

THE READING ACHIEVEMENT OF KANSAS URBAN AFRICAN AMERICAN  
FIFTH GRADERS BEFORE AND DURING  
NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

by

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B.S., Pittsburg State University, 1997

M.S., Emporia State University, 2002

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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## **Abstract**

With the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (PL 107-110), Kansas state reading standards, benchmarks and indicators have been aligned to meet the recommendation of the National Reading Panel (2000). The components that are aligned with the Kansas reading standards are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. High stakes testing and test scores disaggregated by race creates accountability in meeting instructional reading indicators for all students, specifically African American students. With increased pressures to meet and exceed the reading standards and close the achievement gap between Black and White students, schools are searching for instructional factors supportive of to meeting No Child Left Behind requirements.

This mixed method study was conducted in three urban school districts in the state of Kansas. The quantitative study was conducted by analyzing African American fifth grade state reading assessment scores before and during implementation of No Child Left Behind to determine whether No Child Left Behind is positively impacting test scores. Data analysis revealed that African Americans increased in being at or above the standard, while decreasing the number below the standard. Out of the 180 schools in the three districts, six high performing schools were identified based on the percentage of African American students in the school, average mean scores before and during No Child Left Behind , and percentage of students at or above the standard from 2000-2007. Data were collected through detailed observational field notes and interviews with fifth grade teachers and principals in order to determine their perceptions of the instructional factors impacting reading scores.

Data analysis revealed the following instructional factors impacting reading scores: analysis of data, quality professional development, teacher collaboration, high expectations, and parental involvement. Instructional reading indicators were coded throughout the observation of fifth grade classrooms. Observed indicators taught were phonics, vocabulary, comprehension of text types and text structures. This study provided perspectives of instructional strategies essential to increasing the reading strategies, skills and test scores of African American students while closing the literacy achievement gap between Black and White students in Kansas schools.

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This mixed method study was conducted in three urban school districts in the state of Kansas. The quantitative study was conducted by analyzing African American fifth grade state reading assessment scores before and during implementation of No Child Left Behind to determine whether No Child Left Behind is positively impacting test scores. Data analysis revealed that African Americans increased in being at or above the standard, while decreasing the number below the standard. Out of the 180 schools in the three districts, six high performing schools were identified based on the percentage of African American students in the school (15% or more), average mean scores before and during No Child Left Behind (75% or higher), and percentage of students at or above the standard from 2000-2007 (50% or more). Data were collected through detailed observational field notes and interviews with fifth grade teachers and principals in order to determine their perceptions of the instructional factors impacting reading scores.

Data analysis revealed the following instructional factors impacting reading scores: analysis of data, quality professional development, teacher collaboration, high expectations, and parental involvement. Instructional reading indicators were coded throughout the observation of fifth grade classrooms. Observed indicators taught were phonics, vocabulary, comprehension of text types and text structures. This study provided perspectives of instructional strategies essential to increasing the reading strategies, skills and test scores of African American students while closing the literacy achievement gap between Black and White students in Kansas schools.

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## **Dedication**

This manuscript is dedicated to my children, Jade and Noah Davis. Although they are not old enough to know why mommy was always writing, they will soon know that my inspiration came from watching them grow and develop. The experience of reading, writing and raising children these past few years has been a wonderful blessing. I hope that my dedication in completing my dissertation will illustrate to Jade and Noah that with effort and faith, all things are possible.



## PROLOGUE

“Education for all,” “Equality in education,” and “All children can learn.” These are three simple phrases that are heard in America quite often. Are we educating all? Is education equal? Do we truly believe *all* children can learn? I challenge these phrases and plan to do my part in making them valid statements for all educators.

Startling statistics indicate that African American students are lagging academically (National Assessment of Education Progress, 2007). The new age of assessment, accountability, and score reporting disaggregated by race is making the differences visible to the American population (Zavadsky, 2006). As an African American, this outcome of the educational system truly saddens me. As an educator, this society truly frightens me. As a parent, this statistical knowledge truly frustrates me. However, in my experience as an educator, this information does not surprise me.

I grew up in a rural, Midwestern community. As the only African American in my elementary classes for many years, it didn't take long for me to realize that the other students were different. When we came back from the summer break, my teachers would ask which students suntanned in the summer. I knew this question was not directed at me. It was obvious by my fourth-grade year that my home and my school were from two completely different cultures.

Finally, we began to study American history in the fourth grade. From what I learned at home, American history could not be taught without learning the important role of African Americans in our country today. Trips to the South to visit family taught

me a great deal about history. The visits to the South gave me knowledge of the historical black colleges and universities and existing segregation. Leaving the South and coming back home was always discouraging. My world and culture seemed even more different from my white friends at school when I returned from the South.

The social studies text book had a section titled *Black Americans*. I had already looked through the textbook to pace when we would cover this section. The day we began this section, the teacher called on each student to read aloud. A student was called on to read this section that basically said Black Americans were slaves who could not read or write. That was it! The teacher moved on to someone else to read the next section. This was devastating! As I left school that day, my classmates teased me and called me “slave.” They said I could not read or write and Black people were stupid. I now knew what W.E.B Dubois (1903) meant when he spoke of the need for African Americans to know their African/Black roots and American roots.

He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face (p. 3).

I then decided not to forget my heritage and culture, but I realized I had to teach my people and all people how to appreciate the Black culture.

Middle school was no different, but there were more African American students in my classes because students from all elementary schools attended one common middle school. By now I had read more Black literature and had built a wider knowledge base.

However, we still had not read any Black literature in school. In eighth-grade, a teacher introduced the book by Samuel Clemens (1884), *Huckleberry Finn*. I don't remember much besides the knife I felt in my stomach each time I heard the word 'nigger.' The sad part was the white students began to call the Black students 'niggers' and the Black students began to call the Black students 'nigga.' I realized how easy it was for a school to mis-educate everyone by not educating anyone.

When I entered high school, I had already read *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by Alex Haley (1965). Malcolm X had taught me not to feel inferior to anyone anymore, especially because of my race. By any means necessary, I was going to get the most of my education in order to educate others in this country. I attended honors classes in high school, which once again made me the only African American in most of my classes. I graduated with honors and decided to get an elementary education degree. My college experience did not prepare me for all of the challenges I would face in trying to educate all students. I left with a Bachelor of Science in Education, not sure if I could make all students feel a stake in our educational system. However, once I got my first job, race and equality slapped me in the face. I began my teaching career in an integrated urban school with low and middle income levels. I later taught in a high socioeconomic suburban school with no African American students. Finally, I taught in an urban school with all African American students, most from low income families. Experiences in these three districts made the problems very clear.

In the high socioeconomic school district, accountability was very high. Many pre-assessments were given and instruction was aligned with the data. When a student did not meet the indicator from the curriculum, many interventions were implemented.

Not all students came in academically high, however most left that way. Parents were informed about everything through the following methods: back to school night, family literacy night, family math night, parent-teacher conferences, weekly teacher newsletters, monthly grade-level newsletters, and monthly school-wide newsletters.

In the two urban districts, less parent contact was made. There were neither back to school nights nor family nights, and newsletters were not required by the school. This was aggravating and alarming. Educators know parents are children's first teacher, but we gave some parents more tools than others. The urban schools also lacked foreign language classes, computer lab teachers, and quality professional development. Most importantly, there was no accountability and educators had low expectations.

In the last school in which I taught, I looked at the entire school data based on the state assessment. I knew there was a crisis. Only 13 percent of our fifth-graders passed the Kansas State Reading Assessment (KSDE, 2002), while the high-socioeconomic district had 98 percent of students pass the same assessment. Now I truly internalized the achievement gap and knew something had to change. Many teachers were surprised by the difference in the two districts which forced me to realize that before we could discuss methods to help make education equal, we had to first open our eyes by analyzing the data and raising our expectations.

My rationale for research focuses on the educational impact of No Child Left Behind (2002) on the Kansas State Reading Assessment by analyzing the data before and during the implementation of No Child Left Behind. After analyzing the data, the instructional factors impacting success in higher performing schools were determined in order to provide information on how to better educate African American students in

schools. Through accountability and communication efforts, the African American student population can have an even more positive effect in the future on America.

## **CHAPTER 1-Introduction**

The sequence of events throughout African American history correlates with the educational data, as well as the number of African American males in the penal system. With the abolition of slavery Blacks ceased to be slaves, but immediately became criminals—and as criminals they became slaves of the state (Davis, 2005). Thurgood Marshall did not know *Brown vs. Board of Education* would close African American schools, demote African American principals to teachers, reduce the number of African American teachers, and that the bus would go one way for long hours requiring early risings and little African American parental involvement. Nor did Marshall know that schools would be integrated on the outside, but segregated on the inside (Kunjufu, 2002).

The implementation of No Child Left Behind of 2001 (PL 107-110) requires states and schools to report test scores of African American students. American parents receive notification if the school doesn't meet the goal of passing set by the state. The reporting of the scores is information African American parents had not received prior to No Child Left Behind. According to Kunjufu (2002), African Americans may be the only group expecting someone else to educate their children. Parental options are a major component of the law. Parents are given a number of options if low performing schools do not improve within the amount of time specified in the state proficiency goals. If a school fails to meet state proficiency goals for two consecutive years, parents may elect to have their child transferred to a better performing public school within the district. If a school fails to meet the goals for three years, students are eligible to receive supplemental

services such as tutoring. If a school is unsafe or dangerous, parents have the option of sending their child to a safe school. If parents make these choices, then school districts must provide transportation. If low performing schools do not improve, they will be restructured as a result of a loss of students (Yell & Drasgow, 2005). Large numbers of African American students attend predominately Black schools with low tests scores. By parents taking advantage of their school choice option, low performing schools are forced to raise expectations and increase student achievement.

Twenty-nine percent of African American students, compared with 18 percent of white students, drop out of college after less than one year. African Americans on average find themselves in a position where some educational and career opportunities are not accessible based on income and social pressures. African Americans question the American dream due to the social, economic, and political hardships encountered as a result of racial discrimination. African Americans continue to be slightly more than twice as likely to be unemployed as whites (Appleby, Colon & Hamilton, 2007). Quality education is a key element to social, economic, and political equality.

Many Americans have voiced their varied opinions of this new law (Copenhaver-Johnson, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2007; Gay, 2007). Because of No Child Left Behind, closing the achievement gap is now a national priority (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Over 84 percent of African Americans live in urban areas (Appleby, Colon & Hamilton, 2007). This study focuses on the state assessment reading scores of African American students in urban school districts located in Kansas. Data were gathered from 2000-2001 and compared to data from 2002-2007, before and since the implementation of No Child Left Behind in 2001. Did the mandated law make a difference for African

Americans in this Midwestern state? Did test scores improve for the urban settings?

Was there a difference in test scores in this state based on standards being attached to this high stakes assessment?

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act on reading achievement scores of African American students in Kansas. The study focuses on African American fifth grade students in three urban school districts in the state of Kansas--District A, District B, and District C. High performing schools within these districts were identified so interviews with administrators and teachers and classroom observations could help identify instructional methods and other factors impacting reading achievement of African American students. Discussion in this chapter is organized in the following sections: overview of the issues, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, limitations of the study, and definitions of terms.

### **Overview of the Issues**

Accreditation of schools has been a function of the State Board of Education since 1966 (Kansas Department of Education, 2003). The legislature enacted laws to implement the 1966 constitutional amendment in which the State Board of Education was given the authority to “accredit schools including elementary and secondary...public and private” (KSDE, 2003, p.1). This was aligned with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965). The accreditation process began with a task force making recommendations to the State Board of Education. The task force directed the State Board to provide for statewide assessments, determine performance levels, prepare public



report cards, and establish curriculum standards. Reading assessments were given annually at grades five, eight, and eleven. The responsibility of the school district was to meet quality standards, implement a school improvement plan focused on increasing student performance, host an external review team, and document the results of their school improvement efforts (North Central Association, 2006). Meanwhile the federal government reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, more commonly known as the No Child Left Behind Act Public Law 107-110 (NCLB, 2002).

Despite decades of hard work and dedication to education in America, the achievement gaps between White and Black student achievement remain noticeably wide (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Since 1965, the federal government has spent more than \$267.4 billion to assist states in educating disadvantaged children (USDE, 2004). Yet, according to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2007) on reading, only 33 percent of fourth graders can read at a proficient (passing) or advanced level. This percentage is up from 31 percent in 2002 when achievement among the highest performing students remained stable, and America's lowest performers had improved only slightly (NAEP, 2002).

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002). This is a landmark educational reform initiative designed to improve student achievement and change the culture of schools in America. No Child Left Behind raises expectations for all state systems, local school districts, and all individual schools in terms of ensuring that all students meet or exceed state standards in reading and mathematics during their twelve years of schooling (Essex, 2006). The law

is based on four pillars: strong accountability for results; more freedom for states and communities; proven education methods; and more choice for parents (USDE, 2004).

Because of No Child Left Behind, closing the achievement gap is now a national priority (USDE, 2005). In the most politically and economically dominant country in the world, we created two education systems—separate and unequal. Forty years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* 347 U.S. 483 (Supreme Court of the United States, 1954) decision, some schoolchildren were taught effectively while others—mostly poor and minority—were left to struggle and drop out. Schools are now held specifically accountable for the annual progress of all students, including African American students. Schools must have high expectations for every child—the soft bigotry of low expectations is no longer tolerated. No Child Left Behind requires annual assessment of students in grades three through eight and once more in high school. The law requires states and school districts to distribute to parents easy to read, detailed report cards on schools and districts informing them which schools are succeeding (USDE, 2005).

Urban schools have had the challenge of raising student achievement. In the past several years, academic progress in urban schools has outpaced national gains, according to the Council of the Great City Schools (USDE, 2005). The Nation's Report Card, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, is a nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas (Lutkus, Rampey, & Donahue, 2005). The Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA), a special project in National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), began assessing performance at the district level in selected large urban districts in 2002 with reading and writing assessments, and continued in 2003 and 2005 with reading and

mathematics. Eleven large urban districts participated in the 2005 NAEP reading assessment. The eleven districts represented were Atlanta, Austin, Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, Cleveland, District of Columbia, Houston, Los Angeles, New York City, and San Diego. Achievement level results on grade four reading in 2005 by the eleven districts indicated that the average scale score of White students is consistently higher than Blacks in all districts. Black students also had a higher percentage of students scoring below basic than at or above basic, or at or above proficient (Lutkus, Rampey & Donahue, 2005).

There is a literacy gap in America between Black and White students. Forty-six percent of African American fourth grade students are below grade level in reading according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2007). Over 80 percent of inmates entered prison illiterate. States project prison growth based on fourth grade reading levels (Kunjufu, 2002). The No Child Left Behind Act is the first movement to place accountability on all schools to close the achievement gap and educate all children. Despite *Brown vs. Board of Education* (U.S. Supreme Court, 1954), schools have become more segregated since 1971 (Kunjufu, 2002).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The first step in closing the literacy gap is looking at the long-term effects of starting early to prevent reading failure. The National Reading Panel (2000) issued a report which responded to a Congressional mandate to help parents, teachers, and policymakers identify key achievements (Armbruster, Lehr & Osborn, 2001). Five areas of reading instruction were identified by the National Reading Panel (2000): phonemic

awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. Beginning instruction should be based on the five areas of reading to ensure students are fluent readers by third grade. These skills provide the basis for sound curriculum decisions and instructional approaches that can help prevent the predictable consequences of early reading failures (Armbruster et al., 2001).

