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Perceptions of Tennessee School Principals About the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM)

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Perceptions of Tennessee School Principals About the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM)

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by

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this quantitative study was to analyze the perceptions of Tennessee principals about the implementation of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) and the impact of TEAM on teachers' instructional practice and professional growth. Participants in this study were PK-12 public school principals from 12 districts in the First Region of Tennessee who were implementing TEAM in the 2011-2012 school year. Specifically this research was guided by 8 research questions on principal's perceptions about TEAM providing appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers and the principal's perception about their ability to adequately perform the requirements of TEAM.

The survey instrument consisted of 26 statements that asked the respondents to indicate their degree of agreement on a 4-point Likert scale. Quantitative data were analyzed with a series of one-sample *t* tests or independent-samples *t* tests. Results indicated that respondents had a significantly positive perception of TEAM providing appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers. Results indicated that respondents' perceptions of adequately performing the requirements of TEAM were not significantly different from neutral, the value 2.5.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to several people without whom this work would not have been possible. My pursuit of a doctoral degree required patience, understanding, and sacrifice from those that I love most dearly.

To my parents, Mike and Susan Belcher, who instilled in me a love of learning by modeling it yourselves. You have shaped the life I have today by teaching me values and beliefs, encouraging me to live life to its fullest, and supporting me every step of the way. I strive to be for Etta the inspiration you have both been to me. Thank you for being my parents. Without your love, support, and sacrifices, none of this would be possible.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goal of schools is to help more students learn at higher levels (DuFour & Marzano, 2009). In the 2011-2012 school year Tennessee public schools made aggregate student achievement gains at a faster rate than any previously measured year (Tennessee Department of Education, 2012). The Tennessee Department of Education attributed the gains to a number of factors including teacher evaluation "as administrators have consistently expressed the opinion that instruction improved this year as a result" (p. 29). Tennessee has aligned accountability for the state, districts, schools, principals, and teachers through growth measurement and reward for continuous improvement against baselines (Tennessee Department of Education, 2011a).

Tucker and Stronge (2005) defined the primary purposes of teacher evaluation as accountability and professional growth. For accountability and professional growth teacher evaluation must define what good teaching looks like and how professional growth can be embedded in the process. Best practices in education are ever changing based on research findings related to pedagogy and improved student learning (Korthagen, 2010; Reeves, 2011). Teacher evaluation should evolve concurrently with the changing pedagogical practice; however, over the last 3 decades evolution of teacher evaluation has failed to happen. A host of factors have resulted in "teacher evaluation systems throughout public education that are superficial, capricious and

often don't even directly address the quality of instruction, much less measure students' learning" (Toch & Rothman, 2008, p. 1).

For years Tennessee educators have endured a system of teacher evaluation that lacked depth of expectations for good teaching, professional dialogue, and professional growth. Danielson and McGreal (2000) stated, "Experienced practitioners argue that professional dialogue about teaching, in a safe environment, managed and led by teachers, is the only means by which teachers improve their practice" (p. 9). Tennessee teacher evaluation has been in the midst of a paradigm shift. This shift was grounded in the idea that teachers and principals have room for improvement and that feedback was essential for professional growth (Frase & Streshly, 1994).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this research is to analyze the perceptions of Tennessee principals about the implementation of TEAM and the impact of TEAM on teachers' instructional practice and professional growth. The Tennessee First to the Top Act of 2010 required teacher evaluations and unless otherwise approved by the Tennessee Department of Education mandated the specific model of evaluation and frequency of evaluation to be used in the evaluation of apprentice and professional teachers in Tennessee (Tennessee First to the Top Act, 2010). Implemented state wide in school year 2011-2012, the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) process differed from the previous Tennessee model named the State Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth (Tennessee Department of Education, 2009). Given the mandated change in evaluation processes and simultaneous full implementation of TEAM,

principals and teachers have been experiencing the change process together. The Tennessee Department of Education described TEAM as an evaluation system designed to promote principals and teachers working together to ensure that students benefit from the best possible instruction every day. Through a combination of frequent observation, constructive feedback, student data, and meaningful professional development, the new system was designed to support all educators so they can do their best work in the classroom and help every student learn and grow (Tennessee First to the Top website, n.d.).

Research Questions

The following research questions guide this quantitative study:

Research Question 1: To what extent do principals perceive the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model provides appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers?

Research Question 2: To what extent do principals perceive they can adequately perform the requirements of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model?

Research Question 3: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive they can adequately perform the requirements of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model in terms of school size?

Research Question 4: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive they can adequately perform the requirements of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model in terms of years of experience as a principal?

Research Question 5: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive they can adequately perform the requirements of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model in terms of socioeconomic status of the school?

Research Question 6: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model provides appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers in terms of school size?

Research Question 7: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model provides appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers in terms of years of experience as a principal?

Research Question 8: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model provides appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers in terms of socioeconomic status of the school?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this research study may be useful to the Tennessee Department of Education as it continues to administer the guidelines for teacher evaluation as recommended by the Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee and approved by the State Board of Education. "The quest is not to create a perfect system. The quest was to create the best possible system and to continue to reflect on and refine that system over time," said Tennessee Commissioner of Education Kevin Huffman in testimony before the House Committee on Education and Labor (Huffman, 2011, p. 2).

The research findings may be helpful to school principals and district administrators as they approach change processes and support student learning. Within educational research this study extended the awareness of the effectiveness of teacher evaluation on instructional practice and professional growth. Results of this study may fill the gap that existed in the limited research that was available concerning the implementation perceptions of principals who are ultimately responsible for the implementation of the evaluation process and the instructional practices and professional growth of teachers.

Delimitations and Limitations

The participants were limited to PK-12 public school principals from 12 districts in the First Region of Tennessee who were implementing TEAM in the 2011-2012 school year. Principals who were willing to participate in the study may not be representative of the overall demographics of the state. Another limitation was the possible personal and professional biases of the respondents due to their level of training on TEAM or their experiences in general with teacher evaluation. This study was confined to the perceptions of principals about the implementation of TEAM and the impact of TEAM on teacher's instructional practice and professional growth. This study may apply to those states with similar demographics and those states considering similar evaluation models implemented in a similar way.

This study was limited to school principals and did not study the perceptions of other trained TEAM evaluators such as assistant principals and district level personnel. TEAM was the model of teacher evaluation considered in this study. Alternative models

of teacher evaluation approved by the Tennessee Board of Education were not considered. This study will not be generalizable to the perceptions of all Tennessee educators serving as evaluators in the 2011-2012 school year.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are defined to facilitate the use of this research study:

Accountability - The technique by which citizens and their elected representatives control the activities of those who administer, teach, and serve in public schools by requiring schools to pursue the goals established by the people and their representatives through democratic processes (Rothstein, Jacobsen, & Wilder, 2008).

Evaluation Process - When teacher evaluation is integrated within a comprehensive, site-based system with specific practical elements to support teachers and improve teaching and learning in the classroom (National Institute for Excellence in Teaching [NIET], 2011a).

Formative Evaluation - Evaluation for the purpose of enhancing the professional skills of teachers (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

First to the Top Grant (FTTT) - Through the federal government's Race to the Top grant application in 2010 Tennessee is awarded $501 million dollars to fund the initiative of the Tennessee First to the Top grant. FTTT focuses on three main student performance goals: young students' academic readiness, high school graduates' readiness for college and careers, and higher rates of graduates enrolling and succeeding in postsecondary education. Through these initiatives

Tennessee has a renewed focus on developing and improving great teachers and leaders in Tennessee classrooms (Tennessee First to the Top website, n.d.).

Instructional Practice - The planning, instruction, professionalism, and environment rubrics of TEAM (Appendix A) define instructional practice to improve student achievement (NIET, 2011a).

Professional Growth - A comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' effectiveness in raising student achievement (Learning Forward website, 2012).

Summative Evaluation - Evaluation for the purpose of making consequential decisions (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

Teacher Evaluation - Process of assessing a teacher's instructional practices, content knowledge, and professional behaviors that affect student learning (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) - A combination of frequent observation, constructive feedback, student data, and meaningful professional growth that is designed to support all educators to do their best work in the classroom and help every student learn and grow (Tennessee First to the Top website, n.d.).

Tennessee Value Added Assessment (TVAAS) - A statistical analysis of achievement data that reveals academic growth over time for students and groups of students such as those in a grade level or in a school (Tennessee Department of Education, n.d.).

Overview of the Study

This quantitative study is organized and presented in five chapters and analyzes the perceptions of Tennessee principals about the implementation of TEAM and the impact of TEAM on teacher's instructional practice and professional growth. Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter. It includes a statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations and limitations, and definition of terms. Chapter 2 provides a review of the related literature including legislative mandates, the evaluation process, implementation of evaluation, role of educators, and professional growth. Chapter 3 is a description of the research methodology including the research questions and null hypotheses, population, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 is an analysis of the data for each research question. Chapter 5 is a summary of the study including conclusions and recommendations for practice and future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The ultimate goal of teacher evaluation is to improve student learning. Tucker and Stronge (2005) defined the primary purposes of teacher evaluation as accountability and professional growth. For accountability and professional growth teacher evaluation must define what good teaching looks like and how professional growth can be embedded in the process. Rothstein et al. (2008) defined accountability as the technique by which citizens and their elected representatives control the activities of those who administer, teach, and serve in public schools by requiring schools to pursue the goals established by the people and their representatives through democratic processes and to achieve these goals to the extent possible by using the most effective strategies available. Professional growth was a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' effectiveness in raising student achievement (Learning Forward website, 2012). Opportunities were missed for teacher evaluation to improves student learning through teaching, professional dialogue, and professional growth (Davis, Ellett, & Annunziata, 2002).

The Tennessee First to the Top Act of 2010 (FTTT) required teacher evaluations to change. Changes to teacher evaluation were based on an expanding understanding of learning and what constitutes good teaching (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). The purpose of this quantitative study was to analyze the perceptions of Tennessee principals about the implementation of TEAM and the impact of TEAM on teachers' instructional practice and professional growth.

This chapter reviews the relevant literature as it pertains to the implementation of a new model of teacher evaluation in Tennessee. The literature review is divided into five main content areas: (1) the legislative mandates surrounding teacher evaluation; (2) an overview of the evaluation process; (3) a description of the implementation of evaluation; (4) the changing roles of educators; and, (5) an exploration of professional growth.

Legislative Mandates

The involvement of politicians in decision making on behalf of educators resulted in a multitude of legislative mandates that left teachers with a this too shall pass attitude. Often these mandates were unilaterally formulated and left to school districts to implement without additional monies. When enough complaints from education associations had been voiced or when effective change had failed to happen, the mandates were reversed, and educators went back to business as usual. Mandates were more likely to be implemented if the formulation process involved an ongoing dialogue about the beliefs and practices that informed both the proposed mandate and the district implementation (Timperly & Robinson, 1997).

Most school districts across the country implemented a form of teacher evaluation to comply with state or federal mandates (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). These mandates and resulting district policies satisfied the legal requirements, but they rarely affected change at the classroom level (Baker et al., 2010). Lack of change at the classroom level often came from a disconnect between legislative policy mandates and educators' beliefs, values, and practices (Terry, 2010).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) provisions relating to highly qualified teachers required that all teachers be highly qualified by 2005-2006. To earn highly qualified status teachers were to: (1) have a bachelor's degree, (2) have full state certification and licensure, and (3) have demonstrated subject matter expertise in the subject(s) taught (Office of Elementary and Secondary Education Legislation, Regulations, and Guidance website, 2006). Attaining highly qualified status was an important step in assuring the quality of teachers in the classroom, but research on teacher effectiveness showed that meeting these requirements alone did not predict or ensure that a teacher would be successful at increasing student learning (Toch & Rothman, 2008). The NCLB provisions have not driven strong improvements in what matters most, which was the effectiveness of teachers in promoting and supporting student learning.

NCLB does not mandate teacher evaluation. Toch and Rothman (2008) found that without such policy supports for effective teachers, teacher quality by credentials alone would not be supported. Teacher quality should be measured by the effectiveness in the classroom. Kane, Rockoff, and Staiger (2006) found that on average the certification status of a teacher has at most small impacts on student test performance. NCLB sought to improve teacher quality; however, quality was defined by qualifications rather than performance.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2010

On March 13, 2010, in "A Blueprint for Reform," the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), President Obama stated:

> This effort will require the skills and talents of many, but especially our nation's teachers, principals, and other school leaders. Our goal must be to have a great teacher in every classroom and a great principal in every school. We know that from the moment students enter a school, the most important factor in their success is not the color of their skin or the income of their parents—it is the teacher standing at the front of the classroom. To ensure the success of our children, we must do better to recruit, develop, support, retain, and reward outstanding teachers in America's classrooms. (United States Department of Education, 2010, p. 1)

"A Blueprint for Reform" called for elevating the teaching profession to focus on recognizing, encouraging, and rewarding excellence. To do this states and districts developed and implemented systems of teacher and principal evaluation and support. States identified effective and highly effective teachers and principals on the basis of student growth. These systems of teacher evaluation informed professional growth to help teachers and principals improve student learning.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). This legislation was designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors including education. The ARRA laid the foundation for education reform by supporting investments in innovative strategies that are most likely to lead to improved results for students, long-term gains in

school and school system capacity, and increased productivity and effectiveness (United States Department of Education, 2009).

The ARRA provides $4.35 billion for the Race to the Top Fund (RTTT), a competitive grant that “will reward eligible states for past accomplishments and create incentives for future improvement in four key areas: toughening academic standards, recruiting and retaining effective teachers, turning around failing schools, and tracking the performance of students and teachers” (Branigin, 2009, para. 7). States that prohibit linking student performance to teacher evaluations will be ineligible for RTTT funds (United States Department of Education, 2009).

To be eligible for federal RTTT funds states had to link student progress to teacher evaluation. In the RTTT application 70 of the 500 possible application points were based on the linking of teacher evaluation and student test performance. Included within the possible 70 points is the extent to which the state does each of the following: (a) measure individual student growth; (b) implement evaluation systems that use student growth as a significant factor in evaluating teachers and principals; (c) include student growth in annual evaluations; (d) use these evaluations to inform professional support, compensation, promotion, retention, tenure, and dismissal; (e) incorporate data on student growth into professional growth, coaching, and planning (United States Department of Education, 2010). If awarded the grant, the RTTT funded state would: (a) attribute 50% of teacher evaluation to student growth scores; (b) use teacher ratings in granting tenure status for new teachers; (c) use teacher ratings to identify professional growth needs; (d) use teacher ratings to identify coaches or mentors for developing teachers; (e) use teacher ratings for differentiated compensation; (f) use

teacher ratings for termination of ineffective teachers (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010).

The Obama administration billed RTTT as the "largest-ever federal investment in education reform" (Branigin, 2009, para. 2). President Obama challenged the nation's governors, schools boards, teachers, parents, students, and others to meet "a few key benchmarks for reform" in order to compete for and win RTTT grant funds (Branigin, 2009, para. 4). In a letter to the U.S. Department of Education the Board on Testing and Assessment (BOTA) offered comments on the proposed regulations of the RTTT fund, "BOTA has significant concerns that the Department's proposal places too much emphasis on measures of growth in student achievement (1) that have not yet been adequately studied for the purposes of evaluating teachers and principals and (2) that face substantial practical barriers to being successfully deployed in an operational personnel system that is fair, reliable, and valid" (National Research Council, 2009, p. 8).

Tennessee First to the Top Act of 2010

Tennessee was awarded the $500 million grant to support the implementation of the Tennessee First to the Top Act (FTTT), which was signed into law by Governor Bredesen in January 2010 (Tennessee Department of Education, 2011a). Since receiving the award Tennessee has made progress in implementing several initiatives including a new teacher evaluation system (United States Department of Education, 2012, p. 3).

The FTTT legislation established a Teacher Evaluation Advisory Council and charged it with the responsibility of developing and recommending criteria and guidelines for teacher and principal evaluations to the Tennessee State Board of Education (FAQ Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model, n.d.). The Tennessee State Board of Education Teacher and Principal Evaluation Policy 5.201 (Tennessee State Board of Education, 2012) included the purpose, responsibility, basic standards, and procedures for the Tennessee model plan. The policy stated that the primary purpose of annual teacher evaluation is to identify and support instruction that will lead to high levels of student achievement. Evaluations informed professional growth plans, hiring, assignment and promotion, tenure and dismissal, and compensation. Evaluations differentiated teacher performance into five effectiveness groups according to the individual educator's evaluation results. The five effectiveness groups were: significantly above expectations, above expectations, meets expectations, below expectations, and significantly below expectations. Fifty percent of the evaluation criteria were comprised of student achievement data including 35% based on student growth data calculated using Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS) and 15% based on other measures of student achievement selected by teachers in collaboration with their principal. The remaining 50% of the evaluation criteria was based on a rating using the qualitative appraisal instrument contained in each approved evaluation model.

FTTT required evaluations to be used as a factor in personnel decisions including providing professional growth, attaining tenure, and determining dismissal (FAQ Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model, n.d.). Decisions with high stakes

consequences involved data from multiple sources (Gallagher, Rabinowitz, & Yeagley, 2011). Teachers became eligible for tenure if they had taught for at least 5 years in the same local education agency and had attained a rating of 4 or 5 in each of the previous 2 years (Tennessee Code Annotated, 2012c). Teachers who had not attained a rating of 4 or 5 may continue to teach on their current contract status even though they had not become eligible for tenure. A teacher who was tenured by July 1, 2011, would not lose tenure status under this legislation (Tennessee First to the Top website, n.d.).

The Tennessee Consortium on Research, Evaluation, and Development (2011) collected specific data and conducted specific evaluations of select components within FTTT reform efforts. One of these components for research was teacher and principal evaluation. This research included: (a) a study of past evaluation policy in Tennessee; (b) evaluation of educator evaluation field test and scaling-up of educator evaluation policies; (c) evaluation of TEAM; (d) a needs assessment at school and district level to inform implementation experiences with TEAM. Survey data, focus groups, and the data from the evaluations were used to provide feedback on the effectiveness of TEAM (Tennessee First to the Top website, n.d.). The Tennessee Department of Education worked with TN CRED to analyze the data, and key findings were developed to inform TEAM revisions. Recommendations for revision to TEAM went to the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education (Tennessee First to the Top website, n.d.).

Educators were wary of the unintended results of policies linking high-stakes consequences to student scores on standardized tests (Baker et al., 2010). The worry of Burris and Welner (2011b) was that as we attach reform efforts to evaluation systems those factors that matter most such as a collegial environment, collaborative

professional growth, and high quality teaching and learning for all students would be neglected. During a phone conversation with Burris, Secretary Duncan did not understand why teachers would be reluctant to teach at-risk students expressing his faith in value-added models and the ability of value added to account for bias. Burris and Welner (2011b) said this illustrated an important point, "If policy makers do not understand the research concerning the technical limitations of this [value added evaluation] tool, they will support policies that rely on the models to produce valid and reliable numbers for individual educators" (p. 40). In a letter to Burris, President Obama stated, "I respectfully disagree with your suggestion that the closest thing states have to an objective measure of student achievement should not be part of the equation" (Burris & Welner, 2011b, pg. 41).

Educational policy has affected the educator's environment. Burris and Welner (2011a) wrote that educator's environments were "the legacy of policies that were rushed into place by states to get Race to the Top money" (pg. 38). Educational policy initiatives offered the promise of improving education; however, nothing was more important to improving our schools than improving the equity of teaching that occurred every day in every classroom with every student (Baker et al., 2010; United States Department of Education, 2010). The principal was integral to the schools ability to support high-quality instruction (Wilson, 2009). Wilson stated, "Ideally, school leaders would know how effective each teacher is, provide supports to help teachers in their weakest areas, and retain only teachers who most benefit students" (p. 6).

The Evaluation Process

History of the Evaluation Process

Until the 1950s personal characteristics of the teacher such as morals, ethics, and personal traits guided the evaluation process (Ellet & Teddlie, 2003). Until the 1980s evaluation was guided by research that studied the linkages between teaching practices and student outcomes. Principals used evaluation checklists for the infrequent evaluations (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009). School reform in the 1980s sparked by the National Commission of Excellence in Education report A Nation at Risk brought a renewed focus on the evaluation process for the purpose of state mandates to maintain licensure and certification at the state level (Gardner, 1983). In the late 1990s Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching guided the development of the evaluation process that focused on connecting teaching and student learning (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

Nationally the Widget Effect (Weisberg et al., 2009) found flaws in evaluation practice and implementation that included: (a) short and infrequent evaluations; (b) principals untrained in conducting evaluations; (c) evaluation expectations influenced by the school or district culture; (d) failure to differentiate teachers based on effectiveness; and (e) evaluation not aligned to professional growth and teacher support. The process of evaluation should have involved conferencing and feedback that would lead teachers to construct their understandings and to set their professional goals that were measured in terms of student learning (Anast-May, Penick, Schroyer, & Howell, 2011; Ovando & Ramirez, 2007). Research on teacher evaluation measured in terms of student learning showed trends that were moving the evaluation process to a model using a variety of

measures. Much research supports using multiple measures in the evaluation process (Daley & Kim, 2010; Jerald & Van Hook, 2011).

