614,624 for a per pupil expenditure of \$2,832. Two elementary schools received both 1003 (a) and 1003(g) federal school improvement funding. Again, varied amounts are seen with Schools A and E with student enrollments of 257 and 603 respectively receiving \$537,501 and \$537,500. The per pupil expenditure amounts for School A and E were \$2,091 and \$891 respectively. School C with a student enrollment of 377 received \$1,758,099 for a per pupil expenditure of \$4,663.

Budget patterns revealed all schools allocated funds within the object codes of 1000 (personnel), 2000 (employee benefits), 3000 (purchased services), 5000 (other charges), and 6000 (materials and supplies). Table 3 indicates the percentage allocated to each budget code. School A was the only school that limited the allocation of object code 3000 (purchased services) to Year 1; in Year 1, an allocation of \$60,500 was made for an outside consultant that monitored the school improvement process. Object code 6000 (materials and supplies) also revealed a Year 1 allocation only. School A utilized this Year 1 allocation for *TeachFirst* software. The *TeachFirst* software was a requirement of school improvement.

Differences were seen in object codes 4000 (internal services) and 8000 (equipment/capital outlay). School C allocated \$10,000 in object code 4000 in Year 1 only for transportation costs of students participating in extended learning opportunities such as before/after school programs and Saturday school. School D also allocated \$28,952 for object code 4000. Additionally, School D was the only school that allocated funding to object code 8000 (equipment/capital outlay). In Year 1, School D allocated \$58,505 to object code 8000 to purchase 56 laptop computers. The laptops were designated for instructors. In Year 2 and Year 3, School D allocated \$28,914 and \$19,982 respectively for instructional hardware. This hardware included items such as white boards and SmartBoards.

It should be noted that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) provided approximately \$100 billion to public education (Virginia Department of Education, 2015). The intent of ARRA was to save jobs and support states and schools. ARRA funding was utilized to support school reform efforts and save teaching positions in jeopardy of being cut due to budget cuts at the state and local level. ARRA funds were awarded through federal programs. This phenomenon can be seen with School E.

Table 1

*Total Grant Allocation by Budget Code for Schools with the Rating of Denied Accreditation*

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Percent of Allocation
School A	1003(a)				
1000	80,514	136,000	136,000	352,514	65%
2000	21,915	43,167	43,167	108,249	20%
3000	60,500	0	0	60,500	11%
4000	0	0	0	0	0%
5000	12,189	0	0	12,189	2%
6000	4,049	0	0	4,049	1%
8000	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	179,167	179,179,167	179,167	537,501	
School B					
1000	0	44,452.00	44,452.00	88,972.00	11%
2000	0	12,691.00	12,691.00	25,382.00	3%
3000	223,721.00	239,432.86	239,432.86	702,586.72	85%
4000	0	0	0	0	0%
5000	1,080.00	3,623.14	3623.14	8,326.28	1%
6000	0	0	0	0	0%
8000	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	224,801.00	300,199.00	300,199.00	825,267	
School C					
1000	167,500	122,000	122,000	411,500	23%
2000	9,439	5,930	5,930	21,299	1%
3000	365,600	300,000	300,000	965,600	55%
4000	10,000	0	0	10,000	<1%
5000	16,000	37,000	37,7000	91,400	5%
6000	78,300	90,000	90,000	258,300	15%
8000	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	646,839	555,630	555,630	1,758,099	

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Percent of Allocation	
<b>School D</b>						
1000	502,904	436,680	436,680	1,376,264	34%	
2000	139,738	124,962	124,962	389,662	10%	
3000	292,812	373,812	373,812	1,040,436	26%	
4000	28,952	0	0	28,952	1%	
5000	83,398	165,708	165,736	414,842	10%	
6000	249,116	224,500	224,500	698,116	17%	
8000	58,504	28,914	19,982	107,400	3%	
Total	1,355,424	1,354,576	1,345,672	4,055,672		
<b>School E</b>						
	1003(a)	ARRA				
1000	50,099.87	4,155.75	45,944.12	50,099.87	150,299.61	28%
2000	4,150.13	4,150.13		4,150.13	12,450.39	2%
3000	109,000		109,000	109,000	327,000	61%
4000	0		0	0	0	0%
5000	8,360		8,360	8,360	25,080	5%
6000	7,557	1,325	6,232	7,556	22,670	4%
8000	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	179,167	9,658	169,509	179,166	537,500	
<b>School F</b>						
1000	151,906.50	136,500	195,604	484,010.50	30%	
2000	69,593.50	131,631	78,396	279,620.50	17%	
3000	231,523	351,947	183,123	766,593	47%	
4000	0	0	0	0	0%	
5000	7,700	3,000	7,700	18,400	1%	
6000	0	20,000	46,000	66,000	4%	
8000	0	0	0	0	0%	
Total	460,723	643,078	510,823	1,614,624		

As reflected in Table 2, four out of six schools denied accreditation allocated the majority of funding to object code 3000 (purchased services). School A and School D allocated the majority of granting funding to object code 1000 (personnel). School D allocated 85% of its funding essentially to personnel as object code 2000 covers employee benefits. It should be noted that School D is also the only school that allocated the largest amount of funding to object codes 5000 (other charges), 6000 (materials and supplies), and 8000 (equipment/capital outlay). Data suggests larger allocations of SIG funds to instructional programs and strategies may not relate to increased student outcomes among schools denied accreditation as all schools denied accreditation remained denied accreditation at the end of the 3 year grant award period.

Table 2

*Overall Percentage by Code for Schools Denied Accreditation*

	1000	2000	3000	4000	5000	6000	8000
School A	65%	20%	11%	0%	2%	1%	0%
School B	11%	3%	85%	0%	1%	0%	0%
School C	23%	1%	55%	<1%	5%	15%	0%
School D	34%	10%	26%	1%	10%	17%	3%
School E	28%	2%	61%	0%	5%	4%	0%
School F	30%	17%	47%	0%	1%	4%	0%

**School Improvement Allocations for Schools Meeting Full Accreditation Under**

**Sanctions.** As reflected in Table 3, total grant amounts, among schools meeting full accreditation, were consistent with all schools receiving \$537,500 or \$537,501 in grant funds. Schools I and O received 1003 (a) and 1003 (g) federal school improvement funding. Nine of the identified schools were elementary schools and one was a middle school. Enrollment numbers for the identified schools range from 343 to 641 students.

As seen with budget patterns in schools identified as accreditation denied, those identified as meeting full accreditation also revealed consistency with schools allocating funds to the object codes of 1000 (personnel), 2000 (employee benefits), 3000 (purchased services), 5000 (other charges), and 6000 (materials and supplies). Differences were seen in object codes 4000 and 8000. Schools H and K allocated funding to object code 4000 (internal services). School H identified \$1,000 each grant year for printing costs. School K identified \$3,700 each grant year for transportation during Saturday school. Additionally, two schools allocated funding to object code 8000 (equipment/capital outlay). School I allocated \$39,400 for technology. The funding was designated for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade computer upgrades. School J designated \$20,000 in Year 2 and 25,838 in Year 3 for technology. Specifically identified in the grant were laptops, SmartBoards, and LCD projectors.

One noteworthy allocation choice was seen in School H. School H allocated 30% and 31% to object codes 5000 (other charges) and 6000 (materials and supplies). School H allocated a total of \$161,713.86 for the three year grant period to object code 5000, which was designated for indirect costs, trainings/staff developments, and language arts and math tutors. Within object code 6000, a total allocation of \$167,748.08 was set, which was designated for workshops/conferences and instructional materials and supplies. The only other school in both

accreditation denied and those meeting full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions to allocate over 30% to object 6000 was School P.

Table 3

*Total Grant Allocation by Budget Code for Schools Meeting Full Accreditation*

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Percent of Allocation
<b>School G</b>					
1000	95,134	95,134	95,134	285,402	53%
2000	18,033	18,033	18,033	54,099	10%
3000	61,000	61,000	61,000	183,000	34%
4000	0	0	0	0	0%
5000	5,000	5,000	5,000	15,000	3%
6000	0	0	0	0	0%
8000	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	179,167	179,167	179,167	537,501	
<b>School H</b>					
1000	49,119.72	49,119.72	49,119.72	147,359.16	27%
2000	17,276.30	17,276.30	17,276.30	51,828.90	10%
3000	1,950.00	1,950.00	1,950.00	5,850.00	1%
4000	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	3,000.00	1%
5000	53,904.62	53,904.62	53,904.62	161,713.86	30%
6000	55,916.36	55,916.36	55,915.36	167,748.08	31%
8000	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	179,167.00	179,167.00	179,166.00	537,500	
<b>School I</b>					
	1003(a)				
1000	103,213	111,913	111,913	327,039	61%
2000	30,904	31,604	31,604	94,112	18%
3000	1,650	9,650	9,650	20,950	4%
4000	0	0	0	0	0%
5000	4,000	4,000	4,000	12,000	2%
6000	0	22,000	21,999	43,999	8%
8000	39,400	0	0	39,400	7%
Total	179,167	179,167	179,166	537,500	

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Percent of Allocation
<b>School J</b>					
1000	83,424	85,092	86,793	255,309	47%
2000	19,651	20,044	20,444	60,139	11%
3000	71,092	49,031	41,091	161,214	30%
4000	0	0	0	0	0%
5000	0	0	0	0	0%
6000	5,000	5,000	5,000	15,000	3%
8000	0	20,000	25,838	45,838	9%
Total	179,167	179,167	179,166	537,500	
<b>School K</b>					
1000	124,437	124,490	125,686	374,613	70%
2000	35,163	37,526	38,177	110,866	21%
3000	6,820	6,820	6,820	20,460	4%
4000	3,700	3,700	3,700	11,100	2%
5000	3,648	3,648	3,648	10,944	2%
6000	5,399	2,983	1,135	9,517	2%
8000	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	179,167	179,167	179,166	537,500	
<b>School L</b>					
1000	116,230	118,409	120,631	355,270	66%
2000	32,679	33,332	33,999	100,010	19%
3000	24,450	22,000	20,000	66,450	12%
4000	0	0	0	0	0%
5000	1,300	1,300	1,300	3,900	1%
6000	4,508	4,126	3,236	11,870	2%
8000	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	179,167	179,167	179,166	537,500	
<b>School M</b>					
1000	137,545	137,595	136,995	412,135	77%
2000	36,763	37,499	38,249	112,511	21%
3000	1,950	1,950	1,950	5,850	1%
4000	0	0	0	0	0%
5000	1,000	1,000	1,000	3,000	1%
6000	1,909	1,123	972	4,004	1%
8000	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	179,167	179,167	179,166	537,500	

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Percent of Allocation
<b>School N</b>					
1000	131,824	134,334	136,345	402,503	75%
2000	37,657	38,410	39,178	115,245	21%
3000	4,350	2,550	1,950	8,850	2%
4000	0	0	0	0	0%
5000	2,336	1,623	650	4,609	1%
6000	3,000	2,250	1,043	6,293	1%
8000	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	179,167	179,167	179,166	537,500	
<b>School O</b>					
	1003(a)				
1000	91,690	91,440	91,440	274,570	51%
2000	7,063	6,508.92	6,508.92	20,080.84	4%
3000	74,550	72,050	72,050	218,650	41%
4000	0	0	0	0	0%
5000	417	72,050	1,800	4,017	1%
6000	5,447	7,368.08	7,368.08	20,183.16	4%
8000	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	179,167	179,167	179,167	537,501	
<b>School P</b>					
1000	71,792.28	71,792.28	71,792.28	215,376.84	40%
2000	11,429.06	11,429.06	11,429.06	34,287.18	6%
3000	26,545.00	26,545.00	27,045.00	80,135.00	15%
4000	0	0	0	0	0%
5000	700	700	700	2,100	<1%
6000	68,700.66	68,700.66	68,199.66	205,600.98	38%
8000	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	179,167	179,167	179,166	<b>537,500</b>	

As reflected in Table 4, the majority schools meeting full accreditation allocated the greater part of their funding to object code 1000 (personnel). The only school that did not allocate a greater part of their funding to object 1000 (personnel) was School H. School H allocated 30% to object code 5000 (other charges) and 31% to object code 6000 (materials and supplies). It should be noted that School J and School O allocated 30% and 41% respectively to object code 3000 (purchased services) which based on other schools within the study was a considerable amount. School P allocated 38% to object code 6000 (materials and supplies) also a considerable amount based on the allocation patterns of the schools within the study. Among

priority schools that attained full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions, data suggest a larger percentage of SIG funding allocated to object code 1000 (personnel) may support increased student achievement on the Virginia Standards of Learning assessments.