Before implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, students were assessed on a state test in grades five, eight, and eleven for reading. Many students advanced to middle school without achieving primary reading skills. Since the No Child Left Behind Act has been enacted, however, state reading assessments begin in grade three. Reading First (NCLB, 2002) grants, awarded to states based on number of children in poverty, have been awarded to schools to provide support in producing fluent readers by third grade (USDE, 2008). State education agencies develop a plan with school districts in using research-based reading instruction to raise student achievement. The states provide support for assessments and programs.

The No Child Left Behind Act sets a standard that all students tested in reading and mathematics will reach grade level by the year 2014. Critics say the standard is not realistic (Porter, Linn & Trimble, 2005; Liston, Whitcomb & Borko, 2007). Teacher unions, testing experts, and other critics are lobbying Congress to lower the goal from the intended 100 percent. Advocates of the act say lowering the goal will hurt children, especially society's most vulnerable--poor and minority students. Urban schools, being high in poverty and numbers of minorities, are the settings in which we should witness improvement if, in fact, the No Child Left Behind Act is truly effective (Paley, 2007).

## **Purpose of the Study**

There are both critics and supporters of the No Child Left Behind Act (Porter, et al., 2005; Zavadsky, 2006). Critics argue that NCLB focuses more on assessments and program adoption rather than on raising achievement for all children (Whitcomb, Borko, & Liston, 2007). This study quantitatively addresses if the No Child Left Behind Act has achieved in decreasing the achievement gap and qualitatively describes the instructional factors in selected schools whose scores indicate reading achievement in African American fifth graders.

According to a study conducted by Hernandez and Macartney (2006) for the Foundation for Child Development, all children experienced overall improvements in quality of life between 1985 and 2004. Black children made major improvements in crime, poverty and voting, which narrowed the gap between Black and White children. However, the one area in which the gap remains between Black and White children is education. Although more Black children attend preschool programs, the gaps in reading and mathematics indicators have not significantly changed (Hernandez & Macartney, 2006).

The purpose of this study is to inform policymakers and educators of the impact of No Child Left Behind on Kansas African American students reading data. It also informs teachers, administrators, and policymakers of instructional factors perceived from observations and interviews in high performing schools.

## **Research Questions**

The quantitative research question asks if there is a significant difference between reading scores of African American fifth graders on Kansas reading assessments in 2000-2001, before implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, compared to 2002-2007 Kansas reading assessment scores during the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act. The qualitative question pursues instructional factors impacting reading achievement in the highest performing urban schools. These questions relate to fifth grade African American Kansas urban school student reading scores in District A, District B, and District C.

Once data were collected, the researcher identified six high performing schools (two schools in each district) based on the Kansas reading assessment scores. Interviews were conducted with the administrators and teachers in order to identify instructional reading factors that they believed contributed to high achievement. Classroom observations further documented instructional factors influencing achievement. The mixed method research questions include:

1. Is there a significant difference between/among fifth-grade reading scores of African American students in Kansas urban schools in 2000-2001, before the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, compared to 2002-2007, during the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act?
2. In urban high performing schools highly populated by African-American students, what instructional factors may contribute to fifth-grade African-American students performing at high levels on the Kansas reading assessment.

## Significance of the Study

The first step toward achieving equality in education was taken in 1954 as the Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* (U.S. Supreme Court, 1954) greatly impacted education today. The *Brown* decision was aimed at legally sanctioned segregation, sometimes called *de jure* segregation. “*Brown* was not directed at *de facto* segregation, which means segregation arising from such private actions as housing choices” (Armor, 2006, p. 40). This Supreme Court decision is considered a landmark in educational reform. There are critics as well as supporters of *Brown*. The perspective of *Brown* as a failure, however, is inaccurate. Willie and Willie (2005) found the following:

In 1950 before *Brown*, only thirty-five percent of White people and thirteen percent of Black people twenty-five years and older had a high school education or more. Fifty years later, in the year 2000, eighty-five percent of White people and seventy-nine percent of Black people in the same age range had a high school education or more. Meanwhile, the proportion of adults twenty-five years of age and older who have attended college but have not received a bachelors degree is 26.8 percent for Blacks and 25.4 percent for Whites, a parity that may be attributable to *Brown* and the Civil Rights Movement (p. 477).

Based on the quote by Willie and Willie (2005), *Brown* has proven to be an effective move for education. Critics today see that Black students lag behind White students in academic achievement. When younger African Americans look at the number of segregated schools with high drop out rates, they question the issue of equality. Whites remain in control over most public school districts and the federal courts refuse to

fully confront the inequality inherent in property tax-based resources for local-school districts (Willie & Willie, 2005).

*Brown* did what it set out to do—to end legally sanctioned segregation. The next step in achieving equality in education is closing the achievement gap. The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the No Child Left Behind Act share a common goal: to provide every child with a quality education (Nichols, 2005). Nevertheless, many school districts still operate under desegregation plans. While segregation of schools decreased throughout the 1970s and 1980s, school segregation resurfaced in the 1990s (Nichols, 2005). *De facto* segregation has increased in the United States. Eliminating the achievement gap has become a goal for many educators, policymakers, and parents.

The No Child Left Behind Act requires that all students take a standardized test in reading in grades three through eight. Data are generated by the following subgroups: gender, ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and limited English proficiency. The findings of this study could aid Kansas policy makers, administrators, educators, parents, and other citizens in understanding the effectiveness of the law in closing the achievement gap. The results of this study could inform Kansas citizens of a positive or negative impact from the law in reading for the designated subgroups utilized in this study. Once the quantitative data was analyzed, the researcher identified six Kansas schools with high achieving African American students and conducted interviews with administrators and fifth grade teachers. Fifth grade classroom observations were also conducted. The purpose of this qualitative approach was to identify effective instructional reading methods in these classroom settings. The analysis



may be useful for school officials in order to determine effective instructional reading factors impacting the test scores of Black fifth graders in Kansas.

### **Limitations of the Study**

A limitation of the study is the use of Kansas reading assessments (KSDE, 2007) to determine student achievement for school districts. However, the No Child Left Behind Act puts emphasis on the state reading assessment in determining if a school is in need of improvement. All states create their own reading assessment from state standards. It is not possible to compare data from state to state. States could also differ in difficulty level of test items.

Other limitations to the study are standard curriculum revisions and data dates. In 2005, the Kansas standards, benchmarks, and indicators were revised to integrate the National Reading Panel (2000) recommendations of the five areas of reading instruction. The change in standards resulted in a change of the assessment. The same assessment was used in the years between 2000 and 2004, but the assessments were changed to align to the new standards in 2005. Although the standards were revised, the performance categories remained consistent, which did not affect the analyzed data.

A final limitation of the study is the relatively small number of interviews and brief observations conducted to identify effective instructional reading methods which may be impacting Black fifth grade test scores. However, even the small number provides initial foundational information on which future research may be built.

## Definition of Terms

The following are definitions of terms used in this study:

1. *Achievement gap*: The gap that exists between African American and White students' tests scores (USDE, 2005).
2. *Adequate Yearly Progress*: A measure of year-to-year achievement on statewide assessments. The No Child Left Behind Act requires each school to report the percentage of students scoring proficient and above, which will then be compared to the required percentage set by the State Board of Education for the particular year. The percentage set by the State Board of Education increases each year to meet the goal of all students proficient and above by 2014 (Essex, 2006).
3. *Economically disadvantaged*: As pertaining to the study, this group consists of students receiving free or reduced-price lunches (USDE, 2002).
4. *Equality*: A simple sense of fairness in the distribution of the primary goods and services that characterize the social order (Edmonds, 1979).
5. *High performing schools*: Schools in which large numbers of students perform in the proficient or above level on the Kansas State Reading Assessment.
6. *In need of improvement*: Schools that do not meet state academic standards for two years in a row as indicated on test scores are identified as "in need of improvement" (USDE, 2005).

7. *Instructional factors*: Causes that affect academic achievement in schools such as program adoption, instructional methodologies and strategies, professional development, time, parents, and test preparation.
8. *Multicultural education*: A process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society. Multicultural education permeates the school's curriculum and instructional strategies, as well as the interactions among teachers, students, and families, and the very way that schools conceptualize the nature of teaching and learning. It uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action as the basis for social change. Multicultural education promotes the democratic principles of social justice (Nieto, 2000).
9. *Reading First*: This national initiative is designed to aid every child in every state to become a successful reader. It is based on the expectation that instructional decisions for all students will be guided by the best available research (Essex, 2006).
10. *Race/ethnicity*: A matter of biological variation among humans,
11. *Segregation*: To set apart from others. Within the context of education, it refers to the legal establishment of different schools for students of different race (Asante, 1991).
12. *Standardized achievement test*: Test attempting to measure a student's overall knowledge and skill mastery. A test is administered and scored in a standard manner (LeTendre & Lipka, 2000).

13. *State assessments:* States must develop and implement annual assessments in reading in grades three through eight and at least once in grades ten through twelve. These assessments must be aligned with state academic content and achievement standards and involve multiple measures, including measures in higher-order thinking and understanding (Essex, 2006).
14. *Urban schools:* These schools are located in urban areas or major cities. Characteristics of urban America differ in important ways from the characteristics of the country as a whole. The population of urban cities is more likely to be language minority, Hispanic, African American, and economically disadvantaged (Hannaway, 2003).

### **Summary**

With increased accountability and more emphasis on state assessments, it is important to know if the new law, No Child Left Behind, is positively impacting some of the nation's neediest students. The education of both low-income and middle-class African American children affects the health of society as a whole (Hale, 2004). Margaret Spellings made the following statement concerning African American achievement:

For the first time ever, we are looking ourselves in the mirror and holding ourselves accountable for educating every child. That means all children, no matter their race or income level or zip codes (USDE, 2005, p.1).

The findings of this study provide some clarification of how African American student reading achievement in Kansas has been impacted since the signing of the new law. In addition, qualitative aspects of this study, in the form of interviews and classroom observations, identify instructional reading factors thought to be positively impacting reading achievement of Kansas African American fifth graders.

Chapter Two examines historical perspectives of African American readers, theoretical foundations, literacy education in America for African Americans, urban education and literacy, the literacy achievement gap between African American and White students, and successful urban school studies. The last section of Chapter Two emphasizes national and state assessment content and results.

Chapter Three examines the quantitative/qualitative aspects of the research methodology. The research questions, research design, data collection, data analysis, reliability, validity, and trustworthiness were described.

Chapter Four provides quantitative and qualitative results of the study. A description of the six high performing Kansas schools will provide context for an examination of factors impacting test scores.

Chapter Five examines the findings of the study and the conclusions which were drawn. Implications for policymakers, principals, teachers and teacher preparation programs are discussed and recommendations for future research are offered.

## CHAPTER 2- Review of Literature

Most American citizens view education as a basic right for their children. They want the school to provide a global view of knowledge, as well promote patriotism. Parents want schools to prepare their children for college so that they are able to enter a stable, well-paying profession. African Americans view education in the same way as other Americans. They believe literacy is the key to political, cultural, social, and economic success. However, in the past, education was a privilege. In the present, a good education is a privilege for the wealthy, not a right for everyone. Many struggles have been fought in order for African Americans to acquire education, and the fight continues. Many opposed the educating of African Americans with the argument that they were inferior and incapable of learning more than basic skills. Even the proponents of educating African Americans felt the most appropriate education would be basic in order to keep them in lower class status (Woodson, 1932).

Education was not bestowed upon African Americans; they had to demand it, create it, and fund it. The main goals of the African American educational institutions were to provide literacy for all, prepare for the mainstream institutions, counteract the negative images of African Americans, and to uplift the race (Harris, 1992).

Many African American writers have focused on the importance of not only educating the African American but the importance of literacy for African Americans (DuBois, 1903; Woodson, 1932; Ladson-Billings, 1992; Kunjufu, 2002). By examining the literature of the past and present African Americans, evidence is provided that the historical debate on the importance of literacy for African Americans is still not

complete. Literacy has always been a valuable skill in America that African Americans have had limited opportunity to acquire (Harris, 1992).

Charles Johnson (1936) characterized education of the Negro child as inferior to that of White children. To support this statement, he looked at expenditures in the separate educational systems. On average, spending for African American children was 37 percent of that spent on White students. Johnson also wanted the education of the African American to reflect the culture of the Black community. In this way, the children can bridge their culture to the mainstream culture of the country. Jessie Roy and Geneva Turner (1951) had the belief of literacy serving as an oppressive function. They believed, like Johnson, that educational curricula should represent the African American students' culture and not misrepresent the history and facts. Without the correct information and access to relevant materials to the race, groups are not able to participate in the mainstream cultural institutions.

African Americans view literacy as more than reading and writing abilities. Many wrote about literacy in broad terms of access and philosophies. In order for a group to participate in the cultural institutions in America, members of the group have to first be literate (Harris, 1992). Literacy is fundamental in the Black community in order for political and social equality to occur. Literacy is also the first step in producing productive citizens to make the world function effectively.

## **Theoretical Foundations**

Jean Piaget's (1963) cognitive development theory, Vygotsky's (1962) social constructivism theory, and Paulo Freire's (1970) critical literacy theory are three theories that support effective teaching of African American children in the area of literacy. Focusing on each child's stage of development, while enhancing that stage with cultural and social language, will help create the motivation in each child to influence social change.

### ***Piaget's Cognitive Development***

Piaget's (1963) theory describes how children adapt to their environment. The behavior of the child is controlled through mental filing cabinets or schema. Children are able to adapt to situations by balancing schema and the environment. Assimilation and accommodation are the two processes children use to adapt. By assimilating, children have to transform their environment so that it fits into the preexisting cognitive structures. Accommodation is the process of changing cognitive structure in order to accept something from the environment (Atherton, 2005).

Piaget (1963) identified four stages in cognitive development: sensorimotor stage, pre-operational stage, concrete operational stage, and formal operational stage. The sensorimotor stage begins at infancy and ends at approximately two years old. In this stage, intelligence is demonstrated through motor skills rather than symbols. World knowledge is limited but developing. Knowledge of the world comes from the interactions and experiences in the environment. At the end of the sensorimotor stage, language abilities begin to develop. The preoperational stage is from age two to seven



years old. Children are now able to use symbols and language. The thinking is illogical and egocentric at this stage. However, memory and imagination are developed. The third stage is the concrete operational stage from the age of seven to eleven. Intelligence is demonstrated through logical and systematic manipulation of symbols. Finally, stage four is formal operational. This impacts people from age eleven and up. At this stage, logical thinking about abstract situations occurs. In this stage, individuals begin to test hypotheses and they are concerned about the future and ideological problems.

Piaget's (1963) theory provides insight to needs for African American readers. Schools provide much of the structured learning opportunities from the late preoperational through formal operational stages. The process of assimilation and accommodations are undoubtedly easier if the home culture and school culture are similar. The cultural differences between education and home require children to constantly adapt at school. The home schema and school environment continue to cause disequilibrium (Huitt & Hummel, 2003). Many educators believe African Americans should assimilate and make the proper accommodations to adjust to the school environment. However, school culture does not represent the culture of many of the students, especially African Americans (Ladson-Billings, 1992). Students of diverse backgrounds have literacy experiences different from the experiences in school. In this case, the teacher enables the student to assimilate and accommodate by modifying the social context in order for the lesson to be effective. Teachers demonstrate cultural sensitivity by learning about the different cultures in the classroom and integrating those cultures into the curriculum and instructional practices (Callins, 2006).

