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An Analysis of How Student Transience is Related to Achievement Test Scores
in a Northeast Tennessee Elementary School

A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

by

Dixie Chapman Bowen

May 2005

Dr. Terrence Tollefson, Chair

Dr. Edward Dwyer

Dr. Louise MacKay

Dr. Jasmine Renner

Keywords: Academic achievement, mobility, transience, transfer students

ABSTRACT

An Analysis of How Student Transience is Related to Achievement Test Scores in a Northeast Tennessee Elementary School

by

Dixie Chapman Bowen

Few data exist that specifically examine the relationship between student transiency and achievement test scores. No concrete data exist on any of the Bristol, Tennessee, City Schools that specifically examine the relationship between student transience and achievement test scores. Few studies use quantitative measures to investigate the relationship of transiency on achievement. This study is significant because the researcher used data collected through quantitative methods to examine the impact of transience on one school.

This dissertation addressed the question, “How is achievement related to transiency?” Additional questions included: “How do nontransient first through sixth graders perform on the *Terra Nova* Achievement Test?” and “How do transient first through sixth graders students perform on the same test?”

Conducted by a district employee in the participating school district, this study was quantitative and interpretive. The data included test results for three years: 2001, 2002, and 2003. With very few exceptions, the overall scores of nontransient students in this study were higher than that of transient students. The mean between transient and nontransient students was not enough to be statistically significant.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my husband, John Wesley Bowen. During this process, *sometimes* he would ask if he could do something to help. *A couple of times* he quizzed me for upcoming tests, learning vocabulary terms and jargon that I feel sure he knew he would never use. *Sometimes* he would deliver snacks to me as I poured over data from printed journals and from the computer screen that became quite interesting to both of us. *For a brief period of time*, he was still building our home. *Lots of times*, even after working all day on his regular job and then checking on the progress of our new house, he prepared meals for us and took care of other home responsibilities. *All of the time* he was my rock, my wonderful husband, my best friend.

Wes, you are my light, my inspiration, my world.

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For their assistance in the completion of this study, I thank my committee. I am indebted to the very first two ETSU professors I met (in 1996 in my first master's-level course), the extraordinary Dr. Louise MacKay and Dr. Terry Tollefson. Dr. MacKay, I appreciate your genuine concern for graduate students as individuals. You have such a gift for making others feel valued. Thank you for your knowing advice. May YOUR successes be many; you deserve many accolades.

Dr. Ed Dwyer, thank you for serving on my committee and for being the reading expert that you are. I aspire to capture the attention of students the way you do. Your style and passion for teaching children to read is commendable. Your input into my dissertation is greatly appreciated.

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I am, without a doubt, the most fortunate sister in the world. Penny Jenkins and Melinda McGlothlin were willing proofreaders, listeners, and assistants in this project. The nightly (or to possibly coin a new term, multi-nightly) telephone conversations served as encouragement in more ways than they could possibly know. You mean the world to me, girls!

Lastly, but most definitely of the utmost importance, I thank my parents. Many times during this course of study, I feel sure classmates thought, "Wow, Dixie really knows how she feels about . . ." I feel deeply because I have been loved so deeply. The strong sense of values that I possess comes from the standards and beliefs that I grew up knowing. "You've got to stand for something (or you'll fall for anything.)" describes the lives of Thurman and Rhoda Chapman. They are my parents, my support system, (sometimes my conscience), and my friends. Mom and Dad, thank you. I owe you so much more than I will ever be able to express. I am so very blessed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Each school day, approximately 3,552 students in grades kindergarten through 12 step out of cars, vans, school buses, pick-up trucks, and sometimes even taxicabs and motor homes to attend school in Bristol, Tennessee. Children come from a variety of backgrounds throughout Bristol and this is reflected in the population at Anderson Elementary School. How many of these students have stepped out of vehicles in front of another school, two schools, or even three schools? To some, Anderson is the only elementary school they have known; but to others, it is only one of many stops on their journey to find (or escape) whatever it is their family is seeking.

During the current school year, as of January 2005, 160 students have either entered or withdrawn from Anderson Elementary School. What effect has this transient activity had on their achievement? What skills did Cody learn while he was at Anderson? Did Michael, who arrived in October, learn as much as the first-grade students who attended Anderson all year did? Are Anderson's transient students' scale scores on the Tennessee State standardized achievement test, *TerraNova*, lower than their less mobile peers' scores?

Statement of the Problem

Transient students are a widespread challenge. A U.S. General Accounting Office (1994) study indicated that one out of every six third graders had attended three or more schools since entering the first grade. A study of Chicago students revealed that fewer than half who entered school in first grade attended the same school in fourth grade. One author likened classrooms to bus terminals (Hall, 2001). If enrollment in a classroom varies from day to day, do standardized tests accurately measure what has been taught and what the students have learned? Some children do not know whether they are "coming or going." They cannot recall the number of

schools they have attended nor can they give the name of the most recent school in which they were enrolled.

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent of any associations between student transiency and achievement test scores in a specific Northeast Tennessee school, Anderson Elementary School. Using the past three years of test data (using the Test Mate and Test Clarity systems) and the district's education information system (Mac School), I analyzed and studied the data to determine the relationship between transiency and achievement test scores.

Research Questions

1. To what extent is transiency associated with reading achievement test scores in a selected Northeast Tennessee school district?
2. Is transiency closely associated with reading achievement test scores in some grades more so than others? If so, which ones?
3. To what extent are there sex-by-status interactions?

Null Hypotheses

There are no significant differences in the mean normal curve equivalency reading performance scores on the *TerraNova* exam for any of the assigned years (2001, 2002, and 2003) for transient versus nontransient students of any grade level (one through six) in the test area titled "Reading Composite" at Anderson Elementary School. Three null hypotheses were developed and tested:

H₀₁: There is no difference between the transient and nontransient students in their reading scores.

H₀₂: There is no difference in reading achievement test scores associated with transiency in grade levels one through six.

H₀₃: There is no sex-by-status interaction.

Background to the Study

In 1999, 61% of the student population was transient in one particular Bristol, Tennessee, City School--Anderson Elementary. That same year, a study sponsored by the U. S. Justice Department (Berry, 2002) was initiated by Emory and Henry College personnel to determine the demographics of the Anderson community.

The Anderson community has the highest crime rate in Bristol (Berry, 2002). The U. S. Justice Department's study, as reported by Berry, consisted of oral and written interviews with the residents and gave insight into why people move and why people stay. Poor housing, fear of gangs and violence, and low incomes were found to be the major factors attributed to moving to a different community. Residents of the Anderson community identified community needs as including an organized community watch program, after school activities, summer youth programs, a community center, organized community clean-up, adult education programs, organized community gatherings, increased recreational activities, a renter/home owners' association, and a community policing station (Berry).

Many students enroll in a Bristol school every year having already attended three schools during the same year. Some have attended as many as four schools in one year. This study was prompted by the concern that many of these students might not have attained all of the skills that they need to be successful learners.

Significance of the Study

Student transiency--students moving from one school to another for reasons other than being promoted to the next grade level--is widespread in the United States. Rumberger's (2002) study indicated that lower achievement was related to transiency. Overall, mobility is associated with a broad range of issues including students' learning, classroom management, classroom instruction, and school organization. Using the findings of the current study, educators might be able to develop strategies to aid in lessening the effects of mobility on learning.

Definitions of Terms

Academic achievement – the skills a student possesses, often measured by standardized test scores, grade level retention, and high school completion;

Mobility – students moving from one school to another for reasons other than being promoted to the next school level;

Transfer students – a student who moves from one school to another during the course of an academic school year; and

Transience – remaining in one place for only a short period (R. McInturf, personal communication, June 4, 2005).

Delimitations

1. This study is limited to Anderson Elementary School's test scores from the past three years: 2001, 2002, 2003.
2. The number of times a student was entered and withdrawn from Anderson Elementary School has not been ascertained.
3. No attempt has been made to determine if transient students were moving in and out of Bristol, Tennessee (instructional programs vary greatly from district to district).

Overview of the Study

Chapter 1 included the introduction, statement of the problem, research questions, null hypotheses, background, significance of the study, definitions of terms, and delimitations of the study. Chapter 2 includes a review of literature dealing with problems related to students' mobility. These problems include the association between transiency and students' achievement test scores. Chapter 3 contains the description of the research. Chapter 4 is the findings and analysis section of the project. Methodology of content analysis and the findings of Rounds 1, 2, and 3 are included in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 contains interpretations and conclusions and includes a review of the study, research questions, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This review of the literature focuses on four major areas: (a) history of student mobility; (b) relationships between student transience and academic achievement; (c) associations between student transiency and schools (teachers, classmates, and administrators); and (d) strategies to aid in student transition.

History

According to Thomas (2001),

The problem of student transiency is not unique to any school or area nor is it a new phenomenon. People across the United States are on the move and have been since the time people left Europe to come to the New World. (p. 13)

As did the pioneers, people still move in search of a better life.