Table 4

*Overall Percentage by Code for Schools Meeting Full Accreditation*

	1000	2000	3000	4000	5000	6000	8000
School G	53%	10%	34%	0%	3%	0%	0%
School H	27%	10%	1%	1%	30%	31%	0%
School I	61%	18%	4%	0%	2%	8%	7%
School J	47%	11%	30%	0%	0%	3%	9%
School K	70%	21%	4%	2%	2%	2%	0%
School L	66%	19%	12%	0%	1%	2%	0%
School M	77%	21%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%
School N	75%	21%	2%	0%	1%	1%	0%
School O	51%	4%	41%	0%	1%	4%	0%
School P	40%	6%	15%	0%	<1%	38%	0%

**Allocations for Personnel and Instruction.** In the Commonwealth of Virginia, identified schools and divisions received either 1003(a) and/or 1003(g) federal school improvement grant funding. Federal 1003(a) school improvement grants provided funds for a one year period. Federal 1003(g) school improvement grants provided funding for a three year period. Schools A and E received both 1003(a) and 1003(g) grant funds.

Table 5 and Table 6 illustrate the percentages allocated by personnel and instruction within schools identified as denied accreditation. In examining budget allocations on personnel and instruction, the two schools that allocated the largest percentage on personnel were School A at 65% and School D at 34%. The remaining schools allocated the majority of funding to instruction: School C allocated 55%; School E allocated 61%; and School F allocated 47% to instruction respectively. Among schools attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions, all ten schools allocated a greater percentage of the budget to personnel than instruction. Schools K, M, and N each allocated 70% or more to personnel.

Table 5

*Grant Percentage Allocation by Personnel and Instruction for School Denied Accreditation*

	Personnel	Instruction
School A	65%	11%
School B	11%	85%
School C	23%	55%
School D	34%	26%
School E	28%	61%
School F	30%	47%

Table 6

*Grant Percentage Allocation by Personnel and Instruction for Schools Fully Accredited*

	Personnel	Instruction
School G	53%	34%
School H	27%	1%
School I	61%	4%
School J	47%	30%
School K	70%	4%
School L	66%	12%
School M	77%	1%
School N	75%	2%
School O	51%	41%
School P	40%	15%

**Sub-research question 1a**

Sub-research Question a read: What instructional programs or strategies were identified in the SIG grant funding applications/reports?

**Expenditures on Instructional Programs and Strategies.** Of the six schools with the rating of denied accreditation, four of the six schools allocated the majority of their federal school improvement grant funding on Lead Turnaround Partners (LTPs). Table 7 and Table 8 reveal allocations on instructional programs and strategies. School B allocated 85% of its funding to instruction, School C allocated 55%, School E allocated 61% and School F allocated 47% of its total funding on instruction. Schools B, C, E, and F each allocated funds on Lead Turnaround Partners and four vendors were awarded contracts as “Low Achieving Schools Turnaround Partners.” As reflected in the Notice of Contract Award (Appendix B), school divisions paid between \$262.00 and \$1,150.00 per student for required vendor services.

Among priority schools, seven of the ten schools allocated funds to a formative assessment program (Teach First). Seven schools also allocated funding for professional development. This was in contrast to the one school denied accreditation that allocated funds to professional development. It should also be noted that two schools denied accreditation allocated funding for an Accelerated Reader coach and two priority schools allocated funding to DRA Online. One program Accelerated Reader is an instructional skills practice program while the other, DRA Online is a standardized test used to determine student’s instructional reading level.

Allocation patterns among schools denied accreditation and priority schools that attained full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions did not exist. Schools denied accreditation allocated larger percentages of SIG funding to instructional programs and strategies. Specifically, funding was allocated to LTPs. LTPs were given governance to implement research based instructional programs to instructional programs to increase student achievement. Whereas LTPs received the largest percentage of SIG funding for instructional programs and strategies among schools denied accreditation, data suggest caution should be expressed when allocating SIG funding to instructional programs and strategies and more specifically, LTPs.

Table 7

*Instructional Programs and Strategies for Schools Denied Accreditation*

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Instructional Programs/Strategies (Budget Code 3000)	
School A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside consultants required School Improvement sanctions</li> </ul>
School B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead Turnaround Partner (American Institute for Research)</li> <li>• VDOE Consultant</li> </ul>
School C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Istation</li> <li>• Lead Turnaround Partner (NCS Pearson, Inc.)</li> </ul>
School D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead Turnaround Partner (Johns Hopkins University)</li> </ul>
School E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal coach</li> <li>• Math Consultant</li> <li>• Accelerated Reader Coach</li> <li>• ESD Training</li> <li>• Building Relationships and Four-Square Writing Consultant</li> </ul>
School F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead Turnaround Partner (LTP)—(Cambridge Education, LLC)</li> <li>• LTP Professional Development Modules</li> <li>• School survey conducted by LTP</li> <li>• Consultant to provide guidance during alternate governance</li> <li>• Principal coach</li> <li>• Accelerated Reader Coach</li> <li>• PD360</li> <li>• Istation</li> <li>• ARDT</li> </ul>

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Table 8

*Instructional Programs and Strategies for Schools Fully Accredited*

Instructional Programs/Strategies (Budget Code 3000)	
School G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waterford</li> <li>• Flanagan/ROS</li> <li>• PD 360</li> <li>• Istation</li> <li>• SOAR to Success</li> <li>• Two carts with PRD</li> <li>• Required formative assessment program</li> <li>• Rocket Math</li> <li>• Professional development</li> </ul>
School H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formative Assessments (Teach First)</li> </ul>
School I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formative Assessments (Teach First)</li> <li>• Professional development</li> </ul>
School J	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside Consultant</li> <li>• Formative Assessment (Teach First)</li> <li>• Professional development</li> </ul>
School K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ISIP testing</li> <li>• ARDT</li> </ul>
Instructional Programs/Strategies (Budget Code 3000)	
School L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formative Assessment (Teach First)</li> <li>• DRA online</li> <li>• Professional Development</li> </ul>
School M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formative Assessment (Teach First)</li> <li>• DRA online</li> <li>• Professional Development</li> </ul>
School N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formative Assessment (Teach First)</li> <li>• DRA Online</li> <li>• Professional Development</li> </ul>
School O	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DOE Administrative Coach</li> <li>• Istation</li> </ul>
School P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside Consultant</li> <li>• Literacy Professional Development</li> </ul>

### **Sub-research question 1b**

Sub-research Question b read: What personnel positions were identified in the SIG grant funding applications/reports?

**Expenditures on Personnel.** As reflected in Table 9, two schools denied accreditation allocated the majority of their budget on personnel were schools A and D that allocated 65% and 34% respectively on personnel. Two schools (A, D) allocated funding to hire coaches. Three schools (C, D, E) allocated funding for tutors to provide remediation services to students. While three schools (C, D, E) allocated funding for substitutes to cover during quarterly planning, one school (E) opted to allocate stipends for teachers who participated in professional development. Schools E and F allocated funding for incentives/bonuses for teachers who met established goals for increased student achievement.

As reflected in Table 10 in contrast to schools denied accreditation, the priority schools each allocated funding to an instructional coach, literacy coach or specialist. Two similarities between the two groups did include stipends for planning or professional development and allocations for tutoring. Data suggest the allocation to personnel among priority schools attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions support increased student achievement.

### **Research question two**

The second research question read: What, if any, differences in student outcomes were observed over the three year grant period for schools identified as accreditation denied and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions?

**Reading Student Outcomes.** Schools included in the study were the six identified as accreditation denied and ten identified as achieving full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions. Among the 16 schools included, overall reading pass rates were analyzed from grades 3-8 over the 3 year federal school improvement grant period of 2010-2011 through 2012-2013 as well as the pre-implementation year. Differences in student outcomes were captured between Year 1 and the pre-implementation year of federal school improvement funds, Year 1 and Year 2, and the pre-implementation year of federal school improvement funds and Year 3.

Table 9

*Personnel Positions in Schools Denied Accreditation*

Personnel Positions (Budget Code 1000)	
School A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.5 improvement coaches</li> </ul>
School B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>
School C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2-3 Part-time tutors to provide reading and math remediation</li> <li>• Substitutes for quarterly planning</li> <li>• Division Level—Project Director (50%)</li> <li>• Parent Engagement Teacher Specialist (50%)</li> </ul>
School D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District Level Project Director (50%)</li> <li>• Extended hours for teachers</li> <li>• 5 Coaches (Reading, math, social studies, science, and school climate)</li> <li>• Clerical Assistant (50%)</li> <li>• Substitute teachers</li> </ul>
School E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substitutes for planning</li> <li>• Incentives for teachers absent no more than 3 days and meeting student achievement goals</li> <li>• Math and Reading tutors</li> </ul>
School F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead Turnaround Partner Liaison</li> <li>• Stipends for teachers who participate in professional development</li> <li>• Signing bonuses hired to teach in Smaller Learning Communities(SLC)</li> <li>• Bonuses for teachers and paraprofessionals who met goals of student achievement in SLC</li> <li>• Paraprofessional to support SLC</li> <li>• Additional Teachers for SLC</li> </ul>

Table 10

*Personnel Positions in Schools Meeting Full Accreditation*

Personnel Positions (Budget Code 1000)	
School G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional Coach</li> <li>• Instructional Assistants</li> </ul>
School H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Improvement Specialist</li> </ul>
School I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional Coach</li> <li>• Reading Remediation Teacher</li> <li>• Math Tutor</li> </ul>
School J	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading and Math Coach</li> </ul>
School K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional Literacy Coach</li> <li>• SES School Facilitator</li> <li>• Substitutes for Quarterly Data Analysis meetings</li> </ul>
School L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy Coach (50%)</li> <li>• ESOL/HILT Teacher (10%)</li> </ul>
School M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy Coach (80%)</li> <li>• Math Coach</li> <li>• School Improvement Coach (20%)</li> </ul>
School N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy Coach (50%)</li> <li>• Math Coach (50%)</li> <li>• ESL Teacher (50%)</li> </ul>
School O	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TeachFirst/PLC leader stipends</li> <li>• Reading Remediation Specialists (part-time)</li> <li>• Afterschool Remediation</li> </ul>
School P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy Coach</li> <li>• Substitutes for Planning</li> <li>• Substitutes for Peer Observations</li> <li>• Teacher stipend (summer planning)</li> <li>• After school Tutoring</li> </ul>

As reflected in Table 11 and Table 12, between the pre-implementation year and Year 1, 15 out of the 16 schools included within the study saw an increase among reading pass rates in at

least one SOL assessed grade level. Schools A and F witnessed the greatest increases at 18 and 22 percentage points respectively. Both schools were among those identified as accreditation denied. Similar positive improvement was noted in changes between Year 1 and Year 2, as 15 schools saw an increase in reading pass rates. School J saw decreases only among its grade levels in Year 1 and Year 2.

In 2010, the Virginia Board of Education adopted new English standards. The new standards were tested beginning with the 2012-2013 test administration. A statewide press release was issued June 2013 regarding the decrease in test scores and pass rates by then State Superintendent Patricia I. Wright. Dr. Wright explained, “Temporary declines in scores and pass rates on state tests are inevitable whenever academic standards are raised (Virginia Department of Education, 2014).”

The differences between Year 2 and Year 3 reflected decreases in 13 of the 16 schools analyzed. This included decreases in 47 of the 51 SOL grade levels assessed. Between the pre-implementation year and Year 3, only two schools saw an increase. Schools E and O saw an increase among the third grade reading pass rates. Among both schools denied accreditation and priority schools, data suggest SIG funding has a positive impact on student achievement on the Virginia Standards of Learning assessments in reading.

