The Influence of the "Ohio Improvement Process" Requirement on Teacher-Student Relationships/Interactions

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This dissertation titled

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Abstract

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The Influence of the "Ohio Improvement Process" Requirement on Teacher-Student Relationships/Interactions

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The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not the state requirement of participation in the Ohio Improvement Process has an impact on teacher-student interactions and/or relationships. The following research question was addressed: What are the salient characteristics of teacher-student interactions in two rural high schools with similar demographics but different connections to Ohio’s protocol for educational improvement: One school required to participate in the Ohio Improvement Process (school A) and one that chooses not to participate in the Ohio Improvement Process (school B)? Two schools were selected for the study based on location, demographic make-up and their connection to Ohio’s protocol for educational improvement. Teachers were asked to complete a short survey and complete Hoy’s Teacher Academic Optimism Scale for Secondary Teachers (TAOS-S). The principal of each school was interviewed by the researcher utilizing questions similar to those in the teacher surveys, as well as additional questions regarding the implementation of new academic initiatives. Findings from the study indicate that stress between schools for male teachers was found to be statistically significant. In addition, teacher’s stress between schools regardless of gender was found to be statistically significant; and teachers’ self-efficacy between schools regardless of gender was found to be statistically significant. Finally, data from the
interviews found that principal A lacked the knowledge and leadership skills necessary to implement the Ohio Improvement Process. This was reinforced in the data collected from teachers at school A, who also reported higher levels of stress and lower academic optimism scores.
I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my loving wife Denise and my two sons Cole and Reese. Throughout the process they have made numerous sacrifices while at the same time providing much needed support.
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Chapter One: Introduction

School-aged students spend the majority of their time in school interacting with their teachers. These interactions contribute to the development of relationships and, in turn, these relationships contribute to the overall schooling experience (Adeogun & Olisaemaka, 2011; Gregory & Ripski, 2008; Macneil, Prater, & Busch, 2009). In general, the more positive the experiences (i.e., teacher/student interactions and approachability) are, the better students will perform (Meier, 2002).

For example, according to Connell and Klem (2006), “All major reform strategies share the hypothesis that better relationships between adults and students contribute to improved educational outcomes for students” (p. 54). As Halawah (2006) noted, “close personal relationships between staff and students play a major part in fostering the intellectual development of students and help to make the teaching activities of academics more satisfying and rewarding” (p. 675). Comer (2004) offered a similar perspective. “Good relationships make student, adult, and organizational development possible, which, in turn, makes a strong academic focus possible” (p. 2). In fact, studies link the character of teacher-student interactions to a variety of outcomes: attendance (Connell & Klem, 2006), academic performance (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; McClure, Yonezawa, & Jones, 2010; Muller, Katz, & Dance, 1999), discipline (McNeely & Falci, 2004), graduation rates (Bergeron, Chouinard, & Janosz, 2011; Finn & Rock, 1997), and overall well-being (Meier, 2002; Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011).

Because of the close association between teacher-student interactions and various desired outcomes, conditions that compromise such relationships may have deleterious
effects on students, school culture, and student performance. One proposed condition may be teachers’ stress levels (Comer, 2004). As numerous researchers have found, schools are often stressful workplaces (e.g., Chaplain, 2008; McCarthy, Lambert, O’Donnell, & Melendres, 2009). Moreover, with the increased emphasis on school and teacher accountability, some commentators claim that teachers’ stress levels have been rising in recent years (Ballard & Bates, 2008). As a result of state accountability measures, many schools across the nation are required to undertake reform (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005), which in Ohio is called “school improvement”. Participation in mandated reform, however, implicates a series of changes that many teachers and administrators view as difficult and therefore stressful (Black, 2003; Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Kozol, 2007; Wilson & Hall, 2002).

According to some educators and researchers, teaching has become an increasingly stressful job in recent years (Chaplain, 2008; Johnson et al., 2005). As several studies show, changes in teachers’ roles, increasing job demands (Black, 2003; Dunham & Varma, 1998; Provasnik & Dorfman, 2005; Klassen, 2010; Kozol, 2007; Naylor, 2001), and apparent public dissatisfaction with their work (Garmon, 1998) have increased teachers’ stress levels (Hargreaves, 1998; Kozol, 2008).

In part, changes in teachers’ roles regarding expectations in the classroom have resulted from the reforms districts have undertaken in response to federal and state accountability provisions (e.g., The Ohio Department of Education, 2012). According to numerous reports, the U.S. public is scrutinizing its schools—comparing schools both within and across states (Heitin, 2015). Low overall performance has motivated states to
take action, holding schools and districts accountable for increasing student achievement. Moreover, in many states, such accountability provisions require schools with substandard performance to participate in complex, time-consuming, and perhaps even counterproductive improvement programs. For example, 19 states, including Ohio, are currently implementing the Framework for the 21st Century Learning initiative—an effort that asks districts to bring “21st century skills” into the classroom. In addition to core subjects, skills related to global awareness; financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; and health and wellness awareness (U.S. Department of Education, 2012) are infused in the curriculum. In addition, 44 states have agreed to implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) since their roll out in 2010. Ohio chose to use the 21st Century Learning initiative to aid in the implementation of the CCSS. The Ohio version of the CCSS was fully implemented during the 2013-14 school year.

State accountability requirements tend to reward schools and districts that improve and closely monitor and sometimes sanction those that do not. In Ohio, for example, districts that fail to meet established standards must engage in the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP). The rationale for school districts or buildings that must implement the Ohio Improvement Process is addressed in the Ohio Administrative Code, which states:

When a school district has been notified by the department pursuant to section 3302.03 of the Revised Code that the district or a building within the district has failed to make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive school years, the
district shall develop a three-year continuous improvement plan for the district or building containing each of the following:

(1) An analysis of the reasons for the failure of the district or building to meet any of the applicable performance indicators established under section 3302.02 of the Revised Code that it did not meet and an analysis of the reasons for its failure to make adequate yearly progress;

(2) Specific strategies that the district or building will use to address the problems in academic achievement identified in division (B) (1) of this section;

(3) Identification of the resources that the district will allocate toward improving the academic achievement of the district or building;

(4) A description of any progress that the district or building made in the preceding year toward improving its academic achievement;

(5) An analysis of how the district is utilizing the professional development standards adopted by the state board pursuant to section 3319.61 of the Revised Code;

(6) Strategies that the district or building will use to improve the cultural competency, as defined pursuant to section 3319.61 of the Revised Code, of teachers and other educators. (Ohio Laws and Rules, 2015, “Ohio Administrative Code 3302.04”)

School districts that are identified as low, medium, or high support schools are required to implement the Ohio Improvement Process.
The OIP involves the establishment and operation of three connected teams (The Ohio Department of Education, 2012). First, districts form a district leadership team (DLT) that includes representatives from all buildings in the district. The second is the building leadership team (BLT) which consists of representatives from the building: typically administrators, teachers, and often counselors or other support personnel. The third team is the teacher-based team (TBT) which includes teachers organized by grade level in the elementary and middle schools, and by department and/or grade level at the high school.

The first task of the DLT involves responding to a set of questions provided through a tool known as, “The Decision Framework” (DF). The purpose of the DF is to help districts use relevant data to identify instructional needs and plan for school improvement. Once a DLT has used the DF to identify areas of greatest need, the next step is to establish district goals and action plans (The Ohio Department of Education, 2012).

The BLT builds on the work of the DLT by first reviewing the district goals and action plans. It then formulates action plans at the building level to address district goals. The action plans are given to the building TBTs to implement. The BLT meets at least once a month to review data collected from the TBTs within the buildings which are used as the basis for decisions regarding professional development, modifications of the building-level plan, and allocation of resources or other forms of support. Last, the BLT compiles the information received from the TBTs into a quarterly report that is submitted to the DLT and to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). All schools categorized as
needing improvement are required to submit quarterly reports which enable the Ohio Department of Education to track progress and ensure districts are taking the steps necessary for improvement to occur. Once the reports have been reviewed by ODE, districts are notified of what modifications they need to make to their plans.

TBTs, the component of the improvement process most likely to involve teachers, review the school action plans and develop strategies for implementing them at their respective grade levels or within their respective departments. According to the ODE, TBTs review relevant data, identify promising instructional strategies, monitor one another’s performance, and evaluate the effectiveness of instructional strategies they implement. The TBTs monitor progress by meeting weekly to review data, and provide reports of progress to the school’s BLT. The BLT meets every other week to review the data from TBTs and make recommendations (The Ohio Department of Education, 2012).

As the description of the Ohio process suggests, districts required to participate in improvement initiatives must ask teachers to take on responsibilities above and beyond those previously included as part of their jobs. Not only does the process require many teachers to participate in TBTs, it also requires some to serve on school-level or district-level teams. In addition, improvement processes of this sort typically require teachers to participate in professional development activities and change their instructional practices (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

In Ohio, some districts use their own improvement process, while others (i.e., those on improvement plans) are required to use the Ohio Improvement Process. These districts are required to participate in the improvement process due to their failure to meet
minimum scores on one or more of the indicators that make-up Ohio’s state report card. This study is designed to determine (1) if there is a difference in how teachers respond to the process in districts that use their own improvement process as compared to those required to participate; (2) if there are differences, how such differences impact teachers; (3) if their stress levels increase when they are required to participate in the process; and (4) how participation might impact their relationships/interactions with students?

**Logic Model**

The rationale for the proposed study reflects a logic model that posits a series of steps in which teachers’ relationships with students correlate to their participation in school improvement initiatives. This section of the chapter delineates the steps in the logic model.

1. Students who have positive relationships/interactions with their teachers perform better than those who do not, which enhance the level of trust students have in their teachers and motivate them to give their best effort.

2. Some evidence suggests that relationships between students and teachers erode when teachers are under stress.

3. One significant source of stress is the increase in the number of mandates relating to teacher accountability. Schools in Ohio that fail to meet certain criteria on the state report card are placed into year one of school improvement which requires them to participate in the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) and are given three years to make the necessary improvements.
Failure results in additional mandates and sanctions from the Ohio Department of Education.

4. When teachers are continually enjoined to work harder and get better results, they tend to narrow their focus and to spend less time and effort cultivating personal connections with students.

5. Teachers in schools required to participate in improvement initiatives may have higher stress levels and therefore less cordial relationships with students than teachers in schools that voluntarily participate in their own improvement process or do not participate in such initiatives at all.

Theoretical Foundations

Two bodies of theoretical literature are pertinent to this study that explores the quality of student-teacher relationships in schools responding to required improvement efforts. The first body of literature explores conditions supportive of relationship building, and the second explores the way professionals respond to organizational threats.

**Conditions supportive of relationship-building.** Several theories offer insights suggesting how conditions in schools might enable teachers and students to develop cordial relationships. An early theory with bearing on this issue is that of Ferdinand Tonnies. Tonnies (1887) is well known for a theory that distinguishes between formal organizations and organic communities which suggests formal organizations are impersonal and transactional, and emphasizes the value of the individual insofar as he or she helps accomplish organizational goals and relies on explicit rules of engagement. Tonnies called this type of association, “Gesellschaft”; which is German for “society”.
In contrast with how formal organizations function, community or “Geimenschaft” relies on personal relationships and commitments. In community, trust and positive relationships are built on the basis of community beliefs, values, and norms.

According to some educational researchers and commentators, relationships that can develop in small schools make them more community-like (Howley & Eckman, 1997; Meier, 2002; Vander Ark, 2002). Large schools, by contrast, tend to become bureaucratic and more society-like (Byrk & Thum, 1989; Lee & Smith, 1993). Whether the teacher teams that form an important part of the Ohio Improvement Process alter the way schools function—making them either more or less formal in structure, and patterns of relationship—is unknown. The proposed study draws on Tonnies’ distinction to explore teachers’ and administrators’ perceptions of how the OIP influences school culture.

**Professionals’ responses to organizational threats.** Another way to look at how schools might foster or constrain relationship-building is to examine theories about what happens when organizations confront threats. Theories of “threat-rigidity” (Olsen & Sexton, 2009) consider such dynamics. Staw, Sandelands, and Dutton (1981) discussed the connection between organizational threats and the reactions of organizational participants and suggested that anytime an organization confronts a threat resulting from a change in its environment, rigidity is a likely outcome. Lazarus and Folkman (1987) offered a similar perspective and claimed that when a threat is injected into an environment, it not only impacts that environment, but also the people in that
environment causing the people and environment to interact in an effort to respond to the threat.

In other words, threats may cause uncertainty that, in turn, cause personnel to become cautious about doing anything other than addressing required changes. For example, individuals who are forced to change the way they operate may respond in different ways. Some may respond positively and begin to make the necessary change, while others react defensively, vocally oppose the change, and continue with the practices they have always used.

The theory of threat rigidity builds on a much earlier theory, specifically, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943). According to Maslow, higher-order needs, such as the need for positive relationships, can be met only after lower-order needs, such as the need for food, shelter, and security have been met. Threats from change may cause individuals to move into survival mode resulting in less of a focus on higher-order needs. When considering this theory of hierarchy, it may be possible that mandates reduce teachers’ ability to seek higher-order needs such as positive relationships.

**Empirical Foundations**

Accountability in the classroom is growing at a rate never seen before. Schools that fail to meet minimum standards are placed in different levels of school improvement and required to participate in state regulated programs. Thirty-five percent of the new teacher evaluation system in the State of Ohio is based on student growth (The Ohio Department of education, 2015). This increase in accountability may or may not affect the way teachers interact with their students. However, this may be an unintended
consequence, as teachers are forced to change methodologies and content to cover all material in the content standards on which students are tested, leaving little opportunity to get off track. Chudowsky and Behuniak, (1997) argued a narrowing of the curriculum is an outcome of alignment which is sometimes referred to as “teaching to the test” and may impact teacher-student relationships.

The relationship between teachers and students has changed drastically over the years (Meier, 2002). Barriers built up in the educational system may alienate students at a time when content and rigor are at their highest level. According to Meier (2002), “The more complex the learning, the more children need genuine adult company, and the more trusted the adults need to be” (p. 13). In response, it is important for teachers and students to work collaboratively toward mutually agreed upon educational goals.

**Research Question**

The following research question guided this study: What are the salient characteristics of teacher-student interactions/relationships in two rural high schools with similar demographics but different connections to Ohio’s protocol for educational improvement: one school that is required to participate in the Ohio Improvement Process and one that chooses not to?

**Significance**

Recent changes in Ohio’s school and district accountability system have intensified initiatives that provide oversight of local schools’ performance. Among these initiatives have been (1) the establishment of new content standards called the Common Core, now renamed the Ohio Content Standards, (2) the development of new high-stakes
tests aligned with the new content standards, and (3) the adoption of a new teacher evaluation system that puts considerable emphasis on student growth measures. As has been the case for several years, Ohio schools that fail to meet the state accountability targets are required to undertake school improvement following carefully delineated processes. New standards, new assessments, and new teacher evaluation processes are likely to increase the number of schools deemed deficient and therefore need to make use of these processes. Each school district in Ohio receives a report card for the buildings in their district (elementary, middle, and high schools) which are combined into a district report card. These report cards are comprised of indicators that include state assessments, attendance rate, and graduation rate. Districts that fail to meet the minimum standards are required to participate in an improvement plan.

Little is known, however, about the ways these mandated improvement processes contribute to productive improvement efforts or redirect energies away from improvement toward passive or active resistance. This study investigated two schools with different commitments to the Ohio Improvement Process—one school required to follow the process and one not using the process—in an effort to produce preliminary evidence illuminating dynamics ensuing from participation in the process. Several stakeholder groups are likely to have an interest in such findings.

**Significance for education policy makers.** Policy makers at state and local levels have the authority and power to determine how accountability provisions are construed and implemented. They may or may not be aware of the extent to which policies accomplish their intended outcomes or the extent to which they produce
unintended, possibly undesirable consequences. Therefore, studies that investigate the outcomes of policies ought to attract the interest of policy makers. An objective of the current study was to provide policy makers with a deeper understanding of how Ohio’s school accountability measures are implemented in schools with different commitments to the improvement process. For example, how policies that require teachers to attend numerous meetings and take time away from their students—even when those policies focus on instructional reform—affect the quality of relationships teachers have with their students. Alternately, such policies may help teachers find more effective ways to work with their students as well as improve teacher-student relationships.

**Significance for school administrators.** With the ever-growing demands placed on schools from federal and state mandates, the role of the school principal has expanded and become more complex. Notably, the principal’s role has expanded to include the instructional leadership functions purportedly needed for school improvement. Moreover, numerous studies show principals help schools improve when they become the champions of improvement efforts and direct attention to the content of their schools’ curriculum and the pedagogical practices used by teachers in their buildings (Morrison & Cooper, 2009; Printy, Marks, & Bowers, 2009; Senge, 1990). Studies also suggest that principals exert influence through their impact on school culture (Fullan, 2001). Findings from the current study may be of interest to school leaders, as it documents ways in which the Ohio Improvement Process impacts school culture.

As part of their efforts to promote a productive school climate, principals often concern themselves with the emotional well-being of their students and staff (Greenglass,
Stressful conditions—such as those arguably associated with school accountability—may have an influence on staff and student morale, sense of self-efficacy, or emotional balance (Hakanen et al., 2006; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). Understanding how such dynamics can impact school culture, therefore, provides a lens through which principals can interpret on-going practices and plan future actions.