In the early 2000s Tennessee's most pressing needs were beginning teacher support programs and expanded professional growth opportunities (Tennessee Department of Education, 2009). A strategy to meet the state goal of professional growth was the development of a new evaluation process in 2004. Developed by the Tennessee Department of Education, Tennessee's evaluation process from June 2004-June 2011 was the Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth. The framework was a research based description of a teacher's performance on 44 criteria clustered within six domains. Teachers received a summative report of their performance as unsatisfactory, developing, proficient, or advanced based on the six domains and a professional growth plan (Tennessee Department of Education, 2009). While in theory the evaluation process supported individualized professional growth, the process evaluated professionally licensed teachers only twice every 10 years. This infrequent evaluation led to a process that became another checklist to meet a state mandate rather than support for individualized professional growth.

Measures in the Evaluation Process

Two types of evaluation served as the basis for most teacher evaluation systems: summative evaluation for the purpose of accountability decisions and formative evaluation for the purpose of professional growth (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Summative evaluation implied judgment and assessment of teaching made through a

chain of command. Formative evaluation implied learning and growth made through a trusting relationship between teacher and principal (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

Wright, Horn, and Sanders (1997) found teacher effectiveness to be the dominant factor affecting student academic gain. They suggested that the teacher evaluation process should include the teacher's effect on student academic gain over time. Stronge, Ward, Tucker, and Hindman (2007) found that evidence supported the efficacy of value added approaches for assessing teacher quality. Goe (2008) identified benefits of using value added models: (a) value-added measures were relatively objective because they consider only teachers' contributions to student learning; (b) value-added measures provided a useful way to look for evidence about which teacher qualifications and characteristics matter for student learning; (c) analyzing value-added data was relatively inexpensive compared with other means of assessing teachers; (d) value-added measures focused exclusively on student learning—not on teaching practices that may or may not be linked to positive outcomes for students; and (e) value-added measures identified highly successful classrooms and teachers creating opportunities to learn from those teachers. Additionally Goe identified the limitations of value-added measures of teacher effectiveness: (a) difficulty in determining impact; (b) difficulty in isolating the contributions of the individual teacher; (c) difficulties with methodological issues; (d) incomplete student data and small sample sizes; (e) relativity; (f) parameters of good teaching; (g) inability to use value added models; (h) privacy issues; and (i) inadequacy of standardized tests.

Value added growth models did not fully compensate for student differences (Burris & Welner, 2011); however, when compared to principal observations of the

teacher, value added growth models were less vulnerable to bias or favoritism (Donaldson, 2009). Value added was an improvement over the status test score comparison (average student test scores of one teacher to another), change measures (average student test scores in one year to the same teachers average student test scores of another year), and growth measures (average student test scores in one year to the same student scores in an earlier grade); however, value added growth models should not be the primary means of evaluation as the solution to the problems in education accountability (Baker et al., 2010). Because of the uncertainty around why differences in student growth occur, value added models should be used in conjunction with other means of evaluation (Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008).

Effective Evaluation Processes

State and district commitment to the evaluation process was necessary for it to be meaningful and effective (Colby, Bradshaw, & Joyner, 2002). The New Teacher Project (2010) identified six interdependent design standards that teacher evaluation processes must meet in order to be effective: annual process, clear and rigorous expectations, multiple measures, multiple ratings, regular feedback, and significance. To ensure effectiveness of the teacher evaluation system teachers and other stakeholders should be involved in the process (Colby et al.).

The summative data should highlight exemplary educators and dismiss ineffective ones (Huffman, 2011); however, the evaluation system must be valid and reliable in order to use it in the summative role (Marzano, 2012). The formative data improved teaching and learning, and it should coexist with the summative role. A

meaningful evaluation system was a factor in maintaining a positive school culture in which collegiality and teacher relationships with each other, administration, and students were collaborative thus enhancing the working conditions (Burris & Welner, 2011b).

A meaningful teacher evaluation process should improve good instruction and student learning should be a primary focus (Colby et al., 2002). Effective evaluation processes improved student growth through both teacher accountability and professional growth by using multiple data sources and multiple evaluators (Colby et al.). An evaluation process should be differentiated to better meet the needs of all teachers (Colby et al.). Districts should link policies, procedures, and expectations to the evaluation (Weisberg et al., 2009).

TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement

Based on the System for Teacher and Student Advancement (TAP) teaching standards, Tennessee principals were provided a framework and the instruments to implement the TEAM observation process. The TAP observation process has been used for over 10 years, and the selection of the TAP rubric as the Tennessee model for the teacher observation process was based on TAP's research and resources (National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, 2011a).

In the 1990s Milken and the Milken Family Foundation developed a comprehensive system for school reform model to address the challenges facing public education. TAP drew from Danielson's as well as other assessment frameworks and was based on four elements: multiple career paths, ongoing applied professional growth

instructionally focused accountability, and performance based compensation. Because of its support, results, and high demand, TAP is now managed and supported by the public charity National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) (National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, 2011a).

TAP was created to fulfill two goals: (1) accurately measure teacher effectiveness; (2) provide teachers with support to improve their performance (Jerald & Van Hook, 2011). "TAP represents the longest sustained and most successful effort to radically transform teacher evaluation using multiple measures including student achievement gains" (Jerald & Van Hook, 2011, p. 1). Reliability and validity evidence was available for NIET's TAP teacher evaluation process. Principals had overwhelmingly reported that TAP had a positive effect on collegiality through professional growth activities, teacher instructional practice through differentiated professional growth based on teacher evaluation, and teacher effectiveness through the TAP process (National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, 2011a).

Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model

Beginning in July 2011 Tennessee educators were evaluated under new guidelines. These guidelines were recommended by the Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee (TEAC), approved by the Tennessee State Board of Education, and administered by the Tennessee Department of Education (Tennessee Department of Education, 2011a). Tennessee Code Annotated (2012a) created the TEAC. The committee consisted of 15 members including the Commissioner of Education, the executive director of the State Board of Education, the chairpersons of the Education

Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives, a K-12 public school teacher appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one K-12 public school teacher appointed by the Speaker of the Senate, and the remaining nine members appointed by the governor and consisting of three public school teachers, two public school principals, one director of a school district, and three members representing other stakeholder interests. The TEAC was formed to develop guidelines and criteria for the recommendation to the state board of education for the annual evaluation of all teachers and principals in Tennessee (Tennessee First to the Top Act, 2010).

Field tests were conducted on four models, and all of the field tests were observed and evaluated by a Vanderbilt research center the Tennessee Consortium on Research, Evaluation, and Development (TNCRED) (Tennessee First to the Top Developing TEAM: Field Test, n.d., p. 1). In the April 6, 2011, presentation prepared for the TEAC, the TNCRED presented early evidence from the teacher evaluation field test conducted during the 2010-2011 school year. Teachers identified the top benefits of the TAP rubric as providing useful feedback, encouraging strategies to improve instruction, and less paperwork. Evaluators identified the top benefits of the TAP rubric as the ability to provide feedback to teachers, the quality of the rubric, and the fostering of professional interactions. To teachers the top challenges of the TAP system were the time demands, the demands on principals, and the negative impact on teacher morale and stress level. Evaluators identified the top challenges of the TAP system as the time demands, the communication with teachers, and the learning curve in a late implementation. From these findings the TNCRED recommended adequate training for

evaluators, adequate communication to teachers and evaluators about evaluation, and use of data from observations to identify opportunities for targeted professional growth (Tennessee Department of Education, 2011a).

Based on positive field tests and TAP's record of implementation and support, the state selected the TAP rubrics as the foundation for the statewide model called the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM). In summer 2011 Tennessee provided statewide certification trainings on TEAM to principals and other district evaluators. The goal of TEAM was "principals and teachers working together to ensure that students benefit from the best possible instruction every day" so that students may learn and grow (Tennessee First to the Top Teacher Model, n.d., p. 1). The TEAM design was a combination of frequent observation, constructive feedback, student data, and meaningful professional growth. TEAM linked professional growth, promotion, compensation, tenure, and renewal decisions with educator needs as determined through the evaluation process. With TEAM all professionally licensed teachers were evaluated a minimum of two times per year (Tennessee State Board of Education website, 2011). Observers captured evidence during the lesson which is the primary resource used in the postobservation reflection with the teacher (Tennessee First to the Top website, n.d.). Following the postconference, a teacher had an area of reinforcement or success and an area of refinement or development with targeted professional growth opportunities.

TEAM included three components for looking at performance: 50% qualitative observation data; 35% quantitative student growth score; 15% quantitative student achievement data (Tennessee First to the Top website, n.d.). These components were

in the legislation, and the job of the Tennessee Department of Education was “to help school districts implement the evaluation system as well as possible” (Huffman, 2011, p. 2). Through a model of multiple observations followed by useful conversations and targeted professional growth opportunities, TEAM offered an ongoing cycle of reflective feedback focused on quality instruction, teacher growth, and student performance (FAQ Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model, n.d.). TEAM provided a framework for teachers and principals to work together to ensure that students benefited from the best possible instruction every day. Teacher evaluation should enhance the professionalism of teaching (Burris & Welner, 2011).

The qualitative data of the TEAM model was based on four domains: planning, instruction, professionalism, and environment (Appendix A). Rubrics guided evaluators in making decisions on the teacher’s classroom practice. The rubrics were designed to present a rigorous vision of excellent instruction not an expectation of perfection (Tennessee Department of Education, 2012b). Principals made teachers aware of the evaluation criteria ahead of time, provided teaches with feedback afterward, and offered teachers support in the targeted areas (Goe et al., 2008; Jerald & Van Hook, 2011). Multiple and frequent observations including written and in-person feedback were the basis for the qualitative data within each domain (Tennessee First to the Top Teacher Model, n.d.). The scaling of the rubrics was built to allow for honest conversations about areas for growth (Tennessee Department of Education, 2012b).

Research supported using multiple measures to evaluate teachers (Daley & Kim, 2010; Jerald & Van Hook, 2011; Marzano, 2012). The quantitative and qualitative components were used to compute an overall teacher effectiveness rating, and the total

score was then converted to an overall effectiveness rating (Appendix B). Professionally licensed teachers received an observation score based on 41 indicators, while an apprentice licensed teacher score was based on 60 indicators. Statistical modeling using historical TVAAS data and historical data from implementation of comparable rubrics suggested that TEAM was likely to produce a full range of ratings (Appendix C).

To ensure the evaluation system was implemented fairly, the Tennessee Department of Education required evaluators to pass a certification test on the observation rubric, provided guidance to districts to ensure consistent scoring and calculations, and committed to analyzing the evaluation implementation and results each year to ensure that the right training and guidance was provided. Survey data, focus groups, and the data from the evaluations themselves were used to provide feedback on the effectiveness of TEAM (Tennessee First to the Top website, n.d.). The core beliefs of TEAM included the continual improvement of evaluators. In particular evaluators should look to continuously strengthen a vision of instructional excellence and the practice of giving feedback (Tennessee Department of Education, 2012b).

The Tennessee Department of Education contracted with a leading professional development management and evaluation system called My Learning Plan to develop the TEAM data system. This system supported schools in tracking their observations, allowed teachers to see their ratings, calculated the final summative score from the observation data that evaluators submit, and helped the department of education monitor the progress of the evaluation process implementation (Tennessee First to the Top website, n.d.).

Tennessee Value Added Assessment System

Sanders and Rivers (1996) stated “the effects of teachers on student achievement are both additive and cumulative with little evidence of compensatory effects” (p. 1). Sanders’s longitudinal findings enabled him to market a product to states for the purpose of evaluating schools and teachers based on value added scores (Goe et al., 2008). The value added approach was used in Tennessee to measure student growth (Jerald & Van Hook, 2011).

The Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS) was developed in the 1980s by Sanders (Kupermintz, 2003). Available in Tennessee since 1992 TVAAS has tracked over 26 million student progress results, making Tennessee the largest provider of value-added analysis to educators (Battelle for Kids, 2011). TVAAS measured teacher effectiveness on the basis of student gains and was used to measure student progress in grades 4–12 in core subject areas (math, reading, science, and social studies). The system implicitly controlled for socioeconomic status and other background factors that influenced initial levels of achievement (Ballou, Sanders, & Wright, 2004). Research has shown that student demographic variables have no significant relationship with student progress measures. This was because TVAAS value-added analysis measured the change in student growth over time, and factors that remain relatively constant over time such as socioeconomic status cannot account for the changes in growth that students regularly experienced (Battelle for Kids, 2011).

TVAAS divided teachers into five effectiveness groups according to their ranking among their peers in terms of average student gains thus making TVAAS teacher effects norm reference measures (Kupermintz, 2003). By measuring students’ growth,

schools have data that reflect their effectiveness and can be used to inform practice. The analysis of Daley and Kim (2010) based on TAP data from 2006-2008 found a strong relationship between observed teacher evaluation ratings and value added measures of student learning. Additionally principal ratings were significantly correlated with teacher value-added results (Goe et al., 2008).

Tennessee law (49-1-603) defines value added assessment as:

> A statistical system for educational outcome assessment that uses measures of student learning to enable the estimation of teacher, school and school district statistical distributions; and, the statistical system will use available and appropriate data as input to account for differences in prior student attainment, such that the impact that the teacher, school and school district have on the educational progress of students may be estimated on a student attainment constant basis. The impact that a teacher, school or school district has on the progress, or lack of progress, in educational advancement or learning of a student is referred to hereafter as the "effect" of the teacher, school, or school district on the educational progress of students. (Tennessee Code Annotated, 2012b, p. 1)

According to the Tennessee First to the Top TVAAS Guide for Educators:

> Value-added analysis is a tool that Tennessee K–12 public school educators and other stakeholders can use to help students succeed. Teachers, school leaders and district administrators use TVAAS value-added information to measure the impact of their curriculum and instruction on students' academic progress from year to year. Parents use value-added information to learn how well their child's

school is doing to help groups of students improve. When used with other data and information, value-added analysis provides a comprehensive picture of our effectiveness in raising student performance. (Battelle for Kids, 2011, p. 4)

However, only about half of the nations teachers teach subjects that were tested (Toch & Rothman, 2008). Of the subjects that were tested, the standardized test scores only captured level one recall skills from Webb's depth of knowledge (Webb, 2005). Roughly 55% of Tennessee educators do not have their own TVAAS scores (Huffman, 2011).

Policy makers stated that schools would become more accountable if students' growth scores on standardized tests were used in the teacher evaluation process; however, little evidence supported that this alone would motivate teachers to improve student learning (Baker et al., 2010). Growth scores should only be one part of the comprehensive evaluation process (Baker et al.). Value added modeling measured student achievement growth after adjusting for some school and student characteristics. Teachers' value added can only be compared when the teachers have the same mix of struggling and successful students or when statistical measures of effectiveness are adjusted for the differing mix of students.

More than 90% of the variation in student gain scores was due to variation in student level factors that are not under control of the teacher (Schochet & Chiang, 2010). Value added does not address the critical question of the cause of the value added. If the students learning cannot be undoubtedly attributed to the student's teacher, the value added should not be used as a basis for judgments on the teacher's effectiveness (Baker et al., 2010; Sinnema & Robinson, 2007; Steele, Hamilton, & Stecher, 2010). Baker et al. identified factors other than the teachers to whom student

scores are attached that have been found to have a strong influence on student learning gains: (1) influences of the students other teachers both previous and concurrent such as team teaching or pull-out; (2) influences of tutors or instructional specialists; (3) quality of curriculum materials; (4) class size; (5) school attendance; (6) out of school learning experiences; (7) family factors such as resources, stability, and mobility; and (8) student health. Baker et al. (2010) stated, “Teachers cannot be accurately judged against one another by their students’ test scores, even when efforts are made to control for student characteristics in statistical models” (p. 3).

Comparison of educator evaluation to private sector evaluation was not an adequate defense for the use of students’ test scores in teacher evaluation. Private-sector managers evaluated their professional employees based on qualitative reviews, while quantitative indicators were used sparingly and in conjunction with other evaluation processes (Rothstein et al., 2008). In the United States and Great Britain governments ranked cardiac surgeons by their patients’ survival rates. This created incentives for surgeons to turn away the sickest patients in order for the doctor to maintain a satisfactory rating (Baker et al., 2010). The United States Department of Labor rewarded employment offices for their high success rates in finding jobs for unemployed workers. Job counselors shifted their focus from training programs leading to better jobs to the more easily found unskilled job. While the unskilled job might not be a long-term place of employment for the worker, securing the job gave the counselor better ratings.

Potential unintended consequences of the use of student data in teacher evaluation were: (1) narrowing and oversimplifying curriculum to only the subjects and

formats that are tested; (2) discouraging teachers to work in schools with the neediest students; (3) undermining teacher morale; and (4) creating a school culture that does not support collaboration between teachers (Baker et al., 2010; Burris & Welner, 2011b). Teachers were the most important school related factor for student achievement (Daley & Kim, 2010). Teacher evaluation should not be a one time, one size fits all process; rather, teacher evaluation should be embedded in a comprehensive process of supporting teachers and improving teaching and learning in the classroom (Daley & Kim). Creating the culture in schools for evaluation to serve as a tool for instructional improvement required sustained engagement of teachers and leaders (Daley & Kim). Value added measures in combination with principal evaluation of teachers were more strongly predictive of teacher effectiveness than the considerations of those measures alone (Baker et al., 2010; Jacob & Lefgren, 2008; Steele et al., 2010). Because of the uncertainty around why differences in student growth occur, value added models should be used in conjunction with other means of evaluation (Goe et al., 2008).

Successes for TEAM

Through the TEAM rubric educators had a common language to describe high-quality instruction (Tennessee First to the Top website, n.d.). This common language fostered school-wide collaboration among teachers and principals that focused on instruction. A Tennessee Director of Schools stated, “[TEAM] provides a common language to our teachers about how to make sure that they can talk about [good teaching] with not only the folks who evaluate and observe them but with their peers

and their colleagues" (Tennessee Department of Education, 2011b). The Tennessee Department of Education Report on Year 1 Implementation of TEAM (2012a) reported a common theme between teachers and administrators that the TEAM rubric effectively represented high-quality instruction and facilitated rich conversations about instruction.

In a school environment where collaboration was valued teachers grew professionally and focused on the needs of the students. Analysis of teacher interviews explicitly uncovered the connections between collaboration and improved effectiveness in the classroom (Berry, Daughtrey, & Wieder, 2009). Another study found that students achieved more when they were in schools that fostered teacher collaboration for school improvement (Goddard, Goddard, & Tschannen-Moran, 2007). This evidence supported efforts to improve student achievement by providing teachers with opportunities to collaborate on issues related to curriculum, instruction, and professional growth. Additionally some studies have linked teacher evaluation scores to student achievement (Goe et al., 2008). Tennessee administrators noted that having school-wide value added scores has led to increased collaboration among teachers and a higher emphasis on academic standards in all subjects (Tennessee Department of Education, 2012a).

Challenges for TEAM

Often teacher evaluations lacked constructive criticism or concrete feedback because evaluations were full of "valentines"—vague, meaningless praise (Donaldson, 2010, p. 54). Inflated teacher evaluations were indicators of problems that limited the extent to which evaluation could improve teacher instruction. These problems included:

poor evaluation instruments, infrequent observation, unfocused evaluation, limited district guidance, lack of evaluator time and skill, absence of feedback for teachers, and few consequences for poor or superior evaluation (Donaldson, 2010; Weisberget al., 2009). Frase and Streshly (1994) analyzed criticisms of teacher evaluation and proposed considerations for realizing the potential of teacher evaluation for raising the quality of instruction in America's schools. Four problem areas were addressed: (1) inflation of teacher evaluation scores, (2) teachers who fail to receive quality feedback for improvement from evaluations, (3) professional growth plans not aligned with evaluation findings, and (4) principals who fail to assume responsibility for teacher evaluations.

The Teacher Evaluation in Tennessee: A Report on Year 1 Implementation (Tennessee Department of Education, 2012a) indicated that across the state observers must accurately and consistently reflect the true spectrum of teacher performance. Results showed that more than 75% of teachers scored a 4 or 5 that indicated performance exceeding expectation while less than 2.5% scored a 1 or 2 that indicated performance below expectations. When considered alongside student achievement results, “observers systematically failed to identify the lowest performing teachers, leaving these teachers without access to meaningful professional development and leaving their students and parents without a reasonable expectation of improved instruction in the future” (pp. 4-5).