Tandria Callins (2006) describes culturally responsive literacy instruction as the bridge between the school of the student and the world of the student. With teachers and schools planning to make more accommodations and assimilations in the lesson planning, the student will be enabled to move through Piaget's cognitive development stages without obstacles arising from cultural differences. Effective literacy instruction requires reading and writing for real life, relevant purposes. Systematic skill instruction combined with an emphasis on meaning results in higher reading achievement. Teachers using multicultural literature focusing on racial minority groups within the United States have competitive reading scores with teachers not using such materials (Ladson-Billings, 1992).

The No Child Left Behind Act (2002) directly addresses the issue of American minorities within the schools. Subgroups have to be reported according to ethnic backgrounds. With that information, a recommendation for multicultural literacy could be made from the school or state education agency. The No Child Left Behind Act makes the charge for schools to use proven effective instructional materials in order to make gains in reading with all children. Culturally diverse students are not receiving a free and appropriate education when teachers are not implementing instructional strategies that enhance student achievement of all students (USDE, 2005). Instructional methods for children in the concrete operational stage use manipulatives, sequencing, and use familiar examples for explanations of complex ideas to begin assimilating new information. In adolescence and the formal operational stage, students need visuals and relevant ideas (Huitt & Hummel, 2003). Problem solving is an important instructional tool in this stage as well (Woolfolk & McCune-Nicolich, 1984).

### *Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory*

Another theory impacting the literacy of African Americans is Lev Vygotsky's (1962) theory of social constructivism. Piaget's (1963) cognitive constructivism and Vygotsky's (1962) social constructivism share many perspectives about teaching and learning. Both theories focus on multiple representations from the real world in the learning environment in order to make meaning in the context of real situations. Piaget (1963) emphasized the mind as a tool with which individuals move through cognitive stages. Vygotsky (1962) takes the mind and emphasizes how culture and language can move individuals to their highest potential of each stage. Learning is affected in large and small ways by the culture (Doolittle, 1997). Vygotsky (1962) also emphasizes the importance of instruction in development. Since children are educated in groups or classrooms, the role of peer interaction cannot be ignored. Most research related to peer interaction has been on socialization and not as much in the area of cognitive development (Forman & Cazden, 1985).

Vygotsky's (1962) theory strongly emphasized the contributions of culture to a child's intellectual development. The knowledge of the child comes from the culture. The contribution of culture provides the adaptations for the child. Teachers and parents provide scaffolding for the child in order to teach problem-solving experiences (Doolittle, 1997). In reading, teachers scaffold children by providing strategies for word identification and comprehension in order for problem-solving skills to help create independent readers (Doolittle, 1997). Through scaffolding, children become responsible for strategizing when reading in order to comprehend the text. Language acts as a

primary source in internalization, which is the process of learning (Vygotsky, 1962). As children learn and internally process information, they are able to move through their 'zone of proximal development.' Vygotsky's (1978) 'zone of proximal' development refers to the difference between what a child cannot do on his or her own compared to what he or she can do independently. Interactions between cultures, communities, and peers contribute to positive intellectual development for children (Vygotsky, 1962).

Vygotsky's (1978) theory impacts learning in the classroom through the curriculum, instruction, and assessment process. Curriculum should be based on interactions between learners and learning tasks. States create curriculum standards and goals to achieve at each grade level. Many content area tasks are also to be performed at certain grade levels to build the necessary schema needed to move to the next level. Instruction is designed to help children reach the goals of instruction by support or scaffolding of skills. With appropriate instruction, children can perform higher level tasks. When teachers provide this continuous support, children are eventually able to perform independently higher level tasks. Assessment is an emphasis in Vygotsky's (1978) theory. In order to provide instruction of the curriculum; teachers must know the difference between what text a child can read independently and which text requires support. Once teachers are able to find the zone of proximal development for a child, they are then able to provide effective instruction in order to meet the curriculum standards (Doolittle, 1997).

### *Freire's Cultural Literacy Theory*

A Freirean (1970) perspective on literacy encompasses the ideal of proper literacy. Although many students are functionally literate, they cannot comprehend the text read. They cannot critically read text and make decisions based on print to transform their lives. In order for groups in oppression to gain independence, literacy is a major component. According to this philosophy, people without literate skills were powerless, impoverished and considered victims of society. Freire (1970) found enhanced cognitive skills when motivated by liberation and independence. Literacy would enable oppressed groups to become active participants in social transformation, rather than passive recipients of social decisions in the world (Freire, 1970).

The two types of literacy are improper literacy and proper literacy. Improper literacy (O'Neil, 1970) gives readers the illusion of comprehension and genuine control of the text. Proper literacy (O'Neil, 1970) enhances a reader's capacity of comprehension and rational decision making. O'Neil's (1970) distinction between mere reading and proper literacy:

...being able to read means that you can follow words across a page, getting generally what's superficially there. Being literate means you can bring your knowledge and your experience to bear on what passes before you. Let us call the latter proper literacy; the former improper (p. 72).

Paulo Freire's (1970) work and critical literacy theory has five aspects. He emphasizes dialogue as a learning tool. Because educators have to transform information into knowing, dialogue is a main component of learning and knowing (Freire, 1970). Many educators have mistaken dialogue as a method and not a means to develop better

comprehension about the object of knowledge. Once dialogue has become a method of teaching versus an understanding of curiosities and a link between culture and democracy, teachers now have a safe pedagogical zone to facilitate (Macedo, 2000). Teachers and students need epistemological curiosity in order to understand theory and put it into practice. Freire (1970) argues the same amount of emphasis applied to theory has to be applied to practice. No Child Left Behind requires schools to use scientifically researched based reading programs that have been grounded in theory. According to Freire (1970), once the theory has been ignored; we run the risk of “disconnectedness in practice” (p.19). Epistemological curiosity is often missing in dialogue as conversation.

Second, Freire was concerned with praxis-action, which is action that shapes and changes the world. This again reflects Freire’s beliefs in theory. Freire’s description of theory is the truth. Aristotle regarded the word *praxis* means guided by a moral disposition to act truly and rightly; a concern to further human well being and the good life. This is what the Greeks called *phronesis* and requires an understanding of other people. Through dialogue, understanding of the theory is achieved in order to implement the effective practice (Bernstein, 1983).

Third, Freire wanted to develop consciousness to transform reality, which is the pedagogy of hope. In Freire’s (1970)critical literacy theory , he argues that educational systems are banks, making deposits into the students’ minds. In depositing information, students are not able to inquire. “Any situation in which some individuals prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence” (Freire, 1970, p. 85). Instead of making deposits, “problem-posing” (p.79) education responds to the essence of consciousness.

Fourth, Freire (1970) believed in situating activities in education through lived experience. “One cannot expect positive results from an educational or political action program which fails to respect the particular view of the world held by the people. Such a program constitutes cultural invasion” (Freire, 1970, p. 95). Forty percent of American schools have no teachers of color (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001), this reflects Freire’s statement about respecting the particular view held by the people. It is important for teachers to look through the lens of all students. Since the Kansas reading scores are disaggregated by ethnicity, this forces schools to become accountable for all students learning. Teachers and administrators have had to determine effective strategies to educate all students in the schools.

Last, he wanted teachers to develop their consciousness through “class suicide”(Taylor, 1993), which requires teachers to change their mindsets. As long as the goal for the oppressed is to be like the oppressor, the oppressed cannot contribute to liberating pedagogy (Freire, 1970). Closing the achievement gap is a major emphasis of the No Child Left Behind Act. However, many are more concerned with the gap between the results of the African American students versus their full potential.

Freire’s (1998) later works stress the importance of a framework to analyze oppression where the object of oppression is cut across by factors as race, class, gender, culture, language and ethnicity (Macedo, 2000). No Child Left Behind reports test scores based on subgroups. The subgroups are comprised based on race, class, language, and ethnicity.

These three themes define the goals of No Child Left Behind. Piaget’s cognitive development theory suggests that once students enter the concrete and formal operational

stages of development, basic reading skills should be acquired. This supports NCLB requiring students to be proficient readers by third grade. Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism underscores NCLB by schools and teachers identifying the student's zone of proximal development, then scaffolding the child through knowledge of culture and language to increase their reading achievement. Freire's theory of cultural literacy theory blends with the goals of NCLB by attention to text structure on the Kansas reading assessments. The fourth type of text structure is persuasive in which students read and take a stand. Through dialogue, students negotiate meaning and comprehension is more apparent. All three aspects blend into a particular aspect and goal of No Child Left Behind.

### **The History of African Americans and Literacy Education**

Many ethnic minorities entered America in the 1600s. However, African Americans were the only group to come in chains (Banks, 2003). It is very important and necessary to know the history of the African to African American transition to fully comprehend this most recent educational reform, No Child Left Behind. In 1619, the first Africans arrived in Jamestown, Virginia. Lerone Bennett (2001) notes approximately twenty Africans arrived. At this point, Africans were indentured servants just as Whites were. During a transitional period of some forty years, the first Black immigrants held real property, sued in court, and accumulated money and plantations (Bennett, 2001). The colonists deliberately decided to replace indentured servitude with African slavery for economic reasons (Banks, 2003).



American slavery was a unique institution in human history. Africans were dehumanized in order for some Whites to profit. Slaves were being captured and traded between Europeans and Africans. Once caught, the captives were chained together and marched long distances until forced onto ships. The trip to America took forty to sixty days, many dying before the end. The slave trade drained off many of Africa's strongest and most productive young men and women. Only healthy captives could survive the trip to America (Banks, 2003). Whites were in fear of Blacks so many slave codes were enacted in America to oppress the captives. The fear was created because of captives resisting bondage (Banks, 2003). To oppress slaves, Banks (2003) cites the following slave codes enacted in colonies from New York to Georgia:

- Slaves could not congregate without the presence of a White.
- Slaves could not be taught to read or write.
- Slaves could not own property.
- Slaves could not leave the plantation without permission (p. 194).

Although groups such as the Quakers and American Anti-Slavery Society organized groups to denounce slavery, Blacks were still kept in the background. Blacks were the subject of dispute, but not seen or heard. In the North, many slaves paid for their freedom with extra labor. Many free slaves were still treated as slaves. Some of the slave codes were still enforced for non slaves. Southerners regarded free African Americans as a nuisance and threat to slavery (Banks, 2003). According to Harris (1992), the seeds of literacy were planted in 1700s. During this time, African Americans wanted the basic literacy skills in order for a chance at equality and emancipation. Religious denominations such as the Puritans, Anglicans, and Quakers supported teaching literacy

to African Americans. These groups believed the Bible readings should be through direct reading and not oral interpretations (Woodson, 1919). Although African Americans viewed the ability to read as a chance for emancipation and participation in society, many European Americans viewed literacy as a way for African Americans to take control. In 1794, Richard Allen lead the movement for African American independence in economics, education, and liberty. He was the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church as well as founder of benevolent organizations, schools and libraries in these early years.

By the 1800s, 15 to 20 percent of African Americans could read (Woodson, 1919). Through the efforts of Richard Allen and other leaders, African Americans were making literacy gains. In New York, the first African Free School was founded in the early 1800s (Rury, 1983). African Americans operated the school. They hired African American educated and committed teachers. Another reason for more literate African Americans was miscegenation, children resulting from interracial relationships. Many slave owners sent their half African American children to be educated in the North or hired teachers for them in the South (Perkins, 1990).

The debate began over the type of education offered to African Americans. Basic education began in the 1700s, while some agreed to vocational education. However, classical education was opposed. Free African Americans wanted to establish a college at New Haven to offer a classical curriculum. Many local leaders opposed the classical curriculum because it was only deemed for white males, as well as the college would be in the same community as Yale University. Although this college was opposed, other institutions were established. Avery College and Lincoln University were founded in the

mid 1800s. Although the emphasis was to create black institutions, some African Americans were attending mainstream universities. The first African American graduated from college in 1828.

Despite the advancements in literacy and education of African Americans, two events caused the race to regress in education (Harris, 1992). The cotton gin and other inventions created the need for slavery in order to speed production. The second major setback came from African Americans using their literacy to fight oppression. African slaves in Haiti had revolted against the French in 1804. Haiti became the first black republic in the world. Encouraged by this, many African Americans wanted the same liberation. Through literature and pamphlets, African American writers began to spread the word. Among the group of rebels were Nat Turner and other slaves. Many slave masters and European Americans realized that literacy made it impossible to keep slaves oppressed and content. Because of these actions, access to education for African Americans became difficult, especially in the South. Regardless of the attempts to not educate African Americans, many abolitionists still fought for informing their race. Leading the African American abolitionists was Frederick Douglass, Robert Purvis, and Sojourner Truth (Quarles, 1969). These abolitionists worked together to support the Black views of slavery. Frederick Douglass edited and published a paper, the *North Star*.

African Americans were also segregated in churches as they began to form their own. From the churches came schools for Black children (Banks, 2003). In 1850, the Fugitive Slave Act was enacted. This act authorized the federal government to help capture runaway slaves in the North and bring them back to the South. This decision explicitly repudiated Northern states' rights to regulate their own affairs (Newman,

2001). In 1857, the Dred Scott decision granted Southerners the right to bring slaves to free states in the North. The next attempt for European Americans was to send African Americans back to Africa. Many African Americans were against this colonization because they were American born and free. They also felt the back to Africa movement by European Americans was an attempt to get rid of free blacks in order to make slavery safer and secure in the United States (Banks, 2003).

In 1865, Congress enacted the Thirteenth Amendment which abolished slavery in the United States. In 1866, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act and the Fourteenth Amendment, which recognized Blacks as citizens. Voting rights were extended to African Americans, many of whom were elected to minor local offices. Twenty-two served in the United States Congress, two as United States senators (Banks, 2003). There were still too few Blacks elected to create equality. According to Banks (2003), some Whites determined to put Blacks in their place implemented violence against African Americans which became rampant. Northern interest to expand industries to the South made them give in and leave the fate of Blacks up to the South (Banks, 2003). Once Hayes became president, he promised to remove all troops from the South. Southern whites reestablished their control of state governments. One of the first acts of the state legislatures was to disenfranchise African Americans. Violence swept through the South between 1866 and 1898. Not only did violence scare African Americans from voting, laws kept them from voting. The grandfather clause, literacy tests, and poll taxes made it difficult for Blacks and poor whites to vote (Bennett, 1993).

The North and South went to extraordinary lengths to limit economic development in Black America. The manipulation of the educational structures of the

black community was a prime example of this process. In the 1880s and 1890s there were repeated attempts to destroy the effectiveness of Black schools. The goal was to keep Blacks ignorant so they would accept the least desirable occupations. Whites claimed education would spoil black workers and keep Black children from the cotton field. Education would undo the intricate literacy arrangements upon which Black oppression was based (Bennett, 1993).

By the years 1880-1900, an estimated 20-30 percent of African Americans were literate (Anderson, 1988). The central reason for the advancement in literacy was the creation of elementary, secondary and higher education institutions by the African American churches. African Americans worked to create and attend school. Tuskegee University was established by former slaves (Harris, 1992). Once African Americans were educated, they directed their efforts to educating others. By 1880, education, the vehicle for Negro mobility and equal participation in American society, began to change its emphasis from literacy to industrial education and manual training, fitting the Negro for a subordinate role in society (Reimers, 1965).

The 1890s introduced the Jim Crow laws. The history of Jim Crow reflects the history of America. Jim Crow affected many aspects in Americans lives from politics to education to sports. Jim Crow laws legally separated Blacks from Whites in public places. In every state of the former Confederacy, the system of legalized segregation and disenfranchisement was fully in place by 1910 (Davis, 2007). Numerous race riots occurred from Wilmington, North Carolina to Tulsa, Oklahoma from 1865-1955. In 1896 the court's ruling in *Plessy vs. Ferguson* established "separate but equal" schools. This case created a major obstacle to equal rights for Blacks (Davis, 2007). In the case of

*Cumming vs. Richmond County Board of Education* in 1899, the Supreme Court provided additional support for segregation. In Richmond County, Georgia, only a white high school was affordable. Therefore, Black students had no school. This case led to elimination of Black schools in which school districts were able to show evidence of financial hardship.