**Personal significance.** I have been involved with the public education system in Ohio since 1992. During this time, I have worked as a teacher of students with special needs, assistant principal, principal, and superintendent. One thing that has remained constant is that expectations, via unfunded mandates, are regularly being rolled out and teachers and students are typically caught in the middle. Some current mandates include: a new teacher/principal performance based evaluation system, new state content standards, new high-stakes testing, and the third grade reading guarantee. These alone have caused a whirlwind of changes in public education. As seen in the description below, Ohio’s Third Grade Reading Guarantee is no small undertaking. The Ohio Department of Education (2015), “The Third Grade Reading Guarantee,” stated, Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee is a program to identify students from kindergarten through grade 3 that are behind in reading. Schools will provide help and support to make sure students are on track for reading success by the end of third grade. The department provides policy guidance, instructional tools, and resources on the Third Grade Reading Guarantee. (para. 1)
It is understood that changes are necessary for progress to be made, and to respond to the challenges of society. As an education professional, I have witnessed firsthand the anxiety and stress that often accompanies each new mandate. For example, as a teacher of students with special needs in the early 1990s, I was continually asked to adjust to changing special education regulations. For instance, I attended a two-day workshop outlining procedures for completing new IEP forms, only to have them changed 6 months later. It is understandable that changes are necessary, but with limited resources, slowing down the implementation of new forms may have eliminated wasted professional development time.

As an administrator, in particular during the last five years, I have been faced with new content standards, a new evaluation system, reduced funding, staffing cuts, and a legislature that seems unsure of which direction to go with the education system. With increases in accountability and a push for “school choice” in the general assembly, schools have been forced to fight for every dollar. In response, our district began its own on-line school to bring back students that left the district for other on-line programs, saving the district over $200,000 a year. As Superintendent, I have assumed the additional duties of High School Principal and Maintenance Supervisor to save the district $200,000 a year. The Assistant Principal position at the high school was eliminated, saving the district another $90,000 dollars. Finally, the teaching staff has been dramatically reduced, resulting in higher student to teacher ratios. However, with all the cuts, mandates continue to increase.
With an ever-increasing workload, it is difficult for administrators and teachers to maintain the same level of commitment to building culture. Given the relationship between student learning and student-adult connections, it is important to consider how this change in focus has impacted teacher-student relationships. While several studies have examined the impact of workload and accountability on teacher stress (Black, 2003; Naylor, 2001), a limited body of research has examined the effect of such stress on teacher-student relationships (Yoon, 2002). I am aware that my personal experiences contribute to a particular perspective. In chapter three I discuss ways in which I bracketed my perspectives, resulting in a methodology that was unbiased and meaningful.

**Definitions**

- **Academic emphasis:** According to Hoy, Tarter, and Woolfolk-Hoy (2006), “The extent to which the school is driven by a quest for academic excellence—a press for academic achievement” (p. 427).

- **Building Leadership Team (BLT):** A team of individuals consisting of representatives from all areas throughout the building. This team establishes goals for the building regarding student achievement and culture while at the same time encouraging shared leadership through the creation of purposeful communities (Ohio Department of Education, 2012).

- **Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP):** As the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) (2012) stated, A unified grants application and verification system that consists of two parts: the Planning Tool and the Funding Application. The Planning Tool contains the
goals, strategies, action steps, and district goal amounts for all grants in the CCIP. The Funding Application contains the budget, budget details, nonpublic services, and other related pages. The CCIP should be the district’s focused plan for improvement. (p. 118)

- **Decision framework (DF):** Again the ODE (2012) provided a clear working definition:
  
  An electronic tool that ultimately provides the CCIP needs assessment by using essential questions that can be answered with student achievement data, perceptual data, and other forms of data at the state and local level. The essential questions are organized around levels with a focus on student achievement and growth in content areas by grade level, building, and subgroup, followed by essential questions related to the critical student performance problems identified and uncover possible causes of these problems tied to the following: curriculum, instruction, assessment, managing educator talent, and expectations and conditions, for example, school climate, parents and family, community involvement, and allocation of resources. (p. 119)

- **District Leadership Team (DLT):** The DLT is a “team of individuals who promote a culture of common expectations or commitment by maintaining a district-wide focus on high achievement for all students” (Ohio Department of Education, 2012, p. 119).

- **District per pupil expenditure:** The amount of money spent annually in a district to educate a student.
• **District size**: District size is determined by the total number of students enrolled in the district.

• **Ohio Improvement Process (OIP)**: The Ohio Leadership Advisory Counsel, (2015) defined the OIP as “a structured process based on the use of a connected set of tools for reviewing, analyzing, and basing decisions on relevant data – provides a vehicle for initiating Ohio’s Leadership Development Framework in ways that are responsive to stakeholders’ insights about local commitments, needs, and assets” (para. 2).

• **Percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch**: The socio-economic status of a school or district is determined by number of students in the district that qualify for either free or reduced lunch based on family size and income.

• **Salient characteristics**: Effort utilized to motivate students, level of trust in students, level of expectations for students, level of reliability for student’s parents (Researcher defined, 2015).

• **School Academic Optimism Scale (SAOS)**: “The measurement of academic optimism at the individual level is comprised of three parts. First measure teacher sense of self-efficacy, then teacher trust in students and parents, and finally, the teacher's academic press for achievement. An index of teacher sense of academic optimism is the created by combining the measures of these three components of academic optimism” (Fahy et al., 2010, para 4).

• **School climate**: School climate can be seen as “the quality and character of school life.” According to schoolclimate.org, “School climate is based on patterns
of students’, parents’ and school personnel’s experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures” (“School climate,” 2016, p. 1).

- **Self-efficacy**: Self-efficacy has been defined as “the belief in one’s own ability to successfully accomplish something” (Bandura, 1997, p. 15).

- **Teacher Academic Optimism Scale (TAOS)**: A scale that consists of three parts: Self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis (Hoy et al., 2006).

- **Teacher Based Team (TBT)**: “Teams of teachers working together to improve instructional practice and student learning through shared work. As part of the OIP use of collaborative structures, TBTs follow a common set of guidelines described in a five-step process connected directly to focused goals, strategies, and actions described in the school improvement plan” (Ohio Department of Education, 2012, p. 122).

- **Teacher-Student interactions/relationships**: Measured by the levels of trust between teacher and student and the teacher confidence in his or her ability to successfully engage the student in learning (Researcher defined)

- **Value-Added data**: “A component of Ohio’s accountability system that measures growth or improvement over a period of time to determine the value gained by a student during that time period” (Ohio Department of Education, 2012, p. 122).

**Limitations**

Limitations of the current study are the sample size and demographic make-up of the two districts which limit the ability to generalize the findings to districts of different
size and demographic make-up. Another limitation of the study is the tenure of the principals and teachers. The years of experience may or may not limit their ability to draw a comparison. The final limitation is the response rate of the surveys.

**Delimitations**

One delimitation of this study is the location of the two high schools selected for this study. Both high schools are located in the rural Appalachian region of Ohio. Another delimitation is only two high schools are included in the study.

**Summary**

There have been several unsuccessful attempts to change education over the years; however, it the improvement initiatives were typically teacher-centered rather than student-centered (Sergiovanni, 1993). Unfortunately, these initiatives did very little to improve the status of American schools. Research has shown that engaging and innovative methods of interacting and motivating students have been successful. In a longitudinal study based on the analysis of 526 high school students, it was found that student engagement resulted in increases in mood and motivation (Shernoff et al., 2003).

Teachers and administrators play a vital role in creating a climate that is not only supportive, but also inviting to the students and community. “An important first step in establishing a valuing environment is getting to know each student as an individual. The information learned can help the teacher develop a positive rapport that facilitates and supports the student’s learning process” (Jacobson, 2000, p. 49). It is up to the building administration to provide the professional development and resources to train teachers on the importance of devoting the time and energy necessary to accomplish this very
important step. This enables teachers to not only motivate their students, but to do so in a personalized manner. Research suggests that quality professional development, driven by student data, needs to be long-term, intensive, and school-based (Wei, Darling-Hammond, & Adamson, 2010). However, according to many, there has been very little progress in the types of professional development being offered, which continues to be short-term and truncated with very little follow-through or consistency.

Concerns about dropping graduation rates and academic achievement have been on a steady rise throughout recent years. Wells (1989) states that, “A student’s decision to drop out of high school is often the end result of a long series of negative school experiences, academic failure, grade retention, or frequent suspensions that begin before the ninth grade” (p. 2). She also states that, “Much of the research on why students drop out points to negative teacher-student interactions. Likewise, students who stay in school often cite a ‘good teacher’ as one of the most positive elements of their school experience” (p. 5). The goal of this study was to examine teachers’ perceptions of the student-teacher interactions in two rural high schools with different connections to state-developed protocol for educational improvement: one school required to participate in the Ohio Improvement Process and one not required to participate.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The research question that guided this study was: What are the salient characteristics of teacher-student interactions in two rural high schools with different connections to Ohio’s protocol for educational improvement: one school that is required to participate in the Ohio Improvement Process and one that is not. This chapter discusses teacher/student relationships, and provides literature on the issues of educational change and the impact it may have on those relationships.

The basis for this research was to determine if the new educational initiatives in Ohio have an impact on the relationships between teachers and students. The changes addressed in this study are the consequences schools face for their performance on state tests. Schools that do not meet minimum requirements are required to participate in the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP). A more detailed description of this process is provided later in the chapter. In addition to the OIP, for the first time in Ohio, each teacher's individual evaluation is tied to how well their students perform on high-stakes assessments, as student growth represents as much as fifty percent of the teacher's overall rating.

Positive student teacher relationships give children a better opportunity for success in and outside of the classroom. Numerous studies have shown that students are more likely to be successful in a positive environment. How students feel about school can dictate how well they will do in school and building positive relationships may result in the identification of more effective learning opportunities. These extra opportunities
may help students in high poverty areas, to be able to face larger challenges as well (Sanders & Jordan, 2000).

Students that excel academically in the classroom view their teachers as friends first, helpers second, teachers last (Hopkins & Robinson, 1993). Accordingly, students are more likely to succeed if they interact in a safe environment that is supportive with a caring teacher (Gregory & Ripski, 2008). “Teachers who believe in the students’ abilities demonstrate that they care by placing the learners at the center of the educational process. With this focus on caring, teachers engage students in the learning process” (Lumpkin, 2007, p. 159). Research has shown that students who are actively involved or engaged tend to obtain and retain more information. Unfortunately, many teachers are unaware of the different types of social relationships they have jointly constructed with their students (Sarangi, 1998), and therefore unaware of the potentially negative impact these relationships may have.

**Teacher-Student Relationships**

The relationship between teachers and students has changed drastically since the introduction of high stakes testing and increased accountability (Meier, 2002). Barriers exist in the educational system that can alienate students at a time when content and rigor are at an all-time high. Therefore, it is important for teachers and students to work collaboratively toward mutually agreed upon educational goals. These collaborative efforts may lead to relationships built on trust, respect, and high expectations (Comer, 2004; Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989). When students are actively involved in goal setting, their levels of motivation and commitment are increased (Comer, 2004). A
collaborative effort between students and teachers may lead to more positive teacher-student relationships and higher levels of engagement. These relationships, especially when positive, play a vital role in the student’s learning. “High expectations for students was the most consistent positive predictor of students’ goals and interests, and negative feedback was the most consistent negative predictor of academic performance and social behavior” (Wetzel, 2002, p. 299). If students dislike their educators for one reason or another, they will be less likely to participate in the classroom, and if they enjoy the class, they tend to do better. Importantly, a link has been established between students liking school and the achievement of good grades (Gehlbach, Brinkworth, & Harris, 2012; Silva et al., 2011).

The impact of teacher-student relationships also extends to college, as positive relationships between students and their college professors produce excellence (Chen, 2000). Students are more likely to perform in a friendly environment where they feel the most comfortable. If students like a professor, they tend to feel the obligation to give that professor their best effort, and in the event they do not do well, they feel as if they let their professor down in a way.

Person-centered teachers rate above average association with positive student outcomes (Cornelius-White, 2007). When students feel the teacher actually cares about how they perform, they tend to try harder, and as a result do better on average. If they believe teachers do not care about how they perform, they will most likely do a poorer job than if they did.
Other important components of the teacher-student relationship identified by Nair and Fisher (2001) are respect, trust, and safety, in that students need to be able to respect and trust their teachers. If a person feels threatened by another, it is a natural instinct to stay on guard. If students do not feel comfortable in the classroom, they may be focusing on whatever is making them uncomfortable and trust is very important because students must trust their teachers in order to confide in them.

Classroom management is another vital component impacting the student-teacher relationship. Teachers must have control in the classroom for it to be safe and for learning to take place. There must not be a question of the objectives the teacher and students are trying to accomplish, and those objectives must be attainable. When educators create a well-structured, caring learning environment, students are more engaged and feel like they belong (Adelman & Taylor, 2006).

An important component in the development of the teacher-student relationship is dialogue. Teachers need to have the ability to communicate with this generation of students, as well as clearly define and maintain the role of teacher and students in the classroom (Bartlett, 2005). In the past, teachers were viewed primarily as authority figures. Now, teachers may not only be figures of authority, but also mentors. The teacher may be someone who is available and willing to give life advice to those in need.

Some studies have examined the dynamics of the teacher-student relationship and its impact on academic achievement. Jacobson (2000) examined student reactions to the provision of one-on-one meetings and purposeful evaluation methods. An important first step is developing rapport with each student. This process is not a one-way street and
may require one-on-one mentoring to be successful. In doing so, teachers may be able to help students avoid the negative experiences many students encounter. It is important for teachers to care about students as individuals (Jacobson, 2000).

A teacher's knowledge of his or her students, both personally and academically, may result in their academic success. Developing rapport with the students through one-on-one meetings and providing quality feedback from student evaluations helps the students feel valued. This may help teachers understand the basic knowledge their students may lack. In addition, when students see that their parents and teachers have positive relationships, they tend to do better in the classroom (Wong, Weist, & Cusick, 2002). In addition to positive relationships with the students, if teachers feel good about what they are doing in the classroom, it is more likely students will excel (Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012).

One of several factors that can help improve the teacher-student relationship is participation in extracurricular activities, and knowing the students outside the classroom helps to strengthen the teacher-student relationship (Pigford, 2001). Challenging students in mutual areas of interest allows the teacher to share something in common with the students. For example, eating lunch with students shows the teacher is available to speak at any time throughout the day, or something as simple as greeting students as they enter the classroom (Pigford, 2001).

One way to improve a teacher's knowledge of his or her students could be the creation of a caring learning environment in which a teacher and students establish a commitment to success. This begins with the establishment of an environment in which
the teacher gets to know factors that impact every student’s individual learning style (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2011). Good teachers act as mentors and it is through these types of relationships that rapport is developed. Relationships of mutual respect and support will help disrupt, and provide alternatives to traditional power inequities. In a study of 135 sixth-grade and 91 ninth-grade regular education students, Wong et al. (2002), examined students’ perceptions of teacher support, parent attachment, competence, and self-worth to predict motivational orientation and achievement test performance. “Significant predictors were classroom practices and scholastic competence was a significant predictor in all of the regression models” (Wong et al., 2002, p. 255).

The Impact of Educational Changes on Teacher-Student Relationships

The term change has become synonymous with education. In 2010, Ohio adopted a new set of standards for English Language arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. These new standards established a rigorous curriculum aimed at preparing students for both college and career readiness. In particular, Ohio adopted the Common Core for Mathematics and English Language arts (ELA), revamped the standards for Science and Social Studies, and implemented the new Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES). Math and ELA were originally referred to as the "Common Core" because these standards were created in collaboration with several other states. Although, the science and social studies standards were developed specifically for the state of Ohio, all the new standards are now termed the Ohio Learning Standards.

OTES, the new teacher evaluation system has changed the way teachers are evaluated in Ohio. In previous years, teachers were evaluated on individual performance.
The new system evaluates teachers on their individual performances in combination with the academic growth of their students, which has resulted in a drastic change in the pedagogy of teaching, overall accountability, and teachers’ levels of stress. A very similar program known as, Recognizing Educators Advancing Chicago’s Students (REACH students), was implemented in all 600 Chicago schools during the 2012 and 2013 school year. During the first and second years of implementation a survey was conducted on teachers. Results indicate that 79% of the teachers reported increases in their levels of stress and anxiety (Jiang & Sporte, 2014). In addition, 80% of the teachers surveyed had changed their instruction and made notable improvements (Jiang & Sporte, 2014).

The implementation of mandated changes may affect educators’ priorities in the classroom. A qualitative study that examined the strategies utilized to implement mathematics curriculum reform in rural high schools may shed some light on this topic (Howley, Larson, Andrianaivo, Rhodes, & Howley, 2007). Participants in this study were 21 rural Ohio high school principals with seven from remote Appalachian schools, seven from rural high schools not in the Appalachian region, and seven from rural high schools in less remote areas. Each principal was interviewed using eight open-ended questions. In addition to the eight predetermined open-ended questions, the interviewers added probing follow-up questions. The data was coded using an inductive coding process which resulted in six categories which included leadership, reform strategies, math talk, curriculum, teachers, and impediments. This helped researchers identify two conceptual domains. The “how to” domain which was concepts related to leadership and
teachers; and the “what constitutes reform” domain which related to the state of the schools after reforms had been put into place. The authors found the high schools labeled remote non-Appalachian achieved almost as high as the cosmopolitan rural schools, while the Appalachian schools achieved at a lower level (Howley et al., 2007). The study also found the educators’ main concerns was to raise test scores and there was little account for the preferences of the community. “The only response to the rural circumstances seemed to be the principals’ belief that the traditional culture of rural schools and communities might stand as an impediment to rapid adoption of reforms” (Howley et al., 2007, p. 9).

Educators’ sense of powerlessness and helplessness is becoming more and more common (Moje, 1996). Teachers often feel they have little if any say in the standards they teach or the assessments their students must take. After a period of time it is common for educators to lose their enthusiasm and motivation (Masci, Cuddapah, & Pajak, 2008). Restructured schools, teacher beliefs and teacher attitudes regarding their reduced role in educational decision making have made a difference in the way schools function (Enderlin-Lampe, 2002). In some cases, veteran teachers have become their own worst enemy as they tend to experience more consequences from high-risk tests (Burke, 2009). They are used to teaching certain material in a certain way, and cannot always make the necessary adjustments in pedagogy. In a study that examined the implementation of a new educational program designed to bridge teachers’ authoritarian teaching style to that of scientific inquiry, Blanchard, Southerland and Granger (2008), found that impediments to change in teachers still existed in spite of them being engaged
and offering reflection throughout the process. This mixed-methods study was conducted utilizing the naturalistic evaluation approach of four purposefully selected teachers. In addition to the observations, each teacher completed a pre and post implementation questionnaire that was coded and tabulated (Blanchard et al., 2008).