As noted by Staresina (2003), the 2000 U. S. Census reported that 17% of school-aged children had moved in the previous year. Schools with high rates of student mobility generally have been found to possess one or more of the following characteristics: a large population of children whose parents are migrant workers, a large population of children who are homeless, and a large population of children living in low-income families (Staresina). Many urban school districts have high rates of mobility. Additionally, according to Fagan (2002):

Mobility also tends to be high in rural communities where the seasons often dictate the flow of families, especially in areas that experience severe winter weather. It is not uncommon for rural schools in high poverty areas to enroll students for only a few months, knowing that this will be the only public education they will experience during the school year. (p. 33)

According to Buell (2002), approximately 25% of American children have changed schools three or more times during their time as public school students. Hartman, president of the Poverty and Race Research Action Council, stated that “One out of every six children in the

United States has attended three or more schools, often changing schools more than once during the school year” (Hartman & Leff, 2002, p. 1). A General Accounting Office study (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1994) noted that about one out of every six third graders (17%) had attended three or more schools since entering the first grade. A study of students in Chicago revealed that fewer than half who entered school in first grade attended the same school in grade four (Hall, 2001).

Academic Achievement

Although moving once or twice during the public school years may not be harmful, most research has shown that high mobility was associated with students’ achievement, particularly when the students were from low-income, less-educated families. Hayes (1999) pointed out, “High rates of mobility can negatively affect students’ achievement and significantly increase their likelihood of dropping out” (p. 1). Some transient students become as much as a year behind their peers in academic achievement (Kerbow, 1996).

Hayes (1999) contended (even though few studies conclusively supported that a high rate of transience affected schools' test scores) that mobility did complicate the internal monitoring of schools' performance. She reported that schools across the country were finding that by providing immediate assessment, educating parents about the negative effects of mobility, and establishing community programs they could combat some of the difficulties associated with the mobility of students.

Mobility can result in gaps in the necessary skills needed to work well in the classroom. There are a number of research studies linking mobility to lower achievement. Evans, 1996, Mehana and Reynolds, 1995, and Kerbow, 1996 have studied this issue extensively as it pertains to the Chicago area. Research has been completed concerning mobility in Texas (Ligon & Paredes, 1992; Mao, 1997; Paredes, 1993). Bolinger and Gilman (1997) conducted a study on

mobility in Terra Haute, Indiana. Each of these studies linked higher mobility rates to lower rates of achievement.

Hayes (1999) pointed out that transient students often have felt isolated and unconnected. Transiency becomes a vicious cycle and students resolve themselves to a laissez-faire attitude. Often, they are unprepared for class lessons, they miss out on opportunities to bond with teachers and fellow students, and they engage in disruptive or passive behaviors to compensate (Hayes).

Mobility takes a toll on students. Frequently, highly mobile students test below their grade level in reading and math. Oftentimes, when a child arrives at a school, he or she is behind because his or her last school's curriculum was different. Along with the gaps that are caused by differing curricula, transient students often do not get the extra help they need. By the time needs are identified and supports such as Title I and Special Education are put into place, the student moves (Hall, 2001).

Staresina (2003) suggested that the potential impact of mobility on students' education was significant. Students may experience a range of problems such as lower achievement levels because of discontinuity of curriculum, behavioral problems, difficulty developing friendships, and a greater risk of dropping out of school.

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind Act*. This new law represents an education reform plan that contains the most sweeping changes to the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* since it was enacted in 1965. It changed the federal government's role in kindergarten through grade 12 education by requiring America's schools to describe their success in terms of what each student accomplishes. The Act contains the President's four basic education reform principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work. *No Child Left Behind* forces schools and school systems to track and evaluate the progress of individual students and groups of students. Each state, school district, and school will be expected to make adequate yearly progress toward meeting standards.

This progress will be measured for all students by sorting test results for students who are economically disadvantaged, are from racial or ethnic minority groups, have disabilities, or limited English proficiency.

Schools' and districts' performances will continue to be publicly reported in district and state report cards. Individual schools' results are reported on the district's report card. School administrators, teachers, students, and parents should keep abreast of the progress that is being made (Tennessee Department of Education, 2002).

Effects of Mobility on Schools

Schools also suffer the consequences of students' transiency. Student transiency puts enormous stress on schools. It is not unusual for teachers to spend extra time with transfer students to help them catch up often at the expense of the other students in the class. In addition, the time and effort spent developing special services for certain groups of students, such as those who lack a proficiency in English, may suddenly be for naught when those students who required the assistance leave the school (Hayes, 1999). Buell (2002) stated:

High mobility can slow curriculum and place a strain on teachers and financial resources. Teachers spend more time with new students to orient them, and materials are reviewed repeatedly for new students leading to fewer topics covered over the course of a school year. (n. p.)

During the academic year, a teacher may only have been able to teach the full curriculum to three out of every five students. Not surprisingly, schools with high turnover rates for students also have high turnover rates for teachers (Hall, 2001). Teachers must review records, evaluate, and reteach students who may not be on the same level as students who have been in the classroom from the first day of school. Overall, mobility results in a broad range of issues including students' learning, classroom management, classroom instruction, and school organization (Thomas, 2001).

The process of reporting trends in test scores is imperfect at best. The lack of longitudinally merged statistical databases is a fundamental obstacle to progress in this quest.

However, educators rely all too willingly on traditional cross-sectional views of trends (for example: academic progression of fourth and fifth graders for consecutive years). This only makes matters worse. Announcing results of things that do not matter to the public makes confusion a predictable outcome. Certainly, matched-score results would be an improvement especially in districts where student transiency is high. Districts in California that are using matched-score analyses in their testing and assessment departments are not bringing this more revealing view of results into their annual accountability reports. Why not? The data definitions do not require them to do so. For districts like Fresno, where student transiency rates in many schools exceed 50%, reporting year-to-year progress in test results is a meaningless ritual (Rees, 2004).

Raising the Stakes on Attendance

Georgia is an example of a state other than Tennessee where attendance is being considered by their Department of Education. Schools there are held accountable for more than just raising students' achievement. As in Tennessee, Georgia's school personnel are expected to make sure students get to class. Under a recently adopted policy by the state's Education Coordinating Council, schools received an "exemplary" score on their school's report card if 5% or fewer of their students were absent more than 15 days during the academic year. "Acceptable" marks went to schools where the percentage of students absent 15 or more days fell between 5% and 15%. Finally, if the percentage of students missing school was higher than that, schools received an "unacceptable" score (Jacobson, 2002).

"There are some schools that are going to have to work on this," said Garrett, the executive director of the Georgia School Superintendents' Association (Jacobson, 2002). In fact, statistics presented at a meeting of the coordinating council showed that 10% of the state's students had missed more than 20 days of instruction during the 2000-2001 school year. Under the new criteria, about 700 of the state's 1,944 schools could receive an unacceptable rating. The

new rules were written by the state's Office of Education Accountability, the agency charged with implementing democratic Governor Ray E. Barnes' school accountability plan (Jacobson).

The Georgia Education Coordinating Council, created by legislators in 2000, is chaired by the governor and made up by leaders of the state's education agencies--preschool through college. The body is responsible for making sure that the state's policies and programs at the various levels of education are "seamless" and for preventing unnecessary duplication of programs by the state (Jacobson, 2002).

In addition, the council is overseeing the implementation of Georgia's new accountability system. School report cards are already being issued by the agency; however, elementary and middle schools still had until the 2003-2004 school year before their scores triggered rewards or interventions. High schools have until the current school year (2004-2005) to comply. Although the attendance information does not contribute to a school's letter grade, it does indeed appear on the school report card as one of 10 criteria on which schools will be rated. Another criterion is the schools' dropout rate (Jacobson, 2002).

In formulating the new policy, Nelson, the executive director of the accountability office, surveyed the states' 180 district superintendents on what they thought would be fair (Jacobson, 2002). In fact, according to Jacobson, he has asked for input from superintendents since he began working on the accountability system. Jacobson pointed out that Garrett said, "I took the results and came up with the policy." He added, "At least they had the opportunity to be heard" (p. 17). Even so, attendance standards are already causing some confusion at the district level. Brantley, a spokesperson for the Georgia Doctors of Education, said some school officials were asking about whether more than 15 absences would be allowed as long as they were excused. Brantley stated, "I've got schools telling me they have kids who miss 40 days and still pass" (Jacobson, p. 17). However, according to Jacobson, Nelson told the coordinating council that students who miss more than 20 school days are twice as likely as those who do not miss that much time to score below the cutoff scores on state tests.

Though educators will be paying closer attention to their schools' attendance rates in the future, Garrett, of the superintendent's group, said that parents are equally, if not more, accountable for making sure their children are in school. He stated, "This is a place where we need to openly admit that there is a responsibility for what lies elsewhere" (Jacobson, 2002, p. 17).

Foster Care

Researchers at the University of Chicago surveyed 749 17-year olds in foster care in Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin between May 2002 and March 2003 (Blair, 2004). The youths were asked about their educational experiences, mental health, and substance abuse among other questions. The data collected were then compared with national information on individuals the same age who were not part of the foster care system. The study was underwritten by the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, the Iowa Department of Human Services, and the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (Blair). No studies of this magnitude have been done on the topic for a decade, thus, the results are especially important to understand the effect of foster care on a new generation of young people. Researchers will continue to follow the youths until they reach the age of 21.

In this study (Blair, 2004) cited several reasons why many youths in foster care did not do well in school. Not only were their homes unstable but their academic experiences were also interrupted. The study indicated, for example, that more than one third of those surveyed had switched schools five times or more during their time in foster care, thus, significantly upsetting their academic programs. Many of them also missed school because they had been in trouble with the law. Nearly two thirds of the boys and half of the girls had been arrested, convicted of a crime, or had spent time in a correctional facility. Others had several behavioral problems and two thirds were suspended. Moreover, many boys and girls in foster care did not have a realistic view of what it takes to succeed in school. A majority of those polled both hoped and expected

to graduate from college despite their poor academic performance in high school (Blair).