In 1905, the issue of how to deal with Jim Crow laws was the object of a long term debate between Booker T. Washington (1901), W.E.B. Du Bois (1903), Carter G. Woodson (1932), and Marcus Garvey (1923). Booker T. Washington's (1901) vision was for African Americans to rise as a race during the time of Jim Crow; equality would come later. W.E.B. Du Bois (1903) had a vision of African Americans rising as a race, yet with equal rights. Carter G. Woodson (1932) argued against the type of education an African American was able to receive. Marcus Garvey (1923) wanted African Americans to migrate to Africa. He believed African Americans would never be accepted in the United States (Bennett, 1993).

Washington (1901), Du Bois (1903), and Woodson (1932) were all educators with three competing ideologies. Washington, an advocate of industrial education, proposed that African Americans should first have economic independence in order to gain social and political equality. In his autobiography *Up from Slavery*, Washington (1901) stated, "I had a strong feeling that what our people most needed was to get a foundation in education, industry, and property, and for this I felt that they could better afford to strive than for political preferment" (Washington, 1901, p. 64-65). He then founded Tuskegee Institute. Washington viewed basic instruction in literacy and job training necessary for African Americans. He argued for vocational education and not for classical education.

He was also not an advocate for integrated education. Many African Americans supported Washington's views, however many felt like this form of education would continue to keep them as second class citizens in America (Harris, 1992).

Du Bois (1903) supported classical education for African Americans. His message was for African Americans to get wisdom. His philosophy of child socialization created his argument for African American parents to teach their children about race early. That knowledge would help them to be more successful and prepared for mainstream institutions. According to Henry Lee Moon (1972), Du Bois proposed the plan for all African American parents to ensure their children were literate, having acquired the basic reading and writing skills by the age of four. The role of preschool was to refine the literacy skills so that children could read for information and write for communication and self expression. Children also learned to reason through mathematical skills. Du Bois also felt foreign language was important in order for the African American to communicate with other cultures. He opposed the thought of vocational education as the only option for African Americans. Du Bois argued that not all African Americans should choose vocational education because it would keep them in low paying jobs. Du Bois felt like the type of education given to African Americans was "educational slavery", forcing African Americans to work as second class citizens (Harris, 1992).

Woodson (1932), like Du Bois, was not fond of the type of educational opportunities given to African Americans. Woodson's (1932) book, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, argued against the lower educational access of the African Americans in the 1900s. He commented in the book that, "the Negro thus educated is a hopeless liability

of the race” (pp. xxxii-xxxiii). Woodson believed since the African Americans were taught how to think from the oppressor, they were also taught to think of themselves as not measuring up to the standards of the oppressor. The more educated the African American became; the more he would think like the oppressor. Woodson founded many cultural institutions in which to present the information to create the racial pride in African Americans. He also founded Black History Month. Many of his published works were children’s books, written to establish positive racial identities at an early age (Harris, 1992).

Marcus Garvey perceived America as no place for the Black race. In *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey* (1986), he stated:

The white man of America will not, to any organized extent, assimilate the Negro, because in so doing, he feels that he will be committing racial suicide. This he is not prepared to do. It is true he illegitimately carries on a system of assimilation; but such assimilation, as practiced, is one that he is not prepared to support because he becomes prejudiced against his own offspring, if that offspring is the product of black and white; hence, to the white man the question of racial differences is eternal. So long as Negroes occupy an inferior position among the races and nations of the world, just so long will others be prejudiced against them, because it will be profitable for them to keep up their system of superiority. But when the Negro by his own initiative lifts himself from his low state to the highest human standard he will be in a position to stop begging and praying, and demand a place that no individual, race or nation will be able to deny him (p. 21-22).



Southern White school systems began withholding funds from Black schools. In 1915, South Carolina spent \$13.98 per white child and \$2.57 per Black child (Bennett, 1993). There were very few high schools in the South for Blacks. Atlanta, Georgia did not have any high schools for Blacks in 1917 (Bennett, 1993).

The Great Migration occurred as many African Americans left the overt racism of the South to realize resentment in the North of the influx of Blacks. By the 1940s, during President Franklin Roosevelt's time in office, the political ground for challenging Jim Crow had been laid (Davis, 2007). School racial populations were allowed to be separate but equal until the Supreme Court, in a unanimous opinion, ruled in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) (Kopetz, Lease & Warren-King, 2006). In 1951, in Topeka, Kansas, a black third grader named Linda Brown walked a mile to her Black elementary school, even though a White school was closer. Her father, Oliver Brown, was denied permission to enroll his daughter in the White school. Supported by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and other Black parents, Oliver Brown requested an injunction that would forbid the segregation of schools in Topeka, Kansas (Cozzens, 1995). At the trial, the NAACP argued segregation harmed black children's self-esteem and implied inferiority status. Thurgood Marshall, lead attorney for the NAACP, and other civil rights leaders felt segregating public schools would maintain the racial distinctions in America. The Board of Education argued since segregation was the American way of life, segregated schools would better prepare black children for adulthood. They also argued that great African Americans such as Frederick Douglass came from segregated school (Cozzens, 1995).

In 1951, the court ruled in favor of the Board of Education. However, Brown and

the NAACP appealed to the Supreme Court on October 1, 1951. The court unanimously ruled in favor of *Brown* because, based on the Fourteenth Amendment, Black children were deprived of equal protection and equal opportunities. The Court decided *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) had no place in public education. This case was motivated by the ideology of a separate education could never be equal, and racial integration would provide every child with a quality education (Nichols, 2005). Segregation of schools was officially considered unequal and in violation of the U.S. Constitution. The landmark *Brown* decision began the bussing of children from their neighborhood schools into other schools in order to integrate children and provide a better education.

*Brown v. Board of Education* (U.S. Supreme Court, 1955) came about to enforce the *Brown* decision in 1954 because the states were defiant in following the decision. States were to desegregate with deliberate speed as the local federal district courts watched progress closely (Nichols, 2005). The *Brown* decision aimed to end legally sanctioned segregation, sometimes called de jure segregation. *Brown* was not directed at de facto segregation which means segregation arising from such private actions as housing choices (Armor, 2006). Many schools remained segregated throughout the Nation without federal government supervision and guidelines. Integration was accompanied with much resistance at both local and national levels. Without established guidelines and the same resources in Black segregated schools, the integration of schools did not address the issue of equal curriculums and expectations. American society is premised on the ideology that there have to be “winners” and “losers”. The contest clearly demarcates equality of opportunity, as opposed to an equality of outcomes (Conforti, 1992).

Following the Civil Rights Act, President John F. Kennedy introduced the term “affirmative action” in 1961. It was developed and reinforced under the leadership of President Lyndon Johnson. Affirmative action policies required that active measures be taken to ensure that minorities received the same opportunities for promotions, salary increases, career advancement, school admissions, scholarships, and financial aid that was nearly exclusive to whites. Affirmative action was implemented to level the playing field for all Americans (Brunner, 2007).

Many mainstream publications in the 1960s from educational psychology and linguistics wrote about illiteracy among African Americans. Much of the blame was placed on African Americans, but never on the sociopolitical contexts of limited access. Evidence was presented that African Americans could acquire literacy skills with proper external factors such as teacher competency, adequate resources and funding, and parent information (Slaughter, 1969; Smitherman, 1977). Kunjufu’s (1986) work with African American males in schools highlighted the need for relevant content, adequately trained teachers, and positive perceptions of race as factors in literacy. Educational institutions opposed the requirement of teaching African American culture in order to be consistent with the needs of the race for literacy. However, when proponents of African American schools requested relevant curricula materials to uplift the race, opposition came from the argument of segregation. The opposition says teaching an African American centered curriculum would be a return to segregation and a step backwards in America.

Affirmative action brought about what was and is still known as “white flight” (Nichols, 2005, p. 164). Plans to integrate were increasingly ineffective due to changing demographics, “white flight” out of inner-city school districts. While the segregation of

schools decreased throughout the seventies and eighties, school segregation resurfaced in the 1990s (Nichols, 2005). Also in the 1990s, many African Americans, Mexican Americans and American Indians argued that affirmative action was essential due to past discrimination. White males often opposed affirmative action feeling they were denied equality and justice (Banks, 2003). Due to the civil rights movement and affirmative action, a substantial number of African Americans have been able to enter the middle class (Banks, 2003). However, despite their social class mobility and education, achievement remains low for African American children regardless of socioeconomic status.

Literacy has been a central focus for the African American since the 1700s. There has and still is a struggle for access to proper literacy among African Americans in this country. Literacy is the African American's key to equality in America. Although the Haitians were able to take control of Haiti in 1804; their lack of education led to wars and later a dictatorship. Without literacy, oppression will always be a burden. Literacy can liberate, yet it has to be historically authentic and accurate to inspire the youth of today (Harris, 1992).

### **Urban Education, Literacy, and Assessment**

After the Civil War, many suburbs were developed to enable families to get away from the pollution, commerce, industry, and ghettos in the large cities. This suburbanization as an exit plan phenomenon continued throughout the twentieth century (Garnett, 2007). After World War II, demographics spawned White flight from more urban enclaves. By the 1960s, more Americans lived in suburban areas than central cities

and employment shifted to the suburbs by the 1980s. By the 1990s, the United States became a suburban nation. White fears about school desegregation began as early as 1926, but did not impact the South until 1954 after *Brown v. Board of Education*. Many white residents started moving to the suburbs; however this did not concern many urban Catholics because they were required to send their children to parochial schools. Desegregation accelerated the growth of the suburban neighborhoods by offering legal protection to exiters fleeing integration (Garnett, 2007).

Urban schools did not just appear. Throughout history, urban schools evolved to what we have today, developed by the need to be near the city. Suburb demographics are now becoming similar to urban demographics. The greater intensity of the problems exists in cities, especially large inner cities. Urban schools reflect the urban area, while educators in urban areas have to accept the challenge to solve some of the inner city problem. The urban problem is providing equal education. Those who are affluent (upper and middle class) receive access to the best educational opportunities and schools, while those who are poor receive less access and inferior schools and opportunities. People in affluent areas pay higher property taxes than those in urban areas, which in turn create more money and resources in affluent districts. As this is the case of most school districts in the United States, the schools in the urban areas are not of the same quality as the affluent districts. With this reality, the problems that persist in the urban areas and with the poor continue to haunt America (Kopetz, Lease, Warren-King, 2006).

Research has helped us better understand how much we do not know about helping urban children living at the poverty level become literate (Hoover, 1978; Edmonds, 1979). This is particularly so for African American children who live in

poverty conditions in urban settings. The inner city child does not have the same motivation to learn as do middle class children (Cureton, 1978). Because effective motivation is so important, many changes in literacy instruction could result in higher learning by looking at when and how concepts are introduced.

High-stakes assessments are a large component of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Although many educators criticize assessments because of instruction entailing test taking skills, the urban students need these test taking strategies the most.

Implementing effective instructional strategies help students achieve at higher levels, but sometimes these strategies do not transfer to the assessments (Hoover, Politzer, & Taylor, 1987). Some assessments are syntactically biased based on unnecessary complexities. Negative question leads such as, “Which of the following is not...,” are difficult for many African American children with problems using negatives (Hoover, Politzer, & Taylor, 1987). Inner-city children, although used to talking a great deal, often come to school with a poor auditory set, since they are not accustomed to listening for long periods (Cureton, 1977). Students need to listen in order to respond to questions which require continuous participation in the learning experience.

Proficiency requires being able to read with a high level of accuracy, fluency, and comprehension (Akanbi, 2005). In achieving this goal, students need access to literature with which they identify. Building schema is making connections, and students first make connections to prior experience. The comprehension-enhancing connections are: text-to-text connections, which occur when the student relates the information in the text to other text; text-to-self connections, which occur when the reader relates information in the text to their own lives; and text-to-world connections, which occur when the reader

relates the information to world situations (Keene & Zimmerman, 2007). According to research by Akanbi (2005), using multicultural materials in reading programs have the following benefits: students are engaged in meaningful and motivating experiences; students discover the value of their own experiences; other cultures learn about each other to create a more tolerant world; and students from diverse backgrounds are provided with immediate rewards from the literature.

Although many African American scholars and researchers recognize that the cultural learning styles of the African American child is worthy of examination, there are skeptics (Hammond, Hoover, & McPhail. 2005). Craig Frisby (1993) suggests that defining a Black learning style will continue to widen the achievement gap. Frisby argues that the definition of learning style is confusing. According to Richard Restak (1979), learning styles are biological, like eye color, and cannot be changed. Learning styles are also believed to reflect teacher-discovered educational conditions under which students demonstrate that they learn best (Dunn, DeBello, Brenna, Krinsky, & Murrain, 1981). The instructional strategies designed to adapt to black learning styles are considered the best practices for all students (Frisby, 1993).

### **The Literacy Achievement Gap**

The literacy gap is a persistent, pervasive, and significant disparity in educational achievement and attainment among groups of students (Gunning, 2006). A gap exists between middle and lower socioeconomic students, racial minority and majority students, disabled and nondisabled students, and girls and boys. African American children perform below other groups in reading tests. Test scores are used to examine the gap.

While we do want equity in test scores, what we want even more is equity in individuals' abilities to use their minds well (Jencks, Steele, Ceci, Williams, Kornhaber, Bernstein, Rothstein, Loury & Phillips, 1998). Educators question the use of the test scores as the only indicator of the literacy gap. The scores are used to highlight the existing gap. Another indicator of the literacy gap is the number of schools that do not make adequate yearly progress. Not only must the student body as a whole make adequate yearly progress, but each subgroup must make adequate yearly progress. Subgroups include economically disadvantaged students, major ethnic and racial groups, students with disabilities, and limited English proficient students (Gunning, 2006).

Students demonstrated their reading comprehension skills on the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment. Students read various types of passages and responded to questions (Lee, Grigg, & Donahue, 2007). More than 350,000 students were tested in grades four and eight. Gains have been made overall between 1992 and 2005 (Lee, Grigg, & Donahue, 2007). The Black-White achievement gap decreased for fourth graders between 1992 and 2005. However, there has been no significant change in the Black-White gap between 1992 and 2005 for grade eight (Lee, Grigg, & Donahue, 2007). The high school reading gap is smaller than the second grade gap (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). However, findings across different samples suggest an overall narrowing of the Black-White reading gap between grades two and nine (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Blacks had lower reading and math scores in all grades. Among children with similar test scores one or two grades earlier, Blacks generally acquired fewer reading skills than Whites (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).



Jared Bernstein (1995) reported unemployment rates analyzed by Current Population Survey data on 25-34 year old men and women between 1973 and 1993. Bernstein found that declines in employment by Black men vary by educational level. Between 1973 and 1993 dropout rates fell 14 percentage points which resulted in lower rates of employment. Bernstein found between 1979 and 1989, Black men had a decline in wages relative to White men. Declines in relative wages of Black men occurred at all levels of schooling during the 1980s, even for college graduates (Bernstein, 1995). Three possible explanations proposed by Bernstein was declining unionization and real minimum wage, industry and occupational shifts, and increases in labor market discrimination. Educational attainment is another major indicator of the social progress of Blacks (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Since the early 1970s, standardized tests in reading have become the most common indicators of the educational progress of Black students compared to White students (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

Several reasons for the achievement gap proposed by the Kansas Department of Education (2000) are general risk factors such as family structure, poverty, and lack of quality preschool and childcare. General risk factors were poverty, failing schools, cultural differences, and language barriers. Many students come from single parent homes or parents having little formal education. The Educational Research Service (2004) found urban schools to have newer, less-qualified teachers and high teacher turnover. The schools lacked up-to-date technology and well-stocked libraries. Connections with parents were hostile or non-existent. Absenteeism and suspensions were high. Expectations were also lower in the high-minority urban schools (Educational Research Service, 2004).