**School Climate**

"School climate refers to the quality and character of school life as it relates to norms and values, interpersonal relations and social interactions, and organizational processes and structures" (NSCC, 2015, p. 1). School climate is an aggregation of all the positive and negative interactions at an institution. It is the staff’s responsibility to provide the best school climate for learning, from the principal to the janitors. The principal, as the leader of the school, is responsible for facilitating an atmosphere that is warm and filled with trust (Goleman, 2006) which creates a school climate that is positive with higher teacher retention (Cohen & Ball, 2007).

Some research has examined the dynamics of the teacher-student relationships and its impact on classroom/school climate. Macneil et al. (2009) administered the Organizational Health Inventory at three schools. Their findings indicate that students perform better on high stakes tests when they are in schools with healthy learning environments. School climate is often under-evaluated and rarely measured, however understanding it could be vital to teachers who are looking to improve their students’ achievement levels (NSCC, 2008). It is the responsibility of the school leader to help people achieve an optimal state; one that prepares them to do their best (Goleman, 2006). In addition, it is important educators take the time to forge human connection with
students (Goleman, 2006). Goleman examined the brain in depth to determine why it reacts the way it does. He proposes the best climate for learning is one where all stakeholders within the school take steps to become more emotionally intelligent and socially aware, and defines emotional intelligence as the ability to read not only one’s own emotions, but also the emotions of others and to use that information to guide thought processes (Goleman, 2006). School climate encompasses all positive and negative interaction where tone is shaped by culture (Goleman, 2006). The author of this paper suggests that teachers do better when school leaders let them be flexible, teach how they wish, have high expectations and establish goals that are achievable.

Edmonds (1979) proposes that a school climate that supports academic achievement is comprised of strong administrative leadership, an environment that is safe and conducive to learning and a monitoring system that ensures the teaching of basic skills. The types of relationships that exist between principals and teachers is extremely fluid within the buildings as well as between schools. The positive effect on student achievement occurs when teachers see principals as facilitators, supporters, and reinforcers who are united in their determination to reach the mission of the school (Edgerson & Kritsonis, 2006). The principal’s daily interpersonal interactions help create a supportive environment in which the principal must function as the instructional leader of the building.

Principals’ leadership behavior was investigated in a case study of one rural high school that intentionally developed and sustained a plan for school improvement over a five year period (Chance & Segura, 2009). The study consisted of in-depth interviews of
sixteen individuals that had been actively involved in the school improvement process. These individuals were selected using a purposeful sampling method and included the building principal, superintendent, ten teachers, two students and two parents. In addition to the interviews, materials used during the improvement process such as newsletters, the improvement plan, reports, and memos were reviewed. Lastly, numerous observations of pertinent events such as staff meetings, teacher collaboration, and classes were conducted. A significant theme that came out of this study is the importance placed on the closeness and relationships of a rural school community where everyone knows everyone and parents trust that teachers are keeping a watchful eye on their children (Chance & Segura). In addition, they attributed the school’s success to the principal who placed a priority on teacher collaboration and the promotion of teacher leadership (Chance & Segura).

**Teacher Efficacy**

Personal efficacy is an individual's belief in his/her ability to do something (Hoy & Wolfolk, 1993). Teacher efficacy is teachers’ belief in their ability to positively impact student learning (Hoy & Wolfolk, 1993). An instrument designed to measure teacher efficacy, entitled, the "Teacher Efficacy Scale" designed by Hoy and Wolfolk (1993) exists in a short form and a long form (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). The short form contains ten items consisting of five personal efficacy items and five general teacher efficacy items (Hoy & Wolfolk, 1993). "These items were selected because they had the highest factor loadings in the earlier research" (Hoy & Wolfolk, 1993, p. 361). The authors found that teachers who perceive their principals as supportive and influential on
their behalf, display higher levels of personal efficacy (Hoy & Wolfolk). The only personal variable in this study that predicted teacher efficacy was the teacher’s education level. Specifically, teachers that furthered their education at the graduate level had a higher degree of teaching efficacy (Hoy & Wolfolk, 1993).

The long form of the Teacher Efficacy Scale contains 30 items selected from a pilot study of 53 items that were administered to 90 teachers (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Following the pilot study, 23 items were removed due to poor validity. Gibson and Dembo’s research (1984) consisted of three phases. Phase one was a factor analysis of 208 elementary teachers from 13 elementary schools. The participants completed the 30 item Teacher Efficacy Scale. Phase two was a multi-trait-multi-method analysis of fifty-five teachers enrolled in graduate courses. The participants in phase two completed the 30 item Teacher Efficacy Scale in addition to an open-ended measure of teacher efficacy. Phase three was a classroom observation of four teachers that scored high on teacher efficacy in phase one and four teachers that scored low on teacher efficacy in phase one. Results indicate that high efficacy teachers were more persistent in guiding their students to the correct responses via questioning, and spent more time moving throughout the room ensuring students were on task and correctly completing assignments (Gibson & Dembo).

The status of American schooling and the relationship between teachers’ perceived and aspired levels of shared decision-making were examined in a paper by Enderlin-Lampe (2002). According to his examination, teachers feel a sense of
powerlessness and helplessness and need to have more of a central role in decision-making (Enderlin-Lampe, 2002).

Yoon’s primary purpose in a 2002 study was to examine whether or not teachers report stress, negative effect, and self-efficacy. To accomplish this, 113 teachers were surveyed regarding their perceptions of dealing with difficult students. Data indicated that stress among teachers did not predict the number of good relationships teachers have with students (Yoon, 2002).

In order for students to benefit academically, they also need to feel connected to the school and what they are doing when they are there (Thompson, Lachan, Overpeck, Ross, & Gross, 2006). The importance for teachers to focus on students’ sense of connectedness, while important in every school, may be even more so in schools where there is a high poverty rate. In communities where there is a high poverty rate, students have less family support, place less emphasis on education, and are therefore less motivated to put forth a solid effort in high school (Hopson & Lee, 2011). Deeply rooted challenges that exist in economically disadvantaged areas seem to affect students’ aspirations to work hard. These challenges make it extremely difficult to build relationships and become connected to the school (Connell & Klem, 2006).

A study of 21 rural schools in the Central United States was conducted by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL, 2005). This study examined the differences between high-performing high-needs schools and high-needs low-performing schools. The study consisted of two phases. Phase one involved phone interviews of 21 principals of high-needs high-performing schools. High-performing
schools were selected based on two years of state achievement data. The phone interviews consisted of questions that addressed 19 factors covering four areas: leadership, instruction, professional community, and school environment. The top four factors from these interviews perceived as important included high student expectations, structured learning supports, curriculum, and the use of student data. Phase two involved on-site visits to six of the schools (McREL, 2005) selected based on information gathered in phase one. Only five of the selected schools chose to participate in phase two and only four of the schools had useable data. During the site-visits, interviews were conducted with focus groups. All interviews were recorded and coded for the factors used in the phone interviews from phase one. Findings indicate these high-need, high-performing schools had a connection with their communities which indicated a personal investment by community members. In addition, high-need, high-performing schools had a less transient population as indicated by parents who had attended the same school as their children, and exhibited trust in the faculty. The success of these small rural schools is attributed to the close relationships between faculty, students, and community (McREL, 2005).

In addition, according to Patrick, Turner, Meyer, and Midgley (2003), first impressions, consistent behavior, and long-term efforts to create a caring and affirming classroom climate, all play a role in how students respond to the schooling experience. In rural areas of Appalachia, students are plagued by lower expectations and a lower quality education, which hinder achievement (Ali & Saunders, 2009). In this study, sixty-three high school students completed a survey that measured their career decision aspirations,
self-efficacy regarding vocational/educational beliefs, socioeconomic status, age, and perceptions of peer and family support. Ali and Saunders’ findings indicate that low socioeconomic status (SES) Appalachian high school students need interventions to increase self-esteem, confidence and future expectations.

Rural high schools must overcome several obstacles, including student poverty, limited resources, the recruitment of highly qualified teachers and the ability to retain them (Holloway, 2002; Howley & Howley, 2005; Huang & Howley, 1991; Lowe, 2006; Rampage & Howley, 2005). If the same students were taken from the educational setting with lower expectations and placed in an educational setting with higher expectations, those students would be more likely to succeed (McPartland, Jordan, Legters, & Balfanz, 1997).

One third of Ohio falls into the poor rural classification known as the Appalachian Region, which is the region of focus for the present study (Pollard & Jacobsen). In the 32 counties of Appalachian Ohio, only 15.8% of the students earn a bachelor's degree which is nearly 10% lower than the state average, and 13% below the national average (Pollard & Jacobsen, 2012). With an above-average dropout rate, the graduation rate is merely 85.2% which falls below the 88.2% state average (Pollard & Jacobsen). As the rest of the state and nation evolve, Appalachia may be left behind in the industrial era unless this trend of cyclical poverty is broken. This task may be difficult in light of the tendency for Appalachians to prioritize family bonds and heritage and remain isolated to keep outside influences away (Ali & Saunders, 2009).
Academic success is a serious concern given the dropout rate and academic achievement of students residing in this region. Only 12% of all jobs available will be available for high school dropouts (Schwartz, 2004). For Appalachian students to be competitive with the rest of the state and nation, further research needs to be completed in rural area schools. Findings from this research could improve the type and frequency of professional development aimed at increasing student achievement offered to teachers in the Appalachian counties of Ohio. Changes in professional development may increase the number of positive teacher-student interactions; and in doing so, increase academic achievement and graduation rates.

The Impact of Teacher Turnover

In a study that explored the effects of high turnover rates and teacher longevity, it was hypothesized that consistency makes students feel more comfortable and allows them to excel (Guin, 2004). This study was conducted in a large district which serves nearly 47,000 students and employs 4,500 certified staff. A purposive sample consisting of 15 schools were carefully chosen to participate and was based on the demographic makeup and geographic location of the district. Five of the fifteen schools agreed to participate in the study. Teachers from these five schools completed a school climate survey and those that agreed were interviewed. In addition, seven years of turnover data for the district was analyzed. As might be expected, study findings revealed a high turnover rate negatively impacts the amount of time spent with students, repetition of professional development experienced, reduction in knowledge and familiarity gained through tenure, inconsistencies with long range planning and program implementation, as
There are also many positive outcomes associated with a low turnover rate such as: the ability for long range planning and program implementation, stabilization within the overall internal structure, and the ability to create an environment where everyone works toward a common set of goals. Students in buildings with high teacher turnover rates score lower on English and Math tests (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). Chronic teacher turnover and its effects on school climate and organization were also looked at by Guin (2004) and results indicate that school climate may be impacted by high teacher turnover rates (Guin, 2004).

**Teacher-Student Relationships**

The impact of informal relationships on personal and intellectual development was studied by Halawah (2006). Student-faculty interactions in other contexts outside of the classroom are important to help students know they are cared about. “Successful students rate teachers: first as friends, second as helpers and third as teachers” (Hopkins & Robinson, 1993, p. 188). “Positive relationships between staff and students play a major part in fostering intellectual development of students and make teaching activities more satisfying and rewarding” (Halawah, 2006, p. 674). These relationships go a long way in nurturing the academic development of students. They also create an atmosphere in which teaching activities are worthwhile and meaningful. Strong relationships can build a sense of being cared for in school, which can be linked to an overall sense of well-being and connection to school (McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002).

Many students feel that the odds of success are stacked against them. It is part of the educator’s job to help them work through those feelings and ensure they know they
are capable of anything (Wentzel, 2002). There is a great deal of pressure on students to do well, so it is important for them to feel that teachers will be there for them when needed. Niebuhr & Niebuhr (1999) administered a survey questionnaire to 241 high school freshmen from a small rural high school using the Comprehensive Assessment of School Environment (CASE). This instrument was developed in 1982 by members of the National Association of Secondary School Administrators (NASSA). Results indicated that student-peer and student-teacher relationships were positively correlated to academic achievement and positive school climate related to achievement (Niebuhr & Niebuhr, 1999).

**Teacher-student relationships and school connectedness.** Strong relationships are also a predictor of connectedness, which is related to student health outcomes (Thompson et al., 2006). One important component of student learning is the capacity to cultivate positive and supportive student relationships, which become motivational for individuals engaged in the process. “Relationship teaching involves the incorporation of a number of techniques designed to enable teachers with differing personalities, varied teaching styles, and those who teach in different fields to develop human relationship skills that can lead to increased student effort and participation” (Nichols & Sutton, 2015, p. 1). Contributions to relationship building include, but are not limited to: sharing of personal information, showing personal interest in students, acknowledging student success, requiring student meetings for consultation, getting to know the learning style of the students, getting involved with the students in and out of school, providing prompt teacher feedback, making sure the students know the academic expectations, demanding
academic rigor, making sure students are aware of your availability (Nichols & Sutton, 2015). This generalization from college students to students in secondary schools can be attributed to the fact that students as young as 7th grade can now take college courses under the new College Credit Plus program.

**Teacher-student relationships and student academic success.** It is important to remember that children’s relationships with teachers can influence their academic success (Furrer, Skinner, & Pitzer, 2014) Strong teacher-student relationships are observable in the classroom. “When teachers are dependable sources of emotional and instrumental support in difficult times, students feel connected to their teachers and safe at school” (Furrer et al., p.105). It is human nature to make greater efforts for people we like and teachers tend to give greater respect to the ideas and work of students who respect them. That being said, personality clashes can and do exist between teachers and their students. “The key building block of the relationship between student and teacher is trust. The more complex the learning the more children need genuine adult company, and the more trusted the adults must be” (Meier, 2002, p. 13). As the world of academic accountability continues to evolve for both teachers and students, so to do the demands and expectations in the classroom. As a result, students may view their teachers as the villains responsible for, what they view as, negative changes in the classroom (Meier, 2002).

According to numerous secondary students, the teacher-student relationship is top priority for learning to take place (McNeely et al., 2002). The removal of negative interactions between students and teachers in the classroom is crucial to creating an
environment that fosters positive teacher-student relationships. Students indicate that approachable teachers create an environment in which students are not hesitant in asking their teacher for assistance. The body language and emotions a teacher brings into the classroom effects the teacher-student relationship, which in turn, has an impact on the student’s desire to be productive in that class. Students are more productive academically when taught by a caring teacher (Richards, 2006).

**Summary**

The relationship between teachers and students has changed drastically since the introduction of high stakes testing and increased accountability (Meier, 2002). Barriers exist in the educational system that can alienate students at a time when content and rigor are at an all-time high. Students that excel academically in the classroom view their teachers as friends first, helpers second, teachers last (Hopkins & Robinson, 1993). Accordingly, students are more likely to succeed if they interact in a safe environment that is supportive with a caring teacher (Gregory & Ripski, 2008). If students dislike their educators for one reason or another, they may be less likely to participate in the classroom, and if they enjoy the class, they tend to do better. Importantly, a link has been established between students liking school and the attainment of good grades (Gehlbach et al., 2012; Silva et al., 2011).

Change has become synonymous with education. In 2010, Ohio adopted a new set of standards for English Language arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. These new standards established a rigorous curriculum aimed at preparing students for both college and career readiness. In particular, Ohio adopted the Common Core for
Mathematics and English Language arts (ELA), revamped the standards for science and social studies, and implemented the new Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES).

Educators’ sense of powerlessness and helplessness is becoming more and more common (Moje, 1996). Teachers often feel they have little if any say in the standards they teach or the assessments their students must take. After a period of time, it is common for educators to lose their enthusiasm and motivation (Masci et al., 2008).

Rural high schools must overcome several obstacles including student poverty, limited resources, the recruitment of highly qualified teachers, and the ability to retain them (Holloway, 2002; Howley & Howley, 2005; Huang & Howley, 1991; Lowe, 2006; Rampage & Howley, 2005). If the same students were taken from the educational setting with lower expectations and placed in an educational setting with higher expectations, they students would be more likely to succeed (McPartland et al., 1997).
Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter three presents the methodology used in the examination of teacher-student interactions/relationships and whether or not they are affected by required academic improvement initiatives. The purpose of this study was to answer the following research question: What are the salient characteristics of teacher-student interactions in two rural high schools with different connections to Ohio’s protocol for educational improvement: one school that is required to participate in the Ohio Improvement Process and one school that is not? This chapter contains the following sections: methodological assumptions, research methods, background and pertinent experiences, data collection methods, analysis of data and a discussion of the study’s validity.

Research Design

The current study was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. According to Patton (2002), the blending of qualitative and quantitative data in research is common. To address the quantitative aspects, the study used the Teacher Academic Optimism Scale (TAOS) (Fahy et al., 2010) which allowed teachers to rate key aspects of their classroom climate. Interviews with the principals of the two high schools selected for the study using predetermined open-ended questions comprised the qualitative portion of the study. The aim of the study was to identify any differences due to the school’s level of participation in the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP). The schools in this study have different levels of involvement in the state-developed improvement protocols. One school is required to participate in the improvement process and the other is not.
As discussed in chapter one, under Ohio administrative code 3302.04, schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years are identified as “improvement schools” (Ohio Laws and Rules, 2015, “Ohio Administrative Code 3302.04”). These schools are identified as low, medium, or high support schools based on the percentage of students that fail to meet adequate yearly progress, as identified on the state report card in reading and mathematics. Regardless of the level of support, each district in school improvement is required to participate in the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP). This study compares a school that has been designated as an improvement school with a school that has not. The school labeled an improvement school (school A) is required to participate in the OIP, while the school (school B) that is not labeled an improvement school is not.

Variables

Variables in this study included four independent and three dependent variables. The four independent variables included: gender (male, female), years of experience in teaching (interval variable), subject area in which they taught (Math, Science, Social Studies, English, and non-core), and School Type (mandated, non-mandated). The three dependent variables included Teacher Self-efficacy, Trust, and Academic Emphasis.