The New Teacher Project (2010) based the success of any evaluation system, no matter how solid its design, upon its implementation. Specific data points should be sought to track the successful implementation of the evaluation system. Summative

ratings were a reflection of the accuracy of principal evaluation and should roughly mirror patterns of student academic growth. Teacher performance improvement over time should be measured through comparison of summative ratings to value-added percentiles. Additional considerations included the teacher's perspective on usefulness of feedback and fairness of evaluation. "Both students and teachers feel the brunt of distrust" due to rating teachers by students test scores (Burris & Welner, 2011b, p. 40).

McGreal (1990) stated, "The high inference nature of rating scales places the burden of selecting a rating directly upon the evaluator" (p. 50). Measurement challenges existed in teacher evaluation. Reliability referred to the consistent scores (Warner, 2008). Both across evaluators and from observation to observation reliability can be supported through the use of a rubric, training the evaluator on reliability concerns, and meetings between evaluators to monitor quality of scoring (Jerald & Van Hook, 2011). Accuracy referred to scores that reflect true performance against the standardized scoring scale (Creswell, 2003). Accuracy can be supported through clear descriptors of the rubric, using evidence to support scores, and using announced and unannounced observations (Jerald & Van Hook). Validity referred to whether scores provide information on that it is intended to measure (Warner, 2008). Validity can be supported through development of rubrics and training evaluators on capturing evidence (Jerald & Van Hook).

The levels of support principals received to conduct accurate evaluations specifically time demands and content knowledge impacted the success of an evaluation system. Tennessee administrators consistently noted the large amount of time needed to complete the TEAM process and the need for the mechanics of the

process to be more streamlined and efficient (Tennessee Department of Education, 2012a). As a whole, teaching requires knowledge of assessment, curriculum, and instruction. Individually teachers must have content specific knowledge of their subject area. Principals cannot be content specialists in all of the areas they evaluate. Principals and teachers share the knowledge of best practices in education; however, the teacher has the content related pedagogy and knowledge of content. When the principal does not share this content specific knowledge with the teacher, this undermines the evaluation process and contributes to the perception that the evaluation process has little value (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Sinnema & Robinson, 2007).

Tennessee scored 43 out of 63 in a report ranking statewide evaluation practices (Tupa, Huber, & Martinez, 2011). This report gave "pre season rankings" (p. 2) on the chance for success for 19 states—all of which either passed laws or changed regulations related to teacher evaluation during 2010 and 2011. Tennessee was ranked second of 19 and received top scores in frequency of evaluation, rating and performance measures, and performance goals to earn tenure. Tennessee received low scores in pilot program, guidelines for choosing strong evaluators, and consequences for poor performance. To the Tennessee General Assembly the Tennessee Education Association president related the teacher perspective on Senate Bill 1528:

> Our reservations about the bill relate it tying tenure to an evaluation system which is not yet fully developed, which has not been piloted in its entirety in any school district, and which has not been proven to be valid, reliable, credible, or even manageable at this point. (Uniservlb, 2011)

An indicator of community support for education reform was the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) that pulled together the business, education, philanthropic, and local civic organizations under one umbrella to talk about schools (Huffman, 2011). Tennessee Governor Haslam charged the SCORE with conducting an independent third party evaluation of TEAM. Haslam stated:

> These evaluations were a critical piece of the Race to the Top initiative, and it is important for Tennessee to maintain strong accountability measures as we build upon our momentum to improve education. As we work through the first year of implementation, I do not support legislative changes during this season. It is appropriate to give the process time to work and to learn more about what changes might be necessary. ("Haslam Announces," 2011, para. 5)

One revision to TEAM in fall 2011 was the number of evaluations for professional and apprentice licensed teachers. Tennessee State Board of Education Policy 5.201 (2012) states that an LEA may choose to allow principals to conduct a required observation relative to the instructional domain in conjunction with a required observation relative to the palling or environment domain, provided the requisite minimum time, semester distribution, and notice (announced versus unannounced) were met (Tennessee State Board of Education website, 2011). This change lowered the number of required evaluations for professionally licensed teachers from four per year to two per year. The number of evaluations for apprentice licensed teachers changed from six per year to four per year.

Other challenges within TEAM related to qualitative and quantitative measures (Huffman, 2011). In qualitative observations this included the effectiveness of

observers because of skill limitations, the time requirement of observers, and consistency of the range of observation scores. In quantitative measures the challenge included untested subjects and grade levels and the volatility of value added scores. Roughly 55% of the state's educators do not have their own TVAAS scores.

In 2012 SCORE released recommendations for consideration moving forward with teacher evaluation:

1. Ensure current and prospective teachers and leaders receive sufficient training in the evaluation system.
2. Link the feedback that teachers receive with high-quality, collaborative, and individualized professional learning opportunities so that they can improve their instruction.
3. Address challenges with current quantitative and qualitative measures of teacher effectiveness.
4. Support school and district leaders in becoming strong instructional leaders capable of assessing and developing effective teaching and hold them accountable for doing so.
5. Re-engage educators in those districts where implementation of the teacher evaluation system has faltered during the first year of work.
6. Integrate the ongoing implementation of the teacher evaluation system and the Common Core State Standards so that they work together to improve student outcomes.

7. Drive continuous improvement of the teacher evaluation system at the state, district, and school levels. (State Collaborative on Reforming Education, 2012, pp. 5-6)

Implementation of Evaluation

Leadership

The ISLLC Educational Leadership Policy Standards of 2008 represented the latest set of high-level policy standards for education leadership. The standards reflected the wealth of new information and lessons learned about education leadership over the past decade (Council for Chief State School Officers, 2008). Many researchers emphasized the principal as the instructional leader who spearheaded change, encouraged collaboration, set high expectations for teachers and students, and supported change with school stakeholders (Ash & Persall, 2001; Blase & Blase, 2004; DuFour, 2002; King, 2002; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Second only to classroom instruction, school leadership was the most important school-based variable affecting student achievement (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). The school leader affected student achievement in many ways including playing a critical role in creating a school culture focused on learning and high expectations (Wallace Foundation, 2012). Improvements in student achievement would not happen in the absence of effective leadership (Wilson, 2009).

Davis et al. (2002) stated, “An evaluation system can be state of the art in every respect and still not result in change because change requires, in a broad conceptualization, leadership” (p. 292). Dialogic leadership (Isaacs, 1999) referred to a

way of leading that “consistently uncovers through conversation the hidden creative potential in any situation” (p. 2). Principals who engaged in dialogic leadership respected the voices of the teachers within the school thus affecting their teaching and providing an opportunity for teacher leadership (Glover, 2007). Teacher leadership developed with a supportive principal and was linked to pedagogy and problem solving (Crowther, 2009).

Transformational leadership was first discussed by Downton (1973). Burns more fully defined transformational leadership as an ongoing process by which "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation" (Burns, 1978, p. 20). Bass (1990), who is a disciple of Burns, defined transformational leadership as how the leader affects followers who are intended to trust, admire, and respect the transformational leader. Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) explored the relative effects of transformational leadership practices on selected organizational conditions and student engagement. Results indicated significant effects of transformational leadership on organizational conditions and moderately significant effects on student engagement.

Change

Change ‘ups the stakes’ and leads people to become genuinely concerned about how much they can trust management (Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, & Roth, 2009). To build a culture for ongoing learning and change teachers must trust the administration, trust each other, and trust in the ideas and work (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). If teachers have low levels of trust towards the principal, teachers will only comply with the change but never extend beyond minimal expectations. To keep teachers continually changing

rather than searching for the conclusion, Holcomb (2009) used five critical questions to develop a school improvement framework. The questions served to remind educators that there is no one way to change; rather, multiple paths for implementation based on the needs of educators realized through questioning throughout the process.

Fullan (1993) stated, “Effective change agents neither embrace nor ignore mandates. They use them as catalysts to re-examine what they are doing” (p.24). First order change occurred when the goal was to do more or less of something that is already being done. Second order change occurred when the goal was to do something fundamentally different from what has been done in the past (Marzano et al., 2005). TEAM required the principal to balance the demands of some teachers who were experiencing first order change and some who were experiencing second order change. The teacher who was already using highly effective instructional practices may easily implement TEAM; however, the teacher who was using direct instruction will need to learn new instructional practices. The former experienced a first order change while the latter experienced a second order change. These differing experiences among teachers within the same schools made implementation of TEAM more difficult. For those who experienced TEAM as a first order change implementation happened easily. Those who experienced TEAM as a second order change needed additional training, guidance, and support to successfully implement the evaluation model into practice. Principals were reminded to remember the psychological processes people go through when encountering a change (Bridges, 2003).

Marzano et al. (2005) charged principals with the responsibility of leading change initiatives even those with uncertain outcomes. The principal was expected to establish

direction, embed the vision, facilitate cooperation, motivate others, and change the culture by appealing to the basic needs and values of teachers (Kotter, 1996). The principal was responsible for monitoring the change process and guiding the process (Hall & Hord, 1987). Principals must be cognizant of the risk of returning to status quo. This occurred with teachers or the principal and was called the implementation dip (Fullan, 2001). Fullan described the implementation dip as a dip in performance and confidence as one encounters a change that requires new skills and new understandings. Teachers and principals found themselves needing new skills and not being proficient with the TEAM evaluation process. When educators were called upon to do something new and were not clear about what to do, the implementation dip occurred. Overcoming the implementation dip to see growth required practice over time moving from beginning awareness to consciously skilled.

Educators should be cautious of change for the sake of change. Change in education tends to favor the process over the substance (Sergiovanni, 2000). As a result of legislative mandates teachers were continually asked to do more with less. Teachers who have been marginalized by the experience of multiple top down mandated changes in education will be resistant to change no matter its research base (Bailey, 2000). Schools that embraced collegiality and relationships were more likely to implement change successfully. Teachers needed support in the implementation stage of change so that they did not revert to the old way of doing (Fullan, 1991).

Role of Educators

Marzano et al. (2005) found that the principal should serve as a "change agent who consciously challenges the status quo and systemically considers new and better ways of doing things" (p. 45). However school leaders were not adequately prepared to carry out this level of change as they were appointed to and educated for jobs that no longer existed (Levine, 2005). Data from the interviews of public school principals showed that 27% engaged daily in guiding the development and evaluation of curriculum and instruction and 82% spent time daily on managing school facilities, resources, and procedures (Archer, 2004). Principals were required to be highly involved in the evaluation process but indicated that due to managerial responsibilities this transition was difficult (Colby et al., 2002).

A Tennessee principal stated:

> Pushed into being the instructional leader of the school again, and it's a good thing; that's why we got into this. No one got into this to deal with discipline. They got into this to be an instructional leader, and this forces us to be that instructional leader. It forces us to adjust our calendars around it. So to be open minded about that, it is going to take a lot of time, but it is going to be incredibly positive. (Tennessee Department of Education, 2011c)

The demands on principals did not allow them sufficient time to prepare to evaluate teachers and to complete the evaluation process using feedback and support (Baker et al., 2010; Sinnema & Robinson, 2007). Adult learners needed to see the immediate usefulness of new learning (Vella, 2002; Wilson, 2009). Feedback and support were essential if the evaluation process was to affect student learning (Colby et

al., 2002). Vella (2002) stated, “Praxis is a Greek word that means ‘action with reflection.’ There is little doubt among educators that doing is the way adults learn anything: concepts, skills, or attitudes. Praxis is doing with built-in reflection.” (p. 14). Principals and teachers needed to be collaboratively working to improve instruction through reflection, feedback, and professional development to improve instructional practice (Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers, & Killion, 2010). The TEAM core beliefs stated that educators should reflect on their practice together and work to continuously get better (Tennessee Department of Education, 2012b). A Tennessee principal stated:

> My purpose was to be an instructional leader and so that’s why I’m really excited about this new model because we have to be in the classroom evaluating so it’s actually exciting for me because I am going to be forced to do what I got into administration to do to begin with. (Tennessee Department of Education, 2011c)

Principals were a central part of the evaluation process and they “(a) possess knowledge and dispositions that help maximize the potential of teacher evaluation and its impact on professional growth; (b) focus on learning; (c) promote collaborative interactions with those being evaluated; (d) provide useful feedback; (e) facilitate reflection on practice” (Colby et al., 2002, p. 7). The changing role of the principal from school manager to instructional leader was linked to a renewed focus on student achievement. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) compiled a meta-analysis about the effects of leadership practices on student achievement and described 21 principal leadership responsibilities that positively correlate with student achievement. These results were translated into a balanced leadership framework that describes the knowledge, skills, strategies, and tools leaders need to positively impact student

achievement. The framework was predicated on the notion that principals know how to create learning environments that support teachers and connect them with one another while the principal provides the knowledge, skills, and resources that teachers need to succeed. This combination of knowledge and skills was the foundation of balanced leadership.

The principal was essential in the teacher evaluation process if it was to provide professional growth to improve teaching and learning (Davis et al., 2002; Tuytens & Devos, 2010). Fullan (1993) said that schools were learning organizations that needed to rapidly react, respond, and adapt; however, it was difficult to manage the teachers' professional growth needs and the organizational accountability needs (Colby et al., 2002; Tuytens & Devos, 2010). This made teacher evaluation both a professional growth tool and a threatening control tool. Likewise in some schools teacher evaluation was nothing more than a required process with little impact on professional growth (Donaldson, 2010).

TEAM required that principals and teachers work together collaboratively, and such collaboration was successful when principals built trust with teachers to serve as the foundation for open, honest, and reflective dialogue about teaching practices (Colby et al., 2002; Peterson & Peterson, 2006; Tuytens & Devos, 2010). In a qualitative study of teacher's perspectives of principal mistreatment poor evaluations were seen as a means of punishment, while good evaluations were seen as a way of favoring other teachers (Blase & Blase, 2002). Principals must balance maintaining a collaborative school atmosphere and the pressures of maintaining accountability to meet state and federal mandates.

DuFour and Marzano (2009) stated that if the fundamental purpose of schools was to ensure that all students learn at high levels, schools do not need instructional leaders, rather they need learning leaders who focus on evidence of learning. When principals made the transition from instructional leaders to learning leaders they moved the conversation from "What was taught?" or "How was it taught?" to the far more important questions of "What was learned?" and "How can we use evidence of learning to strengthen our professional practice?" Building the capacity of collaborative teams rather than evaluating individual teachers was more aligned with the ideas that a school was committed to learning rather than to teaching. Educators must work collaboratively and collectively to help all students learn, and evidence of student learning should be used as part of a continual improvement cycle. Clear evidence that a teacher's students did not learn compared with similar students who did was a better indicator about instruction than a single classroom evaluation. Clear evidence of learning or lack of learning was more likely to result in precise, content-based, instructionally focused discourse and a commitment to widely dispersed leadership based on expertise rather than authoritarian leadership based on position. Ongoing job-embedded collective learning represented best practice in professional development which was more likely to have a positive effect on student and adult learning.

Donaldson (2009) found that principals and teachers believe that teachers are less effective than evaluation ratings indicate. Multiple factors contribute to inflated ratings. External factors and internal factors decreased the evaluators desire to evaluate rigorously. External factors included: vague standards, restrictive collective bargaining agreements, and evaluators lack of time. Internal factors included:

knowledge and commitment of the evaluator, school cultural norms, and district expectations. Donaldson stated, “A principal who ‘cracks down’ by giving critical feedback and an unfavorable evaluation rating in some ways acts counter to cultural norms and risks losing the cooperation of teacher on whom she or he depends to keep the school running” (p. 11). When teachers see their ineffective colleagues received satisfactory evaluations, the motivation to do well was diminished.

Evaluation alone does not impact student achievement (DuFour & Marzano, 2009). The feedback and professional growth that were a result of evaluation impacted professional practice and thus student achievement. In a 2009 study of 12 urban school districts, 73% of teachers reported receiving no feedback on how to improve instruction with quality professional growth (Weisberg et al., 2009). Three different studies of typical teacher evaluations used in districts found that these evaluations were not designed or used to provide feedback in order to help teachers to improve or to guide teacher professional growth (Mathers, Oliva, & Laine, 2008). The TEAM requirement of feedback to inform professional growth can fill this void. TEAM core beliefs called for observers to score lessons not people where observers should look for the effectiveness of teacher actions based on evidence of student actions and learning (Tennessee Department of Education, 2012b).

The principal alone cannot serve as the instructional leader of the school. Members of the school community must work collaboratively as instructional leaders (System for Teacher and Student Advancement, 2010). The most important factor for schools in improving student achievement was teacher effectiveness (Jordan, Mendro, & Weerasinghe, 1997; Weisberg et al., 2009; Wilson, 2009; Wright et al., 1997). The

Widget Effect (Weisberg et al., 2009) contended that school districts assume effectiveness was the same from teacher to teacher fostering an environment in which teachers were not understood as individual professionals.

Little has been done to differentiate teacher effectiveness (Weisberg et al., 2009). The majority of school districts across the country did not evaluate teachers in a manner that distinguishes effective teachers from ineffective teachers or take student achievement into account in the evaluation (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2011; Steele et al., 2010). Eckert (2009) stated, "Increased teaching effectiveness is dependent upon authentic evaluation and differentiation, which is dependent upon having staff that are trained and qualified to provide ongoing professional growth" (p. 4).

In order to receive funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the United States Department of Education required states to report the criteria and the results of their teacher evaluation systems (Donaldson, 2009). The inspection method was not an effective way to improve quality because it had no effect on the process that caused suboptimal results. Real and continuous improvement occurred only when the workers themselves studied outcome variability and the processes that produced it (Deming, 2000a). Reform required alignment of teacher evaluation and professional growth (Eckert, 2009). Simply changing teacher evaluation processes and expecting effective teaching will not work.

In a study of the achievement scores of over 100,000 students, Wright et al. (1997) concluded, "More can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor" (p. 63). Goe et al. (2008) defined an effective teacher as one who sets high expectations for all students,

contributes to positive outcomes for students, uses diverse resources for engaging learning opportunities, values diversity and civic-mindedness, and collaborates with others to ensure student success. In the Race to the Top Act (RTTT) 2009 an effective teacher was defined as a teacher whose students achieve acceptable rates (at least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth, and a highly effective teacher was defined as a teacher whose students achieve high rates (at least one and one-half grade levels in an academic year) of student growth (US Department of Education, 2009, p. 12). In contrast Meister (2010) defined experienced teachers as "those who, through years of practice, have the knowledge and ability to reflect on their work and speak to the complexity of teaching in the world of reform" (p. 887).

In TEAM a teacher's overall effectiveness rating has been defined by the combined overall observation score (50%), growth score (35%), and achievement measure score (15%). This total score was then converted to an overall effectiveness rating of 1-5. Teacher effectiveness descriptors are:

> Significantly Above Expectations (Level 5) - A teacher at this level exemplifies the instructional skills, knowledge, and responsibilities described in the rubric, and implements them without fail. He is adept at using data to set and reach ambitious teaching and learning goals. He makes a significant impact on student achievement and should be considered a model of exemplary teaching.
>
> Above Expectations (Level 4) - A teacher at this level comprehends the instructional skills, knowledge, and responsibilities described in the rubric and implements them consistently. He is skilled at using data to set and reach

appropriate teaching and learning goals and makes a strong impact on student achievement.

At Expectations (Level 3) - A teacher at this level understands and implements most of the instructional skills, knowledge, and responsibilities described in the rubric. He uses data to set and reach teaching and learning goals and makes the expected impact on student achievement.

Below Expectations (Level 2) - A teacher at this level demonstrates some knowledge of the instructional skills, knowledge, and responsibilities described in the rubric, but implements them inconsistently. He may struggle to use data to set and reach appropriate teaching and learning goals. His impact on student achievement is less than expected.

Significantly Below Expectations (Level 1) - A teacher at this level has limited knowledge of the instructional skills, knowledge, and responsibilities described in the rubric, and struggles to implement them. He makes little attempt to use data to set and reach appropriate teaching and learning goals and has little to no impact on student achievement. (Tennessee First to the Top Teacher Model, n.d., p. 3)

Based on statistical modeling using historical TVAAS data and historical data from implementation of comparable rubrics, the state wide projected range of score distributions for teacher effectiveness is listed in Appendix C (Tennessee Department of Education, 2011a, p. A85). The Tennessee application for the RTTT funds stated “a fair, transparent, and data-driven evaluation system, coupled with a transformed way of linking professional growth to specific teacher needs, will result in no more than 10

percent of Tennessee teachers being defined as “ineffective” and unable to move students’ growth by at least one academic year leading to higher student achievement overall by 2014” (State of Tennessee, 2010).