Some states are making progress. One persistent problem has been that schools and foster care systems do not communicate with each other about the problems or possible solutions. This is a situation that is changing in California, North Carolina, and the state of Washington (Blair, 2004).

Reading Instruction

Reading instruction is paramount to students' success. Fielding, Kerr, and Rosier (1998) explained in their research that 40% of America's children do not read well and 25% of America's children read so poorly that they enter the fourth grade reading at a first or second grade level. Fielding et al. pointed out:

The silent army of low readers who move through our schools, siphoning off the lion's share of administrative resources, emerge into society as adults still lacking the single prerequisite for managing their lives and acquiring additional training. They are chronically unemployed, underemployed, or unemployable. They form the single largest identifiable group of those whom we incarcerate, and to whom we provide public assistance, housing, medical care, and other social services. They perpetuate and enlarge the problem by creating another generation of poor readers. (p. 6)

In her book concerning the principal's role in reading instruction, Carbo (1997) discussed the relationship of reading to students' success:

Today's well-informed principal understands that the inability to read correlates directly with the tendency of young people to drop out of school. As if the threat of dropouts were not enough, however, principals and their teaching staff face a bewildering array of other trends that pose a direct threat to students' ability to learn to read--for example, an increase in the number of high-mobility students whose frequent moves to new schools interrupt their learning and leave them without basic skills. (p. 1)

Strategies

Some suggestions for interventions in schools with highly mobile students are: emphasis on excellence, small classroom size, personal contact, initiative, and high expectations. The issue of high expectations is especially important because there is evidence that when students

have entered classrooms in mid-year, teachers have tended to judge them unfavorably (Neuman, 1988).

Hayes (1999) reported on one school in Lawrence, Kansas, that has implemented several strategies to benefit mobile students including a “community liaison” who works with transient families to help them acquire the services they need. This individual's responsibilities include co-teaching (a sharing of instructional responsibilities among teachers) and creating “a pervasive attitude among the staff that stresses the importance of making everyone feel welcome” (p. 3). The result has been that parents take more of an interest in their children’s education.

The most general, yet potentially the most effective, strategy to reduce mobility is to improve the overall quality of the school. Case studies have suggested that substantial and meaningful school reforms can dramatically reduce a school’s student mobility rate (Rumberger, 2002). “Staying Put” is an awareness campaign plan designed to decrease mobility and improve student transfer processes throughout school systems. According to Buell (2002), “Providing information (to parents) about the negative impact of moving on students helps to prevent many moves” (p. 26).

Fowler-Finn (2001) contended, “Additional strategies need to be developed to help mobile and unstable students achieve better and their parents connect as vital partners in education” (p.10). Schools in Fort Wayne Community Schools have implemented several practices to address this need. Examples include families helping families, keeping students in the same school, getting to know new families, emphasizing teacher teams, engaging the entire school staff, creating a warm and friendly atmosphere, easing the transition, planning the school day, keeping the student's needs first, and putting the right foot forward from the beginning (Fowler-Finn).

Educators really cannot control the movement of students. However, parents can be educated about the potentially harmful effects of frequent changes in schools (Ascher, 1991; Kerbow, 1996). The most widely suggested strategy was the use of the buddy system (Ascher;

Cardenas, Taylor, & Adleman, 1997; Clayton, 1998; Hayes, 1999; Kerbow; Kindler, 1995; Newman, 1988). Another student or students could acquaint new students with the classroom and the school (Thomas, 2001).

Another strategy is that of record keeping. One major administrative problem with transient students stems from the lack of prompt transferal of records. Some students have been incorrectly placed or even held back while their new school was waiting for their records (Neuman, 1988; Sewell, 1982). More recently, some transient students have been causing major problems in record keeping. School districts are being penalized for students being absent when they are already registered in a different district.

Summary of the Literature Review

The five sections of the literature review (history, relationship between transiency and academic performance, effects of mobility on schools, reading instruction, and strategies) gave an overview of literature and research on student transiency. This review reinforced the concept of transiency in the United States. Students often do not “stay put” very long and some feel like strangers wherever they go.

It has been shown in several studies that most children in foster care did not do well in school. Many of their homes were unstable and some foster children have unrealistic views of what it means to succeed. Many foster children had switched schools numerous times before they even reached the high school level.

Attendance is also a huge problem. Transient students tend to miss more days of school than do nontransient students. Some of this happens when those students are actually in transit. Some transient students tend to score lower on achievement tests because they may not have mastered skills that their new schools have already covered or they have not been placed correctly in the new school. Many factors contribute to transient students’ lower scores. The main objective of educators should be to make this transition as easy as possible on the student.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of the study was to determine how achievement test scores in a Northeast Tennessee School District were related to transiency. The study is strictly an analysis with no manipulation of the data.

Test Mate Clarity

A member of the *Test Mate* family of products, Test Mate Clarity, in the researcher's opinion, is state-of-the-art software that offers the highest level of reporting capabilities. Test Mate Clarity allows one to generate any of the most frequently needed reports with a click of a button; modify the standard Test Mate Clarity report templates to meet specific requirements; track special groups of students, such as Title I students, by using special codes; and use multiple measures to create reports that compare one test with another (either the same test taken at different times by a group of students, or different tests taken by an individual student).

There are two main types of tests for which one can generate reports using Test Mate Clarity: criterion-referenced tests and norm-referenced tests. A criterion-referenced test measures the degree of achievement of a set of long-term outcomes or objectives. This type of test determines whether a student has learned a particular skill. The student's score is compared to a criterion, regardless of what other students know. A criterion-referenced test might be administered in only one classroom or at only one school. Unlike some tests, a criterion-referenced test can be scored locally by using CTB/McGraw-Hill products like Test Mate Clarity or Classroom Manager. Classroom Manager is a software program designed for teachers to compare the ability of students in their classrooms.

A norm-referenced test is used to compare a student's progress in school with the

progress of other children of the same age and grade throughout the state or country. When a norm-referenced test is developed, its norms are established by testing a representative sample of students throughout the state or nation. The test results for this sample group become the standard, or norm, for the test.

For this study, the analysis of data began with approval from the Institutional Review Board. The data consisted of test scores from McGraw-Hill/*TerraNova* and reports from Test Mate Clarity. These data were released from the Bristol, Tennessee, school's central office. The goal of the study was to provide data, rather than assumptions, on the performance of transient students. After viewing the data, I determined the necessary statistical tests to conduct and used the SPSS system to do so.

Population

The subjects in this project were students in grades one through six at Anderson Elementary School for whom *TerraNova* achievement test scores were obtainable for the years 2001, 2002, and 2003 with the exception of students who had Individual Education Plans and those students who were certified as English Language Learners.

Instrument

The *TerraNova* reading composite scores were analyzed. *TerraNova* is an assessment system designed to measure skills, concepts, and processes. *TerraNova* is scaled and calibrated using item response theory procedures similar to those followed in the development of CAT/5 and the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills, Fourth Edition, CTB Macmillan/McGraw-Hill, 1989 (*TerraNova* Prepublication Technical Bulletin, 1996). As noted in the *TerraNova* Prepublication Technical Bulletin, item response theory procedures are used to "create a scale that can be used to measure student performance across all grade levels" (p. 33). A composite is the name given to content area totals. The reading composite is the average of reading

comprehension and vocabulary. According to the publishers at McGraw-Hill, *TerraNova* was designed to provide achievement scores that are valid for most types of educational decision-making (*TerraNova* Prepublication Technical Bulletin).

Procedures

Bristol, Tennessee, City School System's director of schools, Dr. Steve Dixon, gave me permission to use *TerraNova* test data (see Appendix A). I obtained test scores from the system's central office. Each student with a *TerraNova* score at Anderson Elementary School for one or more of the last three years was identified and then coded as transient or nontransient.

Data Analysis

A two-way analysis of variance was employed to analyze the data. Test Mate Clarity, the McGraw-Hill data analysis software package, enabled me to generate test scores for each of the last three years. Each of the 18 ANOVA models (one for each grade from first to sixth grade for the years 2001, 2002, and 2003) had two dichotomous main effect factors: sex and transient status. Each model tested three null hypotheses:

H₀₁: There is no difference between the transient and nontransient students in their reading scores.

H₀₂: There is no difference associated with transiency in grade levels one through six in reading achievement test scores.

H₀₃: There is no sex by status interaction.

SPSS for Windows was used to analyze the test scores.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Methodology of Content Analysis

This chapter contains a summary of the results of the findings of this study. Round 1 test analysis consists of students' reading test scores from the 2001 school year. Round 2 includes reading scores from the 2002 school year. Lastly, Round 3 includes reading scores from the 2003 school year. For the purposes of analysis and further disaggregation of data, students were grouped into categories depending on their gender and whether they were transient or nontransient. Gender was coded 1 for female and 2 for male. Transient students were coded 1 and nontransient students were coded 2. A transient student was defined as a student who transferred to Anderson School after the beginning of the fall term through the testing period in the spring term. The reading scale score is the student's actual score from the *TerraNova* test. All data were analyzed using SPSS.