Researcher’s Lens

I have been fascinated with the impact of school climate and the role teacher-student relationships play on student achievement since becoming a high school teacher twenty-four years ago. I grew up in a small rural community nestled along the Ohio River in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. A large majority of the people
worked in the coal or steel mills and placed family and work ethic as priorities. The school was located in the center of the community and was the hub for most events in town. The high school I attended was small with a familial atmosphere. The teachers and administrators knew all the students and their families and called them by name. The classes were small and the teachers truly cared about the students’ academic success. I believe it was these supportive relationships and parental expectations that aided me the most.

My father was the first member of his family to receive a college education, but went to work in the coal mine because of the lack of employment opportunities in his field. My mother earned an associate's degree and worked for a local steel corporation for forty-seven years. They stressed the importance of education and hard work to my two sisters and me from an early age. All three of us have earned a minimum of a Master's degree and we continue to place education as a priority.

My first teaching position was at an inner-city urban school in northwest Ohio. It was there that I witnessed the impact of positive and negative teacher-student relationships on academic achievement. There was limited parent involvement and many students were from single parent homes. I learned early on that developing rapport with the students was vital to their academic and social success. My first year mentor gave me some great advice when he said, "they won't care what you know until they know you care." I took that advice to heart and developed great relationships with my students. During my four years at the school, I had few if any discipline issues and my students excelled academically.
I returned to the Ohio valley in 1997 as the assistant principal of a school fifteen miles from where I grew up. The school was much more culturally diverse and twice the size of the high school I had attended, but many of the same values existed. During my first two years, I had to deal with numerous discipline issues. I focused on being fair, firm, and consistent with all the students. I was very visible and tried to attend as many extracurricular events as possible. Keeping in mind what my mentor teacher had told me, I made a concerted effort to know the students by name and develop positive relationships with them. In my third year, I saw the number of discipline referrals decrease tremendously; in fact they were nearly cut in half. The following year, I was promoted to the position of high school principal.

As principal, I began to focus more on the students’ academic success. The high school had generally done well on state testing, but I knew we could do better. I worked closely with the staff to make changes that would impact student success. I developed the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC), which consisted of a representative from each department and the two guidance counselors. We met on a regular basis to discuss various issues in the school. Together we tackled each issue, often resulting in increased staff and student moral. The next group I initiated was the Student Action Committee (SAC), which consisted of any students interested in making a difference. One goal of this group was to recruit students that were not involved in any school activities. During the initial year, our numbers grew to over one hundred students. We met in the auditorium on a regular basis to discuss student concerns and to address issues such as
bullying, mentoring, and leading by example. In addition, the group would take on a community outreach project each grading period.

During my years at the high school, I also witnessed a consistent increase in state mandates and a steady decline in resources. This began with a series of high-stakes tests ranging from the Ohio proficiency test to the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) to what is currently called the Ohio Curriculum-Based Assessments. Each has resulted in numerous hours of professional development for the staff and drastic changes in the content and sequence of the curriculum. In addition to the state mandates, a state report card was introduced that rates each school in Ohio on a scale ranging from excellent with distinction to needing improvement. Our high school received the identification of excellent each year.

In 2012, drastic changes were made to the state report card and each school now receives an overall letter grade. The overall letter grade is formulated from a compellation of grades assigned to each section of the new Ohio state report card which now includes grades for value added, adequate yearly progress, state testing, attendance, and graduation rates. In addition to the new state report card, the state implemented a new teacher evaluation system, the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) and a new principal evaluation system, the Ohio Principal Evaluation System (OPES). Both of these evaluation systems contain a component of a student growth measure. The student growth measure currently makes up 35%-50% of each teacher and principal's evaluation.
Participants

Participants in this study consisted of the building principals and high school teachers from two rural Appalachian districts in eastern Ohio. These schools were selected due to the location and similar demographic make-up. In addition to the building principal from school A, 14 of 15 teachers completed the survey and TAOS-S. In addition to the building principal from school B, 21 of 23 teachers completed the survey and TAOS-S.

Instrument

The Teacher Academic Optimism Scale for secondary teachers (TAOS-S) and survey questions were used to measure classroom climate and how the climate impacts student learning. The TAOS-S, developed by Fahy et al. (2010), consists of nine questions (see appendix B). Three questions measure teacher’s sense of self efficacy, three questions measure the level of trust the teacher has in students and parents, and three questions measure the amount of academic emphasis the teacher places on the students (Fahy et al.). Scores for the three constructs are combined to create an academic optimism score for the teacher. These questions were piloted via a sample group of secondary teachers enrolled in graduate classes at four universities. The pilot group consisted of 131 secondary teachers that were enrolled in graduate classes at the University of Texas, Ohio State University, University of Alabama, and William and Mary. The teachers participated voluntarily and their identification was kept anonymous.
Measure of Individual Academic Optimism for Secondary Teachers: Teacher

Academic Optimism Scale (TAOS-S)

The Measurement of academic optimism at the individual level is comprised of three parts. First it measures teacher sense of self-efficacy, then teacher trust in students and parents, and family, and finally, the teacher’s academic press for achievement. An index of teacher sense of academic optimism is created by combining the measures of these three components of academic optimism as explained below (Fahy et al., 2010, p. 2).

Scoring TAOS-S

1. Self-Efficacy (SE): Sum the scores of 1, 2, and 3, then divide by 3.
2. Trust (T): Sum the scores of items 4, 5, and 6, then divide by 3.
3. Academic Emphasis (AE): Sum the scores for items 7, 8, and 9, then divide by 3.
4. Standardize each of these subtest scores as follows:
   - Standard Score for Self-Efficacy (SSSE) = [100X(SE-7.53)/1.211] +500
   - Standard Score for Trust (SST) = [100X(SE-3.41)/.856] + 500
   - Standard Score for Academic Emphasis (SSAE) = [100X(SE-4.43)/.756] + 500

   Academic Optimism + [(SSSE)+(SST)+(SSAE)] divided by 3 (Fahy et al., 2010, p. 2).

The results from the pilot group of teachers that took the nine question survey conducted by Fahy et al. (2010), were also divided into the same three categories.
Three Likert items tapped teacher trust in parents and students. Teachers indicated their agreement with each item from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The scale had an alpha coefficient of reliability of .86 for the pilot study and .85 for the final sample and included the following items: T1. Most of my students are honest. T2. My student’s parents are reliable. T3. I trust my students. (Fahy et al., 2010, p. 218)

The next category was teacher sense of self-efficacy. These three items were derived from the 12 original items used in the pilot. They are measured along a 9-point continuum from nothing (1), very little (3), some influence (5), quite a bit, and a great deal (9). According to Fahy et al. (2010),

The higher the score, the greater the teacher’s sense of self-efficacy. Our exploratory factor analysis identified an even shorter, reliable scale consisting of three items: TE1. I can motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork. TE2. I can get students to believe that they will do well in school. TE3. I can get students to follow classroom rules. The alpha coefficient of reliability for this scale was .83 for both samples of this study. (p. 218)

Likewise, academic emphasis was measured using three items identified in our earlier exploratory factor analysis. Teachers indicated their agreement with each item from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The scale had had an alpha coefficient of reliability of .92 for the pilot sample and .87 for the final sample and included the following items: AE1. I press my students to achieve
academically. AE2. I give my students challenging work. AE3. I set high but attainable goals for my students. (Fahy et al., 2010, p. 218)

**Interview protocol.** Second, principals from the high schools were interviewed using an interview protocol created following recommendations by Creswell (2014) that included a descriptive heading, instructions for the interviewer to follow to ensure consistency, seven questions, space to record responses, and a thank-you statement (see Appendix C). The predetermined open-ended questions addressed a district that is mandated to participate in the OIP and a district that does not.

**Research Methods**

This section of the chapter provides details regarding the methods used to conduct the study. The manner in which the schools were selected, the surveys administered, permission sought for the interviews, and data collected and analyzed, are described in this section.

**Context.** The two high schools were selected based on their rural locale, demographic make-up, socioeconomic status, principal’s tenure, and level of participation in the Ohio Improvement Process. The names of the schools have been changed and will be referred to as the following: school A has been mandated to participate in the OIP and school B is not participating in the OIP. The schools that were selected are located in east-central Ohio. The communities are predominately blue-collar and the schools are the hub for most activities within the area.
Procedures

This section describes the procedures used to conduct the research; including the rationale for selecting the research sites and participants, methods used to contact the sites, survey used to capture data, the means for developing the interview questions, and the method for coding and analyzing the data.

Gaining entry. Full Institutional Review Board (see Appendix FF) approval (16-E-7) was gained prior to contacting the superintendents of each district where the two high schools are located. The schools were selected based on location, school size, and demographic make-up. Each school superintendent was contacted to explain the purpose of the study and to get initial approval to proceed with the proposed research in their districts. Following approval, the high school principals were contacted to review the research procedures.

Study procedures. The principal of each district was contacted to arrange a time and place to conduct the interview and to review the survey and TAOS-S procedures. First, the principals were interviewed in their offices using a series of predetermined questions. The interviews lasted approximately thirty minutes each and were digitally recorded and detailed notes were taken by the researcher. In January, the researcher met with the principal from school A to conduct the interview using a set of predetermined questions (Appendix C). Later the same week, the researcher met with the principal from school B to conduct the interview using the same set of predetermined questions. In addition to the recording, the researcher took detailed notes on each principal’s response. Second, the principals reviewed the study procedures with their staff and had them
complete the surveys and TAOS-S at a staff meeting. The teachers were allotted as much
time as needed at the staff meeting to complete and return the surveys. Completed
surveys were placed in large sealed envelope for this researcher to pick up. This was
completed at the beginning of the second semester so as not to interfere with state
assessments periods. In exchange, the results of the TAOS-S and surveys were provided
to the district so that they could utilize them for their own academic improvement
initiatives.

Analysis of Data

Quantitative. The TAOS-S was scored on a five point Likert-like scale and a
nine-point continuum as discussed previously in the instrument section of this chapter.
The statistical analysis that was done was a two-tailed ANOVA for all variables except
the teacher-student relationship. A Levine-test was used to test for the variance between
and within the groups to determine there was no statistically significant difference.

Qualitative. In addition to TAOS-S, completed surveys were collected and coded
based on common themes and concepts. Also, interviews were conducted with the
principals of each high school. The interview questions were formulated using Creswell’s
protocol for developing interview questions (Creswell, 2014). The questions were
predetermined open-ended questions that address the implementation of academic
improvement initiatives, teacher stress, and the impact such initiatives on relationships
between teachers, principals, students and parents. The interviews were recorded with a
digital recorder and detailed notes were taken by the researcher to ensure accuracy for the
purpose of coding.
The causation coding method was used to assign a descriptive label to the interview and survey responses. The goal of causation coding is to “locate, extract and/or infer causal beliefs from qualitative data such as interview transcripts, participant observation field notes and written survey responses” (Saldaña, 2013, p.151). Causation coding is a method used to answer why particular things happen.

This researcher reviewed the interview and survey responses and identified four common themes: leadership, school climate, policy-making and self-efficacy. Once these themes were identified, the researcher coded the data into those four areas for analysis. The goal of which was to identify trends in data that help explain if and how mandates impact teacher-student relationships/interaction.

**Study Validity**

The validity of any study is dependent on the measurement instrument and the skill and competence of the researcher (Patton, 2002). To avoid bias and enhance reliability, all interviews were recorded digitally and participants were reminded to be clear and specific with their answers. The interview and survey questions were piloted with two building principals and two high school teachers to establish content validity and to improve the questions as recommended by Creswell (2014). Furthermore, detailed notes were taken of both interviews in case of a malfunction with the digital recorder. In addition, the digitally recorded interviews were examined for functionality immediately following the interview. If for some reason the digital recorder had malfunctioned, notes were extended and written in more detail. Following Patton’s (2002) recommendation,
interviews were transcribed within a few days of the interview to increase overall validity.

In addition, to further improve the overall validity of the qualitative data, the following two techniques were utilized. The first of which was transactional validity. This approach was more interactive and required the researcher to adjust throughout the process. “Validity as a transactional process consists of techniques or methods by which misunderstandings can be adjusted and thus fixed” (Patton, 2006, p. 321). Throughout the principal interviews this researcher made adjustments in questioning to stay on topic and maintain consistency. The second approach was transformational validity. The ultimate goal of most research is to elicit some sort of change. Transformational validity is not dependent on the methods used, but the delivery and interaction of the researcher throughout the process. In order to accomplish transformational validity this researcher arranged the questions so that the participants could visualize where they started and what if any changes had been brought about throughout the process. As Patton (2006) stated, “Transformational validity in qualitative research as a progressive, emancipatory process leading toward social change that is to be achieved by the research endeavor itself” (p.322).

Triangulation of the data was also used to increase the overall validity of the study. According to Patton (2009), triangulation of data adds credibility to the study. In the current study I analyzed the principal interview responses, teacher surveys, and TAOS-S results to compile data used for interpretation and recommendations of future research.
Limitations

The following limitations have been identified for this study:

The sample size and demographic make-up of the two districts limited the ability to generalize the findings to districts of different size and demographic make-up.

The tenure of the principals and teachers, which refers to the number of years each has worked in their current position as well as previous positions. This is a limitation since teachers and principals with more tenure have been through multiple cycles of academic improvement and may or may not take the surveys as serious as those with less tenure.

The response rate of the surveys may have been impacted by the amount of work already asked of the teachers. However, to avoid overwhelming the teachers, this researcher arranged for the surveys to be distributed by the high school principal and completed at the next staff meeting. The date selected was prior to the annual state assessments so as to afford them the time needed to complete the surveys without being rushed.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to answer the following research question: What are the salient characteristics of teacher-student relationship/interactions in two rural high schools with different connections to Ohio’s protocol for educational improvement: one school that is required to participate in the Ohio Improvement Process and one school that is not required to participate in the Ohio Improvement Process?
In order to answer this question, the researcher conducted a mixed methods study at two high schools with similar demographic make-up. This researcher first received consent from the superintendent of each district to conduct the study. This researcher then met with the building principal of each district to explain the study and arrange for the teachers to complete the surveys and TAOS-S. In addition, this researcher scheduled a place and time to conduct the principal interviews. Once the principal interviews, teacher surveys, and TAOS-S were complete, the data was analyzed using causation coding for the interviews and surveys. The TAOS-S data and the survey responses regarding levels of stress, gender and years of experience were analyzed for levels of significance, standard deviation and mean scores using SPSS software. Finally, triangulation of the data was used to enhance overall validity.
Chapter Four: Findings

Overview of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the salient characteristics of teacher-student relationships/interactions in two rural high schools with different connections to Ohio’s protocol for academic improvement. One school that is mandated (school A) to participate in the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) and one school that is not mandated (school B) to participate in the (OIP). The goal of the study was to better understand if the implementation of mandated improvement initiatives had an impact on teacher-student relationships/interactions. The underlying premise was that school aged students spend a majority of their time at school interacting with teachers, coaches, and peers. These interactions help build relationships which contribute to the overall school experience. Conditions that compromise such relationships may have deleterious effects on students, school culture, and student performance.

The two theories this researcher chose for the theoretical foundation of the study were Tonnies (1887) theory that distinguishes between formal organizations and organic communities; and Staw et al.’s (1981) theory of threat rigidity. Tonnies theory referred to formal organizations as “Gesellschaft” which is German for society. He viewed these as impersonal and transactional. He referred to organic communities as “Geimenschaft” which is German for community. He viewed these as positive, building relationships based on trust (Tonnies, 1887). This researcher’s questions regarding this theory were:
Do these academic initiatives make schools more or less formal? Do they force schools to work in smaller more manageable groups, thus creating more of an organic community?

The rationale behind the theory of threat rigidity is that anytime an organization is confronted with a threat resulting in an environmental change, rigidity is the likely outcome (Staw et al., 1981). This researcher’s question regarding this theory was: Do these academic initiatives increase stress and reduce the teachers’ sense of self-efficacy? Thus creating an environment that is forced to change because of the insertion, of what teachers may consider, threats.

**Study Procedures**

In order to address the research question, this researcher identified two school districts with similar demographic make-up and different levels of connection to Ohio’s protocol for academic improvement. One school that was mandated to participate in the OIP and one school that was not required to participate in the OIP. Once the two schools were identified, this researcher contacted each superintendent, explained the study and asked permission to conduct the study in their district. They both agreed to participate via a letter of acceptance on school letterhead with their signature.

This researcher then contacted each high school principal and talked them through the study. Then arranged to meet each of them in order to conduct interviews and provide them with all required paperwork, the teacher surveys and the TAOS-S. They agreed to have their teachers fill out the surveys and complete the TAOS-S at their next staff meeting. The interview questions and teacher survey questions were generated by this researcher and piloted with two high school principals and two high school teachers.
After completion of the pilot, the researcher determined the question regarding the impact implementation of new academic initiatives regarding relationships needed to be more specific. Therefore, this researcher divided the question into the following relationships: teacher to teacher, teacher to student, teacher to principal and teacher to parent.

The response rate for the surveys and TAOS-S from school A was 93% (N = 14). The response rate for TAOS-S was 100% (N = 23) for school B, and 91% (N = 21) for the teacher surveys for school B. The difference in response rates for school B was due to the fact that two teachers did not answer all survey questions.

**Study Findings**

**Demographic data.** Participants in this study consisted of the building principals and high school teachers from two rural Appalachian districts in eastern Ohio with different connections to Ohio’s protocol for academic improvement. School A was mandated to participate in the OIP and school B was not mandated to participate in the OIP. In addition to the building principal from school A, 14 of 15 teachers completed the survey and TAOS-S. In addition to the building principal from school B, 21 of 23 teachers completed the survey and TAOS-S. Stress and self-efficacy while related, differ in that stress is focused around time management and support while self-efficacy is focused on the teacher’s overall level of confidence and comfort in what they are teaching.

**Findings by school (A and B).** Qualitative data was aggregated and coded for themes across all responses. The themes that emerged were self-efficacy, leadership, and stress and school climate. Results are presented by utilizing questions to organize by
theme. Question 1 and 2 were demographic questions; therefore, the first question is number 3.