Table 11

*Reading Pass Rates for Schools Denied Accreditation*

Reading Pass Rates							
	Pre-SIG	Year 1	Change PreSIG/YR1	Year 2	Change YR1/YR2	Year 3 <sup>a</sup>	Change PreSIG/YR3
School A							
Grade 3	48	66	+18	38	-28	46	-2
Grade 4	79	59	-20	61	+3	22	-57
Grade 5	76	66	-10	64	-2	50	-26
Grade 6	76	72	-4	57	-15	35	-41
Grade 7	-	78	-	73	-	43	-
Grade 8	-	-	-	73	-	50	-
School B							
Grade 6	71	73	+2	76	+3	49	-22
Grade 7	67	73	-6	72	-1	48	-19
Grade 8	70	76	+6	76	0	44	-26
School C							
Grade 3	59	68	+9	72	+4	33	-26
Grade 4	61	70	+9	82	+12	47	-14
Grade 5	73	79	+6	83	+4	58	-15
School D							
Grade 6	63	60	-3	64	+4	45	-18
Grade 7	71	70	+1	72	+2	43	-28
Grade 8	76	74	-2	69	-5	50	-26
School E							
Grade 3	48	58	+10	67	+9	57	+9
Grade 4	53	58	-5	71	+13	27	-26
Grade 5	78	70	-8	80	+10	40	-38
School F							
Grade 6	79	74	-5	76	+2	40	-39
Grade 7	58	80	+22	73	-7	52	-6

<sup>a</sup> In 2010, the Virginia Board of Education adopted new reading standards. Standards were assessed beginning with the 2012-2013 testing administration.

Table 12

*Reading Pass Rates for Schools Meeting Full Accreditation*

Reading Pass Rates							
	Pre-SIG	Year 1	Change PreSIG/YR1	Year 2	Change YR1/YR2	Year 3 <sup>a</sup>	Change PreSIG/YR3
School G							
Grade 3	88	98	+10	78	-20	88	0
Grade 4	83	85	+2	89	+4	73	-10
Grade 5	94	93	-1	91	-2	91	-3
School H							
Grade 3	86	72	-14	77	+5	74	-12
Grade 4	88	79	-9	81	+2	66	-22
Grade 5	91	95	+4	77	-18	79	-12
Grade 6	86	94	+8	92	-2	66	-20
School I							
Grade 6	77	82	+5	86	+4	67	-10
Grade 7	82	82	0	86	+4	60	-22
Grade 8	78	85	+7	85	0	70	-8
School J							
Grade 3	86	89	+3	86	-3	76	-10
Grade 4	82	93	+11	93	0	74	-8
Grade 5	84	90	+6	89	-1	76	-8
School K							
Grade 3	91	81	-10	82	+1	76	-15
Grade 4	95	89	-6	85	-4	51	-44
Grade 5	95	80	-15	85	+5	64	-31
Grade 6	89	93	+4	93	0	68	-21
School L							
Grade 3	78	83	+5	83	0	77	-1
Grade 4	72	78	+6	82	+4	57	-15
Grade 5	66	77	+11	72	-5	59	-7
School M							
Grade 3	84	85	+1	77	-8	70	-14
Grade 4	78	82	+4	84	+2	57	-21
Grade 5	73	82	+9	79	-3	73	0
School N							
Grade 3	71	63	-8	73	+10	58	-13
Grade 4	82	84	+2	69	-15	50	-32
Grade 5	80	79	-1	85	+6	62	-22

(continued)

Table 12 (continued)

Reading Pass Rates							
	Pre-SIG	Year 1	Change PreSIG/YR1	Year 2	Change YR1/YR2	Year 3 <sup>a</sup>	Change PreSIG/YR3
School O							
Grade 3	64	80	+16	84	+4	69	+5
Grade 4	80	73	-7	87	-14	65	-15
School P							
Grade 3	80	69	-11	87	+18	77	-3
Grade 4	83	83	0	79	-4	70	-13
Grade 5	83	88	+5	87	-1	68	-15

<sup>a</sup> In 2010, the Virginia Board of Education adopted new reading standards. Standards were assessed beginning with the 2012-2013 testing administration.

**Math Student Outcomes.** Mathematics pass rates were also examined to capture differences within student outcomes between pre-implementation year of school improvement funding and Year 1, Year 1 and Year 2, and pre-implementation year of school improvement funding and Year 3. Table 13 and Table 14 indicate math outcomes pre-federal school improvement funding and changes in pass rates over the three year grant period. Between the pre-implementation year and Year 1, 13 of the 16 schools saw an increase in at least one SOL assessed grade level. The three schools which did not see an increase in student pass rates from the pre-implementation year and Year 1 were all accreditation denied.

The content area of mathematics also saw an adoption of new standards in 2009. The newly adopted mathematics standards were assessed beginning with the 2011-2012 test administration. The administration of the new standards occurred during Year 2 of the federal school improvement grant. Only one school and more specifically one SOL assessed grade level within the school saw an increase among the 16 schools and 51 SOL assessed grade levels examined. It should be noted that one school saw a 62 percentage point decrease within its mathematics pass rate.

The next testing year, Year 3 saw increases in at least one SOL assessed grade level in 14 of the 16 schools. The difference between the pre-implementation year and Year 3 yielded an increase in 5 of the 16 schools. Within the SOL assessed grade levels, the increase occurred in only 6 of the 51 assessed grade levels. Overall, data suggest SIG funding does not impact student achievement in mathematics on the Virginia Standards of Learning assessments.

Table 13

*Math Pass Rates for Schools Denied Accreditation*

Math Pass Rates							
	Pre-SIG	Year 1	Change PreSIG/YR1	Year 2 <sup>b</sup>	Change YR1/YR2	Year 3	Change PreSIG/YR3
School A							
Grade 3	73	71	-2	42	-29	47	-26
Grade 4	90	66	-24	39	-46	41	-49
Grade 5	83	64	-19	20	-44	31	-52
Grade 6	76	45	-31	41	-3	79	+3
Grade 7		61		29	-32	46	
Grade 8		<		<		<	
School B							
Grade 6	81	65	-16	59	-6	67	-14
Grade 7	70	<		<		15	-55
Grade 8	75	52	-23	30	-22	34	-41
School C							
Grade 3	76	79	+3	17	-62	13	-63
Grade 4	65	64	-1	43	-21	43	-22
Grade 5	70	58	-12	31	-27	27	-43
School D							
Grade 6	55	60	-5	55	-5	36	-19
Grade 7	70	<		<		30	-40
Grade 8	79	32	-47	9	-23	82	+3
School E							
Grade 3	58	67	+9	22	-45	40	-18
Grade 4	71	47	-24	47	0	30	-41
Grade 5	68	70	+2	58	-12	31	-37
School F							
Grade 6	72	32	-40	47	+15	36	-36
Grade 7	47	52	+5	31	-21	30	-17

<sup>b</sup> In 2009, the Virginia Board of Education adopted new mathematics standards. Standards were assessed beginning with the 2011-2012 testing administration.

Table 14

*Math Pass Rates for Schools Meeting Full Accreditation*

Math Pass Rates							
	Pre-SIG	Year 1	Change PreSIG/YR1	Year 2 <sup>b</sup>	Change YR1/YR2	Year 3	Change PreSIG/YR3
<b>School G</b>							
Grade 3	98	98	0	55	-43	70	-28
Grade 4	75	95	+20	87	-8	88	+13
Grade 5	89	88	-1	52	-36	87	-2
<b>School H</b>							
Grade 3	95	91	-4	66	-25	80	-15
Grade 4	86	88	+2	65	-23	71	-15
Grade 5	97	98	+1	67	-31	80	-17
Grade 6	81	83	+2	79	-4	75	-6
<b>School I</b>							
Grade 6	65	78	+13	74	-4	70	-5
Grade 7	73	78	+5	56	-22	34	-39
Grade 8	82	83	+1	45	-38	60	-22
<b>School J</b>							
Grade 3	90	99	+9	64	-35	55	-35
Grade 4	83	93	+10	74	-19	84	+1
Grade 5	92	90	-2	63	-27	82	-10
<b>School K</b>							
Grade 3	92	92	0	54	-38	49	-43
Grade 4	93	95	+2	64	-31	54	-39
Grade 5	96	92	-4	70	-22	62	-34
Grade 6	81	87	+6	72	-15	84	+3
Grade 7	<	96		88	-8	<	
<b>School L</b>							
Grade 3	95	85	-10	52	-33	61	-34
Grade 4	89	86	-3	68	-18	59	-40
Grade 5	85	93	+8	71	-22	57	-28
<b>School M</b>							
Grade 3	86	88	+2	56	-29	80	-6
Grade 4	81	81	0	54	-27	83	+2
Grade 5	80	94	+14	80	-14	71	-9
<b>School N</b>							
Grade 3	86	85	-1	61	-24	47	-39
Grade 4	66	81	+15	59	-22	65	-1
Grade 5	82	75	-7	73	-2	79	-3
<b>School O</b>							
Grade 3	92	92	0	61	-31	63	-29
Grade 4	84	85	+1	74	-11	70	-14

(continued)

Table 14 (continued)

	Math Pass Rates						
	Pre-SIG	Year 1	Change PreSIG/YR1	Year 2 <sup>b</sup>	Change YR1/YR2	Year 3	Change PreSIG/YR3
<b>School P</b>							
Grade 3	89	89	0	75	-14	77	-12
Grade 4	79	77	-2	53	-24	69	-10
Grade 5	79	85	+6	51	-34	54	-25

<sup>b</sup>In 2009, the Virginia Board of Education adopted new mathematics standards. Standards were assessed beginning with the 2011-2012 testing administration.

### Research question three

The third research question read: What differences, if any, were there in the percent of instructional spending between schools that became fully accredited and those that did not?

**Instructional Spending.** An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine the differences in percent of instructional spending between schools attaining full accreditation and those denied accreditation. The t-tests were performed on both reading and mathematics instructional spending. Among instructional spending in years 1, 2, and 3, a significant difference was seen between schools fully accredited and those denied accreditation in reading as shown in Table 15. In Year 1, results indicated a difference of approximately 31% in instructional spending for schools denied accreditation (M=43.68, SD=26.57, N=19) and schools fully accredited (M=12.77, SD= 13.80),  $t(24.05) = 4.70, p = 0.00$ ; In Years 2 and 3, the mean for schools fully accredited remained constant (M=12.77, SD=13.80) while differences of 13% and 25% are seen between schools fully accredited and denied accreditation in instructional spending. Overall data from the total grant award period revealed a significant difference within instructional spending between schools denied accreditation (M=42.58, SD=26.32) and those fully accredited (M=12.77, SD=13.64) in reading. A difference of about 30% in instructional spending was seen.

Table 15

*Results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for Instructional Spending Reading*

<b>Year 1</b>										
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p	
M	SD	n	M	SD	n					
43.68	26.57	19	12.77	13.80	31	17.33, 44.49	4.70	24.05	.000	
<b>Year 2</b>										
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p	
M	SD	n	M	SD	n					
42.05	26.87	20	12.77	13.80	31	15.90, 42.65	4.50	25.54	.000	
<b>Year 3</b>										
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p	
M	SD	n	M	SD	n					
42.05	26.87	20	12.77	13.80	31	15.90, 42.65	4.50	25.54	.000	
<b>Total Award Period</b>										
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p	
M	SD	n	M	SD	n					
42.58	26.32	59	12.77	13.64	93	22.42, 37.18	8.04	78.03	.000	

Within the content area of mathematics, schools that were accreditation denied also spent more for instruction than those fully accredited as shown in Table 16. In Years 1 and 2, outcomes indicated (M=42.29, SD=25.80) for schools denied accreditation and fully accredited schools (M=12.50, SD=13.66),  $t(47) = 5.31, p = 0.00$ . Here, results reflected schools denied accreditation spent 30% more on instruction. Outcomes in Year 3 revealed, a difference in schools denied accreditation (M=43.68, SD=26.57) and schools fully accredited (M=12.77, SD=13.80) in instructional spending. Over the total award period, there is a significant difference in mean instructional spending between schools denied accreditation (M=42.58, SD=26.32) and

schools fully accredited (M=12.77, SD=13.64). Schools denied accreditation had an instructional spending average about 30% more than those fully accredited.