### *Summer Reading Loss*

In early years of formal schooling in America, some children had long summer breaks in order to plant and harvest crops. Urban schools sometimes operated year around. The current nine month calendar emerged when many Americans were involved in agriculture, and air conditioning in the summer was unavailable. Although these conditions existed in the early 1900s, the nine month school year remains standard. Educators and parents voiced two concerns about possible negative effects of summer vacation on student learning (Cooper, 2003). One concern is the summer leads to forgetting and requires a significant amount of review in the fall. Also students from higher socioeconomic levels may have additional school-related learning which widens the achievement gap between rich and poor (Cooper, 2003). Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay and Greathouse (1996) conducted a research synthesis of 39 studies to examine the effects of summer vacation on standardized achievement test scores. The meta-analysis indicated that 13 student standardized test scores were at least one month lower in the fall compared to the previous spring (Cooper et al., 1996). Mathematics skills suffered more than reading skills in the summer. All children had a loss in mathematics skills overall, while reading loss was based on economic differences. Middle class children showed gains in reading achievement over the summer while lower income children showed losses. Reading comprehension scores declined for both groups, but the decline was larger for economically disadvantaged students (Cooper et al., 1996).

Mraz and Rasinski (2007) conducted research with 116 first, second, and third graders in a middle income level school. They found that decoding skills of nearly 45

percent of the participants declined between May and September. Also fluency skills of 25 percent of participants declined between May and September. Lower achieving students exhibited a larger reading loss than higher achieving students. Mraz and Rasinski (2007) also worked in a lower socioeconomic urban school where on average students performed significantly below expectations. There they found declines in word decoding among fourth graders. Sixth grader students declined in word decoding and reading fluency.

A study by Karl Alexander and Doris Entwisle (1996) emphasized the importance of schooling in the early years. The idea was to observe children over time to see how initial experiences in school affected their later academic and personal development. The observation was continuous and with all students in order to see what enabled the students to do well. The Beginning School Study was initiated in Baltimore, Maryland in 1982. The sample of 790 beginning first graders was 55 percent African American, 45 percent White; 47 percent were in single parent households; 67 percent were low income; and 38 percent of the children's mothers did not finish high school. Achievement trends for reading comprehension in the verbal domain were monitored from the California Achievement Test. The results indicated that lower socioeconomic students fall behind their higher socioeconomic classmates. The comparison of test scores from the fall of first grade largely reflected family resources and learning opportunities over the preschool years. These differences continued favoring children from high socioeconomic households throughout their schooling (Alexander & Entwisle, 1996).

The California Achievement Test was administered in fall and spring. The impact of schooling, family and community are reflected in the cognitive gains (Alexander &

Entwisle, 1996). The spring to fall testing interval reflected gains over the summer in which school was not a factor. Over a five year period, children's advantages accumulated in elementary school. Across all five summers, the high socioeconomic student group gained 46 points in reading comprehension, whereas the middle and low socioeconomic student groups stayed the same. In fall to spring testing, the low socioeconomic students and high socioeconomic students made nearly the same amount of gains, and the middle socioeconomic students made the most gains. The increasing achievement gap in elementary school between low and high socioeconomic level can be attributed almost entirely to gains made in the summer by high socioeconomic student groups (Alexander & Entwisle, 1996).

### **Impact of Successful Urban Preschool Programs**

According to Ronald Edmonds (1979), there had never been a time in the United State public school history that we had abundance in knowledge in how to teach all students. His definition of education in this context refers to acquiring the basic school skills that assure pupils successful access to the next level of schooling. Although Edmonds made the statement in 1979, the struggle to meet the expectations of education in the urban schools still exists. The following section examines successful schools in urban districts in the United States. Edmonds (1979) stated that we can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. The knowledge, information and research are there to use. He continues to say, "whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far" (p.24).

One way to close the achievement gap is to begin early (Gunning, 2006). A longitudinal study conducted by the Language Experience Activities Program (LEAP) was one of the most rigorously researched preschool initiatives with poverty-level African American children (Perkins & Cooter, 2005). The Margaret Cone Preschool is a Head Start Center in a high crime, high poverty area. The goal of the Cone center is to provide students with the educational opportunities to ensure employment, college options, and high school graduation. The curriculum components of the Language Experience Activities Program emphasize the areas of receptive language, phonological awareness, letter identification, basic concepts, and motor skills (Perkins & Cooter, 2005). Pre- and post-assessments are used to measure the growth of each student. Abbas (2001) reported the children ranged from the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile to as high as the 94<sup>th</sup> percentile in vocabulary and pre-reading skills. At the beginning of the collaboration in 1990, 42 percent of the third graders passed the TAAS (the state academic test); in 2001, 98 percent of students passed.

Some of the key elements of the Language Experience Activities Program were: (1) language with stories; (2) language with words; (3) language with sounds; (4) language with letters; (5) language with ideas; (6) language with prewriting motor skills. Language with stories is reading aloud to students. This is essential for helping low-income African American learners. Reading aloud teaches story structure and syntax, as well as builds the students' listening and speaking vocabularies. Language with words helps enhance grammar and syntax, while language with sounds introduces phonological awareness. Children segment and blend two and three syllable words. Language with letters introduces children to the alphabetic principle in a systematic way. Students use

“air writing” to practice making letters. Language with ideas provides students with games and dramatic play to learn concepts. These pieces are eventually put into center areas in the classroom for students to use. Language with prewriting motor skills enhances students ability to grip the pencil and write on lines (Perkins & Cooter, 2005).

Another study conducted by Ladson-Billings (1992) identified methods from eight effective classroom teachers of African American children in urban schools. The eight effective teachers were identified by parents and principals. Ladson-Billings (1992) credited their effectiveness to culturally relevant pedagogy such as cooperative learning, multicultural materials, phonics, and teachers who care about their students and their culture.

In terms of evidence-based research focusing specifically on low-income African American children, it seems clear that we are still in the early stages (Perkins & Cooter, 2005). The Language Enrichment Activities Program research has provided increased understanding and scientific evidence. African American city preschoolers who live in poverty benefit from:

- structured language development aimed at increasing listening and speaking vocabularies;
- direct instruction in phonological awareness followed by exposure to the alphabetic principle and alphabet learning;
- exposure to rich multicultural literature in a variety of genres;
- parent involvement in pre-literacy learning activities;
- Standard English grammar instruction;

- Word work using rhyme, word opposites, position words, plurals, and present and past tense words; and
- Prewriting motor skill development (Perkins & Cooter, 2005).

The Chicago Longitudinal Study (Reynolds, 2000) investigated the educational and social development of a same-age cohort of 1,539 low-income, minority children. Ninety-three percent of the students were African American. All of the children grew up in high-poverty neighborhoods in central-city Chicago. The Chicago Longitudinal Study was designed to provide policy-relevant knowledge that can be used to help meet the educational needs of children in urban and other settings (Reynolds, 2000). The children in the study were born in 1979 and 1980. Some children attended full-day kindergarten programs, while most participated in the Child-Parent Centers in the preschool. The Child-Parent Center Program opened in 1967 on Chicago's Westside. It is second to Head Start as the oldest federally funded preschool program. The Child-Parent Center Program is designed to promote children's academic success in the early years and to help create a foundation for learning. It also facilitates parental involvement in their children's education. Two of the four goals of the study were related to the Child-Parent Center Programs. One goal was to evaluate the effects of the Child-Parent Centers on youth, adult, and family well-being. The other was to understand how participating in the Child Parent Center program led to better school and social adjustments (Reynolds, 2000).

The components of the Child-Parent Center program were half-day preschool, half or full-day kindergarten in 19 centers, and first to third grade in 13 elementary

schools. Child-Parent Center programs were staffed by a head teacher, a parent-resource teacher, a school-community representative, classroom teachers and aides, a clerk and a janitor. Parents agreed to participate in the program at least one-half day per week (Reynolds, 2000).

Student outcomes were assessed using measures including the Iowa Test of Basic Skills standardized tests, school records, parent participation, teacher ratings, juvenile court records, and children's self perceptions of competence. The University of Wisconsin, Waisman Center along with Arthur J. Reynolds (2002) examined the Child-Parent Center program's impact on academic achievement and development in adulthood. They found youth who participated in the Child-Parent Center program compared to the comparison group had 41 percent reduction in the rate of violent arrests, 33 percent reduction in the rate of juvenile arrests, 40 percent reduction in grade retention, and 29 percent higher high school completion rate, including a 47 percent higher rate of school completion for boys (Reynolds, 2002).

The High/Scope Perry Preschool Project began in 1962 in Ypsilanti, Michigan. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the High/Scope model of teachers helping children plan, implement, and review their learning activities. David Weikart and his colleagues developed the model and began the study in one school district (Schweinhart, Barnes & Weikart, 1993). Weikart wanted all students to get an early start; therefore, he created the Ypsilanti Public School early childhood program. Because of the growth of the program, Weikart and his colleagues established the nonprofit High/Scope Educational Research Foundation in 1970 to house the early childhood program. Since 1970, High/Scope has published six comprehensive monographs on the Perry



Preschoolers: one on the effects at the end of children's enrollment, one at age 10, one at age 15, one at age 19, one at 27, and one at age 40 in 2005 (Schweinhart, Barnes & Weikart, 1993). Schweinhart (2002b) stated they did not set out to conduct such an extraordinarily long study. However, each set of critical findings served as the impetus the next round of data collection.

Comparing the preschool group to the no-preschool group (Schweinhart, 2002b) the following significant differences were found through age 27:

- Only 7 percent of Perry Preschoolers had been arrested five or more times, compared to 35 percent of those who had not participated in a preschool program. Only 31 percent of the Perry Preschoolers had ever been arrested compared to 51 percent of the control group.
- Fifty-seven percent of mothers in the program group gave birth out of wedlock, compared with 83 percent of mothers in the control group.
- Perry Preschoolers were four times more likely (29 percent) to earn \$2000 or more per month than were adults in the no-program group.
- Almost three times as many (36 percent) owned their homes, compared to the no-program group (13 percent).
- Seventy-one percent of the Perry Preschoolers graduated from high school or obtained a General Education Development certification, compared with 54 percent of those in the no-program group.
- The Perry Preschoolers also had significantly higher average achievement scores at the age of 14 and literacy scores at the age of 19.

Lawrence Schweinhart (2002a) identified three strengths of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project. First, the design involved random assignment of poor, African American children either to a preschool program group or a no-preschool program group. Second, longitudinal studies missed very little data—an average of only five percent per measure, minimizing attrition as a confounding variable. Third, the pattern of findings is consistent and plausibly related to the preschool program.

The Carolina Abecedarian Program was designed to prepare children for school, to ease their transition into elementary school, and to investigate the short and long term effects of providing at risk children with early educational experiences (Ramey & Campbell, 1991). Four cohorts of individuals, born between 1972 and 1977, were randomly assigned at four months old to either the early educational intervention group or the control group (Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, 2007). The Carolina Abecedarian Project was conducted by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. A total of 57 children were part of the intervention group and a total of 54 children were in the control group (Campbell & Ramey, 1995). All children were born in poverty to mothers without high school diplomas, and 25 percent were living with both parents at the time of birth. Ninety eight percent were African American (Campbell & Ramey, 1995). The caregiver-to-infant ratio was initially 1:3 and increased to 1:6 as children aged (Campbell & Ramey, 1995). The targeted areas for teachers to focus on were cognitive and fine motor skills, social and self-help skills, language and gross motor skills.

The curriculum was individualized to meet each child's needs, which was also delivered to parents in order to work with their child at home (Frank Porter Graham Child

Development Institute, 2007). Children's progress was monitored over time with follow-up studies at ages 12, 15, and 21. The Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (2007) reported the following benefits of the program: Children who participated in the project had higher cognitive scores from toddler years to age 21, higher academic achievement scores in reading and math, completed more years of education, had children later, and their mothers achieved higher educational and employment status.

The early childhood field is deeply indebted to these three studies of high-quality early education programs because they provide evidence of the economic and academic benefits of early childhood education (Galinsky, 2006). Addressing the impact of high-quality early childhood programs, providing sound research designs, providing longitudinal research, using different types of outcomes or results, and calculating the financial benefits to the child and society over time are several features that make the three studies relevant (Galinsky, 2006). All three studies had the following overarching principles: an early start; well-educated, well-trained, and well-compensated teachers; small class sizes; many contact hours with teachers; working with parents; and a focus on learning. This information will be used to help design interview questions and an observation protocol for the qualitative portion of this research.

### **Urban Successful School Achievement Study**

George Weber (1971) conducted a study of four instructionally effective inner city schools in order to challenge earlier research that ascribed failure in the urban poor areas to conditions of poverty. In the four inner city schools used in the study, a majority of third graders were reading on grade level. Two schools were located in Manhattan,

NY; one in Kansas City, Missouri; and one in Los Angeles, CA. Although this class study was done in 1971, many of the characteristics of the four schools could be replicated in schools today. This study was also conducted at a time in American history in which many viewed African Americans as genetically incapable of high academic performance and so different from the dominant culture that their education had to be inferior to Whites.

Weber (1971) identified the unit of study as the school. He chose school because of the many influences the school has on neighborhoods, organization of instruction, and curriculum alignment. In defining student achievement, Weber used a national grade norm score. Third grade was used to assess the basic reading skills. Weber developed the assessment used, which was assumed reliable and valid. The third grade scores exceeded the national norm and the percentage of nonreaders was low. The findings in the study posed eight factors common to the success of the four inner city schools: strong leadership, high expectations, good atmosphere, strong emphasis on reading, additional reading personnel, use of phonics, individualization, and careful evaluation of pupil progress. Strong leadership encompassed the skills of the principals. The principals had knowledge of the instructional programs. They were able to manage goal setting and provide instructional leadership for their teachers to ensure they met the standards.

Nonessential school-level factors were identified in the four schools' success. These factors were considered nonessential due to the fact that they were not consistent in the four schools. These factors were small class size, achievement grouping, high quality of teaching, school personnel of the same ethnic background as pupils, preschool education, and outstanding physical facilities. Not all class sizes were small and used

achievement grouping. Some teachers were not high quality or from the same ethnic background as the pupils. Not all students had a preschool education, and not all buildings were outstanding facilities. A critique of this study by Irvin McPhail (2005), stated that many of the nonessential factors should have been part of the common factors. The primary factor of school success is the high quality of teaching. However, Weber noticed in his study that not all of the teachers were high in quality. McPhail also critiques the school as a unit, arguing that the classroom should be the unit of analysis.

Regardless of the critiques of Weber's (1971) study, many researchers agree he led the way for research in what works best in low income, urban schools. The findings strongly suggest that, regardless of socioeconomic status, schools can make the difference for all children (McPhail, 2005).

### **A High Achieving Black Elementary School Study**

A study conducted by Barbara Sizemore in 1983 examined high achieving Black elementary public schools. Sizemore refers to high achieving Black schools as an abashing anomaly in any public school system. It forces the system to explain the number of low achieving Black schools. Questions are then raised about procedures and policies which allow low achieving schools to remain open (Sizemore, 1983).