This section of the study includes the results of the tabulation of the students' reading scale scores. Each of the six grade levels for the 2001, 2002, and 2003 school years was statistically analyzed with a two-way analysis of variance. The 18 ANOVA models were each tested for the violation of the assumption of equal group variances using Levene's test of equality of error variances. All 18 Levene's tests had probabilities less than .05; therefore, none of the ANOVA models violated the assumption of homogeneity of group variances.

Each 2 x 2 analysis of variance model tested the following null hypotheses:

H₀₁: There is no difference between the transient and nontransient students in their reading scores.

H₀₂: There is no difference in reading achievement test scores associated with transiency among grade levels one through six.

H0₃: There is no sex by status interaction.

In the presentation of each model, the sex-by-status interaction term is addressed first. In multifactor ANOVA models, the presence of significant interaction means that the effect of a given factor on the criterion variable is different for levels of the other factor in the model. In other words, when there is significant interaction, a main effect factor such as sex or status should not be addressed in isolation of the other factor.

Findings and Analysis of Round 1

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of status (transient or nontransient) and sex on standardized reading scores. Table 1 shows the 2 x 2 analysis of variance for grade level one in 2001 ($N = 48$). The interaction term for sex by status was not statistically significant: $F(1, 44) = 1.62$, $p = .21$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. Therefore, it was appropriate to proceed with the examination of the main effects of sex and status, respectively. The main effect of sex was not statistically significant at the .05 level, $F(1, 44) = 3.62$, $p = .06$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for sex was retained: There was no statistically significant difference between male and female reading means in 2001. The main effect of status was statistically significant at the .05 level, $F(1, 44) = 6.38$, $p = .02$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for status was rejected: There was a significant difference between first grade transient and nontransient students' 2001 reading scores.

Table 1

Analysis of Variance for Grade Level 1 Reading Scores in 2001

Source	N	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Sex		1, 44	3.618	.076	.064
Female	31				
Male	17				
Status		1, 44	6.378	.127	.015*
Transient	19				
NonTransient	29				
Sex x Status		1, 44	1.619	.035	.210
Female Transient	12				
Female NonTransient	19				
Male Transient	7				
Male NonTransient	10				

**p* < .05

An examination of the means showed that nontransient students had a higher mean on reading ($M = 584.5$, $SD = 40.8$) than transient students ($M = 557.2$, $SD = 42.3$) with a difference of more than 27 points. The partial η^2 for Status ($\eta^2 = .127$) showed that almost 13% of the variance in reading scores was accounted for by status.

Table 2 shows the 2 x 2 analysis of variance table for grade level two in 2001 ($N = 49$).

Table 2

Analysis of Variance for Grade Level 2 Reading Scores in 2001

Source	N	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Sex		1, 45	.006	.000	.940
Female	23				
Male	26				
Status		1, 45	8.803	.164	.005**
Transient	23				
NonTransient	26				
Sex x Status		1	.137	.003	.714
Female Transient	13				
Female NonTransient	10				
Male Transient	10				
Male NonTransient	16				

** $p < .01$.

Because the probability of the sex by status interaction term was not statistically significant, $F(1, 45) = .14, p = .71$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$ examination of the main effects of sex and status was appropriate. Table 2 shows there was not a statistically significant difference between male and female second-grade students in 2001: $F(1, 45) = .01, p = .94$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for sex was retained. However, there was a significant difference in the reading scores of transient and nontransient students: $F(1, 45) = 8.80, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .16$. The null hypothesis for status was rejected.

The mean for nontransient students ($M = 611.8, SD = 43.2$) was almost 40 points higher than the mean for transient students ($M = 571.9, SD = 47.6$). In addition, the partial η^2 for status ($\eta^2 = .16$) showed that status accounted for over 16% of the variance in second graders' reading scores in 2001.

Table 3 shows the 2 x 2 ANOVA for grade level three in 2001 ($N = 39$).

Table 3

Analysis of Variance of Grade Level 3 Reading Scores in 2001

Source	N	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Sex		1, 35	3.897	.100	.056
Female	23				
Male	16				
Status		1, 35	.014	.000	.907
Transient	20				
NonTransient	19				
Sex x Status		1, 35	2.117	.057	.155
Female Transient	14				
Female NonTransient	9				
Male Transient	26				

The interaction term for sex by status was not significant: $F(1, 35) = 2.12, p = .16$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$. The main effects of sex and status were examined. The main effect of sex was not significant: $F(1, 35) = 3.90, p = .06$, partial $\eta^2 = .10$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for sex was retained. The main effect of status was not significant: $F(1, 35) = .01, p = .91$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$. Again, the null hypothesis was retained.

An examination of the means for status showed that the nontransient students' mean ($M = 637.5$, $SD = 28.6$) was over seven points higher than transient students' mean ($M = 629.9$, $SD = 50.1$). However, the partial η^2 for status ($\eta^2 < .001$) showed that virtually none of the variation in reading scores was accounted for by status.

The 2 x 2 ANOVA for grade four in 2001 ($N = 51$) is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Analysis of Variance for Grade Level 4 Reading Scores in 2001

Source	N	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Sex		1, 47	3.167	.063	.082
Female	27				
Male	24				
Status		1, 47	.629	.013	.432
Transient	26				
NonTransient	25				
Sex x Status		1, 47	.215	.005	.645
Female Transient	17				
Female NonTransient	10				
Male Transient	9				
Male NonTransient	15				

The interaction term for sex by status was not significant: $F(1, 47) = .22$, $p = .65$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$). The main effects of sex and status were examined. The main effect of sex was not significant: $F(1, 47) = 3.17$, $p = .08$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for sex was

retained. The main effect of status was not significant: $F(1, 47) = .63, p = .43$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. The null hypothesis for status was retained.

An examination of the means showed the nontransient mean ($M = 644.8, SD = 23.0$) was slightly higher than the transient mean ($M = 642.1, SD = 34.9$). The partial η^2 indicated that 1.3% of the variation in reading scores was accounted for by status.

Table 5 shows the 2 x 2 ANOVA for grade five in 2001 ($N = 56$).

Table 5

Analysis of Variance for Grade Level 5 Reading Scores in 2001

Source	N	df	F	η^2	p
Sex		1, 52	1.519	.028	.223
Female	36				
Male	20				
Status		1, 52	.298	.006	.588
Transient	19				
NonTransient	37				
Sex x Status		1, 52	.045	.001	.833
Female Transient	10				
Female NonTransient	26				
Male Transient	9				
Male NonTransient	11				

The interaction term for sex by status was not significant: $F(1, 52) = .05, p = .83$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$. The main effects of sex and status were examined. The main effect of sex was not

significant: $F(1, 52) = 1.52, p = .22$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The main effect status was not significant: $F(1, 52) = .30, p = .59$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. Again, the null hypothesis was retained.

Examination of the means showed the mean of nontransient students ($M = 652.3, SD = 31.9$) was slightly lower than the mean of transient students ($M = 656.8, SD = 53.6$). The partial η^2 indicated that 0.6% of the variation in reading scores was accounted for by status.

The 2 x 2 ANOVA for grade six in 2001 ($N = 51$) is provided in Table 6.

Table 6

Analysis of Variance for Grade Level 6 Reading Scores in 2001

Source	N	df	F	η^2	p
Sex		1, 47	1.373	.028	.247
Female	23				
Male	28				
Status		1, 47	.935	.020	.339
Transient	15				
NonTransient	36				
Sex x Status		1, 47	.292	.006	.591
Female Transient	5				
Female NonTransient	18				
Male Transient	10				
Male NonTransient	18				

The interaction term for sex by status was not significant: $F(1, 47) = .29, p = .59$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$. The main effect of sex was not significant: $F(1, 47) = 1.37, p = .25$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$.

Therefore, the null hypothesis for sex was retained. The main effect of status was not significant: $F(1, 47) = .94, p = .34, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .02$. The null hypothesis for status was retained.

Although status was not statistically significant, an examination of the means showed that the mean for nontransient students ($M = 672.9, SD = 34.4$) was close to 15 points higher than the mean for transient students ($M = 658.3, SD = 39.7$). The partial η^2 indicated that 2% of the variation in reading scores was accounted for by status.

Findings and Analysis of Round 2

Analysis of 2002 test scores begins with Table 7. It shows the 2 x 2 ANOVA for grade one in 2002 ($N = 42$). The interaction term for sex by status was not significant: $F(1, 38) = .20, p = .66, \text{partial } \eta^2 < .01$. The main effects of sex and status were examined. The main effect of sex was not significant: $F(1, 38) = .03, p = .86, \text{partial } \eta^2 < .01$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for sex was retained. The main effect of status was not significant: $F(1, 38) = 2.07, p = .16, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .05$. The null hypothesis for status was retained.

Table 7

Analysis of Variance for Grade Level 1 Reading Scores in 2002

Source	N	df	F	η^2	p
Sex		1, 38	.034	.001	.855
Female	17				
Male	25				
Status		1, 38	2.070	.052	.158
Transient	15				
NonTransient	27				

Table 7 (continued)

Source	N	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Sex x Status		1, 38	.203	.005	.655
Female Transient	4				
Female NonTransient	13				
Male Transient	11				
Male NonTransient	14				

Although status was not significant, an examination of the means showed an interesting finding. The mean for nontransient students ($M = 582.1$, $SD = 39.1$) was lower than the transient students' mean ($M = 603.9$, $SD = 36.4$) by almost 22 points. The partial η^2 indicated that 5.2% of the variation in reading scores was accounted for by status.