Teacher survey responses for school A Question #3:
How have new programs (mandatory or voluntary) affected your sense of self-efficacy? (i.e., Student Learning Objectives, Building Leadership Teams, Ohio Teacher Evaluation System, Teacher based Teams, etc.)

Eleven of the fourteen teachers (78%) felt that the new programs have taken valuable time away from teaching and increased the amount of paperwork. Three felt the new programs helped them prioritize their objectives and set new goals for their students. Responses varied from one participant to the next, however themes emerged were that the new initiatives made students feel insufficient and were time consuming. Selected responses are listed below.

Stress related responses are reflected in the following statements: Participant #1 responded, “Affected by creating more paperwork and busywork. Reduces my time and energy spent on my students and classes.” While participant #2 responded, “Most seem like a waste of time. I feel my prep time and time teaching has decreased in order to do these things, and I have to work at home a lot.” Finally, participant #10 responded, “Made things much more difficult and busier.”

A response by participant 9 is representative of issues of self-efficacy, “It makes me feel insufficient and underappreciated.” The theme of school climate can be seen in responses made by participants 5 and 7. Participant #5 responded, “The new programs have helped with prioritizing objectives.” Participant #7 responded, “I feel like the
programs have helped me look at what I teach, set new goals for students, and go after stated goals. Want students to achieve and feel accomplished. Then I feel my job is done.” Participant seven’s response suggests the underlying importance of leadership.

Teacher survey responses for school B Question #3:

How have new programs (mandatory or voluntary) affected your sense of self-efficacy? (I.e. SLOs, BLTs, OTES, TBTs, etc.)

A majority of the participants from school B responded that the new programs had little if any affect. A few participants felt the new programs increased their stress levels. The common themes that arose were that the new initiatives caused little stress, were well introduced, and improved overall self-efficacy for teachers. Selected responses are listed below.

Stress related responses are reflected in the two statements. Participant #23 responded, “It’s increased my stress level.” And participant #25 responded “Very stressful.”

Several responses are represented issues of self-efficacy. Participants #15, #16, #17, #18, #19, #21, #24, #34 and #37 responded, “The new programs have had little or no effect.” Participant #26 responded, “For the most part they have been informative and I feel have made me a better educator.” Participant #32 responded, “I think they have for the most part qualified my abilities.” Participant #28 responded, “As the new academic improvement programs, SLO’s, Pre-Test/Post-Tests, quarterly assessments, PARCC Tests, OTES, PBA, EOY Tests, etc. have seemingly been launched “all at once,” all the
additional teacher work required has not hampered my teacher effectiveness, but it has
caused teaching enjoyment and teacher creativity to be lacking.”

Teacher survey responses for school A Question #4:
How do you prioritize the implementation of academic improvement programs within
your classroom?

A majority of the participants indicated they do what they have to. For the most part, they responded that they have to do it, so they do. A common theme was that participants make the implementation of new programs a top priority, but at the expense of valuable class time. A few participants place very low priority on the programs, because they view it as something that changes every two to three years. Selected responses are listed below.

Stress related responses are reflected in statements from three participants. Participant #1 responded, “Main priority is my classroom and students. Then I have to worry about how to implement new programs.” Participant #2 responded, “I make them a top priority, but all the paperwork bogs me down.” Finally, participant #3 responded, “They must be implemented, many, in my opinion only take up valuable classroom time with no discernable gains.”

One participant response that represented a negative impact on self-efficacy was provided by participant #3 who indicated, “They must be implemented, many, in my opinion only take up valuable classroom time with no discernable gains.”

Several participant’s responses focused on leadership. Participant #7 responded, “It has to be done, so I do it (SLO at the beginning and end of the year) when it’s
required. I shifted lesson plans to make my OTES evaluation class which was observed show the principal what he need to see.” Participant #10 responded, “Very low [priority] because things change every 2 to 3 years.” Participant #11 responded, “Very low [priority] because they are always changing or trying to interpret the programs.”

Teacher survey responses for school B Question #4:
How do you prioritize the implementation of academic improvement programs within your classroom?

A majority of the participants responded they prioritize what needs to be done and adjust what they do in the classroom accordingly. A few pick and choose what they do in the classroom based on the needs of their students. Select responses are listed below.

Stress related responses are reflected in the following statement from participant #21, “I do what I need to do to get the classroom goals done. Programs that I feel are helpful become a higher priority.” Several participant responses are representative of issues of self-efficacy. Participant #15 responded, “I implement the necessary programs as often as required to achieve success.” Participant #17 responded, “I use SLO’s first. They have now become the standard in my classroom.” Participant #19 responded, “Prioritized high on my list. Looking for the presence of characteristics as clear and shared focus. Curriculum and instruction are aligned with the state standards.” Participant #22 responded, “First I teach and then I work on the plan.” Participant #26 responded, “I base implementation on the backgrounds of my students. Some classes and students are more motivated than other.” Finally, participant #35 responded, “They guide my planning and instruction.”
Teacher survey responses for school A Question #5:

How does your building principal support teachers during the implementation of new academic improvement programs? (i.e., release time, professional development, collaboration, etc.)

A majority of the participants indicated the principal has given support through the implementation of a common planning period and professional development. Overall, a majority of the participants felt their principal is supportive and tries hard, but the amount of work that the principal does and his stress level limits what he can do. Selected responses are listed below.

Several participant responses focused on leadership. Participant #1 responded, “They provide professional development. They also have given us common planning times to collaborate with other teachers in the department.” Participant #2 responded, “He tries, but there just isn’t enough time in the day. We meet our planning period, but then we don’t have enough time to grade or prep.” Participant #3 responded, “Support is usually given, as far as PD and support. It becomes tedious and disheartening to go through big change after big change only to be dropped soon after.” Participant #13 responded, “Very supportive and helpful. Does what he can to help us.” Finally, participant #14 responded, “More follow-up would be helpful – at the same time people do not want more meetings – there simply isn’t enough time.”
Teacher survey responses for school B Question #5:

How does your building principal support teachers during the implementation of new academic improvement programs? (i.e., release time, professional development, collaboration, etc.)

A majority of the participants responded their principal was very supportive and did whatever he could to help them which included release time, collaboration and professional development. Selected responses are listed below.

Several participants responded regarding leadership: Participant #15 responded, “Our principal offers, guidance in number of areas while allowing teachers the freedom to implement procedures they find successful in their classroom.” Participant #17 responded, “My principal has been great during the implementation process. He has greatly reduced the stress level of all teachers involved. We can pick and choose what if any parts of the OIP we want to use.” Participant #19 responded, “Very supportive and always willing to discuss new ideas for improvement.” Participants #20, #21, #22, #23, #24, #25, #30, #32, #33, #34, #36 and #37 responded, ‘Very supportive.’

Finally, participant #28 responded, “Building principal has worked considerately to clearly and effectively communicate new program requirements for both teachers and students. Administration has provided teachers the extra planning/preparation time needed through professional development/workshop days scheduled into school calendar, and have worked to make the transitions as smooth as possible.”

Teacher survey responses for school A Question #7:

What type, if any, effect have these policies had on the following relationships?
Teacher/student? Positive or negative? Explain.

All but five participants responded that the implementation of these new policies have had a negative impact on the teacher/student relationships. Two responded that it had no impact and three responded that it had a positive impact. Selected responses are listed below.

Stress related responses are reflected in the statement from participant #1 who reported, “It takes me out of the classroom so I have less interaction time with my students.” Several participant’s responses are representative of issues of self-efficacy. Participants #1, #2, #3, #4, #8, #9, #10, #11 and #14 responded, “The impact of policies has had a negative impact on teacher-student relationships.” In contrast, participant #5 responded, “Mostly positive.” Participant #6 responded, “Positive – Getting them to work harder towards goals.” Participant #12 responded, “Positive – Expectations are clear.”

Teacher survey responses for school B Question #7:

What type, if any, effect have these policies had on the following relationships:

Teacher/student? Positive or negative? Explain.

Only five of the 21 participants responded that the implementation of new policies had a negative impact on teacher-student relationships. Twelve participants responded the implementation of new policies had no impact on teacher-student relationships. Only four respondents responded that the implementation of new policies had a positive impact on teacher-student relationships.

A stress-related response is reflected in the following statement from participant #25 who responded, “Less time with students.” Several participant responses are related
to issues of self-efficacy. Participants #15, #16, #20, #23 and #31 responded, “New policies have a negative impact on teacher-student interaction.” Participants #17, #18, #19, #21, #22, #24, #29, #30, #34, #35, #36 and #36 responded, “New policies had no effect.” Participant #26 responded, ‘Positive. I feel that most students see these programs as an attempt to deliver them a better education. They see it as us caring.” Participant #27 responded, “Students work to achieve goals.” Participant #28 responded, “Students have cooperated and adjusted relatively well to our new programs, and have accepted changes as well as could be accepted.” Participants #32 and #33 responded, “Positive.”

Teacher survey responses for school A Question #7:

What type, if any, effect have these policies had on the following relationships:

Teacher/parent? Positive or negative? Explain.

A majority of the participants indicated that the implementation of new policies had little if any impact on the teacher/parent relationship. Three participants felt the new policies had a negative effect and caused teachers to be more defensive. While only one participant responded that the new policies had a positive impact by opening communications between teachers and parents.

Stress related responses are reflected in the several of the following statements. Participant #8 responded, “Negative – Parents expect higher results from teachers, but it’s harder to improve scores when we spend more time on SLO’s, evaluations, etc.; then we try to cover necessary material.” Participant #9 responded, “Negative – I’m more
defensive.” Participant #10 responded, “Negative- Parents wonder why things are constantly changing and I have little answers.”

Some participant responses are represented issues of self-efficacy. Participants #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #11, #13 and #14 responded, “Little or no effect.” Participant #12 responded, “Communications are now more open and positive.”

Teacher survey responses for school B Question #7:

What type, if any, effect have these policies had on the following relationships: Teacher/parent? Positive or negative? Explain.

A majority (17 of 23) of the participants indicated that the new policies had little if any effect on teacher/parent relationships. Four participants responded they had a negative effect because of lost time teaching in the classroom. One participant responded that the new policies had a positive impact, but did not elaborate.

Stress related responses are reflected in the following three statements. Participant #20 responded, “Negative – time.” Participant #25 responded, “Negative, less time with students.” Participant #26 responded, “I feel that parents and their complacency is the biggest part.”

The theme of school climate can be seen in responses made by participants #15 and #26. Participant # 15 responded, “For the same reason the teacher/student relationship is affected. The quality of education is hindered by the quantity of procedures that are required. Participant #26 responded, “I feel that parents and their complacency is the biggest part of our problem. I don’t think most of them even recognize what is going on in education.”
Teacher survey responses for school A Question #7:
What type, if any, effect have these policies had on the following relationships:
Teacher/principal? Positive or negative? Explain.

Seven participants responded that the new policies had a positive impact on the teacher/principal relationship, while the other seven participants felt the new policies had a negative effect on their relationship. Selected responses regarding leadership include participant #1 who responded, “Some positive. It provides more one-on-one time with the principal to discuss ideas and problems.” Participant #2 responded, “Negative – We rarely see our principal. I think the paperwork takes up a lot of his time.” Participant #3 responded, “Negative, teachers begin to think “Oh, this is why we’re doing all this work.” Participants #4, #5, #12 responded, “Positive, better communication and feedback.” Participant #6 responded, “Negative – Seems more focused on these policies being seen, but he’s positive about implementation and assisting.” Participant #7 responded, “Negative - I wish my principal took this more seriously than he does.”

The theme of school climate can be seen in responses made by participants #8, #9, #10 and #11. Participants #8, #9, #10 and #11 responded, “Negative – There is a lot of confusion which creates a lot of stress among the teachers and administrators.”

Teacher survey responses for school B Question #7:
What type, if any, effect have these policies had on the following relationships:
Teacher/principal? Positive or negative? Explain.

A majority of the participants from school B responded that the policies had a positive impact on the teacher/principal relationship. Two participants responded the
policies had a negative impact and the remaining participants felt that the new policies had little if any effect.

Some participant responses were related to leadership. Participant #15 responded, “The main reason for teacher/principal relationships to be affected in a positive manner is the increase in time the administration spends with teachers.” Participant #17 responded, “Positive. Our principal has been great throughout the observation process.” Participants #18, #19 and #35 responded, “Positive. Group collaboration!” Participants #20, #21, #22, #23, #24, #25, #26 responded, “Positive. The principal has been very supportive.” Participant #32 responded, “I think positive. There is a more open dialogue about what is going on in the classroom.” Participant #33 responded, “Positive. When you have a principal that is willing to give advice, but with respect, it’s great.

Teacher survey responses for school A Question #7:
What type, if any, effect have these policies had on the following relationships: Teacher/teacher? Positive or negative? Explain.

Less than half (9 of 23), of participants responded that the new policies had a positive effect on teacher/teacher relationships. Only two participants responded that the new policies had a negative effect and the remaining participants felt they had little or no effect. Stress related responses are reflected in the following statement from participant #8 who responded, “Negative – Teachers worry about how their scores stack up against each other.”

Participant responses representative of issues of self-efficacy are from participants #1, #3, #6, #7, #10, #11, #12, #13 and #14 who responded, “Positive. More collaboration
and creates a sense of togetherness.” The theme of school climate can be seen in responses made by participant #9 who responded, “Negative – We all complain more…negative energy.”

Teacher survey responses for school B Question #7:

What type, if any, effect have these policies had on the following relationships:
Teacher/teacher? Positive or negative? Explain.

The majority (11 of 14) of participants responded that the new policies had a positive effect on the teacher/teacher relationship. Three participants felt the policies were negative in that they created extra work and competition among the staff. The remaining participants responded that the new policies had little if any effect on the teacher/teacher relationships.

The impact on school climate can be seen in several of the responses. Participant #15 responded, “The increase in policy implementation and paperwork required by the staff, demands they collaborate for things to operate smoothly.” Participants #17, #18, #19, #20, #23, #27, #29, #33, #34, #35 and #36 responded, “Positive. Team building and much more collaboration.” Participant #26 responded, “Negative. Teachers tend to complain to each other and sometimes lose the value of the program and its intentions.” Participant #31 responded, “Negative- Competition.”

Responses to TAOS-S and Demographic Questions

The demographic data for school A is as follows 14 respondents self-reported their years of experience with a mean score 11 and a standard deviation of 9.43. The respondents also reported their level of stress with a range of 1-5 resulting in a mean
score of 3.07 with a standard deviation of .73. A total of 14 of 15 people responded to the TAOS-S for school A. The TAOS-S consists of nine questions that measure three areas. The first three questions measured teacher self-efficacy, the second three questions measured trust, and the last three questions measured academic emphasis. The scale used for the nine questions consisted of the following: for question 1-3: 1 = nothing, 3 = very little, 5 = some influence, 7 = quite a bit and, 9 = a great deal; and the response scale for questions 4-9: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often and, 5 = always. Table 1 illustrates the scores of the respondents from school A in the area of self-efficacy, trust and academic emphasis. The number of participants, mean scores and standard deviation for each question are illustrated in the table below.
Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics for TAOS-S Results, Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for School A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n  M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?</td>
<td>14 5.07  1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?</td>
<td>14 6.36  1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?</td>
<td>14 7.00  1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of my students are honest</td>
<td>14 3.50  .76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My students’ parents are reliable</td>
<td>14 3.14  .66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I trust my students</td>
<td>14 3.50  .52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I press my students to achieve academically</td>
<td>14 4.43  .51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give my students challenging work</td>
<td>14 4.29  .474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I set high but obtainable goals for my students</td>
<td>14 4.57  .51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The TAOS-S response rate for school A was 93% and 100% for school B.
The demographic data for school B is as follows: 23 respondents self-reported their years of experience with a mean score 13.52 and a standard deviation of 8.44. The respondents also reported their level of stress with a range of 1-5 resulting in a mean score of 2.48 with a standard deviation of .73. A total of 23 people responded to the TAOS-S for school B. The TAOS-S consists of nine questions that measured three areas. The first three questions measured self-efficacy, the second three questions measured trust and the last three questions measured academic emphasis. The scale used for the nine questions consisted of the following: response scale for question 1-3: 1 = nothing, 3 = very little, 5 = some influence, 7 = quite a bit and, 9 = a great deal; and the response scale for questions 4-9: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often and, 5 = always. Table 2 illustrates the scores of the respondents from school B in the area of self-efficacy, trust and academic emphasis. The number of participants, mean scores and standard deviation for each question are illustrated in the table 2.
Table 2.

*Descriptive Statistics for TAOS-S Results, Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for School B*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7.26</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7.74</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of my students are honest</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My students’ parents are reliable</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I trust my students</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I press my students to achieve academically</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give my students challenging work</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I set high but obtainable goals for my students</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The TAOS-S response rate for school A was 93% and 100% for school B.
A total of 37 people responded to the TAOS-S for both schools combined. The demographic data for both schools is as follows: 37 respondents self-reported their years of experience with a mean score 12.26 and a standard deviation of 8.94. The respondents also reported their level of stress with a range of 1-5 resulting in a mean score of 2.78 with a standard deviation of .73. The TAOS-S consists of nine questions that measured three areas. The first three questions measured self-efficacy, the second three questions measured trust and the last three questions measured academic emphasis. The scale used for the nine questions consisted of the following: response scale for question 1-3: 1 = nothing, 3 = very little, 5 = some influence, 7 = quite a bit and, 9 = a great deal; and the response scale for questions 4-9: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often and, 5 = always. Table 3 illustrates the scores of the respondents from both school A and B for the area of self-efficacy, trust and academic emphasis. The number of participants, mean scores and standard deviation for each question are illustrated in table 3.
Table 3.