The study was funded by the National Institute of Education to determine the organizational factors that were significant in producing above average scores on standardized tests in reading and math. Nonparticipant observations were conducted as well as the study of documents, materials, records and reports to examine the routines, scenarios and processes of the school (Sizemore, 1983).

The findings showed that teachers did not use the norm referenced standardized tests for instructional information. Rather, they used criterion referenced tests to focus on procedural knowledge, not just declarative knowledge. Small and large group instruction was provided throughout the day based on test data in each school. Teachers planned together and shared knowledge and information regularly (Sizemore, 1983).

The two highest achieving schools out of the three operated through tightly coupled relationships between teachers and the principals. Teachers in these schools were an integral part of the decision making, as well as a resource for the principals. In the third school, the principal was “loosely coupled” with the central office (Sizemore, 1983). Also teachers were evaluated and removed if unsatisfactory teacher ratings were present in the two high achieving schools.

In the highest achieving school, parents were treated as equals in a partnership. However, the other two schools treated parents as clients in which the principal and teachers defined the parents’ roles within the schools. In addition, discipline problems were less in the school in which parents were treated as equals.

Instructional factors contributing to the three high achieving schools were vertical and horizontal planning, teaching of Black history and the use of Black literature. Teachers used reading programs and aligned lessons to the reading and mathematics series. Lessons were not skipped; all students were exposed to all lessons. No pretesting was conducted to investigate if skills were already mastered prior to teaching.

Sizemore’s study emphasizes factors related to the No Child Left Behind Act today. Both Sizemore and the No Child Left Behind Act state the need to recruit and hire

teachers and principals who believe all children can learn. Both suggest stronger accountability of all school administrators and teachers (Sizemore, 1983; USDE, 2005).

### **Reading for Comprehension: An Urban High School Study**

Many researchers, teachers and parents have been concerned about the reading skills of students in secondary schools. These critical years are considered the last chance for teachers to instruct students before they enter college or the workforce. Secondary teachers feel the sense of urgency to educate and correct the oversights of the previous years (Marnell & Hammond, 2005). Southwest DeKalb High School in Georgia, a large urban school, improved reading achievement of ninth grade students. Administrators and teachers worked to translate the theories of Perkins (1992), Graves and Graves (1994), and other researchers in to practice. The main goal of the teachers was to help students read for understanding. Perkins (1992) identified three important tasks in reading for understanding: retaining important information; understanding topics deeply; and application of knowledge. Also Graves and Graves (1994) contributed to the concept of scaffolding student learning in order to make the goal of reading comprehension.

Administrators were concerned with ninth grade students who read at low levels of comprehension entering the school. Reading now had to be a focus in the content area classes in order for students to comprehend the content. Many of the administrators' questions addressed how to help students comprehend the text books more quickly, transfer reading skills and strategies into the content area, and deal with issues of equity and self esteem. An administrator was assigned to the ninth grade academy to coordinate

staff development and instructional concerns. Students were tested for base line data. Nearly half of the ninth grade students entering the school in 1998 tested below seventh grade reading level. That year, two ninth grade teachers implemented the Dual Text Reading Initiative to a group of fifteen students. Students were able to begin the content reading in a lower level trade book so that comprehension and success with the text was present. They were then ready to continue instruction with the textbook. All fifteen students showed reading gains.

Based on the gains, the Dual Text Reading Initiative was expanded for the 1999-2000 school year. The base line data for the 32 students showed that the project included students ranging from third grade level to eighth grade level readers. All teachers were able to attend professional development and plan instructionally as a team. A parent volunteer and a reading specialist also supported the reading instruction which enhanced the project. Teacher observations and reflections reported the need for instruction in syntax, grammar, spelling, and work attack skills. Students had to learn syllabication rules and meanings from roots, prefixes and suffixes. Content area teachers were not aware of the many basic skills children needed to read the text, not to mention understanding the text. Once students were able to read the text and work through comprehension strategies, the elaboration of the content resulted in the information being stored in long term memory. By the end of the school year, all students showed improvement. The average positive gain was an increase over two grade levels in reading and reading comprehension (Marnell & Hammond, 2005). The Dual Text Reading Initiative was implemented in all ninth grade classrooms based on the gains made in the previous years.



In 2000-2001 Southwest DeKalb High School piloted a project for sophomores in order to continue the success from the prior year and program. The Skilled Comprehenders Pilot Project (Marnell, 2000) was designed to teach strategies to strengthen reading skills. Reading strategies used were read alouds, think alouds, paired reading, and guided reading, Directed Reading-Thinking activities, silent reading, paraphrasing, vocabulary in context exercises and discussion, note taking, and cooperative learning. Metacognition became a focus throughout the curriculum. Many teachers believed the students were empowered by the understanding of text. They were able to move through Bloom's taxonomy and see it at work. Students were able to analyze, compare, synthesize, and evaluate. Students began to see their role in the world as contributing and positive (Marnell & Hammond, 2005).

This study emphasized the importance of reading skills at a young age in order for high school teachers to meet the expectations of high school instruction. The main instructional reading skills of syntax, word attack skills, grammar, spelling, syllabication rules, and meanings of prefixes and suffixes were taught in this high school and should have been addressed in the lower grades. Teachers were able to see improvements in the students reading achievement after attending professional development and collaborating with other teachers on effective instructional strategies.

### **National Assessments**

In 2007, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessed more than 350,000 students at grades four and seven on the National Reading Assessment. The

reading assessment measures students' abilities in two dimensions: reading contexts and aspects of reading.

The first context for reading assessment questions included reading for literary experiences. Students explore events, characters, themes, settings, plots, actions, and language of literary works by reading excerpts from novels, short stories, poems, plays, legends, biographies, myths, and folktales. Another context for reading was reading for information. This involved reading materials such as excerpts from magazines, newspapers, textbooks, essays, for a better understanding of the world. The final context for reading was reading to perform a task. This required the reader to apply what was learned from reading materials such as directions for repairs, train schedules, or maps. The four aspects of reading assessed were general understanding, developing interpretations, making reader and text connections, and examining content and structure. Each student took a portion of the test, which was timed, and was comprised of a written passage followed by a large number of questions related to the passage. Each section contained a reading passage with a number of questions related to the passage (Lee, Grigg & Donahue, 2007).

The achievement levels were reported as basic, proficient, and advanced. Basic indicated partial mastery of required knowledge at the given grade level. Proficient denoted competency over challenging subject matter at the given grade level. Advanced represented high test scores. For the fourth grade national assessment, the cut scores were 208, 238 and 268 for Basic, Proficient and Advanced, respectively. The average score was 221 with a standard deviation of 36. (Lee, Grigg & Donahue, 2007). The findings show that overall *all* fourth grade student groups made gains in the National

Reading Assessment of 2007. The Black student group made gains in 1992 and 2005. The gap between Black and White student groups *decreased* in 2007.

The average score for the state in which the present study was conducted was 225 in 2007. Twenty-eight percent of students scored below Basic, 36 percent scored at the Basic level, 28 percent scored at the Proficient level, and eight percent scored in the advanced range. All averages scores were above the national average (NAEP, 2007).

The National Assessment of Educational Progress also assessed eighth graders in all three contexts for reading. The assessment included 13 passages and 140 questions. The reading achievement levels were Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. However, the cut scores for Basic, Proficient and Advanced were 243, 281 and 323, respectively. The average score was 263 with a standard deviation of 35 (NAEP, 2007). In Kansas, the average score was 267. Nineteen percent, 45 percent, 33 percent and 2 percent of the students scored below Basic, at Basic, as Proficient, and as Advanced, respectively (NAEP, 2007).

**Table 2.1: 2007 NAEP Score Results by Race**

<b>Racial Group</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade Average Scores in the U.S. (sd)</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade Average Scores in Kansas (sd)</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Grade Average Scores in the U.S. (sd)</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Grade Average Scores in Kansas (sd)</b>
Black	203(33)	208(33)	245(33)	245(32)
White	231(32)	229(30)	272(31)	272(28)
Point Gap	27	21	27	27

The National Reading Assessment scores relate to the current study by examining the trend among African American students. The averages for Kansas in the study are higher than national averages. By focusing on the three urban school districts in the state and the state reading assessment, it will be apparent if the trend remains the same with a different assessment.

### **Kansas Reading Standards**

The Kansas standard for reading is divided into four benchmarks with several indicators aligned to the benchmark goal (Appendix A). Grades kindergarten through twelve have the same standard; *the student reads and comprehends text across the curriculum*. The benchmarks are also the same. The benchmarks were aligned from the recommendation by the National Reading Panel (2000). The National Reading Panel recommended the following five areas of instruction are critical goals to producing fluent readers: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Under each benchmark goal or recommendation are indicators for success in meeting the goal. The indicators are specific for each grade level.

Kansas benchmark one is the understanding of the alphabetic principle, which centers on phonemic awareness and phonics. Before children learn to read print, they must be aware that words are made up of phonemes or individual speech sounds. This is phonemic awareness. To show phonemic awareness, students identify placement of sounds, isolation of sounds, deletion of sounds, blending sounds, and segmenting sounds in a word. Children need phonemic awareness in order to relate phonemes to graphemes in written words (Armbuster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001).

The National Reading Panel (2000) found that phonemic awareness helps children learn to read and spell. Children who enter school with no phonemic awareness experience less success in learning to read. The Panel found fifty-two published studies that met the National Reading Panel criteria (NRP, 2000). The research focused much of the instruction on preschoolers, kindergartners, and first graders. Phonemic awareness helped primary age students with reading and spelling. In a longitudinal study by Share, Jorm, Maclean, and Matthew (1984) kindergarteners were assessed on many measures when entering school, including phonemic segmentation, letter-name knowledge, memory for sentences, vocabulary, father's occupational status, parent reports of reading to children, television watching, and other measures. Researchers examined which measured best how well the children were reading one and two years later. Results showed that phonemic awareness was the top predictor, along with letter knowledge. Phonemic awareness correlated 0.66 with reading achievement scores in kindergarten, and 0.62 with scores in first grade (Farstrup & Samuels, 2002).

Phonics instruction is designed for beginners in the primary grades and for children having difficulty learning to read (National Reading Panel, 2000). Beginning readers learn the alphabetic system, which includes matching letter-sound correspondences and spelling patterns. The National Reading Panel (2000) concluded that phonics should be taught explicitly and systematically. Systematic phonics instruction is a way of teaching that stressed the acquisition of letter-sound correspondences and their use to read and spell words. Phonics instruction is more effective when taught in first grade or before. Low-achieving students in second through sixth grades were not significantly impacted by phonics instruction. Phonics instruction

that is systematic benefits all students regardless of socio-economic status (Harris and Hodges, 1995).

Jeanne Chall (1967) examined both the underlying theory and the classroom realities of the new phonics programs. She found that early and systematic instruction in phonics seems to lead to better achievement in reading than later and less systematic phonics instruction. The National Reading Panel (2000) emphasized that phonics instruction is a means to an end. The goal of reading and writing is comprehension. Growth in reading comprehension is also boosted by systematic phonics instruction for younger students and reading disabled students. It is necessary for a child to learn sequential decoding. Grossen (1997) suggested decodable text be required for beginning reading instruction. Hiebert (1999) argued this statement by making the case for children reading text that provides practice with high-frequency words, along with opportunities to apply decoding skills and use meaning-based cues. By only using decodable text, children aren't able to apply all word-identification cues that fluent readers use. Children primarily begin decoding by analogy, using onsets and rimes. Larger words require knowledge of patterns and analogies. Children then have to use their knowledge of morphemes, which also builds vocabulary. Phonics instruction is an essential part for beginning reading instruction (NRP, 2000). Being aware of sounds and decoding words leads to fluency.

Kansas benchmark two focuses on the ability to read fluently. Concern has grown over students not achieving fluency in reading. Pinnell, Pikulski, Wixson, Campbell, Gough and Beatty (1995) reported a study by the National Assessment of Educational Progress that examined the reading fluency of a nationally representative sample of

fourth graders. The study found forty-four percent of students to be disfluent even with grade level stories that the student had read under supportive testing conditions. Furthermore, that study revealed a close relationship between fluency and reading comprehension. Many researchers agree that the more students read, the more fluent they become. One definition of a fluent reader is a reader who can read text with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. Another definition of fluency is freedom from word identification problems that might hinder comprehension (Samuels, 2002).

Reading instruction does not end once students have phonemic awareness and phonics skills. Richard Allington (1983) described fluency as the “most neglected” reading skill. Phonics, fluency, and comprehension are directly related. Children with many decoding errors are not fluent and cannot usually comprehend what was read. Increased attention on decoding decreases attention on comprehension. A fluent reader is one who can perform multiple tasks—such as word recognition and comprehension at the same time (NRP, 2000).

The last two Kansas benchmarks focus on comprehension of text. Benchmark three is vocabulary. Davis (1942) presented evidence that comprehension is comprised of two skills: word knowledge or vocabulary and reasoning in reading. The National Reading Panel (2000) prepared a report to examine the scientific evidence on the effect of vocabulary instruction on reading achievement. Despite the clear importance of vocabulary, recent research has focused more on overall comprehension than on vocabulary. The theory of teaching vocabulary to improve reading ability has been difficult to demonstrate. Because vocabulary is tied to individual words while comprehension is more thought of in much larger units, it is simple to separate

vocabulary from comprehension. In order to comprehend the larger units, readers have to correctly prove individual words (National Reading Panel, 2000).

The Panel found no research that explicitly addressed the measurement of vocabulary; therefore, evidence presented is implied. *The Teacher's Word Book* (Thorndike, 1921) led to vocabulary as a focus on educational research (Farstrup & Samuels, 2002). In the 1950s, vocabulary researched declined. Terman (1916) suggested vocabulary knowledge is one of the best indicators of verbal ability. Beck, Perfetti, and McKeown (1982) found teaching the vocabulary in a selection can improve students' comprehension of that selection. Four components of an effective vocabulary program are wide reading, teaching individual words, teaching word learning strategies, and fostering word consciousness. Children need opportunities to investigate language. Homophones, homographs, idioms, clichés, and puns are entertaining for children and adults to learn. Dale (1965) attempted to capture the incremental nature of word learning by proposing four levels of word knowledge: (1) never having seen it before; (2) knowing there is such a word, but not knowing what it means; (3) having a vague and context-bound meaning for the word; and (4) knowing and remembering the word.

The fourth and final Kansas benchmark is comprehension. Comprehension as a process began to receive scientific attention only in the past thirty years (National Reading Panel, 2000). It began with the question of whether readers are aware of comprehension failure and if so, what actions do they take when this occurs. Markman's (1978) initial finding was that both young and mature readers failed to detect logical and semantic inconsistencies in the text. This finding resulted in identification and instruction of strategies to improve readers' comprehension. Readers read for a variety of



reasons: to entertain, to learn, or to carry out a task. Most instruction on comprehension was only conducted in the content areas and not during reading instruction. The classroom teacher must model for students and guide them through instruction of comprehension strategies so that students can use them independently.

Comprehension is the fifth area of reading instruction examined by the National Reading Panel (2000). Comprehension is critically important to the development of children's reading skills and, therefore, their ability to obtain an education. Comprehension enables children to develop complex skills and strategies. The National Reading Panel examined 203 studies which identified 16 categories of text comprehension instruction, eight of which showed improvement of comprehension by scientific evidence. These eight strategies are:

1. Comprehension monitoring
2. Cooperative learning
3. Graphic organizer
4. Recognizing story structure
5. Answering questions
6. Generating questions
7. Summarizing
8. Multiple-strategy use (National Reading Panel, 2000).