The 2 x 2 ANOVA for grade level two in 2002 ($N = 50$) is described in Table 8. The interaction term for sex by status was not significant: $F(1, 46) = .52$, $p = .48$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. Because the interaction term was not statistically significant, the main effects of sex and status were examined. The main effect of sex was not significant: $F(1, 46) = 1.93$, $p = .17$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for sex was retained. The main effect of status was not significant: $F(1, 46) = 2.46$, $p = .12$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for status was retained.

An examination of the means for status showed that the mean for nontransient students ($M = 608.7$, $SD = 38.2$) was over 20 points higher than transient students' mean ($M = 588.5$, $SD = 40.0$). The η^2 indicated that 5.1% of the variation in reading scores was accounted for by status.

Table 8

Analysis of Variance for Grade Level 2 Reading Scores in 2002

<i>Source</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Sex		1, 46	1.927	.040	.172
Female	31				
Male	19				
Status		1, 46	2.463	.051	.123
Transient	13				
NonTransient	37				
Sex x Status		1, 46	.517	.011	.476
Female Transient	7				
Female NonTransient	24				
Male Transient	6				
Male NonTransient	13				

The 2 x 2 ANOVA for grade three in 2002 ($N = 34$) is described in Table 9. The interaction term for sex by status was not significant: $F(1, 30) = .01, p = .94$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$. The main effects of sex and status were examined. The main effect of sex was not significant: $F(1, 30) = .43, p = .52$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for sex was retained. The main effect of status was not significant: $F(1, 30) = .36, p = .56$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for status was retained.

Although status was not statistically significant, an examination of the means showed that the nontransient mean ($M = 628.3, SD = 57$) was higher by 14 points than the transient mean ($M = 614.1, SD = 47.0$). The partial η^2 indicated that 1.2% of the variation in reading scores was accounted for by status.

Table 9

Analysis of Variance for Grade Level 3 Reading Scores in 2002

Source	N	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Sex		1, 30	.433	.014	.515
Female	17				
Male	17				
Status		1, 30	.357	.012	.555
Transient	9				
NonTransient	25				
Sex x Status		1, 30	.005	.000	.942
Female Transient	5				
Female NonTransient	12				
Male Transient	4				
Male NonTransient	13				

The 2 x 2 ANOVA for grade four in 2002 ($N = 41$) is described in Table 10. The interaction term for sex by status was not significant: $F(1, 37) = .21, p = .65$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$. The main effects of sex and status were examined. The main effect of sex was not significant: $F(1, 37) = 3.39, p = .07$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for sex was retained. The main effect of status: $F(1, 37) = 1.26, p = .27$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$ was not significant. The null hypothesis for status was retained.

Although the main effect of status was not statistically significant, an examination of the means for status showed the nontransient mean ($M = 650.9, SD = 26.7$) was almost 14 points higher than the transient mean ($M = 637.2, SD = 26.7$). The partial η^2 indicated that 3.3% of the variation in reading scores was accounted for by status.

Table 10

Analysis of Variance for Grade Level 4 Reading Scores in 2002

Source	N	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Sex		1, 37	3.385	.084	.074
Female	22				
Male	19				
Status		1, 37	1.264	.033	.268
Transient	18				
NonTransient	23				
Sex x Status		1, 37	.206	.006	.652
Female Transient	12				
Female NonTransient	10				
Male Transient	6				
Male NonTransient	13				

The 2 x 2 ANOVA for grade five in 2002 ($N = 41$) is described in Table 11. The interaction term for sex by status was not significant: $F(1, 37) = 1.72, p = .20$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. Because there was no statistically significant interaction, the main effects of sex and status were examined. The main effect of sex: $F(1, 37) = .01, p = .91$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$ was not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis for sex was retained. The main effect of status was not significant: $F(1, 37) = .59, p = .45$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$. The null hypothesis for status was retained.

An examination of the means for status showed the nontransient mean ($M = 659.3, SD = 24.1$) was more than 5 points lower than the transient mean ($M = 664.7, SD = 27.5$). The partial η^2 indicated that 1.6% of the variation in reading scores was accounted for by status.

Table 11

Analysis of Variance for Grade Level 5 Reading Scores in 2002

Source	N	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Sex		1, 37	.012	.000	.914
Female	21				
Male	20				
Status		1, 37	.589	.016	.448
Transient	15				
NonTransient	26				
Sex x Status		1, 37	1.718	.044	.198
Female Transient	10				
Female NonTransient	11				
Male Transient	5				
Male NonTransient	15				

Table 12 shows the 2 x 2 ANOVA for grade six in 2002 ($N = 58$). The interaction term for sex by status was not significant: $F(1, 54) = 1.43, p = .24$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$. The main effects of sex and status were examined. The main effect of sex: $F(1, 54) = 2.74, p = .10$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$ was not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis for sex was retained. The main effect of status was not significant: $F(1, 54) = .26, p = .61$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$. The null hypothesis for status was retained.

An examination of the means showed the nontransient mean ($M = 669.4, SD = 31.7$) was slightly higher than the transient mean ($M = 664.8, SD = 32.6$). The partial η^2 indicated that only 0.5% of the variation in reading scores was accounted for by status.

Table 12

Analysis of Variance for Grade Level 6 Reading Scores in 2002

Source	N	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Sex		1, 54	2.742	.048	.104
Female	35				
Male	23				
Status		1, 54	.263	.005	.610
Transient	19				
NonTransient	39				
Sex x Status		1, 54	1.433	.026	.236
Female Transient	10				
Female NonTransient	25				
Male Transient	9				
Male NonTransient	14				

Findings and Analysis of Round 3

Round 3 began with the analysis of 2003 test data. The 2 x 2 ANOVA for grade one in 2003 (N = 50) is presented in Table 13. The interaction term for sex by status was not significant: $F(1, 46) = .25, p = .62$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$. The main effect of sex was not statistically significant: $F(1, 46) = 1.08, p = .30$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for sex was retained. The main effect of status was not significant: $F(1, 46) = .18, p = .68$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$. The null hypothesis for status was retained.

An examination of the means showed that the nontransient mean ($M = 593.2, SD = 31.5$) was almost identical to the transient mean ($M = 594.9, SD = 31.7$). The partial η^2 indicated that 0.4% of the variation in reading scores was accounted for by status.

Table 13

Analysis of Variance for Grade Level 1 Reading Scores in 2003

Source	N	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Sex		1, 46	1.080	.023	.304
Female	28				
Male	22				
Status		1, 46	.175	.004	.678
Transient	13				
NonTransient	37				
Sex x Status		1, 46	.247	.005	.622
Female Transient	5				
Female NonTransient	23				
Male Transient	8				
Male NonTransient	14				

The 2 x 2 ANOVA for grade two in 2003 ($N = 42$) is described in Table 14. The interaction term for sex by status was not significant: $F(1, 38) = .03, p = .86, \text{partial } \eta^2 < .01$. The main effects of sex and status were examined. The main effect of sex: $F(1, 38) = 2.57, p = .12, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .06$ was not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis for sex was retained. The main effect of status was not significant: $F(1, 38) = .80, p = .38, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .02$. The null hypothesis for status was retained.

Examination of the means for status showed that the nontransient mean ($M = 604.9, SD = 34.7$) was lower than the transient mean ($M = 618.7, SD = 32.5$) by almost 14 points. The partial η^2 indicated that 2.1% of the variation in reading scores was accounted for by status.

Table 14

Analysis of Variance for Grade Level 2 Reading Scores in 2003

Source	N	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Sex		1, 38	2.573	.063	.117
Female	17				
Male	25				
Status		1, 38	.799	.021	.377
Transient	17				
NonTransient	25				
Sex x Status		1, 38	.034	.001	.855
Female Transient	5				
Female NonTransient	12				
Male Transient	12				
Male NonTransient	13				

Table 15 describes the 2 x 2 ANOVA for grade three in 2003 ($N = 51$). The interaction term for sex by status was not significant: $F(1, 47) = 1.66, p = .20$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$. The main effects of sex and status were examined. The main effect of sex was not significant: $F(1, 47) = .05, p = .83$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for sex was retained. The main effect of status was not significant: $F(1, 47) = .22, p = .64$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$. The null hypothesis for status was retained.

Although the main effect of status was not statistically significant, examination of the means showed the nontransient mean ($M = 642.5, SD = 40.5$) was almost 9 points higher than the transient mean ($M = 633.9, SD = 38.0$). The partial η^2 indicated that only 0.5% of the variation in reading scores was accounted for by status.

Table 15

Analysis of Variance for Grade Level 3 Reading Scores in 2003

Source	N	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Sex		1, 47	.048	.001	.827
Female	31				
Male	20				
Status		1, 47	.224	.005	.638
Transient	21				
NonTransient	30				
Sex x Status		1, 47	1.664	.034	.203
Female Transient	13				
Female NonTransient	18				
Male Transient	8				
Male NonTransient	12				

The 2 x 2 ANOVA for grade four in 2003 ($N = 41$) is described in Table 16. The interaction term for sex by status was not significant: $F(1, 37) = .17, p = .68, \text{partial } \eta^2 < .01$. The main effects of sex and status were examined. The probability of the main effect of sex was not significant: $F(1, 37) = 1.49, p = .23, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .04$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for sex was retained. The main effect of status was not significant: $F(1, 37) = 2.31, p = .14, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .06$. The null hypothesis for status was retained.