“One of my teachers came to me six weeks ago and said, ‘Morale is in the toilet.’ This destroys any possibility of building a family atmosphere. It causes so much distrust,” said a principal (Winerip, 2011, para. 9). School cultures often supported the “Lake Wobegon Effect” named for Garrison Keillor’s (1985) fictional town in Minnesota where all the children are above average. Most teachers expected to receive an outstanding rating on their evaluations without defining or meeting a standard of high quality teaching and learning.

Teacher effectiveness matters; the research indicated that teacher effectiveness contributed more to improving student academic outcomes than any other school characteristic and that an effective principal was central to recruiting and supporting teachers and leading school improvement (Waters et al., 2003). Studies suggested that a student who has great teachers for several years in a row will be on a path of continued growth and success while a student who was taught by a succession of less effective teachers may experience lasting academic challenges (Wright et al., 1997). In order for performance evaluations to become a meaningful part of an effort to build an effective teacher workforce, the evaluations themselves need to add real value and provide teachers with real benefits by helping them improve their practice (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2011).

Professional Growth

Educators often lack a shared understanding of what effective instruction looks like across classrooms and within districts (City, Elmore, Tietel, & Fiarman, 2009). Conversations within schools should support teachers in moving towards a common language to describe good teaching (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Teacher evaluation has been the link between teacher effectiveness and professional growth (Mathers et al., 2008; Nolan & Hoover 2005).

Traditional teacher evaluation was viewed by teachers and principals to be an administrative burden and perfunctory (Halverson, Kelley, & Kimball, 2004). Principals did not see the time required to complete an evaluation as time spent improving instruction (Holland, 2005; Kersten & Israel, 2005). The TEAM core beliefs stated that improvement was supported best with feedback linked to ongoing learning (Tennessee Department of Education, 2012b). The more specific the rubric for evaluation the easier it was to train teachers on the rubric and measure their performance against it; however, a very specific rubric limited the evaluator's ability to make holistic observations about the quality of instruction (Aspen Institute, 2011). When educators were allowed the time to interpret the rubric they took ownership of the process. Teachers and their evaluators spoke a common language around the rubric if they were offered professional growth time. Through the TEAM rubric a common language can be used to describe high-quality instruction. Teachers can look forward to feedback that is consistent and transparent to improve their ability to collaborate and meaningfully refine their instruction.

Teacher ownership of the rubrics impacted the credibility of the effort. If teachers perceived the evaluation process as an unreasonable expectation placed upon them by politicians, it was likely to fail. To build ownership in the process teachers must have engagement, communication, trust, and feedback (Aspen Institute, 2011). Professional growth needed to be provided to support the implementation of a teacher evaluation system. Professional growth in three stages included: (a) awareness of the evaluation process and what it looks like; (b) deepening understanding and developing strategies to adjust their instruction; and (c) applying the expectations to content area teaching (Aspen Institute). All aspects of professional growth and school support should reflect the expectations of the evaluation process.

Professional growth was a goal of teacher evaluation (Stronge, 2006). The fulfillment of this goal was contingent upon the leadership of the principal. This goal was not always fulfilled unless leadership was developed to support the implementation of effective teacher evaluation as a means of supporting student achievement (Davis et al., 2002; Frase, 2001). Brickmore (2010) identified the changing role of the principal in professional growth: (a) recognize that professional growth must be ongoing and authentic; (b) develop positive collaboration among the teachers to support professional growth; (d) facilitate professional growth by providing resources, specifically time, for collaborative work; and (e) model collaboration and ask for feedback from teachers.

Numeric evaluation ratings did not provide teachers the opportunity to improve their practice. Evaluation systems must use regular and specific feedback on teacher practice, provide the opportunity to reflect on the feedback, and support in implementation of new practices (Aspen Institute, 2011). Teachers and other school

staff rarely received the data and feedback they needed in order to improve instruction. A survey of 15,176 teachers in 12 districts found that nearly 75% had not received specific feedback based on their evaluation on how to improve instructional practice (Weisberg et al., 2009). Feedback to teachers was characterized by top-down communication allowing teachers to be passive participants (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). With a lack of clear criteria upon which to base feedback, what feedback was offered to teachers was not of value to the teacher.

The state's responsibility through its licensing procedures ended with the guarantee of minimum competence (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). When a school employees a teacher, the school takes on the responsibility to grow the teacher professionally. The school leader was important to the individual teacher for professional growth and its link to the evaluation process. Tuytens and Devos (2011) found that most teachers perceived feedback from the school leader as useful. This contradicts findings from almost 2 decades ago when usefulness of this feedback was identified as a weakness of teacher evaluation (Frase & Streshly, 1994).

Effective teacher evaluation focused on professional growth rather than human capital decisions (Valentine, 1992). Quality and relevant professional growth was a product of teacher evaluation (Beerens, 2000; Stronge & Tucker, 2003). Professional growth has been criticized by teachers as marginally helpful or even as a waste of time (System for Teacher and Student Advancement, 2010). The focus of professional growth should be on helping teachers improve their practice (Wilson, 2009).

Inadequate professional growth was offered to teachers because it was not specific to the teachers needs (Weisberg et al., 2009). Effective professional growth

that impacts teaching occurs when teachers have ongoing support (Hall & Hord, 2011; Wilson, 2009). Professional growth for an average of 49 hours improved student achievement by 21 percentile points (System for Teacher and Student Advancement, 2010). School principals should ensure that teacher evaluation aligns and supports the goals of instructional improvement (Sinnema & Robinson, 2007).

K-12 schools encompassed a wide variety of subject areas, thus requiring instructional leaders to have a vast array of knowledge related to these subject areas. When leading instructional improvement, principals who lacked this subject specific knowledge were not as confident to provide feedback as those principals who have such subject specific content knowledge (Robinson, 2006; Spillane & Louis, 2002). Principals who lacked this knowledge needed opportunities to deepen their knowledge if they were to effectively implement TEAM. Principals with greater knowledge of content and pedagogy were viewed by teachers as more helpful in the evaluation process (Colby et al., 2002).

NIET's Best Practices Portal provided Tennessee educators immediate access to individualized trainings and support in order to improve instruction and evaluation. Within the portal was a video library of nationally rated lessons. The portal resources included a strategies library and training modules on specific instructional skills (Jerald & Van Hook, 2011). These pieces were meant to support teachers in the areas of refinement and reinforcement discussed during the postconference.

State and national level mandates often resulted in more restrictions on and control of professional growth at the district and school levels that resulted in undermining the key design principles of effective professional growth (Sandholtz &

Scribner, 2006). This contradicted the intention of teacher evaluation as a tool to improve teacher effectiveness that will thus improve student achievement. Policy rarely considered teacher effectiveness for key decisions (Weisberg et al., 2009). Five characteristics of high quality professional growth directly impacted teacher practice:

1. Alignment of PD with school goals, district and state standards and assessments, and other professional learning activities including formative teacher evaluation
2. Focus on core content and modeling of teaching strategies for the content
3. Inclusion of opportunities for active learning of new teaching strategies
4. Provision of opportunities for collaboration among teachers
5. Inclusion of embedded follow-up and continuous feedback. (Archibald, Coggshall, Croft, & Goe, 2011, p. 3)

Schools can be no better than the educators who worked within them, and professional growth remained the key to educators' progress (Guskey, 2009). Learning Forward (2011) released the third edition of the Standards for Professional Learning. The seven standards described a set of expectations for effective professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students: learning communities, leadership, resources, data, learning designs, implementation, and outcomes. The standards served as indicators that guide the learning, facilitation, implementation, and evaluation of professional learning. Additionally Learning Forward identified four prerequisites for effective professional learning: educators commit to the idea that all students can learn; educators come to the experience ready to grow; educators use professional growth to foster collaborative inquiry; and educators learn in

different ways and at different rates. The most effective professional growth came from a combination of effective practices based on core elements that work well in a particular context (Guskey, 1994; System for Teacher and Student Advancement, 2010). Teacher evaluation developed and nurtured a teacher's instructional capacity that in turn contributed to students' academic successes (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007).

Teachers have a more significant influence on student achievement than any other school factor (Nye, Konstantopoulus, & Hedges, 2004; United States Department of Education, 2010). A school district official noted, "Teachers are only as effective as they know how to be" (Archibald et al., 2011, p. 1). Teacher evaluation can be used as a learning opportunity for teachers when the evaluation is linked to the teacher's professional growth (Archibald et al.). "Teacher evaluation must always be, first and foremost, about the continuous improvement of teaching in every classroom" (American Federation of Teachers, 2011, para 2). The American Federation of Teachers (2010) has consistently said that evaluations must be more than a "gotcha" process to find teachers doing the wrong things, but rather evaluation systems must be linked to professional growth that improves all teachers.

Conclusion

Chapter 2 provided a review of the related literature including legislative mandates, the evaluation process, implementation of evaluation, role of educators, and professional growth. Chapter 3 is a description of the research methodology including the research questions and null hypotheses, population, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 is an analysis of the data for each research

question. Chapter 5 is a summary of the study including conclusions and recommendations for practice and future research.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this quantitative study was to analyze the perceptions of Tennessee principals about the implementation of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) and the impact of TEAM on teachers' instructional practice and professional growth. This chapter provides a description of the research methodology including the research questions and null hypotheses, population, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and a summary of the chapter.

Quantitative research uses research questions and hypotheses to shape and specifically focus the purpose of the study (Creswell, 2003). For the purpose of this study nonexperimental research is conducted. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) state "a nonexperimental research design describes things that have occurred and examine relationships between things without any direct manipulation of conditions that are experienced" (p. 24). A cross-sectional survey in the form of a self-administered web-based questionnaire provides the quantitative description of the perceptions of Tennessee principals about the implementation of TEAM and the impact of TEAM on teacher's instructional practice and professional growth.

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

The following research questions and null hypotheses were guided by the nonexperimental quantitative design:

Research Question 1: To what extent do principals perceive the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model provides appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers?

H_O1_1: Perceptions of appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers are not significantly different from neutral, the value 2.5. .

Research Question 2: To what extent do principals perceive they can adequately perform the requirements of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model?

H_O2_1: Perceptions of adequate performance of the requirements are not significantly different from neutral, the value 2.5.

Research Question 3: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive they can adequately perform the requirements of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model in terms of school size?

H_O3_1: Perceptions of adequate performance of the requirements are not significantly related to school size.

Research Question 4: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive they can adequately perform the requirements of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model in terms of years of experience as a principal?

H_O4_1: Perceptions of adequate performance of the requirements are not significantly related to years of experience as a principal.

Research Question 5: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive they can adequately perform the requirements of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model in terms of socioeconomic status of the school?

H_O5_1: Perceptions of adequate performance of the requirements are not significantly related to socioeconomic status of the school.

Research Question 6: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model provides appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers in terms of school size?

H_O6_1: Perceptions of appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers are not significantly related to school size.

Research Question 7: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model provides appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers in terms of years of experience as a principal?

H_O7_1: Perceptions of appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers are not significantly related to years of experience as a principal.

Research Question 8: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model provides appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers in terms of socioeconomic status of the school?

H_O8_1: Perceptions of appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers are not significantly related to socioeconomic status of the school.

Population

The population in this study was 150 PK-12 public school principals from 12 districts in the First Region of Tennessee. To participate in the research the principal must have evaluated teachers in the 2011-2012 school year using TEAM.

Instrumentation

Based on the literature review a survey instrument was developed (Appendix F). The online survey was created through Survey Monkey. The survey consisted of two assurance statements verifying that the participant was a building level principal in 2011-2012 that used TEAM to evaluate teachers in 2011-2012. Twenty-six statements asked the respondents to indicate their degree of agreement on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The survey contained three open-ended response questions.

Validity is "whether one can draw meaningful and useful inferences from scores on the instrument" (Creswell, 2003, p. 157). According to McMillian and Schumacher (2006) a survey's content validity is established by expert review of the survey instrument prior to formal data collection. Validity was established by administering the instrument in a pilot study to a group of 10 purposefully selected public school principals who were currently evaluating teachers using TEAM. The pilot group made suggestions for modifications to the instrument. Following the pilot study the survey instrument was adopted for use in this study (Appendix F).

Data Collection

Permission to conduct research was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of East Tennessee State University prior to the commencement of the research (Appendix D). Following IRB approval a letter of permission was sent to Directors of Schools of the public school districts in the First Region of Tennessee that used TEAM to evaluate teachers in the 2011-2012 school year (Appendix E). Upon receipt of permission from Directors of Schools to survey principals in their districts, the survey instrument in Appendix F was distributed to the potential participants via a web-based service called Survey Monkey. Each participant was advised on the opening page of the survey that participation was completely voluntary and that questions and demographic information may be left intentionally blank at any time. Participation in this study was completely anonymous with no way to connect responses to participants. Survey responses were analyzed in aggregate form that also ensured that all information provided remained confidential.

Data Analysis

Nonexperimental quantitative methodology was used to analyze the data from this research. Data obtained through the administration of a survey instrument using a Likert scale were used to find the statistical calculations using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 18.0 data analysis software. Research questions 1 and 2 have corresponding null hypotheses and were analyzed with a series of one-sample *t* tests comparing calculated means with a value of 2.5 representing neutrality on a 4 point scale. Research questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 have corresponding null

hypotheses and were analyzed with a series of independent-samples *t* tests. All data were analyzed at the .05 level of significance.

Summary

Chapter 3 described the research methodology including the research questions and null hypotheses, population, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 is an analysis of the data for each research question. Chapter 5 is a summary of the study including conclusions and recommendations for practice and future research.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this quantitative study was to analyze the perceptions of Tennessee principals about the implementation of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) and the impact of TEAM on teachers' instructional practice and professional growth. The population in this study was 150 PK-12 public school principals from 12 districts in the First Region of Tennessee who were implementing TEAM in the 2011-2012 school year.

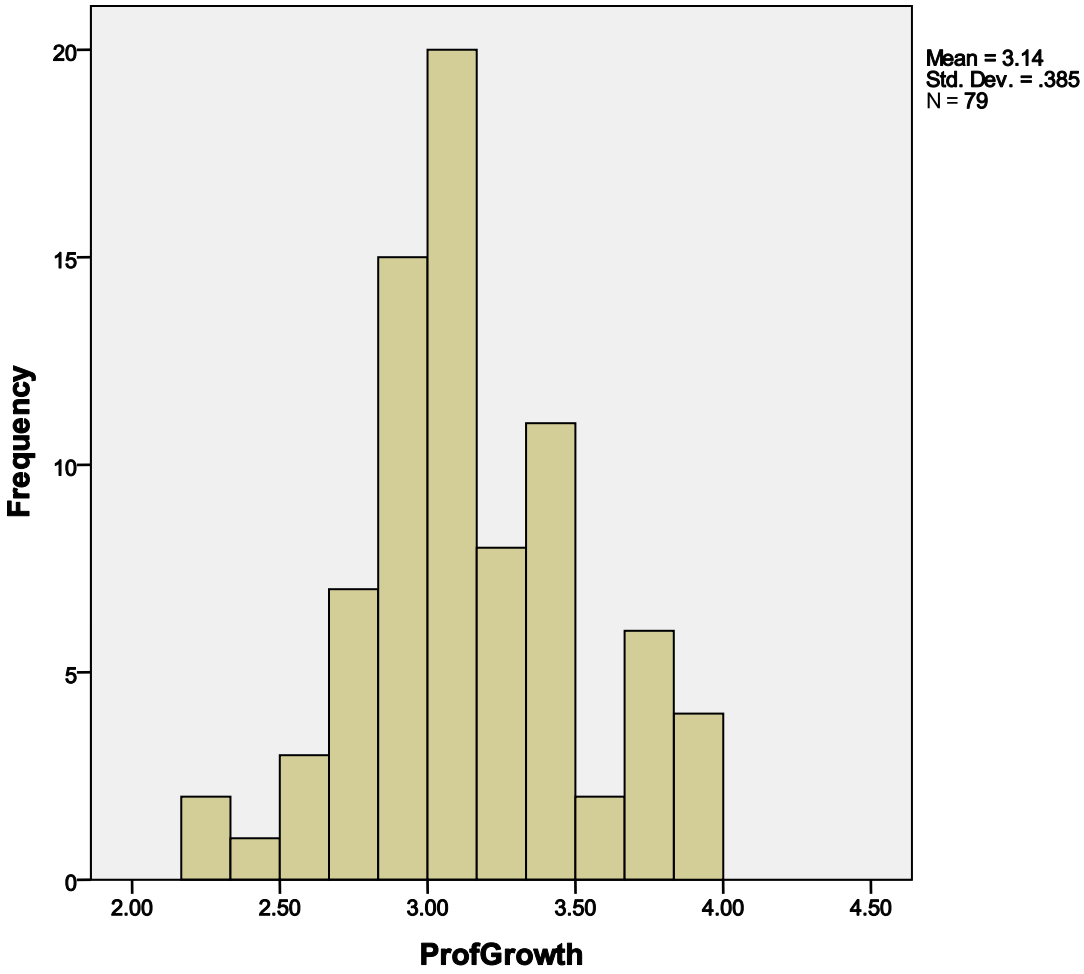
In this chapter data were presented and analyzed to answer eight research questions and eight null hypotheses. Two data measures were analyzed: 26 survey questions measured on a 4- point Likert scale and three open-ended questions. Data were retrieved following the execution of the Perceptions of Tennessee School Principals about the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model Survey (Appendix F) through an online survey format. The request for participation was distributed three times; a total of 150 PK-12 public school principals from 12 districts in the First Region of Tennessee were invited to participate in the survey and 79 responded resulting in a 53% return rate.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1: To what extent do principals perceive the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model provides appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers?

H_O1_1: Perceptions of appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers are not significantly different from neutral, the value 2.5.

A one-sample *t* test was conducted on PK-12 public school principals from 12 districts in the First Region of Tennessee who were implementing TEAM in the 2011-2012 school year to evaluate whether the mean score was significantly different from 2.5, the value representing neutrality. The population mean of 3.14 (*SD* = .39) was significantly higher than 2.5, $t(78)=14.813$, $p < .001$. Therefore the null hypothesis H_O1_1 was rejected. The 95% confidence interval for the PK-12 public school principals from 12 districts in the First Region of Tennessee who were implementing TEAM in the 2011-2012 school year mean ranged from 3.06 to 3.23. The strength of the relationships between the principals implementing TEAM and the mean score effect size *d* of 1.67 indicates a large effect. The results indicated the respondents had significantly positive perceptions of TEAM providing appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the participant responses. The frequency reported within each graph represents the mean of the participant responses to the following 15 items from the online survey: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15.



Note: In order to determine principals' perceptions of TEAM providing appropriate and effective professional growth for teaches, responses to the following items from the survey were analyzed: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15.

Figure 1. Distributions of the Principals' Responses of TEAM Providing Appropriate and Effective Professional Growth for Teachers

The results indicated the principals had significantly positive perceptions of TEAM providing appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers. The

population mean of 3.14 was significantly higher than 2.5, the value representing neutrality. In order to determine principals' perceptions, the following 15 items from the survey were analyzed: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. Furthermore, respondents defined through open-ended questions how TEAM created opportunities for professional growth for teachers. For the question, "In your opinion, what is the value of TEAM for the teacher as a professional?" of the 54 principal responses 25 indicated the value of TEAM for the teacher was through instruction. This included research-based best practices in instruction and reflection on the instruction.