*Descriptive Statistics for TAOS-S Results, Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for both Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Both Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of my students are honest</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My students’ parents are reliable</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I trust my students</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I press my students to achieve academically</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give my students challenging work</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I set high but obtainable goals for my students</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The TAOS-S response rate for school A was 93% and 100% for school B.
Comparing Self-Efficacy, Trust and Academic Emphasis between Schools

**Self-efficacy.** The t-score of -2.13 exceeds the critical value for a two-tailed test at 5% with a level of confidence at -2.03. In addition, the p-value of .040 is less than the target of $\alpha = .05$. Therefore, we can conclude that the difference in self-efficacy is statistically significant between the two schools but only by a small margin. The results of the t-test for self-efficacy is illustrated in table 4.

**Trust.** The null hypothesis is that there is no variance between the two groups in the area of trust. The t-score of .024 is well within the critical values of $\pm 2.03$ and the p = value of .981 exceeds the $\alpha = .05$. Therefore, we cannot reject the null hypothesis in the area of trust when comparing the two schools. This is illustrated in table 4.

**Academic emphasis.** The t-score of .221 falls between the critical values of $\pm 2.03$. The $p$-score of .826 is well above the $\alpha = .05$ level of confidence. Therefore, we can conclude that there is no statistically significant difference in academic emphasis between the two schools. The result of academic emphasis is illustrated in table 4.
Table 4.

Comparison of Self-Efficacy, Trust and Academic Emphasis between Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>a (n)</th>
<th>b (n)</th>
<th>a (M)</th>
<th>b (M)</th>
<th>t-score</th>
<th>(p)-score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>7.03</td>
<td>-2.13</td>
<td>.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>.981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Emphasis</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>.221</td>
<td>.826</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The TAOS-S response rate for school A was 93% and 100% for school B. Response scale for self-efficacy: 1 = nothing, 3 = very little, 5 = some influence, 7 = quite a bit and, 9 = a great deal. Response scale for trust and academic emphasis: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often and, 5 = always. 

\(a\)\(n\) = school A, \(b\)\(n\) = school B, \(a\)\(M\) = Mean for school A, \(b\)\(M\) = Mean for School

Comparing Self-Efficacy, Trust and Academic Emphasis by Gender and School

**Comparison of self-efficacy between schools for males.** The \(t\)-score of 1.591 falls between the critical values of ±2.101. The \(p\)-score of .129 is well above the \(\alpha = .05\) level of statistical significance. Therefore, there is no statistically significant difference in self-efficacy between schools for males. This is illustrated in table 5.

**Comparison of self-efficacy between schools for females.** The \(t\)-score of 1.327 falls between the critical values of ±2.131. The \(p\)-score of .129 is well above the \(\alpha = .05\) level of statistical significance. Therefore, there is no statistically significant difference in self-efficacy between schools for females. This is illustrated in table 5.
Table 5.

*T-Test Results of the Comparison of Self-Efficacy between Schools for Males and Females*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>a n</th>
<th>b n</th>
<th>a M</th>
<th>b M</th>
<th>t-score</th>
<th>p-score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.29</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>-1.59</td>
<td>.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>6.97</td>
<td>-1.33</td>
<td>.204</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The TAOS-S response rate for school A was 93% and 100% for school B. Response scale for self-efficacy: 1 = nothing, 3 = very little, 5 = some influence, 7 = quite a bit and, 9 = a great deal

|      | a n = school A, b n = school B, a M = Mean for school A, b M = Mean for School B |

**Self-efficacy within school A for males and females.** The *t*-score of .339 falls between the critical values of ±2.179. The *p*-score of .741 is well above the $\alpha = .05$ level of statistically significant. Therefore, there is no statistically significant difference in self-efficacy within school A between males and females which is illustrated in table 6.

**Self-efficacy within school B for males and females.** The *t*-score of .197 falls between the critical values of ±2.080. The *p*-score of .846 is well above the $\alpha = .05$ level of statistically significant. Therefore, there is no statistically significant difference in self-efficacy within school B for males and females which is illustrated in table 6.
Table 6.

*T-Test Results of the Comparison of Self-Efficacy within Schools between Males and Females*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>(^a)M</th>
<th>(^b)M</th>
<th>t-score</th>
<th>p-score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.29</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>+.339</td>
<td>.741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>6.97</td>
<td>+.197</td>
<td>.846</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The survey response rate for school A was 93% and 91% for school B. Response scale for self-efficacy: 1 = nothing, 3 = very little, 5 = some influence, 7 = quite a bit and, 9 = a great deal

\(^a\)M = Mean for school A, \(^b\)M = Mean for school B

**Stress.** The t-score of 2.38 exceeds the critical value for a two-tailed test at 5% with a level of confidence at ±2.03. In addition, the p-value of .023 is less than the target statistically significant level of \(\alpha = .05\). Therefore, the difference in stress level between school A and B is significantly significant which is illustrated in table 7.

Table 7.

*T-Test Comparison of Stress between Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(^a)n</th>
<th>(^b)n</th>
<th>(^a)M</th>
<th>(^b)M</th>
<th>t-score</th>
<th>p-score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The survey response rate for school A was 93% and 91% for school B. Response scale for stress: 1 = no stress 2 = little stress, 3 = moderate stress, and 4 = very high stress

\(^a\)n = school A, \(^b\)n = school B, \(^a\)M = Mean for school A, \(^b\)M = Mean for school B
**Stress between schools for males.** The \( t \)-score of 2.737 falls outside the critical values of \( \pm 2.101 \). The \( p \)-score of .014 is well below the \( \alpha = .05 \) level of statistical significance. Therefore, there is a significant difference in stress between schools for males which is illustrated in table 8.

**Stress between schools for females.** The \( t \)-score of .742 falls between the critical values of \( \pm 2.131 \). The \( p \)-score of .470 is well above the \( \alpha = .05 \) level of statistical significance. Therefore, there is no significant difference in stress between schools for females which is illustrated in table 8.

Table 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>SB</th>
<th>aM</th>
<th>bM</th>
<th>t-score</th>
<th>p-score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>+2.74</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>+.742</td>
<td>.470</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The survey response rate for school A was 93% and 91% for school B.
SA = school A and SB = school B
Response scale for stress: 1 = no stress 2 = little stress, 3 = moderate stress, and 4 = very high stress
\( ^a \text{M} = \text{Mean for School A, } ^b \text{M} = \text{Mean for school B} \)

**Stress within school A for males and females.** The \( t \)-score of .354 falls between the critical values of \( \pm 2.179 \). The \( p \)-score of .730 is well above the \( \alpha = .05 \) level of statistical significance. Therefore, there is no significant difference in stress within school A between males and females which is illustrated in table 9.
Stress within school B for males and females. The $t$-score of 1.296 falls between the critical values of ±2.080. The $p$-score of .209 is well above the $\alpha = .05$ level of statistical significance. Therefore, there is no significant difference in stress within school B for males and females which is illustrated in table 9.

Table 9.

*T-Test Results of the Comparison of Stress within Schools (A & B) for Males and Females*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>$^aM$</th>
<th>$^bM$</th>
<th>$t$-score</th>
<th>$p$-score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>+.354</td>
<td>.730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>-1.29</td>
<td>.209</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The survey response rate for school A was 93% and 91% for school B.

$^a$Response scale: 1 = strongly disagree (SA), 2 = disagree (D), 3 = agree (A), and 4 = strongly agree (SA)

$^aM$ = Mean for school A, $^bM$ = Mean for school B
Table 10.

*Group Sizes of Self-Efficacy, Trust, and Academic Emphasis Constructs by Gender across Both Schools A and B*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>LB</th>
<th>UP</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Eff. Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.78</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>6.28</td>
<td>7.28</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>7.38</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>6.26</td>
<td>7.12</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>3.62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.54</td>
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<td>Academ. Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>3.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>3.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>3.33</td>
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</table>

*Note.* The TAOS-S response rate for school A was 93% and 100% for school B.

The Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variance revealed no statistically significant variance for the constructs between the gender groups.

Table 11.

*Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Self-Efficacy, Trust, and Academic Emphasis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene Statistics</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
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<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Emphasis</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.42</td>
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</table>

F1, 35 = 1.49, p = .230
F1, 35 = .03, p = .87
F1, 35 = .68, p = .42
Table 12.

One Way Analysis of Variance Illustrates Differences in Self-Efficacy, Trust, Academic Emphasis Constructs by Gender across Both Schools A and B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>59.29</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Trust</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.004</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>9.39</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8.70</td>
<td>36</td>
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</table>

F1, 35 = .206, p = .65
F1, 35 = .00, p = .95
F1, 35 = 2.82, p = .10

Years of Experience

The t-score of -.84 and the p-score of .405 supports rejecting the null hypothesis.

This implies that the average age of the teachers at school A and B are not statistically significantly different. This is illustrated in table 13.

Table 13.

Descriptive Statistics for Years of Experience.  Mean Scores, Standard Deviation, t-scores and p-scores for Both Schools A and B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>^a^n</th>
<th>^b^n</th>
<th>^a^M</th>
<th>^b^M</th>
<th>^a^SD</th>
<th>^b^SD</th>
<th>t-score</th>
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<td>11.00</td>
<td>13.52</td>
<td>9.43</td>
<td>8.44</td>
<td>.327</td>
<td>.405</td>
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Note. The TAOS-S response rate for school A was 93% and for 100% for B.
^a^n = school A, ^b^n = school B, ^a^M = Mean for school A, ^b^M = Mean for school B., ^a^SD = Standard Deviation for school A, ^b^SD = Standard Deviation for school B
Interpreting the TAOS-S

The average Academic Optimism score for school A, which was mandated to participate in the OIP, was 456.53 and the average Academic Optimism score for school B, which was not mandated to participate in the OIP, was 434.13. Both scores fall into the below average range and are lower than 84% of the schools. Meaning that 84% of the teachers are more optimistic about their ability in the classroom. The scores for academic optimism range from 200 to 800. The lower the score, the more pessimistic the teacher’s view regarding academic optimism. According to Fahy et al. (2010), most teachers’ academic optimism scores fall into the mid-range. Below is the range and interpretation:

If the score is 200, it is lower than 99% of the schools.
If the score is 300, it is lower than 97% of the schools.
If the score is 400, it is lower than 84% of the schools.
If the score is 500, it is average.
If the score is 600, it is higher than 84% of the schools.
If the score is 700, it is higher than 97% of the schools.
If the score is 800, it is higher than 99% of the schools. (Fahy et al., 2010, p. 3)

Principal Interview Responses by School

Principal A. Principal A has been in public education for twenty-four years; fifteen years as a middle school teacher and five years as a high school teacher. The last three years he served as a building principal. His school is currently in year two of the Ohio Improvement Process, in which they are required to participate. In the interview, Principal A indicated that during year one of the OIP, he sat back and took everything in.
He found it overwhelming and quite confusing. It has, however, forced teachers to discuss student performance and discipline (Principal A, January 2016, personal interview).

When asked about stress, Principal A responded that the mandate to participate in the process accompanied with the threat of potential ramifications for the district has definitely increased the stress levels on both him and his staff. In addition, to the mandates, there are many unanswered questions about the process. To alleviate some of the stress and help with the implementation of the Ohio Improvement Process, Principal A has initiated a common planning time for all core teachers (Principal A, January 2016, personal interview).

When asked about professional development, Principal A indicated that they had done very little. Professional development time is used for filling out paperwork, departmental meetings, and making sure the teachers know what is required. Principal A stated that his teachers had done some work with curriculum mapping in regard to what is actually being taught at each grade level, but it has been extremely difficult to maintain and keep up-to-date. He meets with his building leadership team on a regular basis, but struggles with establishing goals and a focus for the group (Principal A, January 2016, personal interview).

Principal A feels confident that they will get out of school improvement. He indicated that the elementary was really the one with a lot of factors to bring up and that the high school had a lot of good things going. Overall, he felt that the district as a whole
was moving in the direction the state wanted (Principal A, January 2016, personal interview).

When asked about the effect these new policies have had on teacher-student relationships, Principal A stated that the policies have had a little positive and negative effect. Positive in that the goals and objectives for each class are clear and concise. Negative in that the collection of data and paperwork have taken away valuable teaching time and added undue stress to the teachers. Teachers can no longer talk to their students about what is going on in their life. They have to focus on the standards and make sure they get them covered (Principal A, January 2016, personal interview).

When asked about the effect these policies have had on teacher-parent relationships, Principal A again stated they have had both positive and negative effects. The positive effect is that this school is much more transparent in their actions, meaning that students are assessed on a regular basis and parents have access to pre and post-test data. Parents can see what is being taught and how his or her child is performing. It may also encourage the parents to extend the learning objectives into the home. Conversely, Principal A feels like the mandates give the teachers an excuse for not covering certain materials. The teachers blame the state for the added stress of covering certain standards. For example, Principal A has seen a change in the content being delivered to students receiving special education services. In the past, they were taught life skills and what they needed to be productive in society. Now they are focusing on academic skills to help the district report card (Principal A, January 2016, personal interview).
When asked about the effect these policies have had on teacher-teacher relationships, Principal A indicated that it has been very frustrating. Some of the teachers think the teacher-based-team meetings are a waste of time because there is no connection between the data collecting and its use. Principal A has had a difficult time getting the teachers to contribute equally in the meetings, especially in the meetings divided by content area (Principal A, January 2016, personal interview).

In summary, Principal A stressed there has been a lot of confusion throughout the process. There have been numerous changes and very seldom are there consistent answers from the state. When the person at the top is confused, it seems to spread like wildfire.

**Principal B.** Principal B has been in public education for twenty years; five years as a high school teacher, seven years as a special education teacher in the middle school, one year as the assistant principal in the middle school, five years as principal in the elementary school, and is currently in his second year as the high school principal. His school is currently not mandated to participate in the Ohio Improvement Process, however, they do use some of the components to help with structure and organization.

When asked about the new educational initiatives and policies, Principal B indicated they have been very helpful to his staff that they have definitely boosted the staff’s overall confidence level. They help with communication as well as clarification and put everyone on the same page. Principal B also pointed out they are able to adapt the OIP components to fit their needs so they are more useful to the staff and students in his building. Although his staff does not meet as often as is required when a district in
mandated, they do meet monthly and follow the OIP structure. Principal B believes this helps keep everyone organized and focused on the data (Principal B, January 2016, personal interview).

When asked about implementation of new academic initiatives, Principal B shared that his building teachers have a common planning time. It is a perfect opportunity to meet and discuss any changes. Principal B stated that he makes it clear to his staff that any changes made will be useful and will be approached together as a building team. It is important that the teachers don’t feel the principal is shoving new initiatives down their throat or standing over them with demands (Principal B, January 2016, personal interview).

When asked about the effect new initiatives have had on stress level, Principal B stated that initially stress was moderate to high. However, now that they are not mandated and can pick and choose the items they like as a group, there has been a huge decline in stress. He also pointed out that he tries to meet with his staff regarding any new or upcoming initiatives before any misinformation gets out from social media or associations. It is important for teachers to know what the building principal is required to do and what they as building teachers are required to do. It is also important the staff has an opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions for implementation from the beginning. Principal B believes this eases the teachers’ minds and helps alleviate any undue stress (Principal B, January 2016, personal interview).

When asked about the effect these new policies have had on teacher-student relationships, Principal B indicated that initially they looked at it as just another
assessment. Now that it has been implemented, they see it as a learning tool that helps guide instruction and improve academic success for the teachers and students. Principal B believes the new initiatives have had a positive impact on teacher-student relationships. The teachers feel a sense of ownership in the initiative and the students buy into it even more. The result is lower stress and the teachers feel more comfortable with what they are doing. In turn, they are able to instruct the students at a higher level (Principal B, January 2016, personal interview).

When asked about the effect these policies have had on teacher-parent relationships, Principal B responded by stating that the biggest hurdle was getting them to understand what and why we were doing the things we were doing. He invited the parents into the building and he and his teachers explained the assessments and answered any questions the parents may have had. Principal B felt this was definitely a positive thing (Principal B, January 2016, personal interview).

When asked about the effect these policies have had on teacher-principal relationships, Principal B acknowledged that there was some tension initially, but over time, that has diminished. It is important teachers know everyone is all on the same team. He reiterated the importance of delivering the new material to the staff and easing their mind (Principal B, January 2016, personal interview).

In closing, Principal B stated that initially, the Ohio Improvement Process was overwhelming to everyone. However, now that the school is not mandated to participate, there is little stress and the staff are able to select the components that are most beneficial
to their building. In fact, there are some components that are now permanently imbedded
in the building practices (Principal B, January 2016, personal interview).

Interview Results from the Principal of High School A which is Mandated to
Participate in the Ohio Improvement Process

The principal from school A taught at the middle school for 15 years, the high
school for 6 years and has been a principal for the last three years. The following
responses were obtained during an interview (Principal A, January 2016, personal
interview).

1. Interview question one: How have new programs, mandatory or voluntary
affected your teachers’ sense of self-efficacy?

Principal of school A:

I think that we are still trying to understand the whole process, to be
honest with you. I haven’t seen a lot of academic benefits. I have seen a
lot of discipline benefit which could tie back academically, but you know
just looking at that it has been more of a time to discuss students who are
either doing exceptionally well or students who are having discipline
problems in the classroom and how to move those individual students
forward.

2. How about the SLO’s which are mandatory, I know at the high school and you
obviously have your OTES, BLT’s, and TBT’s. How has that affected or has it
affected their self-efficacy in the classroom? Like stress level…
Principal of school A:

I think it has actually added to it, to be honest with you. I think it has added to it because of the question marks that are around it, and realistically, some questions that have not had very clear answers for the high school level.

3. Would you say that it is stressful because it is mandated in your building or do you think it would matter?

Principal of school A:

Being mandated from the state, something that you have to do and if you do not do it correctly then this, this and this could potentially happen to you. I know that throwing those “threats” on the other side that if this is not done correctly type ideas is what adds to the stress more than anything else. Our other problem that we find is the time in the schedules to meet effectively.

4. So, because of the consequences with the mandates?

Principal of school A: “Yes. I guess it’s the consequence of the big brother looking over your shoulder.”