Table 16

*Results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for Instructional Spending Math*

<b>Year 1</b>									
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p
M	SD	n	M	SD	n				
42.29	25.80	17	12.50	13.66	32	15.84, 43.75	4.44	20.88	.000
<b>Year 2</b>									
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p
M	SD	n	M	SD	n				
42.29	25.80	17	12.50	13.66	32	15.83, 43.74	4.44	20.88	.000
<b>Year 3</b>									
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p
M	SD	n	M	SD	n				
43.68	26.57	19	12.77	13.80	31	17.33, 44.49	4.70	24.04	.000
<b>Total Award</b>									
<b>Period</b>									
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p
M	SD	n	M	SD	n				
42.79	25.58	53	12.59	13.56	95	22.66, 37.74	7.99	68.63	.000

**Research question four**

The fourth research question read: What differences, if any, were there in the percent of personnel spending between schools that became fully accredited and those that did not?

**Personnel Spending and Student Outcomes.** To investigate the difference in percent of personnel spending between schools fully accredited and those denied accreditation, additional

independent samples t-tests were conducted. Analyses were executed in the content areas of reading and mathematics as revealed in Table 17. Results from this analysis in Year 1 indicated schools fully accredited ( $M=56.35$ ,  $SD= 16.34$ ) spent about 21% more for personnel than those denied accreditation ( $M=35.42$ ,  $SD=19.52$ ),  $t(48) = -4.08$ ,  $p=0.00$  within the content area of reading. Years 2 and 3 saw the same results among schools fully accredited ( $M=56.35$ ,  $SD=16.34$ ) with schools continuing to spend more for personnel than schools accreditation denied. A difference of 19% was seen in personnel spending between schools fully accredited and those denied accreditation. Over the total grant award period, a significant difference was seen between schools denied accreditation ( $M=36.42$ ,  $SD= 19.59$ ) and those fully accredited ( $M=56.35$ ,  $SD=16.16$ ). Results indicated schools fully accredited spent 19% more on personnel than schools denied accreditation.

Exhibited in Table 18, the analyses for mathematics spending in Years 1 and 2 yielded schools fully accredited ( $M=56.78$ ,  $SD=16.26$ ) spent more than schools denied accreditation ( $M=36.94$ ,  $SD=19.72$ ),  $t(47) = -3.78$ ,  $p=0.00$ . A difference of 20% was seen between the two groups. Year 3 outcomes indicated schools fully accredited ( $M=56.35$ ,  $SD=16.34$ ) spent approximately 56% more than schools accreditation denied ( $M=35.42$ ,  $SD=19.52$ ),  $t(48) = -4.08$ ,  $p=0.00$ . A difference of 20% in personnel spending was seen over the total grant award period between schools denied accreditation ( $M=36.40$ ,  $SD=19.58$ ) and those fully accredited ( $M=56.64$ ,  $SD=16.11$ ).

Table 17

*Results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for Personnel Spending Reading*

<b>Year 1</b>									
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p
M	SD	n	M	SD	n				
35.42	19.52	19	56.35	16.34	31	-31.24,-10.62	-4.08	48	.000
<b>Year 2</b>									
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p
M	SD	n	M	SD	n				
36.90	20.12	20	56.35	16.34	20	-29.77,-9.14	-3.79	49	.000
<b>Year 3</b>									
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p
M	SD	n	M	SD	n				
36.90	20.12	20	56.35	16.34	31	-29.77, -9.14	-3.79	49	.000
<b>Total Award Period</b>									
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p
M	SD	n	M	SD	n				
36.42	19.59	59	56.35	16.16	93	-25.71, -14.15	-6.81	150	.000

Table 18

*Results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for Personnel Spending Math*

<b>Year 1</b>										
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p	
M	SD	n	M	SD	n					
36.94	19.72	19	56.78	16.26	31	-30.41,-9.27	-3.78	47	.000	
<b>Year 2</b>										
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p	
M	SD	n	M	SD	n					
36.94	19.72	17	56.78	16.26	32	-30.41,-9.27	-3.78	47	.000	
<b>Year 3</b>										
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p	
M	SD	n	M	SD	n					
35.42	19.52	19	56.35	16.34	31	-31.24,-10.62	-4.08	48	.000	
<b>Total Award Period</b>										
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p	
M	SD	n	M	SD	n					
36.40	19.28	53	56.64	16.11	95	-26.11,-14.38	-6.82	146	.000	

**Differences in Student Outcomes**

Student data outcomes in reading and mathematics were investigated with independent samples t-tests to determine differences that existed between schools fully accredited and those denied accreditation. Student data outcomes in reading for Year 1 revealed schools fully accredited (M=83.44, SD=7.92) had a pass rate 14 percentage points higher than those denied accreditation (M=69.68, SD=6.98). Year 2 and 3 reflected a difference of 13% and 25% between schools fully accredited and schools denied accreditation. As indicated in Table 19, a significant

difference was seen between schools denied accreditation (M=61.05, SD=15.11) and those fully accredited (M=78.60, SD=10.49). Over the total grant award period, schools fully accredited scored approximately 29 percentage points more than those denied accreditation.

Table 19

*Results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for Student Outcomes in Reading*

<b>Year 1</b>										
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p	
M	SD	n	M	SD	n					
69.68	6.98	19	83.42	7.92	31	-18.18, -9.29	-6.22	48	.000	
<b>Year 2</b>										
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p	
M	SD	n	M	SD	n					
69.95	10.04	20	83.32	6.04	31	-17.89, -8.85	-5.95	49	.000	
<b>Year 3<sup>a</sup></b>										
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p	
M	SD	n	M	SD	n					
43.95	9.17	20	69.06	9.89	31	-30.59, -19.57	-9.10	49	.000	
<b>Total Award Period</b>										
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p	
M	SD	n	M	SD	n					
61.05	15.11	59	78.60	10.49	93	-22.02, -13.09	-7.81	93.43	.000	

<sup>a</sup> In 2010, the Virginia Board of Education adopted new reading standards. Standards were assessed beginning with the 2012-2013 testing administration.

As expected, schools fully accredited scored higher than those denied accreditation. This was indicated in Table 20. Within Year 1 and Year 2, a difference of 30 and 20 percentage points are seen between schools fully accredited YR 1(M=88.13, SD=6.50); YR2 (M=65.09,

SD=10.81) and schools denied YR1 (59.42, SD=13.10); YR2 (M=36.47, SD=14.60). Year 2 student data outcomes revealed schools fully accredited (M=68.39, SD=13.30) scored 28 percentage points higher than schools denied accreditation (M=39.89, SD=18.51). As indicated in Table 19, a significant difference was seen between schools denied accreditation (M=44.58, SD=18.02) and those fully accredited (M=73.92, SD=14.64). Over the total grant award period, schools fully accredited scored approximately 29 percentage points more than those denied accreditation.

Table 20

*Results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for Student Outcomes in Math*

<b>Year 1</b>									
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p
M	SD	n	M	SD	n				
57.94	13.10	17	88.13	6.50	32	-37.22, -23.14	-8.93	20.28	.000

<b>Year 2<sup>b</sup></b>									
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p
M	SD	n	M	SD	n				
36.47	14.60	17	65.09	10.81	32	-36.01, -21.24	-7.80	47	.000

<b>Year 3</b>									
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p
M	SD	n	M	SD	n				
39.89	18.50	19	68.39	13.30	31	-37.55, -19.44	-6.33	48	.000

(continued)

Table 20 (continued)

<b>Total Award Period</b>									
Accreditation Denied			Fully Accredited			95% CI	t	df	p
M	SD	n	M	SD	n				
44.58	18.02	53	73.92	14.64	95	22.66, 37.74	-10.75	146	.000

<sup>b</sup> In 2009, the Virginia Board of Education adopted new mathematics standards. Standards were assessed beginning with the 2011-2012 testing administration.

### Summary

Chapter 4 answered the research questions using descriptive statistics and independent sample t-tests. Budget summaries were examined to determine allocation patterns, summaries were also investigated for percentages allocated to instructional and personnel spending and student outcomes in reading and mathematics were examined. Analysis included consideration of how funds were allocated and student performance on the reading and mathematics Virginia Standards of Learning assessments. Independent sample t-tests were performed to examine differences in percent of instructional spending and personnel spending between schools fully accredited and those denied accreditation. The data examined suggest SIG funding has a positive impact on student achievement on the Virginia Standards of Learning in reading. The data examined also suggest the allocation of SIG funding to personnel support increased student achievement. Chapter 5 will provide the findings, implications and reflection.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Summary of Findings**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine how federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds were allocated and what differences existed between allocation patterns and overall student achievement outcomes as measured by annual measurable objectives (AMOs) established by the Virginia Board of Education in schools denied accreditation and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions. Allocation patterns from approved federal school improvement grant applications from 2010, the beginning of the award period, were examined and compared to determine the differences between expenditures on personnel and instructional strategies and the impact on reading and mathematics student data outcomes from the Virginia Standards of Learning assessments given in 2010-2011 through 2012-2013. In this chapter, a summary of the findings and implications as well as recommendations for further research are presented.

#### **Research Questions**

The study was designed to address the follow four research questions:

1. How were federal school improvement grant (SIG) funds allocated for schools identified as accreditation denied and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions?
  - a. What instructional programs or strategies were identified in the SIG grant funding applications/reports?
  - b. What personnel positions were identified in the SIG funding applications/reports?
2. What, if any, differences in student outcomes were observed over the three year grant period for schools identified as accreditation denied and those attaining full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions?
3. What differences, if any, were there in the percent of instructional spending between schools that became fully accredited and those that did not?
4. What differences, if any, were there in the percent of personnel spending between schools that became accredited and those that did not?

## Findings

**Finding one: Funding sources and amount varied both within and between the group of fully accredited schools and the group of schools denied accreditation.** Among schools denied accreditation, two schools received both 1003(a) and 1003(g) federal school improvement grant funding. Of the two schools that received the federal school improvement 1003(a) and 1003 (g) funding, the total award amount was less than the remaining four denied accreditation schools receiving only 1003(g) funding. The award amounts for those two schools varied by one dollar, reflecting \$537,500 and \$537,501. The largest grant award seen amongst the schools denied accreditation was \$4,055,672 found in School D. For school improvement, School D spent approximately one million per year compared with School E, which spent approximately \$180,000 per year. School D received approximately 87% more to allocate per year to implement school reform initiatives.

Among schools that attained full accreditation, a similar pattern was seen regarding the source of funding. Two schools within this group also received 1003(a) and 1003(g) federal school improvement grant funding. Unlike the schools denied accreditation, each school within the group of fully accredited received similar federal school improvement grant awards of either \$537,500 or \$537,501. It should be noted that four schools denied accreditation received larger federal school improvement grant awards than the two other schools denied accreditation and the ten priority schools contained in the study.

As seen with studies conducted by JLARC (2014) and Neymotin (2010), changes in funding have shown inconsistent results in student achievement. Through amendments to its School District Finance and Quality Performance Act, the state of Kansas increased funding to its at-risk schools. Research conducted by Neymotin suggested this change in finance structure had little positive effect on student achievement (Neymotin, 2010). JLARC (2014) reported increased student achievement was found in approximately 40 percent of low performing schools identified in school improvement (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 2014).

**Finding two: Over the three year grant period, all schools that became fully accredited while under school improvement sanctions allocated a larger percent of federal school improvement grant funding to personnel than those denied accreditation.** Among schools fully accredited, funding was allocated to instructional coaches, reading and math

coaches, reading remediation tutors, school improvement specialists and teacher stipends for summer planning.

These findings were consistent with a study conducted by Rivers and Sanders (2002) that sought to evaluate teachers based on student growth. The researchers concluded student achievement was impacted by variability in teacher effectiveness. To address teacher quality, the funding allocated by the schools that achieved full accreditation to coaching, specialists and summer planning addressed the need to strengthen the effectiveness of teachers. Coaches and specialists have a blended role of supporting both students and teachers. The support to teachers comes in the form of modeling best practices and instructional strategies, assisting with lesson plan development, support with data disaggregation and professional development. Rivers and Sanders (2002) concluded, “Improving teacher quality will help ensure that more students reach their potential... (Rivers & Sanders, 2002, p. 23).”

**Finding three: Four out of six schools denied accreditation allocated the majority of federal school improvement grant funding on instruction.** As a school in school improvement, sanctions are imposed that must be followed. As a priority school, each school was required to select and implement a USED intervention model.