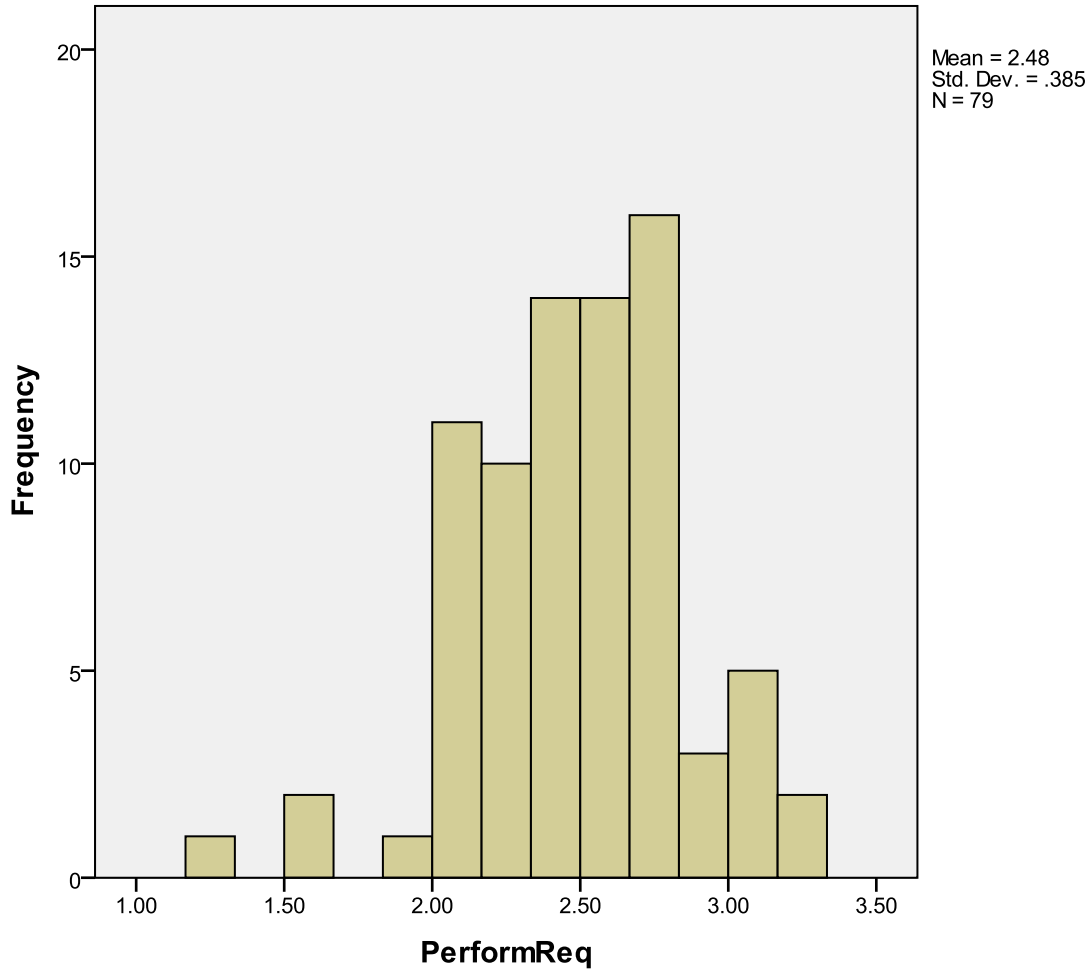
Research Question 2

Research Question 2: To what extent do principals perceive they can adequately perform the requirements of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model?

H_O2_1: Perceptions of adequate performance of the requirements are not significantly different from neutral, the value 2.5.

A one-sample *t* test was conducted on PK-12 public school principals from 12 districts in the First Region of Tennessee who were implementing TEAM in the 2011-2012 school year to evaluate whether the mean score was significantly different from 2.5, the value representing neutrality. The population mean of 2.48 (*SD* = .39) was not significantly different from 2.5*, t(78*)=.531, *p* = .597, ns. Therefore the null hypothesis H_O2_1 was not rejected. The 95% confidence interval for the PK-12 public school principals from 12 districts in the First Region of Tennessee who were implementing TEAM in the 2011-2012 school year mean ranged from 2.39 to 2.56. The strength of the relationships

between the principals implementing TEAM and the mean score effect size *d* of .06 indicates a small effect. The results indicated the respondents' perceptions of adequately performing the requirements of TEAM are not significantly different from neutral, the value 2.5. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the participant responses. The frequency reported within each graph represents the mean of the participant responses to the following 11 items from the online survey: 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26.



Note: In order to determine principals' perceptions of adequately performing the requirements of TEAM, the following 11 items from the survey were analyzed: 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26.

Figure 2. Distributions of the Principals' Responses of Their Ability to Adequately Perform the Requirements of TEAM

The results indicated the respondents' perceptions of adequately performing the requirements of TEAM are not significantly different from neutral, the value 2.5. The population mean of 2.48 was not significantly different from 2.5, the value representing

neutrality. In order to determine principals' perceptions, the following 11 items from the survey were analyzed: 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26. Furthermore respondents defined through open-ended questions the obstacles TEAM created for the principal. For the question, "For you as the building principal, what are the obstacles created by TEAM?" of the 62 responses 55 addressed times required for the process as the obstacle created by TEAM and 29 addressed TEAM procedures as the obstacle.

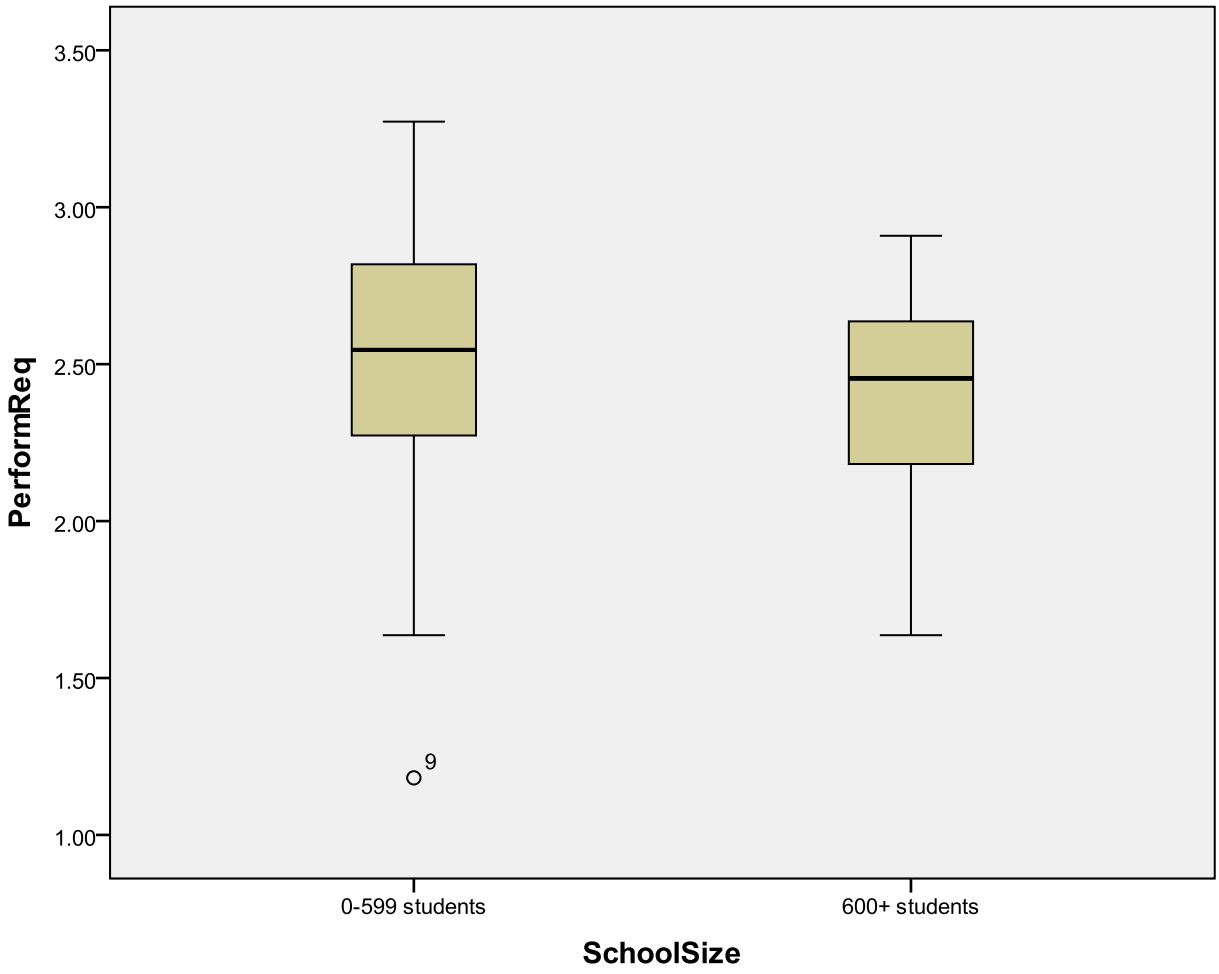
Research Question 3

Research Question 3: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive they can adequately perform the requirements of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model in terms of school size?

H_O3_1: Perceptions of adequate performance of the requirements are not significantly related to school size.

An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate the null hypothesis that principal perceptions of adequate performance of the requirements of TEAM in terms of school size are not significantly different from 2.5, the value representing neutrality. The principal perceptions of adequately performing the requirements of TEAM was the test variable and the grouping variable was school size of 0-599 students or 600+ students. The test was not significant, $t(77) = 1.112$, $p = .270$, ns. Therefore the null hypothesis H_O3_1 was not rejected. The η^2 index was .01, which indicated a small effect size. Principals in the school size of 0-599 students ($M = 2.50$, $SD = .39$) tended to perceive they can adequately perform the requirements of TEAM slightly, but not significantly,

higher than those in the school size of 600+ students (*M* = 2.39, *SD* = .35). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was -.09 to .33. Figure 3 shows the distributions for the two groups.



Note: Participants in school size 0-599 students = 62, Participants in school size 600+ students = 17

Figure 3. Distributions of Scores for Principals' Responses of Their Ability to Adequately Perform the Requirements of TEAM Based on School Size 0-599 Students and 600+ Students

The results indicated the principals perceptions of their ability to adequately perform the requirements of TEAM are not significantly related to school size. The principal perceptions of adequately performing the requirements of TEAM was the test variable and the grouping variable was school size of 0-599 students or 600+ students.

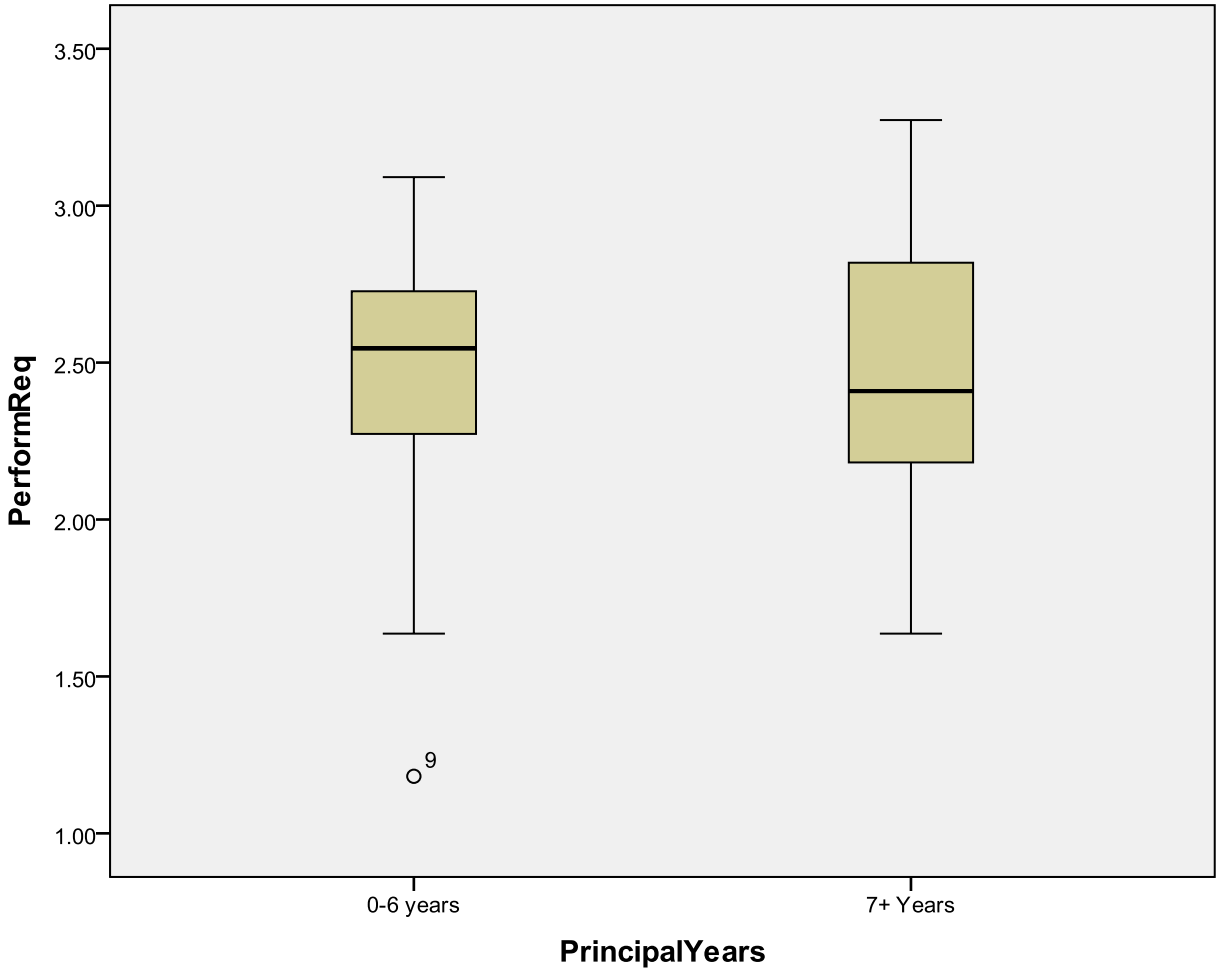
Research Question 4

Research Question 4: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive they can adequately perform the requirements of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model in terms of years of experience as a principal?

H_O4_1: Perceptions of adequate performance of the requirements are not significantly related to years of experience as a principal.

An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate the null hypothesis that principal perceptions of adequate performance of the requirements of TEAM in terms of years of experience as a principal are not significantly different from 2.5, the value representing neutrality. The principal perceptions of adequately performing the requirements of TEAM was the test variable and the grouping variable was 0-6 years of experience as a principal or 7+ years of experience as a principal. The test was not significant, $t(77) = .261$, $p = .795$, ns. Therefore the null hypothesis H_O4_1 was not rejected. The η^2 index was .01, which indicated a small effect size. Principals with 7+ years of experience ($M = 2.49$, $SD = .39$) tended to perceive they can adequately perform the requirements of TEAM slightly, but not significantly, higher than those in schools with 0-6 years of experience ($M = 2.47$, $SD = .38$). The 95% confidence interval

for the difference in means was -.20 to .16. Figure 4 shows the distributions for the two groups.



Note: Participants with 0-6 years experience as a principal = 49, Participants with 7+ years experience as a principal = 30

Figure 4. Distributions of Scores for Principals' Responses of Their Ability to Adequately Perform the Requirements of TEAM Based on 0-6 Years or 7+ Years of Experience as a Principal

The results indicated the principals perceptions of their ability to adequately perform the requirements of TEAM are not significantly related to years of experience as a principal. The principal perceptions of adequately performing the requirements of TEAM was the test variable and the grouping variable was 0-6 years of experience as a principal or 7+ years of experience as a principal.

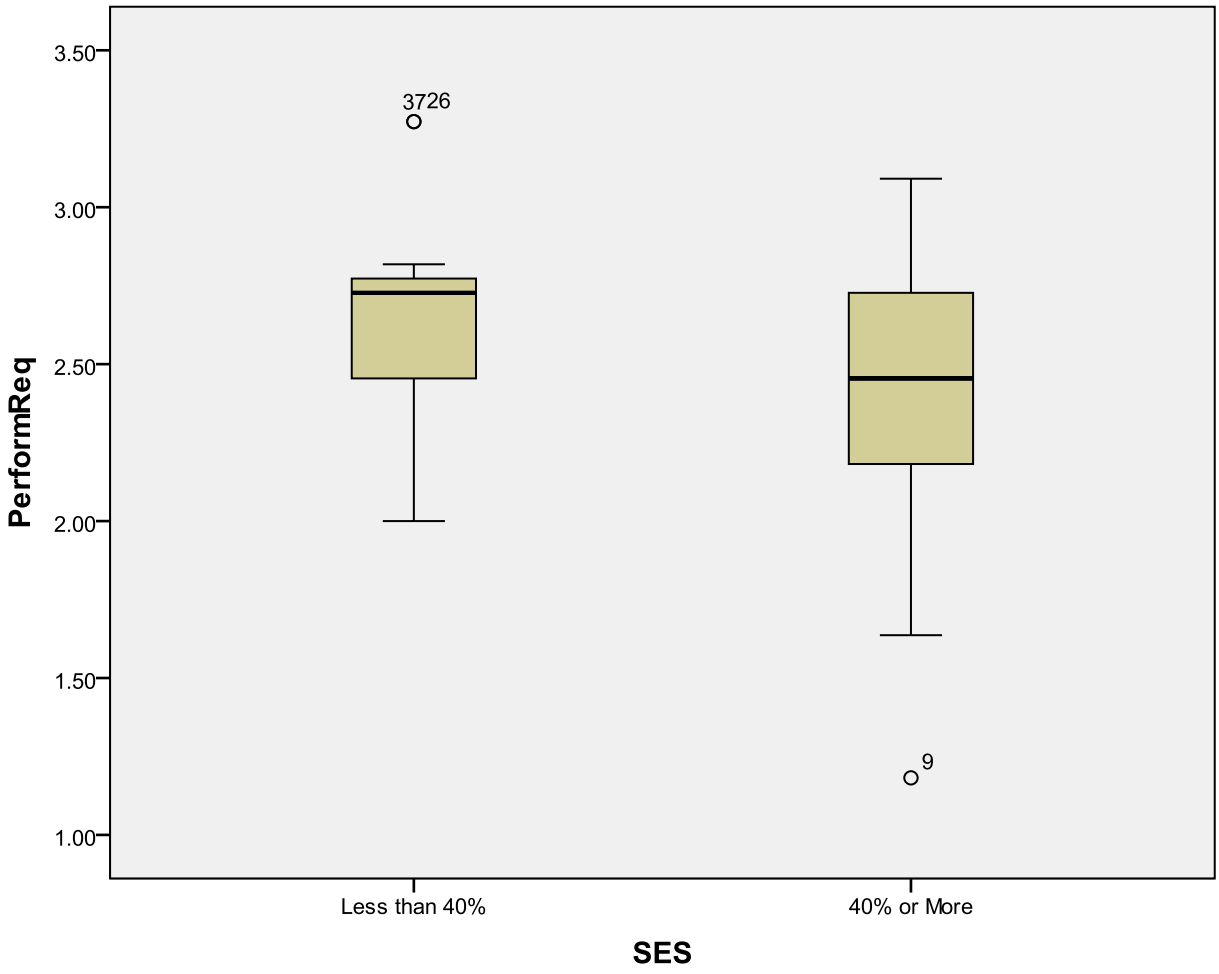
Research Question 5

Research Question 5: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive they can adequately perform the requirements of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model in terms of socioeconomic status of the school?

H_O5_1: Perceptions of adequate performance of the requirements are not significantly related to socioeconomic status of the school.

An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate the null hypothesis that principal perceptions of adequate performance of the requirements of TEAM in terms of socioeconomic status of the school are not significantly different from 2.5, the value representing neutrality. The principal perceptions of adequately performing the requirements of TEAM was the test variable and the grouping variable was less than 40% free and reduced lunch rate of the school or 40% or more free and reduced lunch rate of the school. The test was not significant, $t(77) = 1.892$, $p = .062$, ns. Therefore the null hypothesis H_O5_1 was not rejected. The η^2 index was .04, which indicated a medium effect size. Principals in the schools with socioeconomic status of less than 40% free and reduced lunch rate ($M = 2.68$, $SD = .38$) tended to perceive they can adequately perform the requirements of TEAM slightly, but not significantly, higher than

those in schools with socioeconomic status of 40% or more free and reduced lunch rate (*M* = 2.44, *SD* = .38). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was -.01 to .48. Figure 5 shows the distributions for the two groups.



Note: Participants in schools with less than 40% free and reduced lunch rate = 11, Participants in schools with 40% or more free and reduced lunch rate = 68

Figure 5. Distributions of Scores for Principals' Responses of Their Ability to Adequately Perform the Requirements of TEAM Based on School Socioeconomic Status of Less Than 40% Free and Reduced Lunch Rate and 40% or More Free and Reduced Lunch Rate

The results indicated the principals perceptions of their ability to adequately perform the requirements of TEAM are not significantly related to socioeconomic status of the school. The principal perceptions of adequately performing the requirements of TEAM was the test variable and the grouping variable was socioeconomic status of less than 40% free and reduced lunch rate or 40% or more free and reduced lunch rate of the school.