5. How has the implementation of new academic improvement programs had an impact on your stress level? (No stress, little stress, moderate stress, or very high)

Principal of school A: “Moderate” (Principal A, January 2016, personal interview).

6. Prior to the implementation of these programs…stress level any different? Does this elevate the stress level?
Principal of school A: “This does elevate the stress level. It is a question mark out there for us that we are trying to answer.”

7. How do you as the building principal support your teachers during the implementation of these new academic programs? Such as release time, professional development, and collaboration. What do you do to try to ease their stress?

Principal of school A:

“We have created common planning time for our core high school teacher.”

8. How long? Did you just do that?

Principal of school A:

“That is the second year since I have been at school A that we have had that common planning time for our core teachers. That is approximately 54 minutes.”

9. So, since about the time that it has been required that is when you started/

Principal of school A: “Yes.”

10. Just the core teachers?

Principal of school A:

Just the core teachers. We have been able to pair up others outside of our core so we have the problem such as one art teacher and we have paired her up with the middle school art teacher since we only have one there. We have found solutions such as those. Phys. Ed. being one where we only have one teacher.
11. So creating a schedule for time for collaboration during that time?
Principal of school A: “And pairing up middle school teachers so that you can have a common academic standing with the person that you are meeting with.”

12. How about professional development?
Principal of school A:

Very little to be honest with you. The type of PD that we have discussed at meetings, and I have done this first semester I did a lot of modeling where I was in all the teacher based team meetings giving the main idea of how this is how I want their paperwork filled out and this is how I….

13. So the professional development is done pretty much in house with this more so than out with bringing people in?
Principal of school A: “Yes. The only people we have brought in during our DLT’s is the SLT person where we have talked about the process and how it runs.”

14. OK. Describe how you have implemented new academic improvement policies in your district. What steps have you taken? You find out you have OTES, SLO’s, now you have the OIP. What have you done to introduce this to your staff? What steps have you taken?
Principal of school A:

We have taken a few steps starting with the SLO’s. So in my first year, I did not do much. I left it as the understanding was. This past year, we organized so more time at the beginning of the year for the teachers to meet in their departments to review their SLO exams. That was part of
what was supposed to happen at the very beginning with the process. But coming in a little bit later we started to look at that aspect of SLO’s. So new academic programming, we started looking at a lot of what’s being taught. So in other words, the idea of curriculum mapping. They had curriculum maps but keeping them up to date and useful has been a big issue for me this year. Then some of our extra-curricular programs we are working on adding to um….

15. Do you think they were kept up to date before all these mandates or do you think that is something that kind of shine some light on like hey, we really need to …

Principal of school A:

I think we need more time. One thing I saw was that we were creating SLO’s in independence and not out of we want to do the wrong thing. More of we need to get this done so I will take care of myself. Instead of pulling back where the common planning time I explained to them okay you have this so you should be reviewing your questions. You should be reviewing the data from that. That was part of my modeling process this year. Having them bring those back in with their data. Having them, when they give an assessment have them come back in with their data. Is that what you need on that one? I’m kind of thinking of where else I want to go.

Principal of school A: “BLT, I will be honest with you, the BLT and DLT structure, I am not as good with. I have not worked out as well how to disseminate down from the top.”
16. Do you mean the TBT’s and the BLT’s?

Principal of school A: “Yes. So if we get information taking it from the DLT to the BLT and then to the TBT’s. That has been a challenge for me this year that I have been trying to work….”

17. With the format of the groups?

Principal of school A:

Yes. With the format of the groups. What are these groups for? Today I’m going to sit down with my BLT group after school. I have been struggling with what we are going to focus on. What is our goal here as a group?

18. Now, obviously, there were some areas where you were deficient with subgroups or what not. So are those the things that you are focusing on within your group to try to get out of the Ohio Improvement Process.

Principal of school A: “Yes.”

19. Is there any fear that you won’t get out of it?

Principal of school A:

No, I don’t think so. I think we are pretty confident. Our elementary is really the one with a lot of factors to bring up. At the high school we have a lot of good thing. We are trying to get in the correct direction. I’m going to say that and I can’t remember off the top of my head number wise. I know that when we look at it and work with the SST people and we look at our numbers and what we are doing we are trending the correct
way the state wants us to go. I know that is kind of open and vague but hopefully, you can make something happen with that.

20. What type if any effect have these policies had on the following relationships:
   Teacher to student? Positive, negative and explain. In the classroom mainly.

Principal of school A:

In the classroom, I would say it has a little bit of both. Positive is that the students have more of an idea of the goals and objectives of the class. Especially, looking at a pre and posttest and enforcing that in the SLO the students see that where they are going. The negatives are is that it has added another time structure in the classroom. We told the teachers that they have to pre, you have to post, and you have to do this a number of times that you have to get this data to here. So it has added to the stress level of the teachers which sometimes translates over.

21. Do you think it has impacted? Before all of these tests and mandates, things such as teachable moments and time that you actually spend getting to know the kids. Do you think it has impacted that at all with the teachers?

Principal of school A:

With the standards that we are teaching, they see an X number of standards that we have to get in. I will even say as I was a teacher in the classroom, I felt that pressure to not as much empathize with the students and talk to them and find out what is going on in their life and more of that we have to get this subject done and we have to get this idea done. It is
kind of impacting the idea. You know like everyone else, there are times when some things are more important than others and you drop everything and take care of the kids’ problems.

Principal of school A:

But overall, the new information that we are trying to get out and make sure that the kids have, what you are saying is that it has impacted that personal level where the teachers used to be able to spend more time getting to know the kids on that personal level.

Principal of school A: “Yes. Because I think the teachers look at it as we have to get done so much in this amount of time. So it is tough to take those moments that you would have connected.”

22. How about teachers and parents with all of this stuff going on. Same thing – positive or negative?

Principal of school A:

I would say the positive is a bit more transparent. I mean obviously. You know you have your pre-test. The one thing that I have been able to sell to teachers is okay, parents want hard data right now. Here’s your pre-test, your post-test and this is how we did and this is what we are good with. Also with that posttest, you can tell the parents let’s extend learning at home in these areas. These are the areas that we excelled at or did not excel at. Negatively, I think it has created a situation where it gives them something to blame. Rather than you looking at yourself and what you are
doing. Saying well, look at all the pressure the state is putting on us to teach or we have to teach this. We can’t go back and teach…like a lot of people have asked us about Ohio history.

23. So who does it give?

Principal of school A: “I would say to the teachers. It gives the teachers someone to blame for not covering stuff.”

Principal of school A:

Yes. I would say I guess I can restate it this way- a parent will call in and say, “Why aren’t you doing this anymore? When I was in high school we learned the *Pledge of Allegiance.*” I know that is pretty common but you know… “Why aren’t you teaching the *Pledge of Allegiance* anymore?”

Well, that isn’t a state standard and it is not something that we aren’t tested on. Those type of conversations happen a lot where parents aren’t happy because more basic skills… With our special ed. students, we see that a lot. Where the parents want them taught life skills and we are moving away from life skills and into academic skills for numbers’ purposes.

24. How about between you and your teachers-the teacher and the principal?

Positive? Negative?

Principal of school A: I would say it is a positive. It’s, I guess, my perspective sometimes in that we are all in this together. So let’s get it
figured out and all work together to make it as positive as we can for
everybody.

25. Is that how it was from the get-go or did it take a while to get there?
Principal of school A:

It took a while to get there. I would say it took me to change my attitude
toward everything rather than just saying look, the state is doing
something else to us. It took me saying, “Ok, we are doing this guys.
Let’s make the best of it.” And being a fairly new principal to the whole
thing you don’t think your personal attitude is going to affect everything
until you put it out there a couple times and then all of a sudden everybody
is saying what you just said and then ugh oh…then I got to change what I
am saying in order to get this to be a positive.

26. So the negative would be that you had to step back and look in the mirror?
Principal of School A: “Yes. What message am I putting out as the leader of this group
and when it goes negative, it goes negative really quick? I learned that one a couple
times.”

27. Teacher to teacher?

A lot of times now we are dependent on what the teacher before you did,
making sure they prepared the kids and making sure you prepare the kids
for that next step. How has that impacted the relationship between
teachers?
Principal of school A:

At the high school, that is really interesting because I just had a couple conversations with teachers who are frustrated with the TBT meetings because it is a lot of things that they are not going. For example: the math department - I have one group of math teachers teaching geometry and another group teaching algebra I. Well, they are two different animals sometimes. There is crossover, but the one teacher is like I sit in there and I listen to what they are doing and I never have to deal with that. That has been a frustration at the high school. Especially, looking at different areas of specialization.

28. So for example at the TBT, some teachers are doing more than others and they are getting frustrated that everyone is not carrying their weight type thing?

Principal of school A:

There is some of that and that is across the board. I think that is across the board. You always have your people who do over and above and you have the guys who are kind of there and do the minimum and move forward. That is created, finding the common ground that everyone is working the same to…that has created some issues. But I think more of it is interest in the meeting itself and the content of the meeting. I did look at the people and say, “Well, you are all specialists in math. You should be able to give some you know….”
29. Do you do grade level or department or…

Principal of school A: “We do department. We do three weeks of department and one week of grade level get together. We do what works best at the high school level.”

30. Any other comments that you may have about implementation of the OIP or how it has impacted your district at all?

Principal of school A:

The only thing is sometimes with the confusion. They bring in new people and we brought in a whole new group of people and how that transferred over again. There were some moments of confusion. You know when you are the person at the top confused, it spreads like wildfire. You are not always getting the most consistent answers from the state and that has created us some issues.

31. Well, I thank you taking the time out of your busy day. I know how busy you guys are and how valuable your time is. I cannot thank you enough for agreeing to be interviewed. Thank you.

Principal of school A: “No problem.”

Summary of Interview with Principal from High School B that is Not Mandated to Participate in the Ohio Improvement Process

Principal from school B taught high school for five years, middle school for five years and has been a principal for the last seven years. The following responses to were obtained during an interview (Principal B, January 2016, personal interview).
1. How have new programs, either mandatory or voluntary affected your teachers’ sense of self-efficacy? How confident they are about what they have to do, you know, with stress and those types of things. Examples would be SLO’s, BLT’s, OTES, TBT’s, etc. Some are mandatory and some are voluntary, but how have these programs affected your teachers’ sense of confidence and what they are doing in the classroom?

Principal of school B:

I would have to say that the TBT’s and the BLT’s have been very helpful to all of my teachers and I think their confidence level has been boosted so to speak with all of the new things that have come down the pipe from the state that seemed overwhelming when they were first introduced. Now, once we have met in our TBT’s and were able to digest some of the things and say maybe adapt them to fit our needs more to be more useful to us as a building. Of course, you know, that filters down from our DLT to our BLT to TBT’s.

2. Right now, I know that you are not mandated to be a part of the Ohio Improvement Process, but you have chosen to voluntarily participate in that process. Why?

Principal of School B:

Because just basically, what I said it has been beneficial to my staff. It is a way of communication. Clarification, if you might add that. It is a way for
us to maybe discuss things to make sure that everyone is on the same page.

3. How has the implementation of new academic programs impacted your level of stress as a building principal?

Principal of school B:

I guess, at first, I looked at it like the teachers did. I looked at it like I have enough things to do in my day. That the Ohio Improvement Process, I thought at first, was something that was thrown upon us to do things that we were not able to control. But once we got into it, which was the reason we decided to stay in it to some extent. We don’t meet like we used to. Our teachers meet once a month. The BLT once a month, the DLT is quarterly, I would say. It has actually has kept me, as an administrator, more organized.

4. Now as far as stress level, would you say no stress level, stress, moderate, very high? How would you rate it?

Principal of school B: “In the beginning, when we were implementing? I would say a high level of stress or moderate” (Principal B, January 2016, personal interview).

5. How do you as the building principal support your teachers during implementation of these new academic programs? This might be something like release time, professional development, or collaboration time.
Principal of school B:

Compared to the elementary when I left there, over there I had my meetings before or after school. Other than the additional year waiver days and those things. Here we are scheduled to where we have common planning time per English, Math, by subject area. Which has made it very easy for me in a 46 minute period to be able to meet with those groups to enter these kind of things to meet their needs. That is one of the biggest things. My nature is, Okay we have to do this, but we are going to make it work. A. We are going to make it useful to us. B. I am not going to shove it down your throat, and I am not going to be standing over top of you with times and dates of when things are due. I am going to make the delivery of it as easy as possible.

6. So, try to make it as easy, because it is not mandated with you guys you don’t have the timelines and what not. So the level of stress with the teachers would you say that is…before when you had those timelines… do you see a difference?

Principal of school B: “Yes. Huge difference. There is a decline in their stresses, you said since it is not mandatory as it first was. But we have been able to pick and choose the things that we like as a group.”

7. Describe how you have implemented to make the improvement policies in your district. Whenever something has come up with you. We have had a lot of things come up recently. At the high school, you have had the OIP, you have had the
OTES, and teacher evaluations. How have you implemented those with your staff? What kind of steps have you taken?

Principal of school B:

At first, I explain and talk to them. A lot of times they will read things online from the Ohio Department of Education website as far as OTES is concerned and what is coming down the pipe. Unions meet and get information from their leaders and sometimes it is not delivered the way that I like to deliver it. So, I pretty much ease their mind in the beginning that I am in your classroom. I pick a wing for a subject area a day and I make sure that I am in a class room for about 5-10 minutes. They are used to seeing me. The students usually don’t recognize or stop what they are doing when I walk in. I try to tell them that that is not going to change. I am still going to be in your classroom. You do your thing then if I see something where we need to make an adjustment to it, we will meet post conference to discuss those things and I try to work those things out between us. Of course, we have been fortunate enough to not have to go to the improvement plan over that time.

8. When you are implementing a program with your staff, how much involvement do you let them have? How much do you make them a part of the process as opposed to just being in the process? Does that make sense?
Principal of school B:

What I will do, is I will let them know what I have to do; what my role is and then I will get the feedback from them as to the understanding of whatever the new process that we are implementing and what are their thoughts on how they can tailor it to fit them in what they do in their classroom there. Or what they feel is best for their students. I would say that they have a good bit of say.

9. OK. So would you say that they are a part of the process?

Principal of school B: “Yes.”

10. What type, if any, effect have these policies had on the following relationships: Teacher/student? Has there been an effect? If so, positive or negative? Explain.

Principal of school B:

For example, we have implemented the Common Core quarterly assessments. I know that a lot of our students and teachers have looked at it as here is another assessment. All we do is assess. Whether it is as the state level or the district level. But they have actually taken those tests the teacher and have gotten a lot of information as to giving it at the beginning of the year as a pretest, being able to pick and choose areas in which the overall group with the item analysis needs to attack. The student understands it now that they have just taken it for a second time as I use this as an example. They realize now that this is a learning tool. That this isn’t just another assessment that we are looking for growth. What we
have taught them and what they are able to show us that they know enables us to help better deliver the instruction.

11. Do you think that there is any change in their relationship; you have had things that have been mandated where teachers are under high stress. You have said before that the teachers were under high stress and short of focused as opposed to when they are not mandated and just participating and they see this as something that is helpful. Has that changed the way that they treat the kids in the classroom?

Principal of school B:

That’s a good question. Yeah, I think that they have ownership in it (the teacher) and then the student will buy into it even more. So some of those things that were mandated and thrown at them and caused them more stress, so to speak, you can see that in the classroom that something might not be delivered or might not be absorbed by all the students. Or as if the teacher’s stress level is lower, and they feel more comfortable, maybe buy into themselves even more. Which I think they do when their stress level is lower. Then they are able to instruct the students at a higher level. I definitely see a correlation there.

12. How about teachers and parents with all of these mandates. Have you seen a change? Are there more expectations from the parents because they are reading stuff too just like we are and the teachers are. Anything positive or negative with these new programs?
Principal of school B:

I would have to point to testing with parents. That is my biggest thing that I get from them is that they are trying to understand the end of course exams. They are trying to understand that we are giving it at the district level. Like I said, those common quarterly assessments. We have had meetings where we have invited parents to come in and we have actually gone over what we were assessing their son/daughter on for the year. I think that has helped those who have come. But like those, you know as well as I do (not the majority), but they are the ones asking the questions so I guess it is beneficial.

13. Positive or negative?

Principal of school B: “Positive.”

14. Teacher/Principal? Has there been a change there?

Principal of school B: Individual basis? “Well, it is kind of a trust thing because we are always handing out things and we are going to deliver the message on the front lines. We are out there.”

15. Has the delivery of the implementation of these academic programs caused any change in the relationships with you and your teachers?

Principal of school B:

I can see some tension with some of my staff members. But again, I try to ease their mind to let them know for example: the SLO, the state recommends two, but you have to do one. We are doing one. I let them
know that the state says two. I believe we are doing one. Is it beneficial?
Yes. I think the majority of us have used the SLO and we should use the
SLO if you are a teacher because it will help you out. That is an example
that comes to my mind. Kind of ensuring that you are on the same team.
Principal of school B: “Exactly. That is what I mean when I say to ease their mind. It
goes back to my delivery.”

16. How about teacher to teacher relationships? Like with Value Added. You see
Valued Added and you see how you do the prior year and obviously, that is
coming up to the high school now. It’s working its way up. Do you see that as
having an impact on teacher to teacher relationships and interactions?
Principal of school B:
I can see that. I have seen it at the middle school level. I have one friend
at the middle school who is just beside himself. He’s a great teacher. This
is driving him nuts because he is taking this so personal because he loves
what he does, he works hard at what he does and the results aren’t really
coming through with his 5th grade assessments. So, I am here at the high
school. Like you said, it is working its way to us, but can I see that? Sure.
For those who might not end up having the test results that they anticipate,
we all know, see and hear the teacher who is bell to bell, who gives you
110% and that was this example. This guy did not have a great result.

17. Do you have any comments about the Ohio Improvement Process? Again, I know
that you are not mandated.
Principal of school B:

In the beginning, it was absolutely ridiculous. It was overwhelming to everyone. I felt sorry for our DLT members because I had asked them to come be a part of this. I told them to come and do this this year. If you do not want to do this next year, I totally understand because it was so repetitive and redundant in some ways. But now that we are in the position that we are in we have taken some of it and we wouldn’t give it back so to speak.