Although status was not statistically significant, an examination of the means showed that the nontransient mean ($M = 652.0, SD = 55.8$) was higher than the transient mean ($M = 631.1, SD = 47.5$) by almost 21 points. The partial η^2 indicated that 5.9% of the variation in reading scores was accounted for by status.

Table 16

Analysis of Variance for Grade Level 4 Reading Scores in 2003

Source	N	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Sex		1, 37	1.486	.039	.230
Female	17				
Male	24				
Status		1, 37	2.312	.059	.137
Transient	20				
NonTransient	21				
Sex x Status		1, 37	.172	.005	.681
Female Transient	10				
Female NonTransient	7				
Male Transient	10				
Male NonTransient	14				

Table 17 describes the 2 x 2 ANOVA for grade five in 2003 ($N = 37$). The interaction term for sex by status was not significant: $F(1, 33) = .34, p = .56$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. The main effects of sex and status were examined. The main effect of sex was not significant: $F(1, 33) = .03, p = .86$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for sex was retained. The main effect of status was not significant: $F(1, 33) = 1.57, p = .22$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for status was retained.

Although status was not statistically significant, an examination of the means showed that the nontransient mean ($M = 659.0, SD = 34.2$) was almost 14 points higher than the transient mean ($M = 645.1, SD = 31.3$). The partial η^2 indicated that 4.5% of the variation in reading scores was accounted for by status.

Table 17

Analysis of Variance for Grade Level 5 Reading Scores in 2003

Source	N	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Sex		1, 33	.033	.001	.857
Female	18				
Male	19				
Status		1, 33	1.572	.045	.219
Transient	17				
NonTransient	20				
Sex x Status		1, 33	.344	.010	.561
Female Transient	10				
Female NonTransient	8				
Male Transient	21				
Male NonTransient	12				

The 2 x 2 ANOVA for grade six in 2003 ($N = 44$) is described in Table 18. The interaction term for sex by status was not significant: $F(1, 40) = .10, p = .76$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$. The main effect of sex was not significant: $F(1, 40) = 2.98, p = .09$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for sex was retained. The main effect for status was not significant: $F(1, 40) = .11, p = .74$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$. The null hypothesis for status was retained.

Examination of the means for status showed that the nontransient mean ($M = 671.9, SD = 20.2$) was almost identical to the transient mean ($M = 671.4, SD = 24.3$). The partial η^2 indicated that only 0.3% of the variation in reading scores was accounted for by status.

Table 18

Analysis of Variance for Grade Level 6 Reading Scores in 2003

Source	N	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Sex		1, 40	2.978	.069	.092
Female	20				
Male	24				
Status		1, 40	.112	.003	.740
Transient	21				
NonTransient	23				
Sex x Status		1, 40	.095	.002	.759
Female Transient	11				
Female NonTransient	9				
Male Transient	10				
Male NonTransient	14				

Summary

This chapter contained the analysis of the data to determine the extent to which student transiency was associated with *TerraNova* test scores. School years 2001, 2002, and 2003 were entered into the data lists. Each year and grade level was analyzed separately.

Chapter 5 contains the summarization of this chapter along with some conclusions.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 5 contains conclusions and recommendations and includes a review of the study, research questions, recommendations to improve practice, and recommendations for further research.

Summary of Findings

Table 19 provides a summary of whether or not the null hypotheses were rejected or retained.

Table 19
Year by Status by Grade

Grade Level	H0 ₁	H0 ₂	H0 ₃
Round 1, 2001:			
1	Retained	Rejected	Retained
2	Retained	Rejected	Retained
3	Retained	Retained	Retained
4	Retained	Retained	Retained
5	Retained	Retained	Retained
6	Retained	Retained	Retained

Table 19 (continued)

Grade Level	H0 ₁	H0 ₂	H0 ₃
Round 2, 2002:			
1	Retained	Retained	Retained
2	Retained	Retained	Retained
3	Retained	Retained	Retained
4	Retained	Retained	Retained
5	Retained	Retained	Retained
6	Retained	Retained	Retained
Round 3, 2003:			
1	Retained	Retained	Retained
2	Retained	Retained	Retained
3	Retained	Retained	Retained
4	Retained	Retained	Retained
5	Retained	Retained	Retained
6	Retained	Retained	Retained

Research Question #1 Conclusions

To what extent, if any, is transiency associated with reading achievement test scores in a selected Northeast Tennessee school? With very few exceptions, the overall score of nontransient students in this study were higher than that of transient students. The mean difference between transient students and nontransient students was not enough to be statistically significant. Transient students scored higher in a few grade levels.

One possible explanation for the findings is that in January 2002, the faculty members at Anderson Elementary School proposed changes to the school's program based on test scores and attendance data (see Appendix B). The proposal was funded and changes were made accordingly. This plan (for maximizing students' success) has been evaluated and changed as test scores and attendance have improved.

Another possible reason for the progress of transient students is that intradistrict transiency is much higher than intersystem transiency. The district's philosophy to "maximize student success" permeates the programs that are carried out in the six elementary schools.

Research Question #2 Conclusions

Is transiency closely associated with reading achievement test scores in some grades more so than others? If so, which ones?

Table 20 presents the means and standard deviations for year by grade by status. Twelve out of the 18 models show that nontransient students scored higher than did transient students; in only six areas did transient students outperform nontransient students.

Table 20

Means and Standard Deviations for Year by Grade by Status

Grade		2001		2002		2003	
		Non-Transient	Transient	Non-Transient	Transient	Non-Transient	Transient
1	<i>M</i>	584.5	557.2	582.1	603.9	593.2	594.9
	<i>SD</i>	40.8	42.3	39.1	36.4	31.5	31.7
2	<i>M</i>	611.8	571.9	608.7	588.5	604.9	618.7
	<i>SD</i>	43.2	47.6	38.2	40.0	34.7	32.5
3	<i>M</i>	637.5	629.9	628.3	614.1	642.5	633.9
	<i>SD</i>	28.6	50.1	57.0	47.0	40.5	38.0
4	<i>M</i>	644.8	642.1	650.9	637.2	652.0	631.1
	<i>SD</i>	23.0	34.9	26.7	26.7	55.8	47.5
5	<i>M</i>	652.3	656.8	659.3	664.7	659.0	645.1
	<i>SD</i>	31.9	53.6	24.1	27.5	34.2	31.3
6	<i>M</i>	672.9	658.3	669.4	664.8	671.9	671.4
	<i>SD</i>	34.4	39.7	31.7	32.6	20.2	24.3

The test scores from the years 2002 and 2003 do not show a finding of transient students outperforming nontransient students. There is a pattern that even though there was not statistical difference of the 18 pairs of nontransient and transient means, 12 (67%) showed that nontransient students had a higher mean than transient students.

One possible reason for the difference in grades one and two in 2001 is the implementation of skills-based instruction at Anderson Elementary School. When the proposal was made to the director of schools (for implementation in June, 2001), he gave the go-ahead and funding to start immediately. Skills-based grouping was implemented approximately two months prior to the administration of achievement tests.

Prior to the proposal in the fall of 2000, teachers were mindful of changes that were needed. At a district-wide meeting of second grade teachers in July 2000, teachers discussed grouping students according to skills, mentoring and tutoring, and using computer labs for remedial work. First- and second-grade teachers at Anderson began making changes in their individual classrooms to accommodate students' mastery of skills with the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year.

Skills-based grouping (see Appendix C) might be making a difference in the test results at Anderson. Identifying the needs of students as soon as they enter school has been effective. Differentiated instruction and teaching to mastery has also affected test results.

Recommendations for Further Research

Because of the outcome of this study, the following recommendation is offered for consideration:

Future studies should focus on a broader demographic area to include Title I and NonTitle I schools in order to determine if there is any significant difference in the results of transiency caused by resiliency provided by the environment.

Recommendations to Improve Practice

1. Develop and implement strategies to reduce the learning gap for transient students, not only academically but also socially, where the "buddy system" as explained in the review of literature might prove effective.

2. Assist schools in the development of early intervention procedures for identification of learning gaps and provide instructional strategies to include such means as Direct Instruction and accelerated fast cycle learning models.
3. Develop prompt and more efficient ways to transfer students' records to ensure proper placement and program needs.
4. Consider developing a reward system to expedite record transfers completed in a timely manner.
5. Continue to consider the data in grades one and two from the school year 2001-2002 that would account for first- and second-grade transient students doing better on the 2002 test. The momentum that occurred with changes made as programs were implemented should be continued. Share graphic depictions (see Figures 1 and 2) with teachers and stakeholders for discussion and further research.