These revised Kansas reading standards were implemented in 2005, and new tests were implemented in 2006 (Kansas State Department of Education, 2007). The test format consists of three, forty-five minute sessions by paper pencil or computer. All questions are multiple choice with four to eight items per indicator (Kansas State

Department of Education, 2007). There are five performance levels: exemplary, exceeds standard, meets standard, approaches standard, or academic warning. The 2008 Adequate Yearly Progress reading goal in 75.6 percent for 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades (Kansas State Department of Education, 2007). The scores reported are student performance levels, student percent correct, and results by indicator (Kansas State Department of Education, 2007).

### **Summary**

Chapter Two examined the historical perspectives and theories of the African American reader. DuBois (1903), Woodson (1932), and Kunjufu (2002) emphasize the importance of literacy to the Black race as the key to political, cultural, social, and economic independence. Historically, the education of African Americans has been inferior in America; the No Child Left Behind Act addresses subgroups in which African American student reading achievement scores are reported.

Theories related to learning to read by Piaget (1963), Vygotsky (1962), and Freire (1970) are also reviewed in Chapter Two. Piaget's theory of cognitive development (1963) leads to a practice of incorporating students' culture into classroom instruction. Facilitating accommodations and assimilations through teacher lessons will reinforce the movement through the cognitive stages of development. Vygotsky's (1962) theory of social constructivism impacts classroom instruction by the emphasis on language and culture in development. Meanwhile, Freire's (1970) theory of critical literacy found that adults enhanced their literacy skills when motivated by liberation in order to fight oppression.

Relating historical perspectives to current urban school literacy issues such as the literacy achievement gap and high stakes assessments provided background information in critically analyzing the implementation of the federal mandate of *No Child Left Behind*. Data collected for public information of school progress were derived from standardized and state assessment scores. Chapter Two examined the NAEP standardized assessment results for fourth and eighth grade students in reading. States assess students based on standards provided by the State Board of Education. Kansas reading assessment content aligned with the National Reading Panel (2000) was examined to determine the alignment of standards and assessments.

## **CHAPTER 3-METHODOLOGY**

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if the mandated No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has made a difference in state reading assessment scores for African American fifth-graders in three Kansas urban school districts. The study also attempted to identify schools with high performing students to determine effective instructional factors which may be impacting reading achievement. The study focused on the following subgroups: African American fifth grade students in years both immediately prior to the implementation of No Child Left Behind (1997-2001) and years during the implementation of the mandate (2002-2007). The data were gathered from the state reading assessment scores of fifth-grade students in District A, District B, and District C.

Chapter Three describes the research methodology: the research questions, research design, data collection, data analysis, reliability, validity, and trustworthiness. The research methods are mixed, quantitative and qualitative methods. In addition to data analysis of quantitative test scores, the study also identified high performing urban schools and utilized interviews and observations to determine instructional factors contributing to higher test scores for fifth grade African American students.

### **Research Questions**

The implementation of No Child Left Behind began in 2002. Schools working to increase reading achievement of students were then revising instructional factors used before the new law was implemented. Schools challenged to improve student

performance the most were urban schools. Students had been assessed at grade five before the implementation of the new law. With the signing of No Child Left Behind, students would now be tested in grades three through eight. In examining the impact of the federally mandated No Child Left Behind Act, the following two questions about fifth grade reading assessment were addressed by the current study.

1. Is there a significant difference between/among fifth-grade reading scores of African American students in Kansas urban schools in 2000-2001, before the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, compared to 2002-2007, during the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act?
2. In urban high performing schools highly populated by African-American students, what instructional factors may have contributed to fifth-grade African-American students performing at high levels on the Kansas reading assessment?

### **Research Design**

This research design was a mixed methods quantitative/qualitative study in which the researcher examined state assessment data in a retrospective manner. A retrospective quantitative comparative design was used to analyze data stored in the archives of the testing center, the Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation, located at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. Demographic information on race, grade and state reading assessment scores were gathered. The data were analyzed using a 2 (Time of Measurement) x 3 (District A, B, and C) analysis of variance (Bruning & Kintz, 1977). The analysis of the statistical data allowed the researcher to infer whether a significant

difference in African American students meeting the reading standards and increasing total reading scores could be identified in the time before No Child Left Behind (1997-2001) and during the No Child Left Behind enactment (2002-2007). Next, six urban schools with high performing African American students were identified. In addition, qualitative methods were used in which principal/teacher interviews and observations of fifth grade classrooms were conducted to determine factors impacting fifth grade reading achievement test scores in six high performing urban schools.

### **Population and Selected School Sites**

The population in this study included all fifth-grade African American students in the three largest urban districts in Kansas. The study focused on school data from the state reading assessment. The data reflected the academic performance of fifth-grade students from 2000-2001 (before NCLB) and from 2002-2007 (after NCLB).

District A consists of 58 elementary schools (K-5), 17 middle schools (6-8) and 11 high schools (9-12). There is a total of 48, 770 students in the district, of which 21 percent are African American. Sixty-six percent of students are on free and reduced lunch. The two schools identified as high performing were School Seven (A-7) and School Nine (A-9).

School Seven (A-7) contained three classrooms and a gymnasium. It was built in 1953. More additions were added and the building was then used for storage from 1988 to 1994. In 1994, the building was renamed. School A-7 was joined into District A by attachment in 1963. The building now holds an enrollment of 269 students. Fourteen teachers are certified teaching employees, five are certified special education employees,

and 2.7 are certified nonteaching employees. The school day begins at 9:00AM and ends at 4:10PM.

School Nine (A-9) was built and opened in 1956. The building was designed for 225 students. The school was named after a woman who fought against child abuse and the rights of women and served on the Board of Education. In 1992, the school became a performing arts magnet. The school now has an enrollment of 246. School A-9 has 19 certified teaching employees, five certified special education employees, and two certified nonteaching employees. The school day begins at 9:00AM and ends at 4:10PM.

District B has 30 elementary schools, eight middle schools (6-8), and four senior high schools. The total number of students attending the district in 2006-2007 was 19,561. Forty-four percent of students in the district were Black. The percentage of students on free and reduced lunch was 76 percent. The high performing schools identified in District B was School Five (B-5) and School 29 (B-29).

School Five (B-5) was built in 1965 on 7.4 acres. It was attached to the district in January of 1967. In 2001, voters approved a proposal of a bond to put air conditioning in the building. The school has an enrollment of 190 students. Fourteen teachers are certified, one is certified in special education. Three employees are certified nonteaching employees. The school day begins at 9:00AM and ends at 4:00PM.

School 29 (B-29) was originally a church and converted into a school in 1869. In 1887, a two story building was built on the present day site. The first floor was for White students and the second floor was for Black children. School B-29 now has 190 students, 10 certified teaching employees, one special education employee, and three certified nonteaching employees. The school day begins at 9:00AM and ends at 4:00PM.

District C consists of 21 elementary schools, six middle schools (6-8), three high schools, and one high school charter school. There were a total of 13,465 students in the year 2006-2007; 25 percent were Black. In the district, 65.9 percent of students were on free and reduced lunch. District C schools identified as high performing were School 15 (C-15) and 17 (C-17).

School 15 (C-15) was constructed in 1955. Two wings were added in 1958 and 1968. The media center was added in 1970. In 2002 the building was updated and air conditioned. It was renamed in 1993. The enrollment is 227 students. School C-15 has 22 certified teaching employees, three certified special education employees, and three certified nonteaching employees. The school day begins at 8:30AM and ends at 3:30PM.

School 17 (C-17) was built in 1955. It was named after a former high school teacher that later became a principal and then superintendent of schools. The school contains 160 students. Fourteen teachers are certified teaching employees, seven are certified special education employees, and three are certified nonteaching employees. The school day begins at 8:30AM and ends at 3:30PM.

Demographic tables (see Appendix B) present percentages of African American students and the percentage of all students meeting the standard on the state reading assessment for all elementary schools in the three school districts for the 2006-2007 school year. The six highest performing fifth grade schools from the three school districts were identified. These schools were determined by identifying schools in which more of the African American subgroup tested met the standard, exceeded the standard or scored exemplary. Also, the average mean of scores were higher for African American students from years 2001-2007. Through interviews and classroom observations, the



qualitative aspect identified instructional methods thought to contribute to the high performing test scores of African American students. Program adoption, instructional methodologies, professional development, amount of planning and teaching time, communication with parents, and instructional changes since NCLB began were topics to be covered in the administrator and teacher interviews. Time in each school was spent observing and identifying other instructional factors contributing to high achievement of test scores. The researcher observed the reading instruction time in each of the six schools for a one hour and thirty minute session.

### **Data Collection**

To determine the potential effects that No Child Left Behind (NCLB) had on student achievement for African-American fifth-grade students in reading, data from the state reading assessment for fifth-grade African-American students were collected from all of the elementary schools in the three districts (see Appendix B). The data were retroactively collected for the years of 2000-2001 and 2002-2007. The 2000-2001 period represents pre-NCLB data collection years and the 2002-2007 period represents data collection years after the initiation of the NCLB legislation. As a result, performances during these data collection periods provided a potential estimate of the effect of NCLB on the achievement of African-American fifth-grade students before and after the implementation of NCLB. The basic hypothesis concerns whether NCLB has assisted fifth grade African American students in becoming more proficient readers. The qualitative question concerns instructional factors impacting reading achievement of

African American students in urban schools. Table 3.1 shows the dates and times for interviews and observations in the selected six schools.

**Table 3.1: Interviews and Observations Dates and Times**

<b>District</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
A	A-7	9/10/08	9:00AM-12:00PM
A	A-9	11/11/08	9:00AM-2:00PM
B	B-5	10/9/08	9:30AM-2:00PM
B	B-29	10/10/08	9:30AM-1:00PM
C	C-15	10/22/08	9:00AM-2:00PM
C	C-19	10/21/08	9:00AM-12:00PM

The state reading assessment data were analyzed for the students described above. The data collection periods (2000 to 2001 and 2002 to 2007) were selected in a manner to gather data from pre-NCLB to NCLB and to ensure that the reading assessment was the same for all students given during those time periods. In 2005, the state reading standards were revised; however, the change did not affect the assessment protocol.

Interview protocol was developed to address professional development in the area of reading, state benchmarks and indicators, teacher planning time, instructional changes due to implementation of NCLB, and parental involvement.

### **Phases of Quantitative Data Collection**

The phases of data collection described below indicate the various stages that were utilized to acquire the data necessary to complete data analysis and interpretation.

Phase 1: The researcher identified the 108 elementary schools included from District A, District B, and District C.

Phase 2: Demographic information on the percentage of African Americans was retrieved from the district website for each school. This information was utilized in the data analysis stage.

Phase 3: The researcher requested data from the state reading assessment for all years from 2000-2007 from the Center of Educational Testing and Evaluation at the University of Kansas. The data requested included fifth-grade African-American students from the 57 elementary schools from District A, the 30 elementary schools from the District B, and the 21 elementary schools in District C.

Phase 4: The data were prepared for data analysis with regard to pre-NCLB and during NCLB, and the demographic variables listed above. The years 2000-2007 were analyzed individually. In reference to pre-NCLB the years 2000 and 2001 data were analyzed together and post-NCLB represented 2002 through 2007 data analyzed together.

### **Phases of Qualitative Data Collection**

The phases of qualitative data collection described below indicate the processes utilized to acquire necessary information to complete data analysis and interpretations.

Phase 1: Based on the collected data, the researcher identified the six highest performing schools with 15 percent or more of an African American population.

Phase 2: The researcher conducted interviews with six administrators from the designated schools to identify instructional factors that may have contributed to the high performance in reading achievement. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed for later analysis. A sample interview transcript can be found in Appendix D.

Phase 3: The researcher conducted interviews with six fifth grade teachers to identify instructional factors that they identified as potentially linked to the high performance of African American students. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed for later analysis.

Phase 4: The researcher observed six fifth grade classrooms in the designated high performing schools to determine additional instructional factors contributing to high fifth grade reading test scores. Field notes provided data reflecting the instructional factors of classroom reading instruction in these six specific schools. Table 3.1 presents the dates and times of school interviews and observations. The observation protocol (Appendix D-2) focused on the following areas: reading instructional time, five components of reading instruction, state indicators, motivation of students, relevant instruction, reading materials, organization of instruction, cooperative learning and active engagement.

### **Protection of Human Participants**

The information for the state reading assessment is public information. Because the targeted years include archival data, the researcher collected data from the Center of Educational Testing and Evaluation. In addition, when the archival data were requested,

students' names were removed from the data set before the researcher acquired the complete data set.

The researcher identified the six top performing schools in the data set. Interviews with administrators and teachers in each of the three districts were conducted in order to examine instructional factors that they perceived led to the higher performance of the students. Schools were listed as School A-7, School A-9, School B-5, School B-29, School C-15, and School C-19. Schools and administrators are not identified by names, but coded by numbers and letters. Pseudonyms were used to differentiate classroom teachers.

The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Office of Research Compliance at Kansas State University (Appendix C). Permission forms approved by the IRB were also reviewed, distributed and signed by interview participants (Appendix C).

### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

The data from the fifth-grade African American students from the Kansas State Reading Assessment data were subjected to a 2 (Pre and Post NCLB) x 3 (School District) analysis of variance. This analysis examined the effect of school districts (A, B, and C), year of assessment (prior to vs. during NCLB) and performance categories. The earlier years represent the time before implementation of NCLB and the latter years represent the implementation of NCLB utilizing the same assessment.

Once quantitative data were analyzed, the researcher identified six high performing schools based on the following fifth grade qualifications:

- 15 percent or more African American students in the school;
- more than 50 percent of African American students met standards, exceeded standards, or scored exemplary between 2000-2007, and
- the mean reading score was 75 or higher.

This led to the next phases of qualitative data collection.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

Data analysis is inductive and reflexive (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). The understanding of the data was through the researcher's experience. Data in this case were presented through a detailed narrative based on interviews and observations emphasizing the instructional factors impacting African American fifth grade student test scores, as well as graphics for transcribing and coding that represent connections determined through data analysis.

Observation field notes and interviews with the teachers and administrators were coded. The researcher reviewed the notes of what occurred in the reading instructional time in the classroom and with conversations with teachers. Initially, instructional indicators (Appendix E) were coded to link the five areas of reading instruction recommended by the National Reading Panel (2000) - phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Instructional methodologies (i.e guided reading) were also coded (Appendix E). The researcher also coded instructional settings to determine whole group, small group, independent practice, and partner reading

(Appendix E). Each type of text structure used in reading lessons was coded as narrative, expository, technical and persuasive (Appendix E).

### Focused Coding

After completing initial coding, the researcher began focused coding by summarizing and synthesizing the classroom observations and interviews with teachers and principals. Instructional factors were identified as impacting high performance on the state reading assessment.

Observations of classroom instruction focused on the teachers' instructional methods and objectives based on state indicators. Instructional methods were coded as whole group, small group or partner work instruction. Instructional indicators were coded for *text types*, *text structure*, *making connections*, *phonics*, *vocabulary*, and *comprehension*. Events occurring during instruction were then described.

During interviews, field notes revealed teachers and principals' perceptions of factors contributing to high performance on state reading assessments. Interviews were then coded for *professional development*, *teacher collaboration*, *parental involvement*, *analysis of data*, and *high expectations*.

Table 3.2 presents the system developed to code data collected during observations.