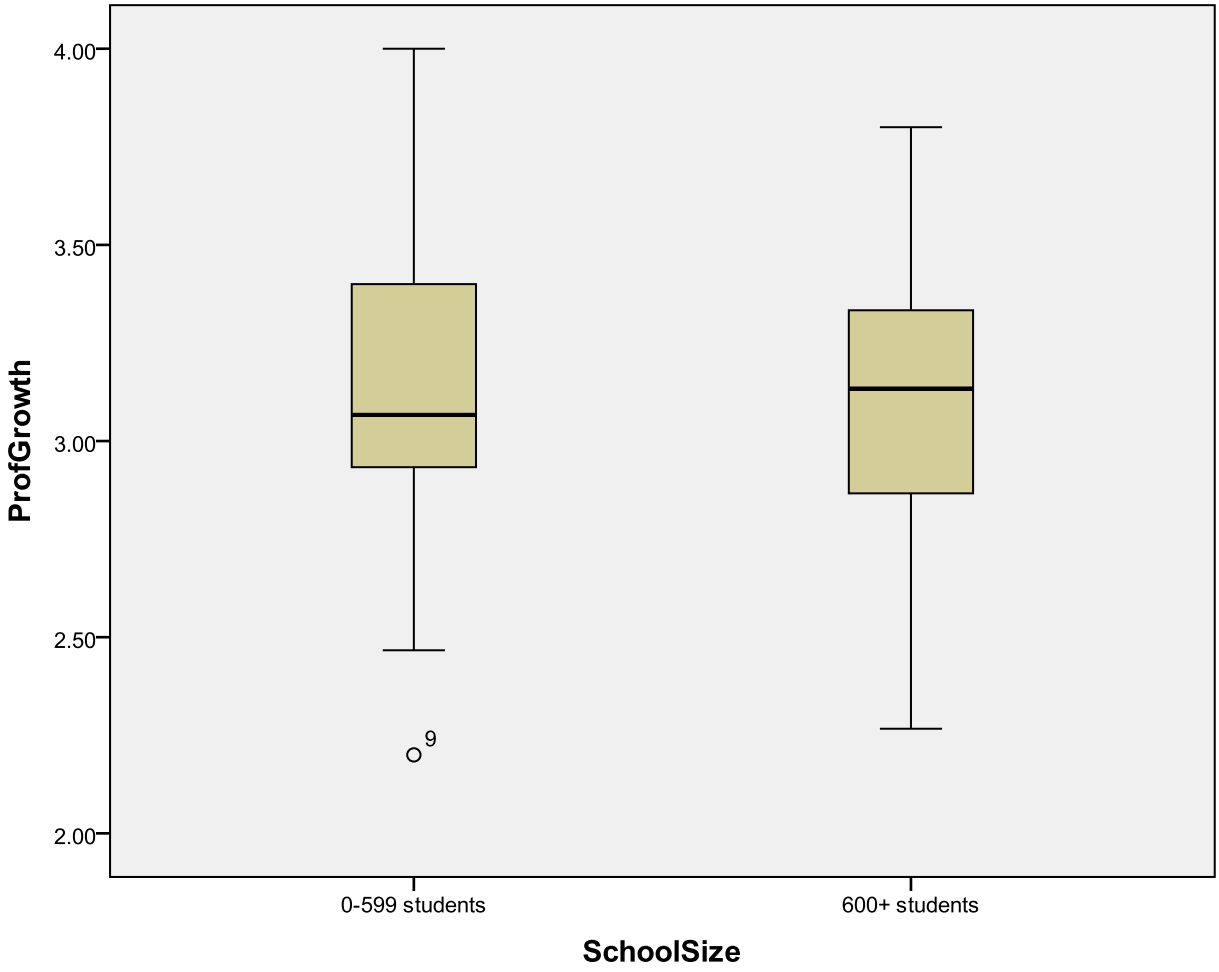
Research Question 6

Research Question 6: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model provides appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers in terms of school size?

H_O6_1: Perceptions of appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers are not significantly related to school size.

An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate the null hypothesis that principal perceptions of appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers in terms of school size are not significantly different from 2.5, the value representing neutrality. The principal perceptions of appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers was the test variable and the grouping variable was school size of 0-599 students or 600+ students. The test was not significant, $t(77) = .248$, $p = .805$, ns. Therefore the null hypothesis H_O6_1 was not rejected. The η^2 index was .01, which indicated a small effect size. Principals in the school size of 0-599 students ($M = 3.15$, $SD = .39$) tended to perceive TEAM provided appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers slightly, but not significantly, higher than those in the school size of

600+ students (*M* = 3.12, *SD* = .38). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was -.19 to .24. Figure 6 shows the distributions for the two groups.



Note: Participants in school size 0-599 students = 62, Participants in school size 600+ students = 17

Figure 6. Distributions of Scores for Principals' Responses of Appropriate and Effective Professional Growth for Teachers Based on School Size 0-599 Students and 600+ Students

The results indicated the principal perceptions of TEAM providing appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers are not significantly related to school size. The principal perceptions of appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers was the test variable and the grouping variable was school size of 0-599 students or 600+ students.

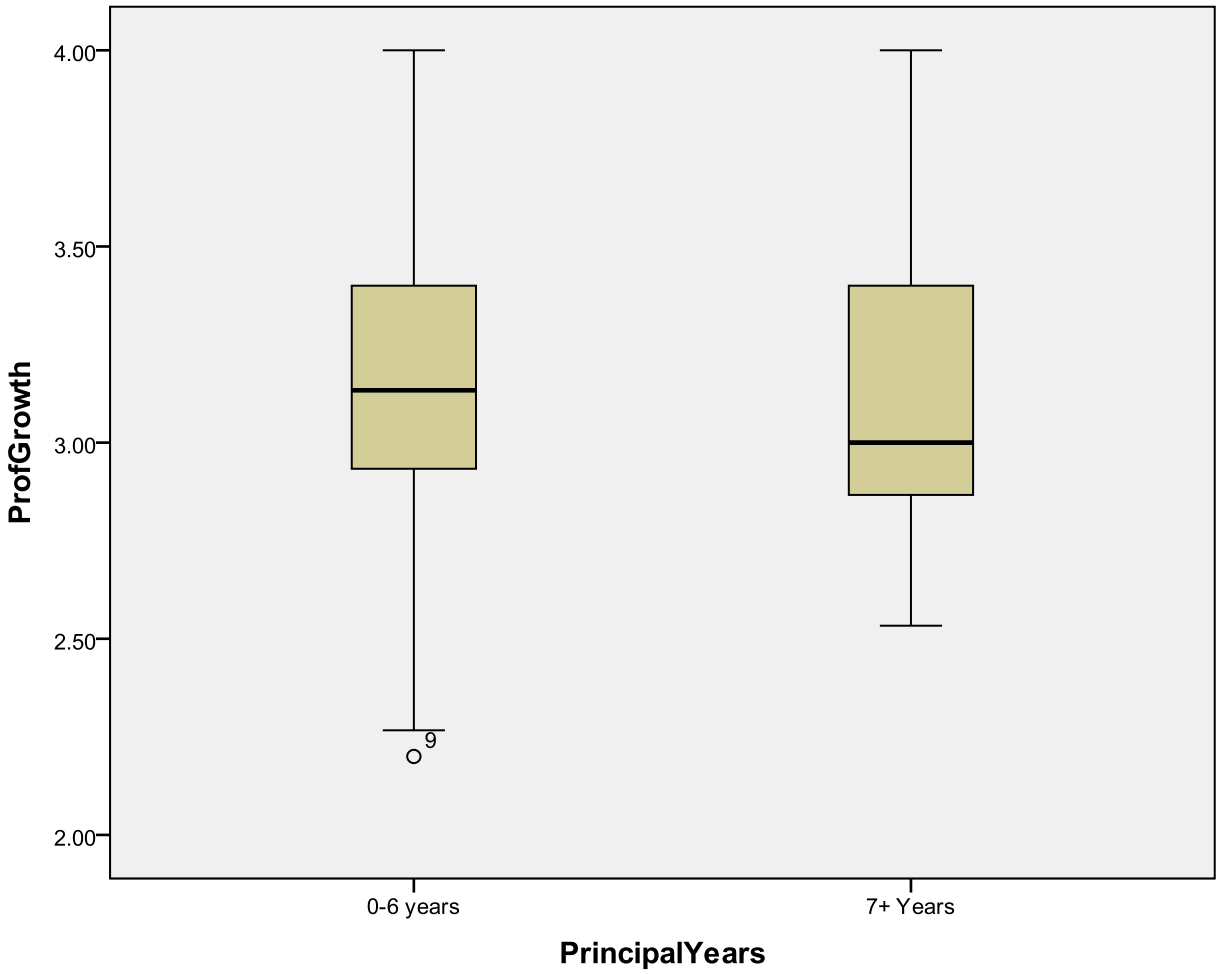
Research Question 7

Research Question 7: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model provides appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers in terms of years of experience as a principal?

H_O7_1: Perceptions of appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers are not significantly related to years of experience as a principal.

An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate the null hypothesis that principal perceptions of appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers in terms of years of experience as a principal are not significantly different from 2.5, the value representing neutrality. The principal perceptions of appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers was the test variable and the grouping variable was 0-6 years of experience as a principal or 7+ years of experience as a principal. The test was not significant, $t(77) = .373$, $p = .710$, ns. Therefore the null hypothesis H_O7_1 was not rejected. The η^2 index was .01, which indicated a small effect size. Principals with 0-6 years of experience ($M = 3.15$, $SD = .41$) tended to perceive TEAM provided appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers slightly, but not significantly,

higher than those with 7+ years of experience (*M* = 3.12, *SD* = .35). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was -.15 to .21. Figure 7 shows the distributions for the two groups.



Note: Participants with 0-6 years experience as a principal = 49, Participants with 7+ years experience as a principal = 30

Figure 7. Distributions of Scores for Principals' Responses of Appropriate and Effective Professional Growth for Teachers Based on 0-6 Years or 7+ Years of Experience as a Principal

The results indicated the principal perceptions of TEAM providing appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers are not significantly related to years of experience as a principal. The principal perceptions of appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers was the test variable and the grouping variable was 0-6 years of experience as a principal or 7+ years of experience as a principal.

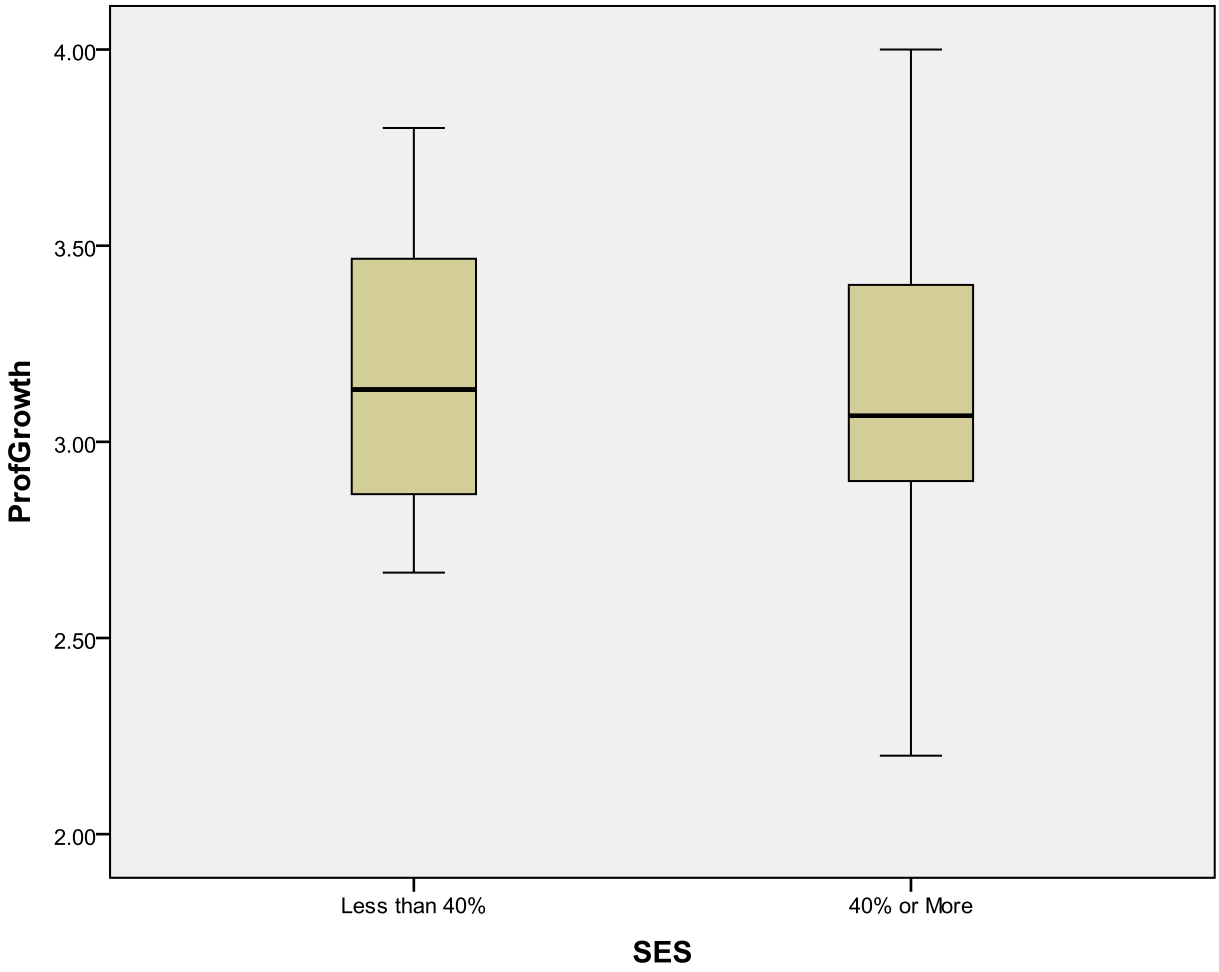
Research Question 8

Research Question 8: Is there a significant difference in the extent to which principals perceive the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model provides appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers in terms of socioeconomic status of the school?

H_O8_1: Perceptions of appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers are not significantly related to socioeconomic status of the school.

An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate the null hypothesis that principal perceptions of appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers in terms of socioeconomic status of the school are not significantly different from 2.5, the value representing neutrality. The principal perceptions of appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers was the test variable and the grouping variable was socioeconomic status of less than 40% free and reduced lunch rate or socioeconomic status of 40% or more free and reduced lunch rate. The test was not significant, $t(77) = .590$, $p = .557$, ns. Therefore the null hypothesis H_O8_1 was not rejected. The η^2 index was .01, which indicated a small effect size. Principals in the school with socioeconomic status of less than 40% free and reduced lunch rate ($M = 3.21$, $SD =$

.40) tended to perceive TEAM provided appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers slightly, but not significantly, higher than those in schools with socioeconomic status of 40% or more free and reduced lunch rate (M = 3.13, SD = .38). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was -.18 to .32. Figure 8 shows the distributions for the two groups.



Note: Participants in schools with less than 40% free and reduced lunch rate = 11, Participants in schools with 40% or more free and reduced lunch rate = 68

Figure 8. Distributions of Scores for Principals' Responses of Appropriate and Effective Professional Growth for Teachers Based on School Socioeconomic Status of Less Than 40% Free and Reduced Lunch Rate and 40% or More Free and Reduced Lunch Rate

The results indicated the principals' perceptions of TEAM providing appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers are not significantly related to socioeconomic status of the school. The principal perceptions of appropriate and

effective professional growth for teachers was the test variable and the grouping variable was socioeconomic status of less than 40% free and reduced lunch rate or socioeconomic status of 40% or more free and reduced lunch rate.

Open-Ended Questions

In addition to the 26 survey questions participants had an opportunity to complete 3 open-ended questions about the value of TEAM for the principal as a professional, the value of TEAM for the teacher as a professional, and the obstacles created by TEAM for principal. Fifty-five participants responded to the first question: In your opinion, what is the value of TEAM for the principal as a professional? Of the 55 responses 49 responded with a positive value TEAM brought to the principal as a professional. The positive value related most often to instruction and the TEAM process. A minimal number of responses related to the positive value of TEAM based on communication, student achievement, professional development, and the role of the principal as instructional leader. The remaining 6 responses did not address a positive value of TEAM for the principal as a professional. Rather two participants addressed the issues of time management and maintaining day-to-day operations of the school while completing the TEAM process. “It limits the time a principal attends to their many other duties.” Four participants negatively addressed the TEAM process including one principal who stated TEAM was “an imperfect framework to evaluate teachers in public schools.”

Twenty-nine participants indicated the value of TEAM for the principal was through instruction. This included the principal observing instruction, collaborating with

teachers about instruction, and personally learning about research-based best practices in instruction. The following responses indicated five principals' perceptions about the value of TEAM for instruction:

"It allows me to help teachers to focus on research based strategies in their classroom."

"It allows the principal to focus on what classroom instruction that works looks like and professional growth."

"Team is very valuable to the principal in that it makes you spend time with teachers in postconference situations talking about teaching strategies and best practices. To me this is its greatest value."

"It has allowed me to be in classrooms more and have professional discussions regarding instruction with teachers."

"Teachers and I have a much more focused conversation about teaching and learning. This focus is carried over into every meeting opportunity we have as a group."

Seventeen participants indicated the value of TEAM for the principal as a professional was through the systemic and standardized TEAM process. This included coherence, clarity, and expectations outlined through TEAM. The following responses indicated five principals' perceptions about the value of TEAM:

"It has been valuable at getting all administrators and teachers on the same page for expectations of instruction and student participation in the classroom. Also helps me to identify patterns and trends to determine professional development."

“I think the rubrics, though far from perfect, are probably the most valuable part, in that they provide more of a consistent picture of quality instruction than we have had previously.”

“TEAM evaluation finally aligns teaching with the evaluation process and expectations.”

“Gives the principal specific things to look for in an observation.”

“I know my obligations to the evaluation system being used. I know that I am expected to evaluate the teachers as professionals and know that I can evaluate them with the utmost professionalism.”

Fifty-four participants responded to the second question: In your opinion, what is the value of TEAM for the teacher as a professional? Of the 54 responses 48 responded with a positive value TEAM brought to the teacher as a professional. The positive value related most often to instruction and the TEAM process. A minimal number of responses related to the positive value of TEAM based on communication, student achievement, and professional development. The remaining 6 responses did not address a positive value of TEAM for the teacher as a professional. Rather one participant addressed the need for more training on the process. Five participants addressed issues around the TEAM process.

“The value of the TEAM model is lost when we assign them a numerical score. We can have a great postconference with good feedback and discussion, but the score can ruin that progress.”

“I do not believe that it would ever be possible to perform at the 5 level on a daily basis for any teacher.”

“My primary concern is the high quality teachers are the ones who have great stress and anxiety over this process.”

Thirty-four participants indicated the value of TEAM for the teacher was through the systemic and standardized TEAM process. This included expectations outlined through TEAM and the identified area of refinement and reinforcement as a model of continuous improvement. The following responses indicated five principals’ perceptions about the value of TEAM for the teacher as a professional:

“The rubric gives specifics to expectations for teachers.”

“I am glad that teachers have a guide that shows components that will make a good lesson.”

“It is a proven PROCESS that teachers can follow and it puts a focus on good teaching every day.”

“It serves as a means for showing areas of need as well as areas of strength.”

“If the teacher takes the refinement pieces and works to improve them he or she will become a more effective teacher.”

Twenty-five participants indicated the value of TEAM for the teacher was through instruction. This included research-based best practices in instruction and reflection on the instruction. The following responses indicated five principals’ perceptions about the value of TEAM for instruction:

"It pushes the teacher into considering what is happening in the classroom. If the teacher takes the refinement pieces and works to improve them he or she will become a more effective teacher."

"It forces teachers to think about what they are teaching, and what strategies they will use."

"It raised the awareness of planning and instruction."

"It provides the teacher with a guide (rubric) for their instruction. The rubric lets them determine what they need to be including in the lessons they teach."

"To confirm best practices and to provide feedback for improvement."

Sixty-two participants responded to the third question: For you as the building principal, what are the obstacles created by TEAM? Of the 62 responses 55 addressed the amount of time required for the process as the obstacle created by TEAM and 29 addressed TEAM processes as the obstacle for the principal. The following responses indicated 10 principals' perceptions about the obstacles created by TEAM:

> There are many obstacles as a building level principal. First, there is not nearly enough time in a day, week, month, or year to get everything done. The TEAM process takes 90% of the instructional day, and principals are forced to stay at their schools until 8:00 or 9:00 at night to get their regular job done. This is not fair to the principals or the schools. Many important things in running a school have to be neglected during the day in order to accommodate the TEAM evaluation system. This is not good for the

school or morale. Next, the principals and teachers have not been adequately trained on the TEAM rubric. Along with this, the process is so subjective, and many principals just have no clue what good instruction looks like. Also, the TEAM system is killing the teachers. The morale of teachers is at an all time low, and good teachers are leaving the profession by the droves because of the unnecessary pressure on them. Finally, the TEAM system was just thrown together overnight and was not thought through well enough at the state level. It has a tremendous amount of holes that would take all night to list, and nothing is being done about them.