FIRST GRADERS

Estimated Marginal Means of SCORE

GRADE: 1

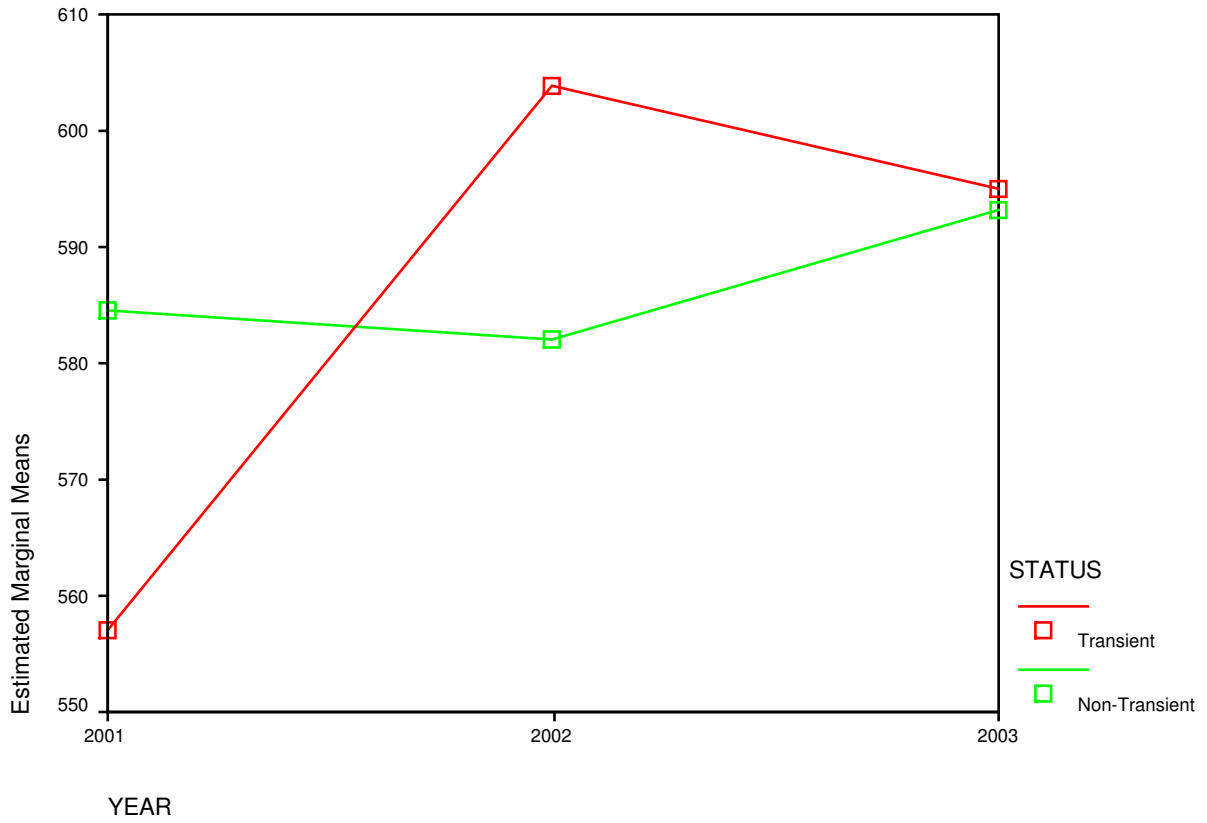


Figure 1. Estimated Marginal Means Scores for First Graders

SECOND GRADERS

Estimated Marginal Means of SCORE

GRADE: 2

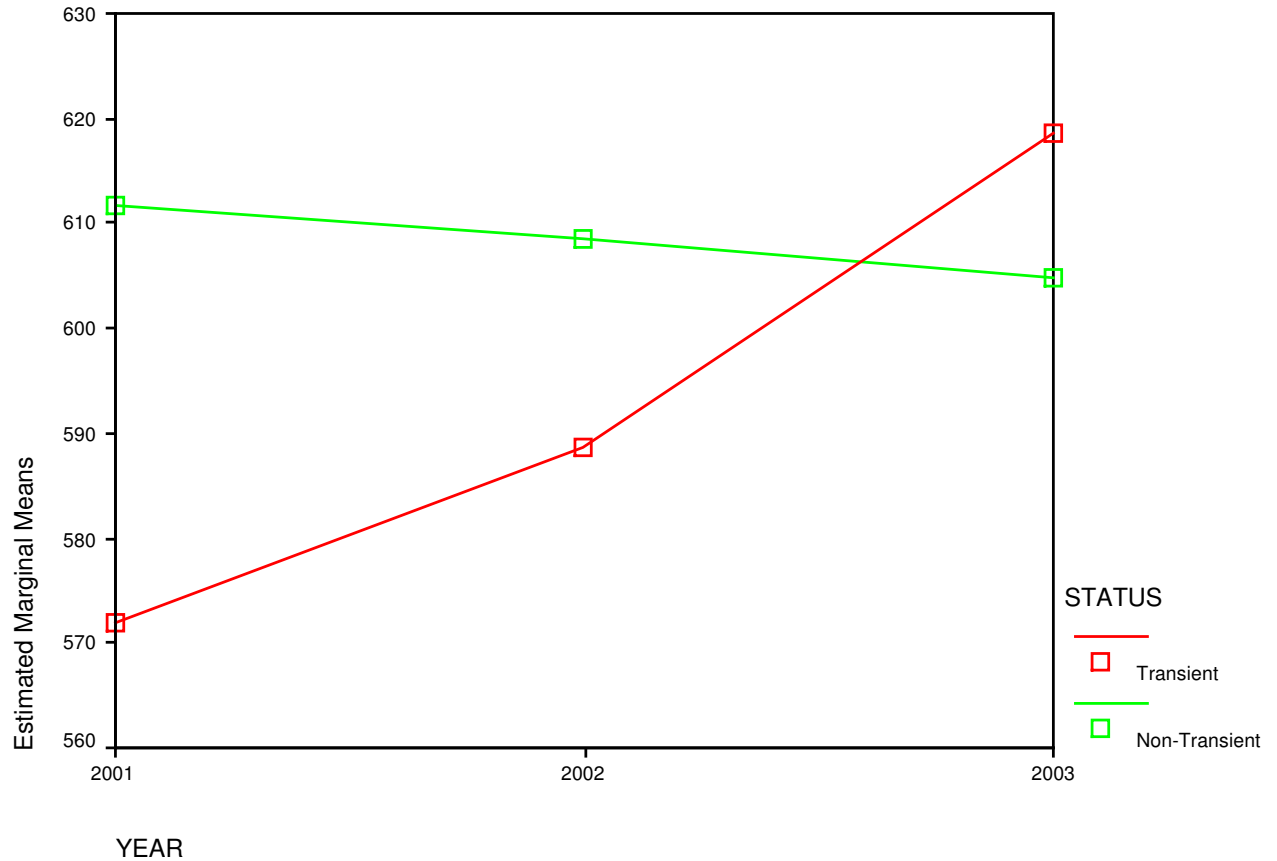


Figure 2. Estimated Marginal Means Scores for Second Graders

7. Develop and implement strategies to best help transient students enter a new school without falling behind. This means not only academically but also socially. This is when the "buddy system" should prove effective.
8. Hold schools more accountable for the education of their students. This may mean more evaluation of students and faculty. Laws such as the *No Child Left Behind Act* might be a way for schools to make sure students are academically where they need to be.
9. Develop a better and more efficient way to transfer transient students' records. This

would be very beneficial in placement of the students. Consider a reward system for schools that send transfer records in a timely manner

Transiency can be harmful to children both academically and emotionally. It should be each educator's ultimate goal to make transience as effortless for the child as possible. These children are our future and they all deserve the ultimate chance.

The results of this study are somewhat surprising. Teachers and administrators in this district have observed the negative implications of transiency; the findings of this study suggest that current programs, however, are making a positive impact.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Letter to Dr. Steve Dixon

Dixie C. Bowen
1031 Deer Harbour Road
Bristol, Tennessee 37620
423-764-0600

Permission to Use Data

January 30, 2004

Dr. Steve F. Dixon
Bristol Tennessee City Schools
615 Edgemont Avenue
Bristol, Tennessee 37620

Dear Dr. Dixon :

I am writing this letter to request your permission to use Bristol Tennessee City School System test data. I am completing a doctoral dissertation at East Tennessee State University. The study relates to how student transiency/mobility affects test scores.

The confidentiality of individual student scores will be protected. I am asking your permission to collect test scores from the TestMate/Clarity software package as well as attendance data from MacSchool.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter where indicated below. Thank you very much for your continued support of this project that I hope will benefit our students and faculty.

Sincerely,


Dixie C. Bowen

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE
USE REQUESTED ABOVE:



Steve Dixon, Ed.D.

Date: 2/5/04

APPENDIX B

Maximizing Student Success Proposal

ANDERSON SCHOOL

Maximizing Student Learning



A Proposal

Presented to:	Dr. Steve Dixon, Director of Schools, BTCS
By :	Anderson Elementary School Faculty

Objectives

The faculty of Anderson Elementary School believes that we can influence the results that we wish our students to achieve by:

- Maximizing student learning by **improving academic performance** in the areas of math and reading.
- Maximizing student learning by improving **attendance** of students at Anderson Elementary School.

Growth Targets

1. 50% of the students in grades 1-6 who scored below the 80th percentile in 2001 will improve their Reading and Math Terra Nova scores by at least 10% in 2002. 50% of the students in grades 1-6 who scored above the 80th percentile in 2001 will improve their Reading and Math Terra Nova scores by at least 5% in 2002. (Evaluation and comparison available late spring 2002).
2. Student attendance at Anderson Elementary School will increase from 95.5% (August 16 – December 17, 2001) to 97% by June 2001.