Whereas priority schools that attained full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions allocated funding to the following: formative assessment programs, Istation, SOAR to Success, professional development, and DRA Online; school denied accreditation allocated funding to LTPs, outside consultants, and coaches for instructional programs and strategies. Schools denied accreditation allocated the following amounts to instructional programs and strategies: School B allocated 85% or \$702,586; School C allocated 55% or 965,600; School E allocated 61% or \$327,000; and School F allocated 47% or \$766,593. This is in contrast to School A which allocated 11% or \$60,500. It should also be noted that while School D allocated 26% that allocation totaled \$1,040,436.

This study examined federal school improvement grant funds and academic outcomes. The results of this finding support reports from the JLARC study. The JLARC researchers found that low performing schools were reluctant to implement recommended instructional practices (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 2014). The researchers also noted instructional strategies recommended by educational consultant hired to support the low performing schools. The educational consultants as noted within the JLARC study contended (1)

teachers needed to integrate technology into their lessons (2) professional development was needed in differentiated instruction and (3) “rules and procedures need to be established for group work and using small groups for differentiated instruction (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 2014, p. 14).” Funding alone does not produce results, but actions and decisions regarding the usage of the funding.

**Finding four: All schools experienced growth in overall reading student outcomes in at least one grade level or remained constant between the Pre-SIG implementation Year through Year 2.** Between the Pre-SIG implementation Year and Year 1 of SIG funding among schools denied accreditation, School A experienced an eighteen point gain in overall reading outcomes for grade 3. School B experienced an increase in both grade 6 and 8 at a rate of 2 percentage points and 6 percentage points respectively. School C experienced an increase in grades 3, 4, and 5. School D saw an increase in grade 7 of one percentage point. School E saw an increase at grade 3 of 10 percentage points. School F saw the greatest increase with 22 percentage points at grade 7.

Among priority schools that gained full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions, the following gains were seen in overall reading outcomes between the Pre-SIG implementation Year and Year 1: School G increased 10 percentage points at grade 3 and 2 percentage points at grade 4; School H increased 4 percentage points at grade 5 and 8 percentage points at grade 6; School I increased 5 percentage points at grade 6 and 7 percentage points at grade 8; School J increased 3 percentage points at grade 3 and 6 percentage points at grade 5; School K increased 4 percentage points at grade 6; School L increased 5, 6, and 11 percentage points respectively at grades 3, 4, and 5; School N increased 2 percentage points at grade 4; School O saw the greatest increases among priority schools with 16 percentage points at grade 3 and School P increased 5 percentage points at grade 5.

Year 2 also saw increases and consistency in overall reading student achievement outcomes. Schools accreditation denied revealed an increase between Year 1 ( $M=69.98$ ,  $SD=6.98$ ) and Year 2 ( $M=69.95$ ,  $SD=10.04$ ). Priority schools that achieved full accreditation remained consistent between Year 1 ( $M=83.42$ ,  $SD=7.92$ ) and Year 2 ( $M=83.32$ ,  $SD=6.04$ ). Whereas the research conducted by Gross, Booker and Goldhaber (2009) found federal CSR awards had no significant effects on increased student achievement, this finding revealed contrasting results for award Year 1 and Year 2.

During award Year 3, students within the Commonwealth were assessed on new, more rigorous standards adopted by the Virginia Board of Education in 2010. Year 3 overall student outcomes in reading revealed schools fully accredited ( $M=69.06$ ,  $SD=9.89$ ) decreased as with schools denied accreditation ( $M=43.95$ ,  $SD=9.17$ ).

**Finding five: Both schools denied accreditation and priority schools that were fully accredited saw a decrease in overall mathematics student outcomes over the total award period.** Between the Pre-SIG implementation Year and Year 1 of SIG funding among schools denied accreditation, half or three of the schools saw an increase in at least one grade level assessed and half or three saw a decrease in all grade levels assessed in overall mathematics student achievement outcomes as measured by the Virginia Standards of Learning assessments. School A saw a decrease in all grade levels assessed, with the greatest decrease found in grade 6 at 31 percentage points; School B saw decreases at all grade levels assessed with the greatest decrease found in grade 8 at 23 percentage points; School D also saw a decrease in all grades assessed with the greatest decrease found in grade 8 at 47 percentage points. The schools denied accreditation which made increases during the Pre-SIG implementation Year and Year 1 were School C which saw increases in grade 3 at 3 percentage points; School E which saw increases in grades 3 and 5 at 9 percentage points and 2 percentage points respectively; and School F in grade 7 at 5 percentage points.

Each priority school that achieved full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions saw an increase in overall mathematics student achievement in at least one grade level assessed or remained constant as measured by the Virginia Standards of Learning assessments. School G remained constant at grade 3 and saw an increase at grade 4 of 20 percentage points; School H saw increases at grades 4, 5, and 6 of 2, 1, and 2 percentage points respectively; School I saw increases at all grade levels assessed; School J saw increases at grade 3 of 9 percentage points and grade 5 of 10 percentage points; School K remained constant at grade 3 and witnessed increases at grades 4 and 6; School L saw increases at grade 5 of 8 percentage points; School M remained constant at grade 4 and saw increases at grades 3 and 5 of 2 and 14 percentage points respectively; School N saw increases at grade 4 of 15 percentage points; School O saw increases at grade 4 of 1 percentage point and School P remained constant at grade 3 and saw an increase at grade 5 of 6 percentage points.

In Year 2 of the award period, students were assessed with the new, more rigorous standards adopted in 2009. Overall student outcomes in mathematics decreased among the majority of schools included within the study. The greatest decrease was seen in School C at grade 3 of 62 percentage points. The only school that saw an increase was School F at grade 6 of 15 percentage points. Between Year 1 (M=57.94, SD=13.10) and Year 2(36.47, SD=14.60) overall pass rates among schools denied accreditation decreased as did overall pass rates among priority schools that attained full accreditation (Year 1: M=88.13, SD=6.50; Year 2: M=65.09, SD=10.81).

In Year 3 of the award period, only 5 grade levels of the 49 assessed in the 16 schools included in the study saw an increase in overall mathematics scores. Over the total award period, overall pass rates among schools denied accreditation (M=44.58, SD=18.02) decreased as also seen in priority schools that became fully accredited (M=73.92, SD=14.64) while under school improvement sanctions.

This finding is consistent with the JLARC study which found that schools within school improvement saw increases in pass rates of less than one point annually (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 2014). It is however in contrast to Gross, Booker and Goldhaber who found significant effects of CSR award on mathematic gains (Gross, Booker, & Goldhaber, 2009).

## **Implications**

Based on the findings of this study, the following implications may be considered by policymakers and educational leaders as they seek to increase student achievement and determine funding allocations.

**Implication one. When reviewing SIG applications, the State Education Agency (SEA) should examine student achievement and previous school improvement efforts in school divisions and schools that have received multiple SIG awards.** Data collected revealed some schools included within the study had seen little growth in student achievement but continued to receive funding. Findings revealed varied SIG amounts and inconsistent student data outcomes. JLARC noted since 2010, 85 schools in the Commonwealth have been awarded SIG funds totaling \$82.2 million (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 2014). SIG

applications should be reviewed to determine whether or not allocation patterns benefitted student achievement on the VA Standards of Learning in reading and mathematics.

**Implication two. Division level and building level leadership among schools denied accreditation should consider additional SIG allocations to personnel.** Based on the findings, priority schools that achieved fully accreditation while under school improvement sanctions allocated a larger percentage of SIG funding to personnel. Rivers and Sanders (2002) noted strengthening teacher effectiveness promotes student growth. Low performing schools can be hard to staff or contain more ineffective teachers. Dedicating additional funding to strengthen teacher effectiveness should increase content knowledge and pedagogy. Increasing content knowledge and pedagogy through on-going professional development, coaching, and planning, reduces teacher variability and works to strengthen effectiveness.

**Implication three. Division level and building level leadership should plan strategically when allocating resources to schools in school improvement.** Based on findings, priority schools that achieved full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions allocated a larger percentage of SIG funding to personnel. Schools denied accreditation allocated a larger percentage of SIG funding to instruction. Both personnel and instructional strategies are components within the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*. Multiple researchers (Hallinger, 2011; Rivers and Sanders, 2002; Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis 1996) have addressed effectiveness of teachers and administrators. The standards adopted by the Virginia Board of Education created a uniform set of standards within the Commonwealth. Through strategic planning and effective allocation, school divisions and schools should benefit from SIG funding.

**Implication four. Division level and building level leadership would benefit from examining schools exiting school improvement to ascertain successful allocation practices.** In Finding Three, schools denied accreditation spent the majority of funding on instruction, yet did not benefit from their efforts. Implementation of research based instructional strategies was a requirement of the Transformation Model (Virginia Department of Education, 2014). In the JLARC findings, it was noted that low performing schools were reluctant to implement instructional best practices (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 2014). In an effort to ensure systematic best practices are followed, division level and building level leaders should examine schools exiting school improvement.

**Implication five. Division level leadership should develop accountability methods for monitoring instructional best practices.** The findings revealed a larger percentage of SIG funding was allocated to instructional programs and strategies. JLARC (2014) found low performing schools were reluctant to implement instructional best practices. Creating accountability measures to monitor instructional practices would identify ineffective teachers. Division level leadership support would ensure consistent practices are followed throughout the school division.

### **Recommendations for Future Studies**

The goal of this study was to provide a descriptive analysis of the relationship between SIG funding and overall student achievement that would add to the current research. Overall findings of this study validated SIG funding does impact student outcomes in reading. The researcher does recommend the following for future studies:

1. This study examined allocations for personnel positions with SIG funding. Future studies should consider expanding the study to determine which personnel positions had the greatest impact on student achievement.
2. An analysis could be conducted on SIG schools and non-SIG schools that experienced higher student achievement on the Virginia Standards of Learning assessments and identify strategies that contributed to their success.
3. Future research should examine the effectiveness of LTPs on student achievement and teacher effectiveness. Within the current study, four schools selected LTPs and all four failed to achieve full accreditation. As a requirement in one of the USED intervention models, additional research would benefit both the SEA and the Local Education Agency (LEA).
4. With regard to educational leadership, a specific focus could be made through examining building leaders who have lead SIG schools to full accreditation identifying leadership skills that have contributed to building success.
5. Expanding research to include the variable of poverty may reveal barriers reveal barriers to academic success. The achievement gap between different ethnicities has been examined, but what barriers have influenced to the lack of academic success and do SIG funds aid in eliminating this barrier.

6. Further studies could focus on teacher perceptions in persistently low achieving schools regarding LTPs and their role in the school improvement process.

## **Reflections**

The overall purpose of the study initially was to take a closer look at schools denied accreditation within the Commonwealth of Virginia. In 2013-2014, there were only 6 schools denied accreditation. Because this was such a small number, I wanted to determine the reasons for this group failing to attain full accreditation. I also wanted to examine practices that might assist these schools in becoming fully accredited. However when collecting data, I came to the realization with the help of my committee that maybe other schools should be included for comparison. After a moment to consider the recommendation, it became clear as stated by one of my committee members if I only examined schools denied accreditation, what would be the comparable data? The inclusion of the ten schools for comparable data provided the balance that was needed.

As an administrator who is familiar with the school improvement process, this research provided an invaluable experience. The goal of increased student achievement often drives many decisions made by effective leadership teams. Examining approved SIG applications, analyzing allocation patterns and reviewing student achievement data outcomes provided an insight into not *why* but *what* decisions were made in various school divisions across the Commonwealth. Unfortunately, through this study, similar patterns were seen among all schools denied accreditation. The greatest revelation of the findings was the majority of funding allocated to instruction among schools denied accreditation.

This finding was a great revelation because four of the schools denied accreditation selected Lead Turnaround Partners who were provided the authority to govern and implement research based instructional strategies. The research however, also included from JLARC (2014) revealed the reluctance of teachers to implement these recommended strategies. School improvement grant funding would not prove effective if approximately half of the funding is allocated to instruction but teachers are reluctant to implement the instructional strategies.

In contrast to the similarities of the decisions made by schools denied accreditation are the similarities of the decisions made by the schools that achieved full accreditation while under school improvement sanctions. This study showed that schools that achieved full accreditation

allocated the majority of funding to personnel. Not only as a practitioner, but educational leader, a thorough examination of beliefs and practices must be examined.