"It is impossible to implement TEAM fully and maintain the day to day operations that are essential to maintain a positive environment that will enhance instruction."

"NEED MORE RESOURCES FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT OF REFINEMENT AREAS."

"TIME! TIME! TIME! I also feel that the training was very inadequate. It is unrealistic to expect principals to get all this completed and do the daily duties required to have a successful staff and student body."

The biggest obstacle is...while it is possible to complete the observations in the expected time frame and still complete all the other responsibilities assigned to school leaders, it provides for us "tunnel vision" of one teacher at a time. While teachers should be able to work on improving, I never really get back to see what changes are made because I am off to watch

another teacher. It generally takes me half of a day to do two observations and that does not include write-ups and the amount of time I have to ponder over the evidence and make a decision based on the rubric. The rest of my day and often well into the evening is devoted to all the things required of me. While it should provide guidance for staff development, that is still generally provided by the needs of all teachers or the system even though we are making improvements in the area of individualized staff development.

"TIME. So many things have had to be neglected in order to meet the demands of TEAM. I have determined that my role as a principal has shifted from working with children to molding the teachers to work with children."

TIME! I cannot prepare evaluation scores and postconference conversations during the school day during my "normal" hours. It all has to be done at night or on weekends. I resent the extra hours I must work to perform the evaluations with fidelity.

"Time - interruptions (student and community needs) during observations, preconferences and postconferences."

"Time management has been much more difficult. This lack of time is eroding my ability to get to spend time with and get to know our students."

"The lack of time for quality implementation. This was a huge time burden that was added to school level administrators yet nothing was taken off our list of responsibilities to counterbalance this additional requirement."

Summary

Chapter 4 was an analysis of the data for each research question. There were eight research questions and eight null hypotheses. In research question 1 the results indicated the respondents had significantly positive perceptions of TEAM providing appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers. The results for research question 2 indicated the respondents' perceptions of their ability to adequately perform the requirements of TEAM were not significantly different from 2.5, the value representing neutrality. In research questions 3-5 respondents' perceptions of their ability to adequately perform the requirements of TEAM were not significantly related to school size, years of experience as a principal, or school socioeconomic status. In research questions 6-8 respondents' perceptions of TEAM providing appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers were not significantly related to school size, years of experience as a principal, or school socioeconomic status.

Two open-ended questions revealed the values TEAM brought to the principal as a professional and the teacher as a professional. The value for both principals and teachers as professionals was positive and related to instruction and the TEAM process. For instruction the positive values were principal observation of the teachers' instruction, teacher reflection on instruction, principal collaboration with teachers about instruction, and principal and teacher knowledge of research-based best practices in instruction. For the TEAM process the positive values for the principal and teacher were coherence, clarity, and expectations outlined through TEAM as well as the identified area of refinement and reinforcement as a model of continuous improvement for the teacher.

One open-ended question addressed obstacles for principals that were created by TEAM. The amount of time required for the TEAM process and the support for TEAM was noted by principals as the obstacles created by TEAM. This included a need for more resources to support teachers in the area of refinement, a need for more training on the TEAM procedures, and a lack of time in the day to manage the day-to-day operations of the school along with the TEAM process of evaluation.

The results indicated that respondents had significantly positive perceptions of TEAM providing appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers, and the open ended questions revealed that principal perceptions about TEAM providing appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers were positive. These finding support the use of TEAM.

The results indicated that respondents' perceptions of adequately performing the requirements of TEAM were not significantly different from neutral, the value 2.5, and the open ended questions revealed that obstacles created by TEAM included amount of time required for the TEAM process as well as the TEAM procedures. These findings indicate the need for more support of principals in effective implementation of TEAM if they are to adequately perform the requirements of TEAM.

Chapter 5 is a summary of the study including conclusions and recommendations for practice and future research.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This chapter contains the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for readers who may use the results as a resource when considering a teacher evaluation model. The purpose of this study was to analyze the perceptions of Tennessee principals about the implementation of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) and the impact of the TEAM on teachers' instructional practice and professional growth. The study was conducted using data from 79 respondents collected through an online survey of 150 PK-12 public school principals from 12 districts in the First Region of Tennessee. To participate in the research the principal must have evaluated teachers during the 2011-2012 school year using the TEAM.

Summary

The statistical analysis reported in the study was based on eight research questions presented in Chapters 1 and 3. In Chapter 3 each research question had one null hypothesis. Research questions 1 and 2 were analyzed with a series of one-sample *t* tests. Research questions 3-8 were analyzed with a series of independent-samples *t* tests. Three additional open-ended questions were analyzed and descriptions of findings were recorded. Respondents in this study were 79 PK-12 public school principals from 12 districts in the First Region of Tennessee who were implementing TEAM in the 2011-2012 school year. The .05 level of significance used to

test all hypotheses. Findings indicated the respondents had a significantly positive perception of TEAM providing appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers. Respondents' perceptions of adequately performing the requirements of TEAM were not significantly different from neutral, the value 2.5.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to analyze the perceptions of Tennessee principals about the implementation of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) and the impact of the TEAM on teachers' instructional practice and professional growth. Specifically this research assesses principal perceptions of TEAM providing appropriate and effective professional growth for teachers and the principal perceptions of their ability to adequately perform the requirements of TEAM.

The results of this study suggest that the participating principals see value and positive outcomes for their schools as a result of their district's participation in TEAM evaluation. The strengths they realize from use of TEAM include: principal observation of the teachers' instruction; teacher reflection on instruction; principal collaboration with teachers about instruction; principal and teacher knowledge of research-based best practices in instruction; coherence, clarity, and expectations outlined through TEAM; and the identified area of refinement and reinforcement as a model of continuous improvement for the teacher. However substantial concerns were raised about the time required in the TEAM processes.

These findings corroborated what Mathers et al. (2008) reported after reviewing various teacher evaluation tools and assessing the strengths and weaknesses of each:

"evaluation results should drive the individualized professional development opportunities made available to teachers" (p. 12). Additionally results of this study confirmed assertions made by Nolan and Hoover (2005) who state that using evaluation results to inform professional development empowers teachers to self-direct their growth. Through TEAM the observers captured evidence during the lesson which is the primary resource used in the postobservation reflection with the teacher (Tennessee First to the Top website, n.d.). Following this conference teachers had an area of reinforcement or success and an area of refinement or development with targeted professional growth opportunities. Stronge (2006) identified professional growth as a goal of teacher evaluation. Schools can be no better than the educators who work within them and professional growth remained the key to educators' progress (Guskey, 2009). The principal was essential in the teacher evaluation process if it was to provide professional growth to improve teaching and learning (Davis et al., 2002; Tuytens & Devos, 2010). To improve teacher professional growth, provide ongoing, job-embedded collaborative learning that supports a cycle of continuous improvement (DuFour & Marzano, 2009; Harris, 2011; Shulman, 2004).

To improve teacher effectiveness, provide principals assistance in transitioning from supervision to improve teacher effectiveness to building the capacity of teachers in high-performing collaborative teams as they work together to achieve common goals for which members are mutually responsible for promoting individual and collective responsibility (DuFour & Marzano, 2009). Deming (2000b) supported driving out fear and building trust so that everyone can work effectively to transform the organization.

For the question, “In your opinion, what is the value of TEAM for the principal as a professional?” of the 55 principal responses 29 indicated the value of TEAM for the principal was through instruction. This included the principal observing instruction, collaborating with teachers about instruction, and personally learning about research-based best practices in instruction. DuFour and Marzano (2009) stated if the fundamental purpose of schools was to ensure that all students learn at high levels, then schools do not need instructional leaders rather they need learning leaders who focus on evidence of learning. Educators must work collaboratively and collectively to help all students learn and evidence of student learning should be used as part of a continual improvement cycle.

DuFour and Marzano (2009) stated principal evaluation of a teacher is a low leverage strategy for improving schools particularly in terms of the time it requires of principals. Lack of administrator time to commit to the evaluation process is supported by research (Colby et al., 2002; Donaldson, 2010; Rothstein et al., 2008; Sinnema & Robinson, 2007; Weisberg et al., 2009). Huffman (2011) recognized a challenge within TEAM for the qualitative observation was the time requirement of observers. Both the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (2012) and the Tennessee Department of Education (2012a) reports on year 1 implementation of TEAM supported the need for balancing the requirements of TEAM with existing responsibilities. Kersten and Israel (2005) identified time constraints as the major impediment due to the high number of teachers to evaluate, intensive evaluation paperwork, and other administrative tasks. If time flexibility is low, time can become a major constraint to progress by lacking enough time to devote to reflection and practice (Senge et al., 1999).

If principals devote less time to evaluation of teaching and more time to working collaboratively with teams to examine evidence of student learning and strategies for improving on those results, principals will be more likely to fulfill their primary responsibility of helping more students learn at higher levels (Marzano & DuFour, 2009). Senge et al. (1999) defined a cultural denominator that lies behind all strategies for coping with time—undoing the mental model of people as components plugged into an industrial, mechanical machine.

To improve the evaluation process, allow teachers to participate in self-directed improvement by generating data about their own teaching, identifying their own areas of focus, and establishing their own improvement goals. This can increase teacher motivation and engagement along with developing a habit of mind that guides teachers' instructional decisions every day. When adult learners are empowered to objectively analyze and understand their own practice and have a clear vision of where they can improve, they are intrinsically motivated to embark on a pathway that leads to expertise (Haberman, 2004; Mielke, 2012). Deming (2000b) supports removing barriers that rob people of joy in their work.

Recommendations for Practice

The results of this study suggest the following recommendations for practice for the implementation of TEAM and the impact of TEAM on teachers' instructional practice and professional growth:

1. Provide principals assistance in transitioning from supervision to improve teacher effectiveness to building the capacity of teachers in high-performing collaborative teams.
2. To improve principal effectiveness, reduce or remove low-leverage and high-time tasks such as teacher evaluation from the principalship.

Recommendations for Future Research

The study provided a narrow scope of focus as only the First Region in Tennessee was examined to determine principal perceptions of TEAM. However teacher evaluation processes and principal responsibility for their completion are currently undergoing substantial modification across the nation. Substantial study would therefore seem warranted. The following represent recommendations for additional study are suggested:

1. A replication of this study in a similar region or an expansion to include all principals in the state of Tennessee.
2. The study could be expanded by researching the perceptions of other certified TEAM evaluators such as assistant principals or district administrators.
3. This study addressed only principal perceptions about TEAM. A comparable study could investigate teacher perceptions about TEAM.
4. The study could be expanded to include a qualitative design and investigate principal perceptions and teacher perceptions.

5. Further research on the perceptions of TEAM related to teacher effectiveness, student achievement, teacher job satisfaction, and school climate and culture.
6. An additional study can be conducted to investigate present and past principals' perceptions about the evaluation process.
7. Replicate this study in the same region 3 years from now to see if the additional time for implementation and changes to improve efficiency by the Tennessee Department of Education has changed the principals' perceptions.
8. This study could be replicated in another region of the state to make comparisons of principals' perceptions based on region of the state.
9. Further research can be done on the principals' perceptions in terms of grade band of school, years of experience of teaching staff, and teacher training and development.
10. An additional study can be conducted to investigate the amount of time principals spend on teacher evaluation and the principal's perceptions of the quality of the use of this time.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

TEAM Rubrics

Educator Rubric

Instruction

	Significantly Above Expectations (5)	At Expectations (3)	Significantly Below Expectations (1)
Standards and Objectives ☐	• All learning objectives and state content standards are explicitly communicated. • Sub-objectives are aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson's major objective. • Learning objectives are: (a) consistently connected to what students have previously learned, (b) know from life experiences, and (c) integrated with other disciplines. • Expectations for student performance are clear, demanding, and high. • State standards are displayed and referenced throughout the lesson. • There is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the objective.	• Most learning objectives and state content standards are communicated. • Sub-objectives are mostly aligned to the lesson's major objective. • Learning objectives are connected to what students have previously learned. • Expectations for student performance are clear. • State standards are displayed. • There is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the objective.	• Few learning objectives and state content standards are communicated. • Sub-objectives are inconsistently aligned to the lesson's major objective. • Learning objectives are rarely connected to what students have previously learned. • Expectations for student performance are vague. • State standards are displayed. • There is evidence that few students demonstrate mastery of the objective.
Motivating Students ☐	• The teacher consistently organizes the content so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students. • The teacher consistently develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity, and exploration are valued. • The teacher regularly reinforces and rewards effort.	• The teacher sometimes organizes the content so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students. • The teacher sometimes develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity, and exploration are valued. • The teacher sometimes reinforces and rewards effort.	• The teacher rarely organizes the content so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students. • The teacher rarely develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity, and exploration are valued. • The teacher rarely reinforces and rewards effort.
Presenting Instructional Content ☐	Presentation of content always includes: • visuals that establish the purpose of the lesson, preview the organization of the lesson, and include internal summaries of the lesson; • examples, illustrations, analogies, and labels for new concepts and ideas; • modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his or her performance expectations; • concise communication; • logical sequencing and segmenting; • all essential information; • no irrelevant, confusing, or non-essential information.	Presentation of content most of the time includes: • visuals that establish the purpose of the lesson, preview the organization of the lesson, and include internal summaries of the lesson; • examples, illustrations, analogies, and labels for new concepts and ideas; • modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his or her performance expectations; • concise communication; • logical sequencing and segmenting; • all essential information.; • no irrelevant, confusing, or non-essential information.	Presentation of content rarely includes: • visuals that establish the purpose of the lesson, preview the organization of the lesson, and include internal summaries of the lesson; • examples, illustrations, analogies, and labels for new concepts and ideas; • modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his or her performance expectations; • concise communication; • logical sequencing and segmenting; • all essential information; • no irrelevant, confusing, or non-essential information.
Lesson Structure and Pacing ☐	• The lesson starts promptly. • The lesson's structure is coherent, with a beginning, middle, end, and time for reflection. • Pacing is brisk and provides many opportunities for individual students who progress at different learning rates. • Routines for distributing materials are seamless. • No instructional time is lost during transitions.	• The lesson starts promptly. • The lesson's structure is coherent, with a beginning, middle, and end. • Pacing is appropriate and sometimes provides opportunities for students who progress at different learning rates. • Routines for distributing materials are efficient. • Little instructional time is lost during transitions.	• The lesson does not start promptly. • The lesson has a structure, but may be missing closure or introductory elements. • Pacing is appropriate for less than half of the students and rarely provides opportunities for students who progress at different learning rates. • Routines for distributing materials are inefficient. • Considerable time is lost during transitions.

(Tennessee Department of Education, 2012b)

Educator Rubric

Instruction *(continued)*

	Significantly Above Expectations (5)	At Expectations (3)	Significantly Below Expectations (1)
Activities and Materials	Activities and materials include all of the following: • support the lesson objectives; • are challenging; • sustain students' attention; • elicit a variety of thinking; • provide time for reflection; • are relevant to students' lives; • provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction; • induce student curiosity and suspense; • provide students with choices; • incorporate multimedia and technology; and • incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts (e.g., teacher-made materials, manipulatives, resources from museums, cultural centers, etc). • In addition, sometimes activities are game-like, involve simulations, require creating products, and demand self-direction and self-monitoring.	Activities and materials include most of the following: • support the lesson objectives; • are challenging; • sustain students' attention; • elicit a variety of thinking; • provide time for reflection; • are relevant to students' lives; • provide opportunities for student to student interaction; • induce student curiosity and suspense; • provide students with choices; • incorporate multimedia and technology; and • incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts (e.g., teacher made materials, manipulatives, resources from museums, cultural centers, etc).	Activities and materials include few of the following: • support the lesson objectives; • are challenging; • sustain students' attention; • elicit a variety of thinking; • provide time for reflection; • are relevant to students' lives; • provide opportunities for student to student interaction; • induce student curiosity and suspense; • provide students with choices; • incorporate multimedia and technology; and • incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts (e.g., teacher made materials, manipulatives, resources from museums, etc).
Questioning	Teacher questions are varied and high quality, providing a balanced mix of question types: ○ knowledge and comprehension; ○ application and analysis; and ○ creation and evaluation. • Questions are consistently purposeful and coherent. • A high frequency of questions is asked. • Questions are consistently sequenced with attention to the instructional goals. • Questions regularly require active responses (e.g., whole class signaling, choral responses, written and shared responses, or group and individual answers). • Wait time (3-5 seconds) is consistently provided. • The teacher calls on volunteers and nonvolunteers, and a balance of students based on ability and sex. • Students generate questions that lead to further inquiry and self-directed learning.	Teacher questions are varied and high quality providing for some, but not all, question types: ○ knowledge and comprehension; ○ application and analysis; and ○ creation and evaluation. • Questions are usually purposeful and coherent. • A moderate frequency of questions asked. • Questions are sometimes sequenced with attention to the instructional goals. • Questions sometimes require active responses (e.g., whole class signaling, choral responses, or group and individual answers). • Wait time is sometimes provided. • The teacher calls on volunteers and nonvolunteers, and a balance of students based on ability and sex.	Teacher questions are inconsistent in quality and include few question types: ○ knowledge and comprehension; ○ application and analysis; and ○ creation and evaluation. • Questions are random and lack coherence. • A low frequency of questions is asked. • Questions are rarely sequenced with attention to the instructional goals. • Questions rarely require active responses (e.g., whole class signaling, choral responses, or group and individual answers). • Wait time is inconsistently provided. • The teacher mostly calls on volunteers and high-ability students.

(Tennessee Department of Education, 2012b)

Educator Rubric

Instruction *(continued)*

	Significantly Above Expectations (5)	At Expectations (3)	Significantly Below Expectations (1)
Academic Feedback	• Oral and written feedback is consistently academically focused, frequent, and high quality. • Feedback is frequently given during guided practice and homework review. • The teacher circulates to prompt student thinking, assess each student's progress, and provide individual feedback. • Feedback from students is regularly used to monitor and adjust instruction. • Teacher engages students in giving specific and high-quality feedback to one another.	• Oral and written feedback is mostly academically focused, frequent, and mostly high quality. • Feedback is sometimes given during guided practice and homework review. • The teacher circulates during instructional activities to support engagement, and monitor student work. • Feedback from students is sometimes used to monitor and adjust instruction.	• The quality and timeliness of feedback is inconsistent. • Feedback is rarely given during guided practice and homework review. • The teacher circulates during instructional activities, but monitors mostly behavior. • Feedback from students is rarely used to monitor or adjust instruction.
Grouping Students	• The instructional grouping arrangements (either whole class, small groups, pairs, individual; heterogeneous or homogenous ability) consistently maximize student understanding and learning efficiency. • All students in groups know their roles, responsibilities, and group work expectations. • All students participating in groups are held accountable for group work and individual work. • Instructional group composition is varied (e.g., race, gender, ability, and age) to best accomplish the goals of the lesson. • Instructional groups facilitate opportunities for students to set goals, reflect on, and evaluate their learning.	• The instructional grouping arrangements (either whole class, small groups, pairs, individual; heterogeneous or homogenous ability) adequately enhance student understanding and learning efficiency. • Most students in groups know their roles, responsibilities, and group work expectations. • Most students participating in groups are held accountable for group work and individual work. • Instructional group composition is varied (e.g., race, gender, ability, and age) to most of the time, accomplish the goals of the lesson.	• The instructional grouping arrangements (either whole class, small groups, pairs, individual; heterogeneous or homogenous ability) inhibit student understanding and learning efficiency. • Few students in groups know their roles, responsibilities, and group work expectations. • Few students participating in groups are held accountable for group work and individual work. • Instructional group composition remains unchanged irrespective of the learning and instructional goals of a lesson.
Teacher Content Knowledge	• Teacher displays extensive content knowledge of all the subjects she or he teaches. • Teacher regularly implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge. • The teacher regularly highlights key concepts and ideas and uses them as bases to connect other powerful ideas. • Limited content is taught in sufficient depth to allow for the development of understanding.	• Teacher displays accurate content knowledge of all the subjects he or she teaches. • Teacher sometimes implements subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge. • The teacher sometimes highlights key concepts and ideas and uses them as bases to connect other powerful ideas.	• Teacher displays under-developed content knowledge in several subject areas. • Teacher rarely implements subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge. • Teacher does not understand key concepts and ideas in the discipline and therefore presents content in an unconnected way.
Teacher Knowledge of Students	• Teacher practices display understanding of each student's anticipated learning difficulties. • Teacher practices regularly incorporate student interests and cultural heritage. • Teacher regularly provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure children have the opportunity to master what is being taught.	• Teacher practices display understanding of some student anticipated learning difficulties. • Teacher practices sometimes incorporate student interests and cultural heritage. • Teacher sometimes provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure children have the opportunity to master what is being taught.	• Teacher practices demonstrate minimal knowledge of students anticipated learning difficulties. • Teacher practices rarely incorporate student interests or cultural heritage. • Teacher practices demonstrate little differentiation of instructional methods or content.