Process

Identify the desired results

- Improved student achievement
- Improved student attendance

Identify the specific needs to reach desired results

- Additional personnel
- Materials and equipment

Develop a specific and well thought out Action Plan

(pp. 5-6)

Strategies

The strategies listed below will reach the desired results (improved student achievement and improved student attendance).

Additional Personnel:

4 part-time Teachers (beginning immediately – June 1)

Parent Involvement Coordinator (beginning immediately – June 1)

Materials and Equipment:

Tutors

Textbooks on audio tape and/or compact disc

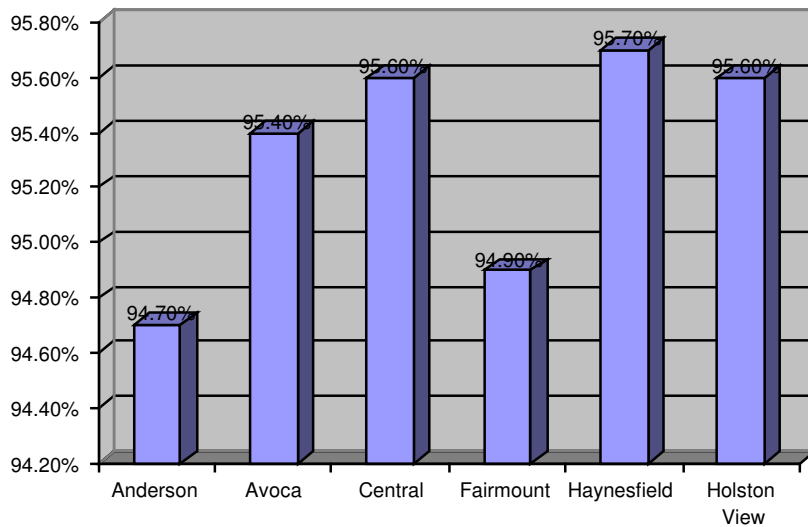
Additional student station computers (for Math drill and practice)

Math materials (including Math Sharks, Math Safari)

Student Impact

The State of Tennessee recently released school report cards. Students in the Bristol Tennessee City school district perform in the above average range. Anderson students, however, performed lower in several areas than students in other schools.

Attendance 2000-2001



With this proposal, the Anderson teachers expect to increase academic attainment and value-added scores of our students on the Terra Nova, as well as improve student attendance. The strategies outlined herein support school efforts with the home/school/after school components of learning through its wide array of services to our students.

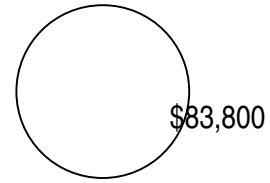
Budget

4 part-time Teachers (beginning immediately – June 1)	\$40,000
Parent Involvement Coordinator (beginning immediately – June 1)	\$15,000
Tutors (King College students compensated with Weed & Seed funds)	0
Textbooks on audio tape and/or compact disc (AES funds)	0
32 additional student station computers (for Math drill and practice)	\$28,800

Math materials (including Math Sharks, Math Safari)

0

Total Requested



Action Plan

In order to reduce our student "risk factors", and promote student achievement and attendance, we are seeking funds to implement our locally developed plan.

If funded, this proposal will put into action the following:

Four part-time Teachers (beginning immediately – June 1) in the areas of Reading and Math.

Four additional teachers will further enhance our skills based model of instruction and allow for more one-on one attention to students. Currently most "small" groups exceed 15 students. Four teachers will greatly reduce the pupil/teacher ratio.

Parent Involvement Coordinator (beginning immediately – June 1)

A half-time teacher will assist parents and teachers in maximizing student success through:

- Home visits, taking supplies and materials to parents and instructing them on how to use them to help their child learn
- Home visits, to convey information to and from teachers and parents. Conferences will be held in homes concerning grades, attendance, motivation, responsibility, and overall success

Tutors (King College students compensated with Weed & Seed funds)

Students will benefit from the help of tutors during and after school. Tutors will preteach and reteach under the direction of classroom teachers.

Textbooks on audiotape and/or compact disc (AES funds)

Audiotapes and/or compact discs of current textbooks in use at each grade level will be purchased. These will serve as a different mode of instruction, an aid in the make-up of missed work, and a modification in instruction for special education students.

32 additional student station computers (for Math drill and practice)

These additional classroom computers will allow for immediate drill and practice of skills being taught. In addition, many of the computers currently in use are old models incapable of performing certain tasks.

Math materials (including Math Sharks, Math Safari)

Materials such as Math Sharks and Math Safaris will serve as individual tools for math practice.

Quote: "The winner's way is to ask: 'What can we do differently next time to get the results we want?'"

Dr. Steve F. Dixon

Everyone at Anderson is a winner. We have, however, lost many games in recent years. We are winners in our hearts and minds. This proposal will enable us to be winners with improved *TerraNova* and performance accountability model scores.

APPENDIX C

Skills-Based Grouping Proposal

General Information

- Teachers will teach the skills (and not necessarily follow the textbook).
- All teaching follows the curriculum alignment. The curriculum alignment notebook is **THE** essential document for instruction.
- The objective or skill being taught will be written on the board (or somewhere at the front of the room) at the beginning of each lesson, so that students know exactly what is expected of them prior to instruction.
- Teachers must be able to show the evaluation tool being used to assess individual skills and must be able to show parents a copy of the evaluation when skills have not been mastered.
- Every child will have a PEP, Personalized Education Program. It will be comprehensive including all assessments.
- Teachers will be equipped with a usable management system.

Assigning Skill Groups

Group Assignments will occur during the summer and first week of school, initially; students enrolling after the school year begins will be given a benchmark test and assigned to a group in the same manner.

The following data will be analyzed to determine the assignment of students into skill groups:

Terra Nova Mastery Scores

Benchmark Tests

Teacher Recommendation

Possible Pre-Test in the fall

Grades

STAR Testing

Teacher Recommendation

*Note: Beginning of the Year Assessment is crucial

At the end of the third week of the 2001-2002 school year, teachers will reconvene to discuss all components of skill grouping.

Movement through the Curriculum

Options for Enrichment and Remediation within a Group

Peer tutoring

Tutoring with a Teacher

Smaller Group instruction

America Reads Program

Assistance from a paraprofessional

- If a child has not mastered skills and enrichment/remediation techniques have been followed, collaboration shall take place among all teachers involved and a plan will be developed for movement.
- Every 3 weeks (with interims and report cards) PEP's and grades will be reviewed to determine future placement.
- When a child cannot progress through the curriculum, we will investigate alternative options including CDC classes, outside agencies, and other resources.
- Movement across grade levels can occur in the following manner:
K-2, 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, 4-5, 5-6
- Unusual circumstances involving movement to grade levels not listed above must be approved by the principal.
- All changes of placement must be discussed with the parent(s).

Communication

It is imperative that communication occurs often between and among parents, teachers, and students. Forms of communication will include, but will not be limited to:

- ◆ Parent/Teacher Association Meetings
- ◆ Parent/Teacher Conferences
- ◆ School Newsletters
- ◆ School Website
- ◆ Interim Reports
- ◆ Report Cards
- ◆ Parent Workshops
- ◆ Online Curriculum Guides (BTCS)
- ◆ Informal communication among teachers and among teachers/parents.
- ◆ Telephone Calls

Communication with parents will be very specific about what skills have or have not been mastered.

Staff Development/Training

- One day of brainstorming among the faculty of Anderson.
- One day of training from Kelly Crandell and Sandra Rushing concerning the proper usage of the Curriculum Alignment Guide.
- One day for Anderson Faculty to meet in grade groups.
- One day for development of forms, checklists and PEP's.
- Materials will be needed to teach skills across grade levels and to match and support the curriculum guide. The request is being made for \$500 per teacher to begin building a library, with funds being available to spend throughout the year.

Budget

Title I: Personnel

Math/Reading Instructor – Betty Stergios, Master Teacher

Math/Reading Instructor – Lynn Oneal, Master Teacher

Math/Reading Instructor & Parent Involvement – Kathy Whisman

\$139,145

(These moves will cause a complete change in the Title I budget for Anderson Elementary School. Positions for five instructional assistants will be lost and no funding will be available for committee expenditures).

Local: Staff Development

4 Inservice Days: Day 1: Planning by Anderson faculty (review of entire plan, curriculum alignment documents, enrollment). \$100 Stipends

Day 2: Planning with advisement from chairpersons of Reading and Math Curriculum Alignment Committees (Kelly Crandall and Sandra Rushing). \$100 Stipends

Day 3: Grade Group Meetings between and among faculty members of Anderson Elementary School. \$100 Stipends

Day 4: Group Assignments by Anderson Elementary School faculty. \$100 Stipends

\$11,200

Local: Materials

Instructional materials for skills not addressed in current textbook adoptions. \$500 per teacher.
\$14,000

Local: Other Supplies

A 3-Ring Binder for each student's PEP (2")
Dividers for the Binders

\$ 2,152

Total Local Funds Requested

\$27,352

Evaluation of Program

After the third week of school, teachers will reconvene to discuss all components of skill grouping.

The following will be employed to determine effectiveness and success of Skill Based Instruction:

Parent Survey

Teacher Survey

Evaluation and comparison of Terra Nova Scores.

Review of Discipline Records

Feedback from parents, teachers, students, administrators, community