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# Appendix A

## IRB Approval Letter



Office of Research Compliance  
Institutional Review Board  
North End Center, Suite 4120, Virginia Tech  
300 Turner Street NW  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959  
email [irb@vt.edu](mailto:irb@vt.edu)  
website <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** September 1, 2014  
**TO:** Ted S Price, Stephanie Diane Bassett  
**FROM:** Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires April 25, 2018)  
**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Examining the Use and Academic Outcomes of Federal School Improvement Funds in Schools with the Rating "Denied Accreditation" in the Commonwealth of Virginia  
**IRB NUMBER:** 14-839

Effective August 29, 2014, the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

### PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: Exempt, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 4  
Protocol Approval Date: August 29, 2014  
Protocol Expiration Date: N/A  
Continuing Review Due Date\*: N/A

\*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

### FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

*Invent the Future*

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY  
*An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution*

## Appendix B

### Notice of Contract Award

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 2120  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23218-2120

April 1, 2010

### **NOTICE OF CONTRACT AWARD**

Contract Title: **Low Achieving Schools Turnaround Partners**

Contract Period: **April 1, 2010, through June 30, 2013 (Renewable)**

Authorized Users: **Virginia Public School Divisions/Public Schools**

#### **Awarded Contractors:**

Mott MacDonald dba Cambridge Education  
EdisonLearning, Inc.  
Johns Hopkins University  
Pearson Education

#### **Contract Numbers:**

E100329-149-096  
E100329-149-097  
E100329-149-098  
E100329-149-099

Use of this contract is optional by the authorized users; however, orders placed against these contracts **must not** be entered in the state's e-procurement system, referred to as eVA. A local purchase order **must be** issued to consummate the contract and without the addition of any local terms and conditions or modifications to the contract terms. Specific guidance on use of this contract is contained herein.

Contract Officer: Wiley C. Rowsey, VCO, CPPO  
VDOE Procurement Director  
Telephone: 804-225-3576, Fax: 804-225-2509  
Email: [wiley.rowsey@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:wiley.rowsey@doe.virginia.gov)

Contract Administrator: Kathleen Smith  
VDOE School Improvement Director  
Telephone: 804-786-5819  
Email: [kathleen.smith@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:kathleen.smith@doe.virginia.gov)

**Note: This public body does not discriminate against faith-based organizations in accordance with the *Code of Virginia*, § 2.2-4343.1 or against an Offer because of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by state law relating to discrimination in employment.**

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### CONTRACT OVERVIEW

This optional-use contract incorporates Request for Proposal, RFP# DOE 2010-03, entitled “Low Achieving Schools Turnaround Partners” issued October 29, 2009, by the Virginia Department of Education, and each contractor’s proposal and negotiated changes.

The primary purpose of the contract is to provide school divisions a choice of Lead Turnaround Partners (LTP) to select from on an as needed, when needed basis to develop and implement an academic program for one or more of the core discipline areas of math, science, social studies and language arts for students in persistently low-achieving public schools. Persistently low-achieving schools for the purpose of this contract are those schools that are denied accreditation and/or are in restructuring as sanctioned by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*; school divisions may also utilize these contracts for LTP services though a school or group of schools does not meet this criteria.

Divisions, groups of schools and individual schools will have the option to select any of the four LTP contractors for their particular region. The division or school will establish the time period for performance of services by the selected LTP and at the contracted base unit price plus other school division negotiated costs not covered by the base unit price. Examples of additional cost may include rental of office space, equipment, transportation, instructional materials, etc. The LTP may reject its selection provided it can demonstrate that its current commitments or lack of sufficient resources will not allow for timely and quality performance. In that case the division or school may select another LTP.

It is the intent of VDOE that all LTP contractors provide services that meet the following minimum requirements:

- One of the three USED models (transformation, turnaround, restart) as selected by the LEA.
- Any additional or supplemental instructional program provided by the LTP must be aligned with the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL). It is the responsibility of the LTP to ensure alignment with the SOL. The VDOE will check for alignment.
- All teachers provided by the LTP must meet highly qualified status and meet licensure requirements.
- Parental involvement, such as a parent outreach program.

**NO TECHNOLOGY RELATED PRODUCT OR SERVICE CAN BE OFFERED OR PURCHASED UNDER THE CONTRACT.** This does not prohibit the offer or purchase of instructional materials necessary for performance of the contract.

### ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS

The following describes the six basic steps to be taken by a school division when selecting an LTP:

- Step 1: Select one or more LTP contractors from the contract list for an initial interview/discussion of needs. The initial interview/discussion can be via telephone and/or face to face.
- Step 2: The selected LTP(s) may be invited to visit the applicable school(s) for visual purposes and to obtain a better understanding of the needs.
- Step 3: After the initial discussion, select one or more LTP to begin a collaborative drafting of a scope of work, which must include a detailed estimated total cost (base unit price X annual average number of students and other negotiated costs). During this step discussion on what the division will provide, such as transportation, working space, equipment (telephone, computer, printer, furniture, etc.) must be itemized in the scope.
- Step 4: At the conclusion of step 3 the school division will review the draft(s) and select the LTP to be awarded the contract and begin finalization of the scope of work and initial total cost. The total cost is subject to change during contract performance as the scope of work and/or other conditions (e.g., division furnished items added/deleted, division directed travel, etc.) may need to be modified.
- Step 5: The LTP must include along with the finalized scope of work a detailed budget based on its contract pricing schedule documenting how the initial total cost was calculated (quantity, unit pricing, description, etc.).
- Step 6: Upon acceptance by the school division of the finalized scope of work and budget, and before performance can begin, the division must issue a local purchase order to the LTP referencing the applicable VDOE contract number and attach the scope of work and budget. The contract must be issued for three school years, if federally funded. No other terms and conditions can be added to the order by either the LTP or school division without prior approval of the VDOE procurement director. School

divisions using their own funds may place orders for services for any time period (3 years or less) by following the above steps, and may place orders for services though a school has not been designated as a low performer.

**NOTE:** Insert the following statement on the local purchase order: **“The terms and conditions contained in RFP# DOE 2010-03 apply to this order and supersede any pre-printed terms that may appear on the contractor’s forms, this purchase order and any attachments. All invoices for payment must be submitted to the address shown on the purchase order. All payments will be made by the ordering entity and not by the Virginia Department of Education.”**

**CONTACTOR INFORMATION, PRICING AND SERVICE REGIONS**

Mott MacDonald dba Cambridge Education    Contract Number: **E100329-149-096**  
 400 Blue Hill Drive, Suite 100 N. Lobby    Regions Served: **All**  
 Westwood, MA 02090

Contact: Trevor B. Yates, Executive Vice President  
 Mott MacDonald dba Cambridge Education  
 400 Blue Hill Drive, Suite 100, N. Lobby  
 Westwood, MA 02090  
 Phone: 717-701-0123, Fax 781-915-0001  
 Email: [Trevor.yates@camb-ed-us.com](mailto:Trevor.yates@camb-ed-us.com)

Gail McLean  
 Phone: 781-6636-4038 (work), 781-690-7717 (cell)  
 Email: [gail.mclean@camb-ed-us.com](mailto:gail.mclean@camb-ed-us.com)

Kevin Hardy  
 Phone: 781-915-0020 (work), 617-997-3427 (cell)  
 Email: [Kevin.hardy@camb-ed-us.com](mailto:Kevin.hardy@camb-ed-us.com)

<i>Cambridge Education, Contract E100329-149-096</i>	<b>Elementary School</b> annual per student fixed fee	<b>Middle School</b> annual per student fixed fee	<b>High School</b> annual per student fixed fee
200 students or less	\$748	\$795	\$838
Optional start up fee	\$None	\$None	\$None
201-400 students	\$352	\$382	\$402
Optional startup fee	\$None	\$None	\$None
401-600 students	\$265	\$305	\$334
Optional startup fee	\$None	\$None	\$None
601 students or more	\$262	\$299	\$329
Optional startup fee	\$None	\$None	\$None

**Contractor comments:**

The above pricing schedule includes the core strategic interventions that Cambridge Education will provide as an LTP. They exclude:

1. Other items of cost that we may experience as an LTP during performance such as school or division directed travel, lease of space and/or equipment, and other miscellaneous items/services shall be billed and reimbursed at actual cost.
2. All costs which the district/school may incur in relation to additional staffing, relocation of staff, training venue costs, etc.

Other optional pricing that may apply on a case by case basis:

Inclusive price for each of the below diagnostic surveys and audits is **\$7,000 per school:**

- Initial Schools Quality Reviews
- Interim Progress Reviews
- Curriculum Audit
- Fiscal Audit
- School culture/student surveys

**Indicative additional Continual Professional Development Program (CPD):**

In addition to the core LTP program Cambridge provides an extensive range of CPD programs for each school. Each 3 day program will cost **\$6,600** per school for up to 15 members of staff. Programs can also be run across similar schools which will reduce the per school cost. The following are indicative of the range of program Cambridge currently provides:

- Efficacy training
- Language in Learning across the Curriculum
- English language Learners
- Professional Growth – Performance Review
- Extended day
- Re-tracking – behavior management
- Good teaching successful learning
- Strategic Leadership of IT to promote learning
- Leading for Learning
- Safe schools

**CONTACTOR INFORMATION, PRICING AND SERVICE REGIONS**

EdisonLearning, Inc.  
 485 Lexington Ave.  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
 New York, NY 10017

Contract Number: **E100329-149-097**  
 Regions Served: **All**

Contact: Curtiss Stancil, Vice President for Business Development  
 EdisonLearning, Inc.  
 8101 Hampton Meadows Lane  
 Chesterfield, VA 23832  
 Phone: 917-482-4396, Fax 804-739-7260  
 Email: [curtiss.stancil@edisonlearning.com](mailto:curtiss.stancil@edisonlearning.com)

<b><i>EdisonLearning, Inc., Contract E100329-149-097</i></b>	<b>Elementary School</b> annual per student fixed fee	<b>Middle School</b> annual per student fixed fee	<b>High School</b> annual per student fixed fee
200 students or less	\$1,150	\$1,150	\$1,450
Optional start up fee	\$350	\$350	\$470
201-400 students	\$660	\$660	\$830
Optional startup fee	\$150	\$150	\$200
401-600 students	\$420	\$420	\$530
Optional startup fee	\$100	\$100	\$130
601 students or more	\$310	\$310	\$390
Optional startup fee	\$75	\$75	\$100

## CONTACTOR INFORMATION, PRICING AND SERVICE REGIONS

Johns Hopkins University  
3400 N. Charles Street  
Baltimore, MD 21218

Contract Number: **E100329-149-098**  
Regions Served: **All (no elementary)**

Contact: Kathy Nelson (contact for middle schools only)  
Center for Social Organization of Schools  
Johns Hopkins University  
3003 N. Charles Street  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
Phone: 410-516-8800  
Email: [knelson@csos.jhu.edu](mailto:knelson@csos.jhu.edu)

Rosemary Outlaw (contact for high school only)  
Same address as above  
Phone: 410-516-8800  
Email: [routlaw@csos.jhu.edu](mailto:routlaw@csos.jhu.edu)

<i>Johns Hopkins University, Contract E100329-149-098</i>	<b>Elementary School</b> annual per student fixed fee	<b>Middle School</b> annual per student fixed fee	<b>High School</b> annual per student fixed fee
200 students or less	\$N/A	\$945	\$945
Optional start up fee	\$N/A	\$None	\$None
██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
201-400 students	\$N/A	\$450	\$450
Optional startup fee	\$N/A	\$70	\$70
██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
401-600 students	\$N/A	\$375	\$375
Optional startup fee	\$N/A	\$42	\$42
██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
601 students or more	\$N/A	\$316	\$316
Optional startup fee	\$N/A	\$30	\$30

### Contractor Comments:

These figures do not include material costs. In addition, Talent Development recommends an additional content coach and a behaviorist to identify, track and support the Tier II and Tier III interventions. These costs will be part of the negotiation discussions with the school/district.