18. Do you think the fact that it is not mandated now, that you are able to pick and choose makes it more useful?

Principal of school B: “It goes back to that stress level. Yes. It is very useful in the components that we do use of it. It is very beneficial.”

19. Well, thank you for taking the time from your busy schedule to meet with me. I know how valuable your time is and cannot thank you enough for agreeing to be interviewed. Thank you!

Principal of school B: “Not a problem. Thank you.”
Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendation

This chapter will examine findings from each portion of the study. The first section will review results obtained from the TAOS-S and the teacher survey results. The final section will review the principal interview responses. The sections will be analyzed using the triangulation method and the final results will be discussed in the conclusion and recommendation section of this chapter.

Procedures

This study attempted to answer the following research question: What are the salient characteristics of teacher-student relationships/interactions in two rural high schools with different connections to Ohio’s protocol of educational improvement. One school that is mandated to participate in the Ohio Improvement Process and one school that is not mandated to participate in the Ohio Improvement process?

The teachers at both schools were asked to complete a short survey as well as the Teacher Academic Optimism Scale for Secondary Teachers (TAOS-S). The survey questions were developed, piloted and revised by this researcher. In addition, this researcher gained permission to use the TAOS-S from Dr. Wayne Hoy, for the purpose of this study. Both the survey and TAOS-S will be discussed in this chapter. Finally, the principals from each school were interviewed using questions similar to those on the teacher survey. The results will also be discussed in this chapter.

The survey and TAOS-S were administered to 37 teachers from two different schools. School A was mandated to participate in the OIP and school B was not. School A had 14 participants and school B had 23 participants. The surveys and TAOS-S were
hand delivered to the building principals for them to administer to their staff. The final response count was 37 which represented a response rate of 100%.

**TAOS-S**

The Teacher Academic Optimism Scale for Secondary Teachers consists of nine questions broken down into three areas. Three questions measure teacher sense of self-efficacy, three questions measure trust in students and parents, and three questions measure academic emphasis. Each set of questions are scored individually resulting in a score for each of the three areas discussed above. Those scores are combined, resulting in that individual’s Academic Optimism score (Fahy et al., 2010).

**Teacher sense of self-efficacy.** The t-score of -2.13 exceeds the critical value for a two-tailed test at 5% with a level of confidence at -2.03. In addition, the p-value of .040 is less than the target of $\alpha = .05$. Therefore, we can conclude that the difference in self-efficacy is statistically significant between the two schools.

**Trust.** The t-score of .024 is well within the critical values of $\pm 2.03$ and the p-value of .981 exceeds the $\alpha = .05$. Therefore, we cannot reject the null hypothesis in the area of trust when comparing the two schools.

**Academic emphasis.** The t-score of .221 falls between the critical values of $\pm 2.03$ which is located in the do not reject null hypothesis region. The p-score of .826 is well above the $\alpha = .05$ level of statistical significance. Therefore, we can conclude that there is no significant difference in academic emphasis between schools. This is illustrated in the charts below.
Teacher Survey Responses

Teacher survey responses for school A Question #3. How have new programs (mandatory or voluntary) affected your sense of self-efficacy? (I.e. SLOs, BLTs, OTES, TBTs, etc.)

Over half of the participants felt that the new programs have taken valuable time away from teaching and increased the amount of paperwork. A few of the participants felt that the new programs have helped them prioritize their objectives and set new goals for their students.

Teacher survey responses for school B Question #3. How have new programs (mandatory or voluntary) affected your sense of self-efficacy? (I.e. SLOs, BLTs, OTES, TBTs, etc.)

A majority of the participants from school B responded that the new programs had little if any affect. A couple participants felt the new programs increased their stress levels.

Teacher survey responses for school A Question #4. How do you prioritize the implementation of academic improvement programs within your classroom?

A majority of the participants indicated that they do what they have to. For the most part they responded that they have to do it, so they do. A common theme was that participants make the implementation of new programs a top priority, but at the expense of valuable class time. A few participants place very low priority on the programs, because they view it as something that changes every two to three years.
Teacher survey responses for school B Question #4. How do you prioritize the implementation of academic improvement programs within your classroom?

A majority of the participants responded that they prioritize what needs to be done and adjust what they do in the classroom accordingly. A few pick and choose what they do in the classroom based on the needs of their students.

Teacher survey responses for school A Question #5. How does your building principal support teachers during the implementation of new academic improvement programs? (I.e. release time, professional development, collaboration, etc.)

A majority of the participants indicated that the principal has given support through the implementation of a common planning period and professional development. Overall a majority of the participants feel that their principal is supportive and tries hard, but the amount of work that the principal does and his stress level limits what he can do.

Teacher survey responses for school B Question #5. How does your building principal support teachers during the implementation of new academic improvement programs? (I.e. release time, professional development, collaboration, etc.)

A majority of the participants responded that their principal was very supportive and did whatever he could to help them. This included release time, collaboration and professional development.

Teacher survey responses for school A Question #7. What type, if any, effect have these policies had on the following relationships?

All but five participant responded that the implementation of these new policies have had a negative impact on the teacher/student relationship. Two responded that it has had no impact and three responded that it has had a positive impact.

**Teacher survey responses for school B Question #7.**


Only five of the 21 participants responded that the implementation of new policies had a negative impact on teacher-student relationships. Twelve participants responded that the implementation of new policies had no impact on teacher-student relationships. Only four respondents responded that the implementation of new policies had a positive impact on teacher-student relationships.

**Teacher survey responses for school A Question #7.**


A majority of the participants indicated that the implementation of new policies had little if any impact on the teacher/parent relationship. Three participants felt that the new policies had a negative effect and caused teachers to be more defensive. While only one participant responded that the new policies had a positive impact by opening communications between teachers and parents.

**Teacher survey responses for school B Question #7.**

A majority of the participants indicated that the new policies had little if any effect on teacher-parent relationships. Four participants responded that they had a negative effect because of lost time teaching in the classroom. One participant responded that the new policies had a positive impact, but did not elaborate.

**Teacher survey responses for school A Question #7.**


Seven participants responded that the new policies had a positive impact on the teacher/principal relationship. While the other seven participants responded that the new policies had a negative effect on their relationship.

**Teacher survey responses for school B Question #7.**


A majority of the participants from school B responded that the policies had a positive impact on the teacher/principal relationship. Two participants responded that the policies had a negative impact and the remaining participants felt that the new policies had little if any effect.

**Teacher survey responses for school A Question #7.**

d. Teacher/teacher? Positive or negative? Explain.

A large majority of the participants responded that the new policies had a positive effect on teacher/teacher relationships. Only two of the participants responded that the new policies had a negative effect and the remaining participants felt they had little or no effect.
Teacher survey responses for school B Question #7.

d. Teacher/teacher? Positive or negative? Explain.

The majority of participants responded that the new policies had a positive effect on the teacher/teacher relationship. Three participants felt the policies were negative in that they created extra work and competition among the staff. The remaining participants responded that the new policies had little if any effect on the teacher/teacher relationships.

Contrasting Principal A to Principal B

Principal A was very unsure of himself, frequently making comments about confusion and lack of focus. He did not appear to have the knowledge or background to effectively lead the change process in his school. This was further reinforced when reviewing the teacher surveys and TAOS-S results. Several teachers indicated they did not see the need or benefit of the OIP. Many were unsure of what they were doing and did not feel supported by the principal. In addition, Principal A did not appear to use the available resources to instill confidence in his staff and help guide the change process. There was no indication that stakeholders had been involved throughout the process or that the staff had any opportunity to provide feedback and actively participate in the implementation.

Principal B seemed very focused and confident in working with his staff. He frequently discussed the importance of delivery and buy-in. He felt very strongly about how changes or the introduction of anything new was delivered to his staff. Keeping the staff informed and making them a part of the change process was crucial. In addition, he
stressed the importance of getting a consistent message out to not only the staff, but to the community. He felt when new programs are introduced or changes occur, it is important to bring all stakeholders in to answer questions and correct any misinformation. In addition, the teacher surveys and TAOS-S provided very similar and supportive information. A majority of Principal B’s staff reported feeling very supported, informed, and part of any changes that have taken place.

**Recommendations**

**Leadership.** How the principal in school A and the principal in school B dealt with the implementation of new academic initiatives was quite different. Principal A lacked the background and knowledge necessary to implement the new initiative. His confusion and inability to involve all stakeholders throughout the process caused stress and concern among the staff. It was apparent from the data that the staff from school A felt threatened by the new initiatives. In some ways these new academic initiatives could be considered under the theory of “threat-rigidity” (Olsen & Sexton, 2009). When a threat is injected into an environment, it not only impacts that environment, but also the people in that environment causing the people and environment to interact in an effort to respond to the threat (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987).

Principal B handled the implementation much differently. He involved all stakeholders throughout the process and met with staff immediately to squelch any misinformation that may have otherwise come about. In addition, principal B invited parents and community members in to answer questions and ensure that accurate information was properly disseminated. This approach of being open and forthcoming, as
supported by the data in this study, resulted in lower levels of stress and high levels of academic optimism.

First and foremost, principals of schools that are mandated to participate in the OIP must be properly trained and given the knowledge to lead the process. Without proper training, the process could cause more harm than good. Assigning a mentor to principals new to the process who has gone through the process and experienced success could also be very helpful. This person, through experience, may assist his/her mentee in several other areas as well, such as bringing stakeholders in and keeping them informed, introducing new initiatives to the staff, or tapping into resources that the mentee either does not know about, or does not realize they have access to these resources.

Having been a high school principal for several years and a superintendent for nine years, I can attest to the importance of keeping all stakeholders informed and including the staff in the change process. If principal A were in my district, I would sit down with him and establish short term and long term goals. In the short term, I would provide him with the professional development needed to implement the OIP. This may be done by sending the principal out to visit high schools that have been through the process and had success which would provide the principal with the opportunity of developing a mentoring relationship with the principal. I would also review what my expectations are for a building principal which would include being visible throughout the building, interacting in a positive manner with staff and students on a regular basis, working with the building staff to create education and climate goals, and always leading by example. In the long term, I would expect Principal A to keep up-to-date on policies
and procedures that impact his building.

In regards to principal preparation programs, findings from this study would support an increase in practical experience. Similar to student teaching, aspiring principals should be required to spend a substantial amount of time with veteran administrators. Having been a building level principal for several years I can attest to the fact that my largest learning curve occurred while networking and or interacting with veteran administrators. The role of building principal has changed drastically over the years, but the preparation programs have not.

Policy makers. Information from this study would support the legislation of required training programs for building principals. Implementation of these new programs should be based on research similar to this study to establish a baseline and make decisions on the data rather than assumptions. Policy makers need to bring true experts to the table when developing and implementing new policies. These training programs should be developed in conjunction with veteran administrators and should be part of the total implementation process. To expect an administrator with little or no experience to implement new academic initiatives without proper training is a recipe for failure.

School climate. "School climate refers to the quality and character of school life as it relates to norms and values, interpersonal relations and social interactions, and organizational processes and structures" (NSCC, 2015, p. 1). This was obviously impacted by the implementation of new initiatives and how the principal, staff, and students responded. If the principal is confused and lacks confidence in what he or she is
doing the staff and students are likely to feel the same. As the data from this study suggests, school A reported statistically significant higher levels of stress as well as a statistically significant higher percentage of staff that reported the new initiatives had a negative impact on teacher-student relationships.

**Teacher self-efficacy.** Based on data gathered from the TAOS-S, teacher surveys, and principal interviews, this researcher can make several recommendations. Teachers need to feel like they are part of the process. It is essential for the building principal to keep his or her teachers informed, to value their input, and to include them from the beginning. This will hopefully diminish the fear and anxiety that often comes with change. Findings from this study demonstrate that the implementation approach used by Principal B not only reduced stress, but also increased teacher self-efficacy. How the principal introduces and implements, what many see as a threat, does make a difference. When a threat is injected into an organization it elicits a response (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Findings from this study demonstrate that the Principal B’s leadership style had a positive impact on teacher self-efficacy.

**Conclusion**

These findings are further supported by the literature. A principal that is up-to-date on new policies and or academic initiatives fosters a less stressful and supportive environment. In regards to self-efficacy and stress, teachers are much more confident when they understand what is expected of them and have a principal that is both confident and knowledgeable about what they are doing. A principal that lacks this knowledge and confidence often compounds what is already a stressful condition. The
principal, as the leader of the school, is responsible for facilitating an atmosphere that is warm and filled with trust (Goleman, 2006) which creates a school climate that is positive with higher teacher retention (Cohen & Ball, 2007).

As indicated in the literature, stressful conditions—such as those arguably associated with school accountability—may have an influence on staff and student morale, sense of self-efficacy, or emotional balance (Hakanen et al., 2006; Maslach et al., 2001; Marzano et al., 2003).

Participation in mandated reforms such as the Ohio Improvement Process, implicates a series of changes that many teachers and administrators view as difficult and therefore stressful (Black, 2003; Hakanen et al., 2006; Kozol, 2007; Wilson & Hall, 2002). Findings from this study further support the negative implications mandates put on teacher stress, self-efficacy and morale.
References


Schneider & S. McDonald (Eds.), *Scale-up in education: Ideas in Principle* (pp. 19-36). Lanham, MD.


achievement. *Education & Educational Research, 50*(1), 14-36.


and teacher–child relationship quality to school attitudes in a low-income sample.

_Early Education & Development, 22_(3), 434-460.


Appendix A: Ohio Improvement Process

**STAGE 0: Preparing for the OIP**
Preparing for the OIP provides the basics on establishing the collaborative structures and processes necessary to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate the OIP. In addition to defining the necessary collaborative structures, it describes the practices of communication and engagement, decision-making and resource management that are threaded throughout the OIP.

**STAGE 1: Identify Critical Needs of Districts and Schools**
- How: Teams use data to identify critical needs.

**STAGE 2: Develop a Focused Plan**
- How: Develop goals, strategies, indicators, and action steps focused on stage 1 critical needs.

**STAGE 3: Implement and Monitor the Focused Plan**
- How: Implement strategies and action steps to achieve district goals. Monitor fidelity of implementation and effect on changes in adult practice and student learning.

**STAGE 4: Evaluate the Improvement Process**

**OHIO 5-STEP PROCESS**
- STEP 1: Collect and chart data.
- STEP 2: Analyze data.
- STEP 3: Establish shared expectations for implementing specific changes.
- STEP 4: Implement changes, consistently.
- STEP 5: Collect, chart, and analyze pre- and post-data.
## Appendix B: TAOS

### TAOS-S

**Directions:** This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.

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<th></th>
<th>Nothing</th>
<th>Very Little</th>
<th>Some Influence</th>
<th>Quite a Bit</th>
<th>A Great Deal</th>
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<td>1. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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**Directions:** Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements below from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

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<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
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<td>4. Most of my students are honest.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>5. My students’ parents are reliable.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>6. I trust my students.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>7. I press my students to achieve academically.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>8. I give my students challenging work.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. I set high, but attainable goals for my students.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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(©Hoy, Wu, Fahy – 2009)
Appendix C: Principal Interview Questions

Principal Interview Questions

Give me a brief history of your background in the field of education.

1. How long have you been an administrator in this building?

2. How have new programs (mandatory or voluntary) affected your teachers’ sense of self efficacy? (i.e., SLOs, BLTs, OTES, TBTs, etc...)
   a. Provide examples

3. How have you prioritized the implementation of academic improvement programs within your building?

4. How do you, as the building principal, support your teachers during the implementation of new academic improvement programs? (i.e., release time, professional development, collaboration, etc...)

5. Describe how you have implemented new academic improvement policies in your district?

6. What type, if any, effect have these policies had on the following relationships:
   d. Teacher/teacher? Positive or negative? Explain.
   e. School/community? Positive or negative? Explain.
Appendix D: Teacher Survey Questions

Teacher Interview Questions

1. What subject do you currently teach? __________

2. How long have you been a teacher in this building? __________

3. How have new programs (mandatory or voluntary) affected your sense of self efficacy? (I.e. SLOs, BLTs, OTES, TBTs, etc...)

4. How do you prioritize the implementation of academic improvement programs within your classroom?

5. How does your building principal support teachers during the implementation of new academic improvement programs? (I.e. release time, professional development, collaboration, etc...)

6. How has the implementation of new academic improvement programs impacted your level of stress? (circle one)
   a. No stress
   b. Little stress
   c. Moderate stress
   d. Very high stress

7. What type, if any, effect have these policies had on the following relationships:


   d. Teacher/teacher? Positive or negative? Explain.
Appendix E: IRB Approval Form

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<td>Office of Research Compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance Contact</td>
<td>Robin Stack (<a href="mailto:stack@ohio.edu">stack@ohio.edu</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Investigator</td>
<td>Walter Skaggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title</td>
<td>The Influence of the Ohio Improvement Process Requirement on Teacher-Student Relationships/Interactions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Ohio University Office of Research Compliance reviewed and approved by exempt review the above referenced research. The Office of Research Compliance was able to provide exempt approval under 45 CFR 46.101(b) because the research meets the applicability criteria and one or more categories of research eligible for exempt review, as indicated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IRB Approval</th>
<th>01/11/2016 09:28:45 AM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review Category</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Waiver: N/A

If applicable, informed consent (and HIPAA research authorization) must be obtained from subjects or their legally authorized representatives and documented prior to research involvement. In addition, FFRPA, PPRA, and other authorizations must be obtained, if needed. The IRB-approved consent form and process must be used. Any changes in the research (e.g., recruitment procedures, advertisements, enrollment numbers, etc.) or informed consent process must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented (except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects).

It is the responsibility of all investigators and research staff to promptly report to the Office of Research Compliance / IRB any serious, unexpected and related adverse and potential unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This approval is issued under the Ohio University OHRR Federally Approved #00000095. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Compliance staff contact listed above with any questions or concerns.