(Tennessee Department of Education, 2012b)

Educator Rubric

	Significantly Above Expectations (5)	At Expectations (3)	Significantly Below Expectations (1)
Thinking	The teacher thoroughly teaches two or more types of thinking: • analytical thinking, where students analyze, compare and contrast, and evaluate and explain information; • practical thinking, where students use, apply, and implement what they learn in real-life scenarios; • creative thinking, where students create, design, imagine, and suppose; and • research-based thinking, where students explore and review a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems. The teacher provides opportunities where students: • generate a variety of ideas and alternatives; • analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints; and • monitor their thinking to insure that they understand what they are learning, are attending to critical information, and are aware of the learning strategies that they are using and why.	The teacher thoroughly teaches one type of thinking: • analytical thinking, where students analyze, compare and contrast, and evaluate and explain information; • practical thinking, where students use, apply, and implement what they learn in real-life scenarios; • creative thinking, where students create, design, imagine, and suppose; and • research-based thinking, where students explore and review a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems. The teacher provides opportunities where students: • generate a variety of ideas and alternatives; and • analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints.	The teacher implements no learning experiences that thoroughly teach any type of thinking. The teacher provides no opportunities where students: • generate a variety of ideas and alternatives; or • analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints.
Problem Solving	The teacher implements activities that teach and reinforce three or more of the following problem-solving types: • Abstraction • Categorization • Drawing Conclusions/Justifying Solutions • Predicting Outcomes • Observing and Experimenting • Improving Solutions • Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information • Generating Ideas • Creating and Designing	The teacher implements activities that teach two of the following problem-solving types: • Abstraction • Categorization • Drawing Conclusions/Justifying Solution • Predicting Outcomes • Observing and Experimenting • Improving Solutions • Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information • Generating Ideas • Creating and Designing	The teacher implements no activities that teach the following problem-solving types: • Abstraction • Categorization • Drawing Conclusions/Justifying Solution • Predicting Outcomes • Observing and Experimenting • Improving Solutions • Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information • Generating Ideas • Creating and Designing

(Tennessee Department of Education, 2012b)

Educator Rubric

Planning

	Significantly Above Expectations (5)	At Expectations (3)	Significantly Below Expectations (1)

Instructional Plans ☐	Instructional plans include:
	• measurable and explicit goals aligned to state content standards;
	• activities, materials, and assessments that:
	  ○ are aligned to state standards.
	  ○ are sequenced from basic to complex.
	  ○ build on prior student knowledge, are relevant to students' lives, and integrate other disciplines.
	  ○ provide appropriate time for student work, student reflection, and lesson and unit closure;
	• evidence that plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, and interests of all learners; and
	• evidence that the plan provides regular opportunities to accommodate individual student needs.
		Instructional plans include:
		• goals aligned to state content standards;
		• activities, materials, and assessments that:
		  ○ are aligned to state standards.
		  ○ are sequenced from basic to complex.
		  ○ build on prior student knowledge.
		  ○ provide appropriate time for student work, and lesson and unit closure;
		• evidence that plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, and interests of most learners; and
		• evidence that the plan provides some opportunities to accommodate individual student needs.
			Instructional plans include:
			• few goals aligned to state content standards;
			• activities, materials, and assessments that:
			  ○ are rarely aligned to state standards.
			  ○ are rarely logically sequenced.
			  ○ rarely build on prior student knowledge
			  ○ inconsistently provide time for student work, and lesson and unit closure;
			• little evidence that the plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, or interests of the learners; and
			• little evidence that the plan provides some opportunities to accommodate individual student needs.

Student Work ☐	Assignments require students to: • organize, interpret, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information rather than reproduce it; • draw conclusions, make generalizations, and produce arguments that are supported through extended writing; and • connect what they are learning to experiences, observations, feelings, or situations significant in their daily lives both inside and outside of school. •	Assignments require students to: • interpret information rather than reproduce it; • draw conclusions and support them through writing; and • connect what they are learning to prior learning and some life experiences.	Assignments require students to: • mostly reproduce information; • rarely draw conclusions and support them through writing; and • rarely connect what they are learning to prior learning or life experiences.
Assessment ☐	Assessment Plans: • are aligned with state content standards; • have clear measurement criteria; • measure student performance in more than three ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple choice test; • require extended written tasks; • are portfolio-based with clear illustrations of student progress toward state content standards; and • include descriptions of how assessment results will be used to inform future instruction.	Assessment Plans: • are aligned with state content standards; • have measurement criteria; • measure student performance in more than two ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple choice test); • require written tasks; and • include performance checks throughout the school year.	Assessment Plans: • are rarely aligned with state content standards; • have ambiguous measurement criteria; • measure student performance in less than two ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple choice test); and • include performance checks, although the purpose of these checks is not clear.

(Tennessee Department of Education, 2012b)

Educator Rubric

Environment

	Significantly Above Expectations (5)	At Expectations (3)	Significantly Below Expectations (1)
Expectations ☐	• Teacher sets high and demanding academic expectations for every student. • Teacher encourages students to learn from mistakes. • Teacher creates learning opportunities where all students can experience success. • Students take initiative and follow through with their own work. • Teacher optimizes instructional time, teaches more material, and demands better performance from every student.	• Teacher sets high and demanding academic expectations for every student. • Teacher encourages students to learn from mistakes. • Teacher creates learning opportunities where most students can experience success. • Students complete their work according to teacher expectations.	• Teacher expectations are not sufficiently high for every student. • Teacher creates an environment where mistakes and failure are not viewed as learning experiences. • Students demonstrate little or no pride in the quality of their work.
Managing Student Behavior ☐	• Students are consistently well-behaved and on task. • Teacher and students establish clear rules for learning and behavior. • The teacher uses several techniques, such as social approval, contingent activities, and consequences, to maintain appropriate student behavior. • The teacher overlooks inconsequential behavior. • The teacher deals with students who have caused disruptions rather than the entire class. • The teacher attends to disruptions quickly and firmly.	• Students are mostly well-behaved and on task, some minor learning disruptions may occur. • Teacher establishes rules for learning and behavior. • The teacher uses some techniques, such as social approval, contingent activities, and consequences, to maintain appropriate student behavior. • The teacher overlooks some inconsequential behavior, but other times addresses it, stopping the lesson. • The teacher deals with students who have caused disruptions, yet sometimes he or she addresses the entire class.	• Students are not well-behaved and are often off task. • Teacher establishes few rules for learning and behavior. • The teacher uses few techniques to maintain appropriate student behavior. • The teacher cannot distinguish between inconsequential behavior and inappropriate behavior. • Disruptions frequently interrupt instruction.
Environment ☐	The classroom: • welcomes all members and guests. • is organized and understandable to all students. • supplies, equipment, and resources are easily and readily accessible. • displays student work that frequently changes. • is arranged to promote individual and group learning.	The classroom: • welcomes most members and guests. • is organized and understandable to most students. • supplies, equipment, and resources are accessible. • displays student work. • is arranged to promote individual and group learning. •	The classroom: • is somewhat cold and uninviting. • is not well organized and understandable to students. • supplies, equipment, and resources are difficult to access. • does not display student work. • is not arranged to promote group learning.
Respectful Culture ☐	• Teacher-student interactions demonstrate caring and respect for one another. • Students exhibit caring and respect for one another. • Teacher seeks out and is receptive to the interests and opinions of all students. • Positive relationships and interdependence characterize the classroom.	• Teacher-student interactions are generally friendly, but may reflect occasional inconsistencies, favoritism, or disregard for students' cultures. • Students exhibit respect for the teacher, and are generally polite to each other. • Teacher is sometimes receptive to the interests and opinions of students.	• Teacher-student interactions are sometimes authoritarian, negative, or inappropriate. • Students exhibit disrespect for the teacher. • Student interaction is characterized by conflict, sarcasm, or put-downs. • Teacher is not receptive to interests and opinions of students.

(Tennessee Department of Education, 2012b)

Professionalism Rubric

Indicator	5	3	1
1. Professional Growth and Learning	• Uses feedback from observations and self-assessment to significantly improve performance in identified areas of need. • Is consistently prepared and highly engaged in professional learning opportunities. • Engages in evaluation process with eagerness by seeking out feedback from both supervisors and colleagues. • Consistently self-reflects on evidence of instruction, accurately matching evidence to the rubric in both areas of strength and areas of growth.	• Uses feedback from observations, self-assessment, and to implement and reflect on personal improvement strategies. • Is prepared and engaged in appropriate professional learning opportunities. • Engages in evaluation process with evidence of focus on improving practice and openness to feedback. • Self-reflections on evidence of instruction largely match the expectations of the rubric.	• Inconsistently uses feedback from observations to improve. Demonstrates little evidence of growth on targeted indicators. • Is unprepared or disengaged in professional learning opportunities provided. • Engages in evaluation process without evidence of focus on continuous improvement of practice. • Self-reflections do not match the expectations of the rubric or assessment of the evaluator.
2. Use of Data	• Systematically and consistently utilizes formative and summative school and individual student achievement data to: ○ Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of all his/her students. ○ Plan, implement and assess instructional strategies to increase student achievement and decrease achievement gaps between subgroups of students. ○ Plan future instructional units based on the analysis	• Utilizes student achievement data to address strengths and weaknesses of students and guide instructional decisions to increase student achievement. • Analyzes student work to guide planning of instructional units.	• Rarely utilizes student achievement data to address strengths and weaknesses of students and guide instructional decisions related to student achievement.

(Tennessee Department of Education, 2012b)

	of his/her students' work. ○ Reflect on use of instructional strategies that led or impeded student learning.		
3. School and Community Involvement	• Regularly organizes and leads school activities and events that positively impact school results and culture. • Always adheres to school and district personnel policies and serves as a leader and model for others. • Regularly works with peers to contribute to a safe and orderly learning environment and actively facilitates improvement in school-wide culture.	• Regularly supports and contributes to school activities and events. • Regularly adheres to school and district personnel policies. • Regularly works with peers to contribute to a safe and orderly learning environment.	• Rarely supports school activities and events. • Inconsistently adheres to school and district personnel policies. • Rarely works with peers to contribute to a safe and orderly learning environment.
4. Leadership	• Actively and consistently contributes to the school community by assisting and/or mentoring others, including successful engagement in three or more of the following: ○ Collaborative planning with subject and/or grade level teams ○ Actively leading in a Professional Learning Community ○ Coaching/mentoring ○ Supervising clinical experiences ○ Leading data driven professional learning opportunities	• Contributes to the school community by assisting others, including at least two of the following: ○ Collaborative planning with subject and/or grade level teams ○ Actively participating in a Professional Learning Community ○ Coaching/mentoring ○ Supervising clinical experiences	• Inconsistently contributes to the school community by assisting and/or mentoring others.

(Tennessee Department of Education, 2012b)

Appendix B

TEAM Score Calculations

Score Calculations

The three evaluation components are used to compute an overall teacher effectiveness rating as shown below.

Overall Score Calculation

Overall Observation Score*:	____	x	50	=	_____
Growth Score:	____	x	35	=	_____
Achievement Measure Score:	____	x	15	=	_____
Total Score			100%	Sum Lines 1-3	_____

*Scores on the Professionalism Domain are included in the Overall Observation Score. This overall score is rounded to the hundredths place.

The total score is then converted to an overall effectiveness rating using the following table.

Score Range	Overall Effectiveness Rating
<200	1
200-274.99	2
275-349.99	3
350-424.99	4
425-500	5

(Tennessee First to the Top website, n.d.)

Appendix C

TEAM Projected Range of Score Distributions

Statistical modeling using historical TVAAS data and historical data from implementation of comparable observation rubrics suggests that TEAM is likely to produce a full range of ratings:

Projected Range of Distribution

Score/ Rating	Predicted Distribution
1	3-5%
2	15-25%
3	40-50%
4	15-25%
5	5-10%

As this breakdown illustrates, we anticipate teacher performance in year one will yield observation scores and overall effectiveness ratings that span the complete spectrum of scores. These predicted distributions are based on the best available information, but actual year-one scores for each of the components may be different from the data used in the projections - and should be different depending on the student achievement and growth in different schools and districts. As a result, while these projections provide a good estimate of the distribution of scores that TEAM could produce, actual distributions during the first year of implementation may vary.

(Tennessee First to the Top website, n.d.)

Appendix D

IRB Approval

East Tennessee State University
Office for the Protection of Human Research Subjects • Box 70565 • Johnson City, Tennessee 37614-1707
Phone: (423) 439-6053 Fax: (423) 439-6060

IRB APPROVAL – Initial Exempt

October 12, 2012

Ms. Carmen Bryant

RE: Perceptions of Tennessee School Principals About the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM)
IRB#: c1012.4e
ORSPA#: ,

On **October 12, 2012**, an exempt approval was granted in accordance with 45 CFR 46. 101(b)(). It is understood this project will be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Policies. No continuing review is required. The exempt approval will be reported to the convened board on the next agenda.

- ☐ Form 103; Narrative (dated 9/10/12); Email to Participants; Survey Questions; Assurance Statement; CV; Potential Conflict of Interest

Projects involving Mountain States Health Alliance must also be approved by MSHA following IRB approval prior to initiating the study.

Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks to Subjects or Others must be reported to the IRB (and VA R&D if applicable) within 10 working days.

Proposed changes in approved research cannot be initiated without IRB review and approval. The only exception to this rule is that a change can be made prior to IRB approval when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the research subjects [21 CFR 56.108 (a)(4)]. In such a case, the IRB must be promptly informed of the change following its implementation (within 10 working days) on Form 109 (www.etsu.edu/irb). The IRB will review the change to determine that it is consistent with ensuring the subject's continued welfare.

Sincerely,
Chris Ayres, Chair

Accredited Since December 2005

Appendix E

Letter of Permission

Dear Fellow Educator:

As a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership at East Tennessee State University, I am requesting to conduct research through an online survey with principals in your district who used the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) for teacher evaluation in 2011-2012. The purpose of this quantitative study is to analyze the perceptions of principals in 21 public school districts in east Tennessee about the implementation of TEAM and the impact of TEAM on teachers' instructional practice and professional growth. Detailed information related to the research is listed at the bottom of this email. This research has been approved by the ETSU Institutional Review Board.

With your permission, principals will receive an email link to an online survey consisting of three demographic questions, 26 statements that ask the respondents to indicate their degree of agreement on a 4-point Likert scale, and three open ended response questions. Participation is strictly voluntary and all results are completely anonymous. The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. A link for you to review the survey questions is at:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/reviewofTEAMsurveyquestions

I ask that you or your designee reply to this email by Thursday, November 1, with the following information:

- Director/Superintendent permission for principals in the district to voluntarily participate in the research.
- The preferred method of survey distribution to principals:
    1. You request that I, the researcher, email all information on the voluntary survey to principals, or
    2. You or your designee will forward this email directly to your principals.
        - Principals should use the link: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TEAMdissertation
        - Password: TEAMTN

Respectfully,

Carmen Belcher Bryant,
ELPA Doctoral Candidate
East Tennessee State University

Appendix F

Survey

Perceptions of Tennessee School Principals About the Tennessee Educator

Dear Principal:

You are invited to participate in a research study I am conducting to analyze the perceptions of Tennessee principals about the implementation of TEAM and the impact of TEAM on teachers' instructional practice and professional growth. My hope is that, by participating in this research, you will have the opportunity to candidly share and reflect on your experiences with TEAM in 2011-2012.

Taking approximately ten minutes, your participation involves completing a structured online survey from Survey Monkey consisting of three demographic questions, 26 Likert-scale questions, and three open ended response questions. This study has no foreseen risk involved. You may choose not to answer any question at any time, and you may stop at any time or chose not to submit the survey without penalty. You may refuse to participate. Your participation in this study will be completely anonymous with no way for me or Survey Monkey to connect you with your responses. Survey responses will be analyzed in aggregate, or group form, which also ensures that all information provided remains confidential. Survey data will be stored on a secure computer file to which only I have access.

All aspects of your participation in this study are voluntary and confidential. If you have any research-related problems or questions about the research, you may contact me at carmenraebryant@comcast.net. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the researcher, you may call the ETSU Institutional Review Board at 423-439-6002.

Please complete the survey no later than Friday, November 30. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Carmen Belcher Bryant
Doctoral Candidate
Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University
Johnson City, Tennessee
carmenraebryant@comcast.net

Perceptions of Tennessee School Principals About the Tennessee Educator

ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANT ASSURANCE

To continue with this survey as an eligible participant, these questions require an answer of "YES." If you cannot answer "YES" to both of these questions, please do not continue with this survey. Thank you.

***In 2011-2012:**

	Response
I was a building principal	
I evaluated teachers using Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM)	

Perceptions of Tennessee School Principals About the Tennessee Educator

DEMOGRAPHICS

Including 2011-2012, your total years of experience as a building level principal at any school:

- Less than 7 years as a principal
- 7-14 years as a principal
- More than 14 years as a principal

In 2011-2012, the enrollment of your school was:

- Less than 600 students
- 600-1200 students
- More than 1200 students

In 2011-2012, the free and reduced lunch population of your school was:

- Less than 40%
- 40% or more

Perceptions of Tennessee School Principals About the Tennessee Educator

TEAM BELIEF STATEMENTS

I believe:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I provide adequate support to teachers in the implementation of TEAM.				
TEAM impacts the manner in which I view classroom instruction.				
TEAM provides alignment between expectations for teachers, professional learning practices, and student achievement goals.				
The area of refinement identified through evaluation with TEAM is supported through professional learning.				
The components of the planning rubric support professional growth for teachers.				
The components of the environment rubric support professional growth for teachers.				
TEAM positively impacts instruction in my school.				
The TEAM rubrics communicate to teachers clearer expectations for classroom instruction.				
The components of the instruction rubric support professional growth for teachers.				
The components of the professionalism rubric support professional growth for teachers.				
The preconference (when applicable) supports professional growth for teachers.				
The post conference supports professional growth for teachers.				
I have the knowledge and expertise as an instructional leader to provide teachers with high quality post conferences.				
The area of refinement is valuable for the teacher's professional growth.				
The area of reinforcement is valuable for the teacher's professional growth.				

Perceptions of Tennessee School Principals About the Tennessee Educator

I believe:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The information and training needed to successfully implement TEAM is provided to me.				
I have a thorough understanding of the purpose of TEAM.				
I have a thorough understanding of the instruments and processes of TEAM.				
Announced observations are challenging to schedule due to day to day operations of the school.				
The unannounced observations allow more flexibility in my schedule in order to maintain the day to day operations of the school.				
The post conference and/or preconference are difficult to schedule around day to day operations of the school.				
Scheduling multiple preconferences, observations, and post conferences in the 180 day school year limits my ability to maintain the day to day operations of the school.				
It is possible to meet the requirements of TEAM and meet the needs of the teachers.				
It is possible to meet the requirements of TEAM and meet the needs of the students.				
It is possible to meet the requirements of TEAM and meet the needs of the community.				
I have ample time to complete the TEAM process.				

Perceptions of Tennessee School Principals About the Tennessee Educator

OPEN ENDED RESPONSE

In your opinion, what is the value of TEAM for the principal as a professional?

In your opinion, what is the value of TEAM for the teacher as a professional?

For you as the building principal, what are the obstacles created by TEAM?

VITA

CARMEN BELCHER BRYANT

Education:

Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership, 2013
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN

Master of Education, 1998
Milligan College, Milligan, TN

Bachelor of Science, Biology, 1996
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN

Professional Experience:

Director of Secondary Education, 2011-present
Kingsport City Schools, TN

High School Principal, 2009-2011
Washington County Schools, TN

High School Assistant Principal, 2003-2009
Washington County Schools, TN

High School Chemistry Teacher, 1998-2003
Washington County Schools, TN

Middle School Math and Science Teacher, 1997-1998
Washington County Schools, TN

Memberships:

ASCD
National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics
Learning Forward Tennessee

Honors and Awards:

Delta Kappa Gamma Society International
Who's Who among America's Teachers, 8th and 9th editions
Milligan College Intern of the Year, 1997-1998