**CONTACTOR INFORMATION, PRICING AND SERVICE REGIONS**

Pearson Education  
 One Lake Street  
 Upper Saddle River, NJ 07458

Contract Number: **E100329-149-099**  
 Regions Served: **All**

Contact: Fred Bost, Regional VP  
 c/o Carissa Tilford  
 Pearson K-12 Solutions  
 10911 White Rock Road  
 Rancho Cordova, CA 95670  
 Phone: 877-873-1550, x1617  
 Email: [fred.bost@pearson.com](mailto:fred.bost@pearson.com)

<i><b>Pearson Education, Contract E100329-149-099</b></i>	<b>Elementary School annual per student fixed fee</b>	<b>Middle School annual per student fixed fee</b>	<b>High School annual per student fixed fee</b>
200 students or less	\$750	\$750	\$750
Optional start up fee	\$253	\$253	\$253
201-400 students	\$700	\$700	\$700
Optional startup fee	\$164	\$164	\$164
401-600 students	\$625	\$625	\$625
Optional startup fee	\$96	\$96	\$96
601 students or more	\$540	\$540	\$540
Optional startup fee	\$72	\$72	\$72

**Contractor Comments:**

Pearson’s price to Virginia schools is for services per procurement instructions; materials are not priced. At the point we begin implementation discussion at the District level, we will ask school officials to discuss the materials and data that already exist as these provide baseline information from which we will rollout the school improvement model. At that time, schools may make decisions that lead to purchasing material or technology resources, but such purchases are outside the parameters of this offer.

**Notes**

- Pearson reserves the right to assign its embedded support and resources to match the number and size of schools selected.
- Pearson’s school improvement model is titled School Turnaround Education Partnership (STEP).

- The First Year Start Up Price is a one-time, per school charge will be invoiced in Year 1 of the agreement only. Thereafter the annual fees will be comprised of the Pearson STEP Model fee and any other mutually agreed upon charges by Pearson and the local district or school.
- The Annual STEP Model Price is an annual per school charge for the 3 year contract term. Any services or products provided outside of the proposed 3 year contract term will be subject to additional fees as mutually agreed upon by Pearson and local district or school.
- Local districts or schools shall be solely responsible for all site staff, with the exception of the Pearson Team. These responsibilities include recruitment, hiring & termination of site staff. Pearson will provide consultation and input for consideration by the site Principal and/or the District Turnaround Liaison.
- Local districts or schools shall be responsible for all personnel costs associated with any necessary agreed upon professional development and/or leadership institutes. This includes release time and any substitute teaching costs necessary for the staff to be able to fully participate in the STEP training.

## **RFP# DOE 2010-03 EXTRACT (Selected Content)**

**These selected sections of the RFP are intended to provide the school divisions with an understanding of the contractor's performance and reporting requirements, the terms and conditions requiring compliance by all parties and method of payment. These sections should be reviewed and made available to the individual(s) assigned to manage/administer an order placed against the contract.**

### **STATEMENT OF NEEDS**

The contractor shall furnish all labor and resources to increase student achievement using the following desired approaches and/or other VDOE accepted approaches proposed as a result of this RFP and those that may be refreshed/added during the performance of the contract:

1. Provide formative and ongoing reports on program effectiveness to include, but not limited to, student achievement, parental involvement, student attendance, and student discipline.
2. Employ research-based strategies that provide an immediate and dramatic turnaround in student achievement.
3. Work with the school division to recruit and recommend teachers and a leader(s) who have a proven record of success of increasing student achievement.
4. Recommend necessary restructuring of teacher and leader contracts.
5. Develop and engage teachers and the leader in professional development aligned to programmatic goals.
6. Promote student motivation for learning.
7. Secure parental commitment and involvement through school choice.
8. Promote parental capacity to support student engagement, motivation, and learning within school, at home and in the community.
9. Work with the school division to expand community support to garner human resources needed for reform.
10. Evaluate teacher and leader performance and outcomes and make staffing recommendations accordingly.
11. Develop constructive relationships with existing school personnel.
12. Recommend changes to the school calendar according to student and program needs, for example, year-round schools or extending the length of the school day.
13. Require commitment from parents to allow for additional time for instruction (such as after school support).
14. Work with the school division to obtain a commitment from teachers to allow for additional time for instruction and professional development.
15. Provide comprehensive, coherent, manageable and integrated instructional and support programs.
16. Recommend which existing programs are to be continued and which programs are to be eliminated.
17. Consistent with the state Standards of Learning recommend alignment of curriculum, instruction, classroom formative assessment and sustained professional development to

- build rigor, foster student-teacher relationships, and provide relevant instruction that engages and motivates students.
18. Organize programming to engage students' sense of adventure, camaraderie, and competition.
  19. Develop and implement evidence-based discipline programs that minimize time out of school and/or class.
  20. Identify and recommend supporting partners to address social, emotional and behavioral issues (e.g., over-age students).
  21. Identify and obtain adequate materials from school system resources (such as the Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Assessment (ARDT) or benchmark assessments).
  22. Identify and recommend outside resources needed in the reform effort.
  23. Develop and recommend a budget to the School Board based on available per pupil amounts of local, basic Standards of Quality (SOQ), school improvement, appropriate Title monies, and special education funding in addition to other sources identified and aligned specifically for the turnaround zone.
  24. Work with school division to seek outside funding from the greater community (business, private foundations, federal and state sources) to support the reform effort.
  25. Integrate all academic and support services.

### **REPORTING AND DELIVERY INSTRUCTIONS**

**PROGRESS REPORTS:** Each contractor shall submit a written monthly progress report (through a single sign-on web site to be provided later) to the school division/public school and the VDOE Office of School Improvement by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month following the month services were provided detailing the following listed items:

1. Cumulative enrollment data for each student by student ID and by name. Such data must include daily attendance information including number of absences, tardiness, discipline referrals, out-of-school suspensions and in-school suspensions by infraction and by teacher, and parental request meetings by infraction and by teacher.
2. Student achievement data including grades for the nine weeks, diagnostic data, benchmark assessment data, progress monitoring assessment data, and SOL assessment data, if available.
3. Teacher recruitment activities, teacher professional development activities (including agendas of all staff meetings), and teacher absenteeism.
4. Completed teacher evaluations and observations.
5. Core SOL curriculum taught during the month including all essential skills and knowledge in each of the four core content areas.
6. Number of minutes provided during the month for extended learning opportunities for each student and cumulatively.
7. Report on the development and coordination of supporting partnerships.
8. Line item budget expenditures for each month.
9. Report of parental development activities.
10. Any other report requested by the local school board.

Payment under the contract may be withheld until such report is delivered or other appropriate remedies may be assessed in lieu of withholding such payment.

Within 30 days after completion of each contract the contractor shall submit a final summary report highlighting accomplishments to the school division/school and to the VDOE Office of School Improvement. The final report should include any recommendations for future consideration by the school division/school.

### **GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

- A. **VENDORS MANUAL:** This solicitation is subject to the provisions of the Commonwealth of Virginia *Vendors Manual* and any changes or revisions thereto, which are hereby incorporated into this contract in their entirety. The procedure for filing contractual claims is in section 7.19 of the *Vendors Manual*. A copy of the manual is normally available for review at the purchasing office and is accessible on the Internet at [www.dgs.state.va.us/dps](http://www.dgs.state.va.us/dps) under "Manuals."
- B. **APPLICABLE LAWS AND COURTS:** This solicitation and any resulting contract shall be governed in all respects by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and any litigation with respect thereto shall be brought in the courts of the Commonwealth. The agency and the contractor are encouraged to resolve any issues in controversy arising from the award of the contract or any contractual dispute using Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) procedures (*Code of Virginia*, § 2.2-4366). ADR procedures are described in Chapter 9 of the *Vendors Manual*. The contractor shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations.
- C. **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION:** By submitting their proposals, offerors certify to the Commonwealth that they will conform to the provisions of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, as well as the Virginia Fair Employment Contracting Act of 1975, as amended, where applicable, the Virginians With Disabilities Act, the Americans With Disabilities Act and § 2.2-4311 of the *Virginia Public Procurement Act (VPPA)*. If the award is made to a faith-based organization, the organization shall not discriminate against any recipient of goods, services, or disbursements made pursuant to the contract on the basis of the recipient's religion, religious belief, refusal to participate in a religious practice, or on the basis of race, age, color, gender or national origin and shall be subject to the same rules as other organizations that contract with public bodies to account for the use of the funds provided; however, if the faith-based organization segregates public funds into separate accounts, only the accounts and programs funded with public funds shall be subject to audit by the public body. (*Code of Virginia*, § 2.2-4343.1E).

In every contract over \$10,000 the provisions in 1. and 2. below apply:

1. During the performance of this contract, the contractor agrees as follows:
  - a. The contractor will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by state law relating to discrimination in employment, except where there is a bona fide occupational qualification

reasonably necessary to the normal operation of the contractor. The contractor agrees to post in conspicuous places, available to employees and applicants for employment, notices setting forth the provisions of this nondiscrimination clause.

- b. The contractor, in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the contractor, will state that such contractor is an equal opportunity employer.
  - c. Notices, advertisements and solicitations placed in accordance with federal law, rule or regulation shall be deemed sufficient for the purpose of meeting these requirements.
2. The contractor will include the provisions of 1. above in every subcontract or purchase order over \$10,000, so that the provisions will be binding upon each subcontractor or vendor.

**D. ETHICS IN PUBLIC CONTRACTING:** By submitting their proposals, offerors certify that their proposals are made without collusion or fraud and that they have not offered or received any kickbacks or inducements from any other offeror, supplier, manufacturer or subcontractor in connection with their proposal, and that they have not conferred on any public employee having official responsibility for this procurement transaction any payment, loan, subscription, advance, deposit of money, services or anything of more than nominal value, present or promised, unless consideration of substantially equal or greater value was exchanged.

**E. IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL ACT OF 1986:** By submitting their proposals, offerors certify that they do not and will not during the performance of this contract employ illegal alien workers or otherwise violate the provisions of the federal Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.

**F. DEBARMENT STATUS:** By submitting their proposals, offerors certify that they are not currently debarred by the Commonwealth of Virginia from submitting bids or proposals on contracts for the type of goods and/or services covered by this solicitation, nor are they an agent of any person or entity that is currently so debarred.

**G. ANTITRUST:** By entering into a contract, the contractor conveys, sells, assigns, and transfers to the Commonwealth of Virginia all rights, title and interest in and to all causes of action it may now have or hereafter acquire under the antitrust laws of the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia, relating to the particular goods or services purchased or acquired by the Commonwealth of Virginia under said contract.

**H. PAYMENT:**

1. To Prime Contractor:
  - a. Invoices for items ordered, delivered and accepted shall be submitted by the contractor directly to the payment address shown on the purchase order/contract. All invoices shall show the state contract number and/or purchase order number;

social security number (for individual contractors) or the federal employer identification number (for proprietorships, partnerships, and corporations).

- b. Any payment terms requiring payment in less than 45 days will be regarded as requiring payment 45 days after invoice or delivery, whichever occurs last. This shall not affect offers of discounts for payment in less than 45 days, however.
  - c. All goods or services provided under this contract or purchase order, that are to be paid for with public funds, shall be billed by the contractor at the contract price, regardless of which public agency is being billed.
  - d. The following shall be deemed to be the date of payment: the date of postmark in all cases where payment is made by mail, or the date of offset when offset proceedings have been instituted as authorized under the Virginia Debt Collection Act.
  - e. **Unreasonable Charges.** Under certain emergency procurements and for most time and material purchases, final job costs cannot be accurately determined at the time orders are placed. In such cases, contractors should be put on notice that final payment in full is contingent on a determination of reasonableness with respect to all invoiced charges. Charges which appear to be unreasonable will be researched and challenged, and that portion of the invoice held in abeyance until a settlement can be reached. Upon determining that invoiced charges are not reasonable, the Commonwealth shall promptly notify the contractor, in writing, as to those charges which it considers unreasonable and the basis for the determination. A contractor may not institute legal action unless a settlement cannot be reached within thirty (30) days of notification. The provisions of this section do not relieve an agency of its prompt payment obligations with respect to those charges which are not in dispute (*Code of Virginia*, § 2.2-4363).
2. To Subcontractors:
- a. A contractor awarded a contract under this solicitation is hereby obligated:
    - (1) To pay the subcontractor(s) within seven (7) days of the contractor's receipt of payment from the Commonwealth for the proportionate share of the payment received for work performed by the subcontractor(s) under the contract; or
    - (2) To notify the agency and the subcontractor(s), in writing, of the contractor's intention to withhold payment and the reason.
  - b. The contractor is obligated to pay the subcontractor(s) interest at the rate of one percent per month (unless otherwise provided under the terms of the contract) on all amounts owed by the contractor that remain unpaid seven (7) days following receipt of payment from the Commonwealth, except for amounts withheld as stated in (2) above. The date of mailing of any payment by U. S. Mail is deemed to be payment to the addressee. These provisions apply to each sub-tier contractor performing under the primary contract. A contractor's obligation to pay an interest charge to a subcontractor may not be construed to be an obligation of the Commonwealth.

- I. PRECEDENCE OF TERMS:** The following General Terms and Conditions *VENDORS MANUAL*, *APPLICABLE LAWS AND COURTS*, *ANTI-DISCRIMINATION*, *ETHICS IN PUBLIC CONTRACTING*, *IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL ACT OF 1986*, *DEBARMENT STATUS*, *ANTITRUST*, *PAYMENT* shall apply in all instances. In the event there is a conflict between any of the other General Terms and Conditions and any Special Terms and Conditions in this solicitation, the Special Terms and Conditions shall apply.
- J. TESTING AND INSPECTION:** The Commonwealth reserves the right to conduct any test/inspection it may deem advisable to assure goods and services conform to the specifications.
- K. ASSIGNMENT OF CONTRACT:** A contract shall not be assignable by the contractor in whole or in part without the written consent of the Commonwealth.
- L. CHANGES TO THE CONTRACT:** Changes can be made to the contract in any of the following ways:
1. The parties may agree in writing to modify the scope of the contract. An increase or decrease in the price of the contract resulting from such modification shall be agreed to by the parties as a part of their written agreement to modify the scope of the contract.
  2. The Purchasing Agency may order changes within the general scope of the contract at any time by written notice to the contractor. Changes within the scope of the contract include, but are not limited to, things such as services to be performed, the method of packing or shipment, and the place of delivery or installation. The contractor shall comply with the notice upon receipt. The contractor shall be compensated for any additional costs incurred as the result of such order and shall give the Purchasing Agency a credit for any savings. Said compensation shall be determined by one of the following methods:
    - a. By mutual agreement between the parties in writing; or
    - b. By agreeing upon a unit price or using a unit price set forth in the contract, if the work to be done can be expressed in units, and the contractor accounts for the number of units of work performed, subject to the Purchasing Agency's right to audit the contractor's records and/or to determine the correct number of units independently; or
    - c. By ordering the contractor to proceed with the work and keep a record of all costs incurred and savings realized. A markup for overhead and profit may be allowed if provided by the contract. The same markup shall be used for determining a decrease in price as the result of savings realized. The contractor shall present the Purchasing Agency with all vouchers and records of expenses incurred and savings realized. The Purchasing Agency shall have the right to audit the records of the contractor as it deems necessary to determine costs or savings. Any claim for an adjustment in price under this provision must be asserted by written notice to the Purchasing Agency within thirty (30) days from the date of receipt of the

written order from the Purchasing Agency. If the parties fail to agree on an amount of adjustment, the question of an increase or decrease in the contract price or time for performance shall be resolved in accordance with the procedures for resolving disputes provided by the Disputes Clause of this contract or, if there is none, in accordance with the disputes provisions of the Commonwealth of Virginia *Vendors Manual*. Neither the existence of a claim nor a dispute resolution process, litigation or any other provision of this contract shall excuse the contractor from promptly complying with the changes ordered by the Purchasing Agency or with the performance of the contract generally.

- M. DEFAULT:** In case of failure to deliver goods or services in accordance with the contract terms and conditions, the Commonwealth, after due oral or written notice, may procure them from other sources and hold the contractor responsible for any resulting additional purchase and administrative costs. This remedy shall be in addition to any other remedies which the Commonwealth may have.
- N. TAXES:** Sales to the Commonwealth of Virginia are normally exempt from State sales tax. State sales and use tax certificates of exemption, Form ST-12, will be issued upon request. Deliveries against this contract shall usually be free of Federal excise and transportation taxes. The Commonwealth's excise tax exemption registration number is 54-73-0076K.
- O. INSURANCE:** By signing and submitting a bid or proposal under this solicitation, the bidder or offeror certifies that if awarded the contract, it will have the following insurance coverage at the time the contract is awarded. For construction contracts, if any subcontractors are involved, the subcontractor will have workers' compensation insurance in accordance with §§ 2.2-4332 and 65.2-800 et seq. of the *Code of Virginia*. The bidder or offeror further certifies that the contractor and any subcontractors will maintain these insurance coverages during the entire term of the contract and that all insurance coverage will be provided by insurance companies authorized to sell insurance in Virginia by the Virginia State Corporation Commission.

**MINIMUM INSURANCE COVERAGES AND LIMITS REQUIRED FOR MOST CONTRACTS:**

1. Workers' Compensation - Statutory requirements and benefits. Coverage is compulsory for employers of three or more employees, to include the employer. Contractors who fail to notify the Commonwealth of increases in the number of employees that change their workers' compensation requirements under the *Code of Virginia* during the course of the contract shall be in noncompliance with the contract.
2. Employer's Liability - \$100,000.
3. Commercial General Liability - \$1,000,000 per occurrence. Commercial General Liability is to include bodily injury and property damage, personal injury and advertising injury, products and completed operations coverage. The Commonwealth of Virginia must be named as an additional insured and so endorsed on the policy.
4. Automobile Liability - \$1,000,000 per occurrence. (Only used if motor vehicle is to be used in the contract.)

- P. **DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE:** During the performance of this contract, the contractor agrees to (i) provide a drug-free workplace for the contractor's employees; (ii) post in conspicuous places, available to employees and applicants for employment, a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, sale, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance or marijuana is prohibited in the contractor's workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violations of such prohibition; (iii) state in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the contractor that the contractor maintains a drug-free workplace; and (iv) include the provisions of the foregoing clauses in every subcontract or purchase order of over \$10,000, so that the provisions will be binding upon each subcontractor or vendor.

For the purposes of this section, “*drug-free workplace*” means a site for the performance of work done in connection with a specific contract awarded to a contractor, the employees of whom are prohibited from engaging in the unlawful manufacture, sale, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of any controlled substance or marijuana during the performance of the contract.

- Q. **AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS:** It is understood and agreed between the parties herein that the agency shall be bound hereunder only to the extent of the funds available or which may hereafter become available for the purpose of this agreement.

### **SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

- A. **ADVERTISING** In the event a contract is awarded for supplies, equipment, or services resulting from this proposal, no indication of such sales or services to the VDOE and public schools will be used in product literature or advertising. The contractor shall not state in any of its advertising or product literature that the Commonwealth of Virginia or any agency or institution of the Commonwealth has purchased or uses its products or services.
- B. **AUDIT:** The contractor shall retain all books, records, and other documents relative to this contract for five (5) years after final payment, or until audited by the Commonwealth of Virginia, whichever is sooner. The agency, its authorized agents, and/or state auditors shall have full access to and the right to examine any of said materials during said period.
- C. **CANCELLATION OF CONTRACT:** The purchasing agency reserves the right to cancel and terminate any resulting contract, in part or in whole, without penalty, upon 60 days written notice to the contractor. In the event the initial contract period is for more than 12 months, the resulting contract may be terminated by either party, without penalty, after the initial 12 months of the contract period upon 60 days written notice to the other party. Any contract cancellation notice shall not relieve the contractor of the obligation to deliver and/or perform on all outstanding orders issued prior to the effective date of cancellation.
- D. **RENEWAL OF CONTRACT:** This contract may be renewed by the Commonwealth for three (3) successive one year periods under the terms and conditions of the original

contract. Written notice of the Commonwealth's intention to renew shall be given approximately 90 days prior to the expiration date of each contract period.

- E. PRICE ADJUSTMENTS:** The unit prices will remain fixed for the first two years of the contract; however, adjustments may be authorized by the VDOE to be effective beginning on the third year of the contract and each renewal year thereafter. The Contractor must submit in writing to the VDOE Procurement Office any request for price adjustments at least 60 days in advance of the effective date. Such requests shall be limited to changes in the Contractor's cost for providing the services and shall not exceed 4%. The US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index CPI-W (Other Services Category) for the latest 12 months will be used as a guide by VDOE to verify any price adjustment requests. The Contractor shall document the basis for the requested amount. Such documentation shall be supplied with the Contractor's request for adjustment and certify that the requested price adjustment is general in scope and not applicable just to the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- F. SUBCONTRACTS:** No portion of the work shall be subcontracted without prior written consent of the purchasing agency. In the event that the contractor desires to subcontract some part of the work specified herein, the contractor shall furnish the purchasing agency the names, qualifications and experience of their proposed subcontractors. The contractor shall, however, remain fully liable and responsible for the work to be done by its subcontractor(s) and shall assure compliance with all requirements of the contract.
- G. CONFIDENTIALITY OF PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION:** The contractor assures that information and data obtained as to personal facts and circumstances related to students and staff will be collected and held confidential, during and following the term of this agreement, and will not be divulged without the individual's and the agency's written consent and only in accordance with federal law or the *Code of Virginia*. Contractors who utilize, access, or store personally identifiable information as part of the performance of a contract are required to safeguard this information and immediately notify the agency of any breach or suspected breach in the security of such information. Contractors shall allow the agency to both participate in the investigation of incidents and exercise control over decisions regarding external reporting. Contractors and their employees working on this project may be required to sign a confidentiality statement.
- H. CERTAIN CRIMES AND CHILD ABUSE:** Pursuant to subsection C of § 22.1-296.1 of the *Code of Virginia* the contractor shall, prior to commencing performance, provide certification to the contracting school division/school that all employees who will have direct contact with students on school property have not been convicted of a felony or any offense involving the sexual molestation or physical abuse or rape of a child. Any additional or replacement contractor employee assigned to work on school property during performance of the specific contract shall require prior certification.
- I. AUTHORIZED USERS:** This procurement is being conducted on behalf of all Virginia public school divisions and public schools who will be the only authorized users of the contract. The school divisions or individual schools may place orders for services in

accordance with the terms of the contract. No other terms and conditions may be imposed upon the contractor(s) by the ordering entity unless reduced to writing and accepted by the contractor. Any unresolved contractual disputes must be referred to the Virginia Department of Education Procurement Office for resolution.

### **METHOD OF PAYMENT**

The Contractor shall submit a monthly invoice by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month following the month of service at the contracted unit price(s). The invoice shall provide sufficient detail to validate goods provided and services performed. The division or school will make payments within forty-five (45) days of receipt of complete and accurate invoices. Invoices must be submitted to the ordering division or school, not to the VDOE.

## Appendix C

### Permission to Reprint TVAAS

**Stephanie Bassett**

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**From:** Education Research <Education.Research@tn.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 01, 2014 4:40 PM  
**To:** Stephanie Bassett  
**Subject:** RE: Permission to Reprint

Hi Stephanie,

The TN Department produced and owns the rights to the attached. Yes, you may use the attached figures and explanations, provided that you appropriately cite the TN Department of Education.

Thanks

**From:** Stephanie Bassett [mailto:[stbassett@petersburg.k12.va.us](mailto:stbassett@petersburg.k12.va.us)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 25, 2014 9:17 AM  
**To:** Education Research  
**Subject:** Permission to Reprint

To Whom It May Concern:

I am completing a doctoral dissertation at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) entitled "Accreditation Denied: Examining Federal Funds and their Effect on Student Achievement". I would like your permission to reprint three figures with their corresponding explanations which appear in the Tennessee Department of Education's *Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) Fact Sheet*. I have attached the Fact Sheet for reference.

The requested permission extends to any future revisions and editions of my dissertation, including non-exclusive world rights in all languages, and to the prospective publication of my dissertation by UMI Company. These rights will in no way restrict republication of the material in any other form by you or by others authorized by you. Your granting permission will also confirm that your company owns the copyright to the above-described material.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, please reply to this e-mail that you grant permission. You can reach me at [stephdb@vt.edu](mailto:stephdb@vt.edu); [stbassett@petersburg.k12.va.us](mailto:stbassett@petersburg.k12.va.us); or (804) [REDACTED]

Thank you for your consideration to this request.

**Stephanie D. Bassett**  
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