**Table 3.2: Observation Focused Coding Grid**

Method of Instruction	Indicator Considered in Coding	Example of Event
-----------------------	--------------------------------	------------------

Coding for Observations:

- WG = Whole Group
- SG = Small Group
- PW = Partner Work
- TT = Text Type
- TS = Text Structure
- MC = Making Connections
- PH = Phonics
- V = Vocabulary
- C = Comprehension

Table 3.3 presents the system developed to code data collected when reviewing interview transcripts. Samples of coding for each type can be found in Appendix D.

**Table 3.3: Interview Focused Coding Grid**

<b>Interview Participant</b>	<b>Factors Considered in Coding</b>	<b>Interview Comments</b>

Coding for Interview Transcripts:

- PD = Professional Development
- TC = Teacher Collaboration
- PI = Parental Involvement
- AD = Analysis of Data
- HE = High Expectations



## State Assessments

In 1991, the Kansas State Board of Education adopted Quality Performance Accreditation (Kansas State Department of Education, 2002). Development of the State Assessment Program is tied to Quality Performance Accreditation, which is a results-based accreditation system for elementary and secondary schools. The mathematics assessment based on state standards was piloted in 1991 while the state assessments in reading and writing were piloted in 1992. By 1993, piloted assessments for mathematics, reading, writing, and science were administered. The State Board of Education and the legislature agreed in 1994 to a testing schedule. Mathematics and reading would be tested annually. Writing assessments would be alternated with science and social studies. In 1995, the Kansas State Board of Education established a standard of performance for students and buildings. Another change took place in 1997 when the State Board of Education took action to revise and improve the State Assessment Program. Changes included:

- identifying the purpose of assessment to inform and improve instruction;
- requiring local measures of performance assessment in the accreditation process;
- and
- curriculum committees were formed to bring greater clarity to specific instructional needs at all grade levels (Kansas State Department of Education, 2002).

As the federal government reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Act, more commonly known as the No Child Left Behind Act, changes occurred in the state assessment system (Kansas State Department of Education, 2003). The change led the

state to set challenging standards, measure student progress against these standards, and hold all schools accountable for results (Kansas State Department of Education, 2003).

State reading assessments were given in 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade annually from 2000 until 2005. The revisions began in 2005-2006 in which grades 3-8 and one high school grade would take state assessment tests annually (Kansas State Department of Education, 2003). Each individual state develops its own state assessment and sets its own proficiency standard for reporting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Because of the variations in state tests and standards, there is no way for parents, educators and policymakers to compare one state to another using the state assessments (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2007).

### **Reliability and Validity of Quantitative Data**

Fifth grade students in Kansas participate annually in the reading assessment. The reading assessment is taken by students in grades 3-8 and in one grade in high school. It is mandatory that all schools in the state administer the test and that it be administered during the window of February-April (KSDE, 2007). The assessments administered were developed to measure the indicators (outcomes) in the state curricular standards (Glasnapp, Poggio & Omar, 2000). The state standards (KSDE, 2007) serve as the basis for what is assessed. Any interpretation and subsequent action based on student or group performance must focus on the indicators assessed (Glasnapp, Poggio & Omar, 2000). Students are classified into one of five performance categories: Academic Warning, Approaches Standard, Meets Standard, Exceeds Standard, and Exemplary.

Performance levels are established by the Kansas State Department of Education.

Students are tested in both public and private schools (accredited and non accredited).

In the reading assessment test form, passages are selected representing the four text types: narrative, expository, technical and persuasive. The assessment was multiple choice with yes/no items. In reading, there were between 150 to 200 multiple yes/no items and between 40 to 56 stems per form at each grade level. Each text type and its questions were designed for a testing period of 30 minutes (Glasnapp, Poggio & Omar, 2000).

In the psychometric findings for the Reading Assessments based on regular education students, the mean scores were identified in 2000 across the state for the text type scores. The effective score range for the values reported is from a lower bound of 50 to the upper bound of 100 on the percent correct scale. Based on the reliability estimates, total scores were consistent and achieved acceptable level. Total scores for students showed evidence of satisfactory reliability for the purpose of the test. For accuracy and consistency reliability estimates, all coefficients were high (mid 90s) to provide confidence in the dichotomous decisions of student classification (Glasnapp, Poggio & Omar, 2000).

The model of test construction is a content validation development approach that was later supported by empirical validation for revision and change (Glasnapp, Poggio & Omar, 2000). The assessments were designed by state educators whose development is coordinated by the Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation at the University of Kansas and the Kansas Department of Education. Kansas teachers were trained in creating tests by the Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation (CETE) staff. The

CETE staff edited and sent the items to a group of developers whose title is curriculum specialists. After more reviewing by experts, test items were reviewed by independent groups of field based reviewers. After a series of more reviews, test items were examined for bias, insensitivity and offensiveness by a committee composed of impacted class members (Glasnapp, Poggio & Omar, 2000). Pilot testing was conducted after the steps were completed to ensure content validity. A table of sample test items and indicators for fifth grade students are located in Appendix F.

The Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation (CETE) was authorized by the Kansas Board of Regents in 1983. The CETE is a research and evaluation unit under the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research, Graduate Studies, and Public Service at the University of Kansas (Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation, 2007). The CETE's main function is its contract as the sole source vendor to provide services for Kansas' mandated testing programs in mathematics, science, social studies, reading and writing skills. Approximately 40,000 students are tested at each grade level annually. Developments of the assessments are cycled through several phases. Coordination from the K-12 curriculum personnel, higher education and psychometric experts help to create the assessments.

### **Trustworthiness of Qualitative Data**

Establishing trustworthiness by gathering information from multiple sources of evidence is important for qualitative research (Merriam, 1998). Creswell (1998) suggests procedures for researchers to use for adding credibility to the study: triangulation; peer

review or debriefing; clarifying of research bias; member checks; and external audits. In this study, member checks and triangulation was implemented.

The researcher solicited review of the findings of this research by the six observed classroom teachers and interviewed principals in the study. The researcher first observed classroom instruction, and followed with interviews of teachers and principals. After interviews were conducted, classroom teachers and principals reviewed observation analysis and conclusions highlighted by the researcher to seek input on the credibility of the findings. Member checks are critical for establishing credibility in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Teachers and principals of the six observed schools will receive a copy of the completed dissertation.

Triangulation means combining multiple sources of data (Newman, 2006). The methods were used sequentially. First, data were collected from the fifth grade state reading assessment. The researcher used the data to identify six high achieving urban schools in which 15 percent populations of students are African American. Interviews with administrators and fifth grade classroom teachers were conducted, as well as observations of the classrooms. Observational field notes and administrator and teacher interview transcripts provided additional data sources for triangulation purposes.

### **Summary**

The mixed methods methodology and procedures in this study have been presented in Chapter Three. The research design combining quantitative and qualitative methods was presented and explained. The population and school selection procedures were described. The main instrument used in this study was the Kansas reading

assessment. In addition, interviews of administrators and teachers and fifth grade classroom observations provided qualitative data to further enhance the study. Facts about the state reading assessment as well as the issues of reliability, validity, and trustworthiness were also discussed in this chapter.

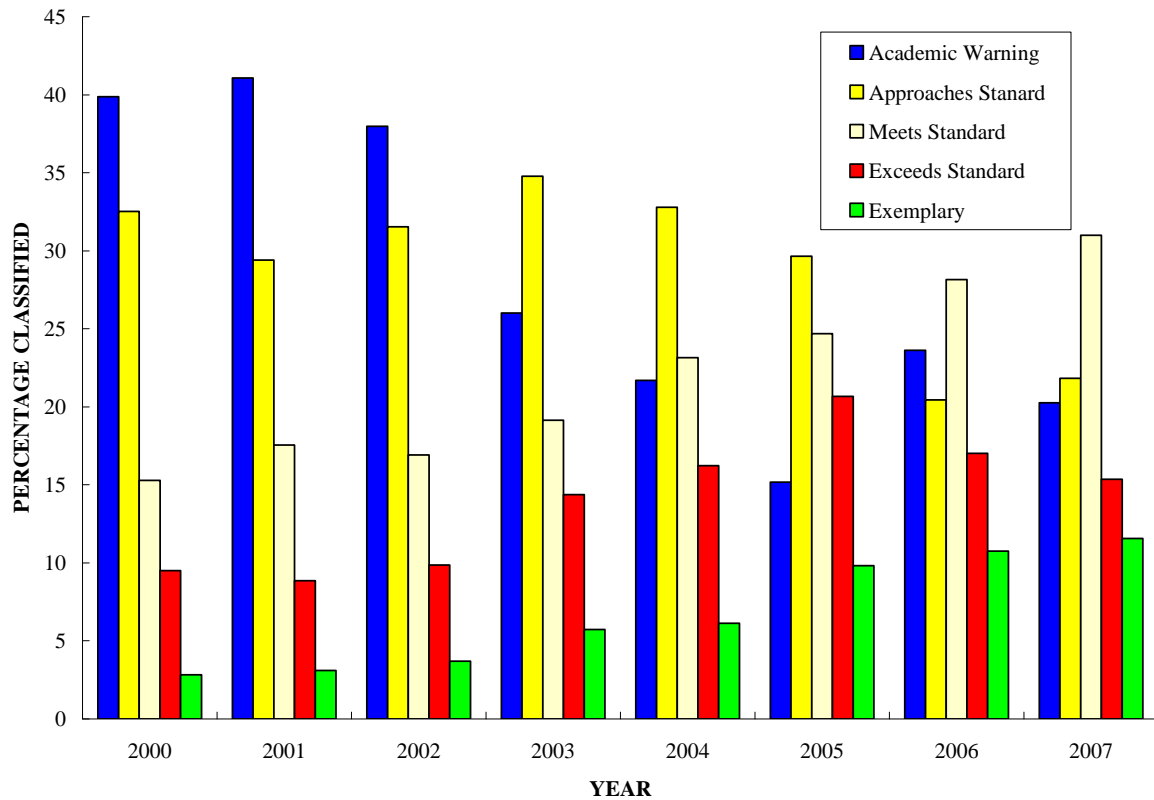
## CHAPTER 4—Results

Schools and school districts are seeking to teach reading skills and strategies effectively as well as meet state standards and raise test scores. These schools must be aware of instructional factors that increase reading achievement of African American students. Administrators and teachers have been faced with challenges and accountability with the No Child Left Behind Act. The purpose of this study was to quantitatively address if the No Child Left Behind Act has achieved increased reading scores of African American students, as well as to qualitatively describe instructional factors of selected schools whose scores demonstrate improved reading achievement of African American fifth graders.

The quantitative and qualitative study was conducted between May 2008 and November 2008. This study addressed the achievement of fifth grade African American students in three urban schools in Kansas before and during the implementation of NCLB. One hundred eighty one schools' state reading assessment scores were analyzed. A quantitative description of data analyzed compared reading scores before and during the implementation of the NCLB Act. The results of this quantitative study provided a framework for beginning to answer the first research question which guided this study.

1. Is there a significant difference between/among fifth-grade reading scores of African American students in Kansas urban schools in 2000-2001, before the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, compared to 2002-2007, after the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act?

Figure 4.1. Percentage of African American Students Classified by Year



As indicated in Figure 4.1, the number of African American fifth grade students in Kansas who were in the Academic Warning category declined from 2000-2007 while those in the Exemplary category steadily increased. In fact, the percentage of African American students in the two lowest categories, Academic Warning and Approaches Standard both steadily decreased from 2000-2007 while the percentage of African American students in Meets Standard and Exemplary increase.



Figure 4.2. Mean Percentage of African American Students Pre and During NCLB

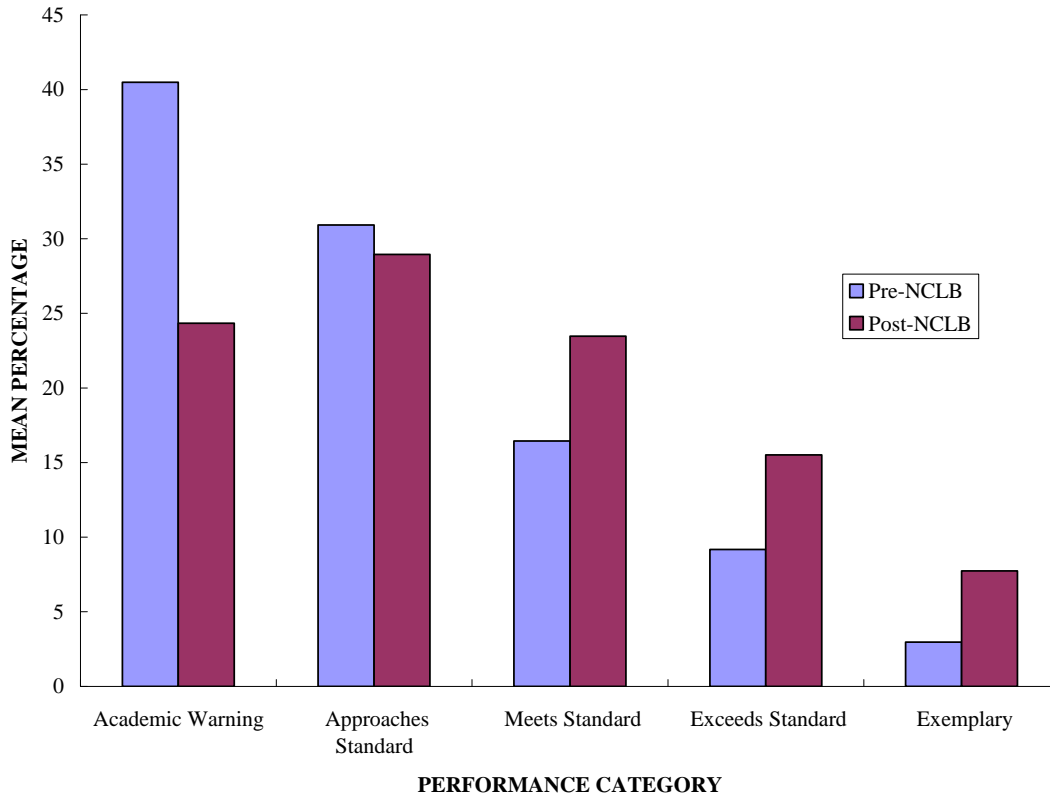


Figure 4.2 shows the mean percentage of African American students in each performance category before and after NCLB. Based on the performance categories for the Kansas State Reading Assessment, in post-NCLB the percentage of African American students decreased in Academic Warning and the Approaches Standard category. The percentage of African American students in the categories of Meeting the Standard, Exceeding the Standard, and Exemplary increased during the implementation of NCLB.

## **Quantitative Data Analysis**

The data from the fifth-grade African American students from the Kansas State Reading Assessment data were subjected to a 2 (Pre and Post NCLB) x 3 (School District) analysis of variance. This analysis examined the effect of school districts (A, B, and C), year of assessment (prior to vs. during NCLB) and reading score. The earlier years represent the time before implementation of NCLB and the latter years represent the implementation of NCLB utilizing the same assessment.

There were significant main effects for school districts; therefore, Schéffé post-hoc analyses was performed. The post-hoc test indicated the source of the differences due to these main effects.

## **Quantitative Results**

In the quantitative analysis of data, scores and performance levels of the 108 schools in District A, District B, and District C were analyzed. An examination of the descriptive statistics showed a changed distribution of performance levels in African American fifth grade students on the Kansas State Reading Assessment between the years of 2000-2007.

**Table 4.1: Performance Category Percentages for Kansas Urban Districts (A, B, and C) Pre-NCLB and Post-NCLB**

<b>NCLB</b>	<b>Academic Warning</b>	<b>Approaching Standard</b>	<b>Meets Standard</b>	<b>Exceeds Standard</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
Pre-NCLB	40.49%	30.92%	16.44%	9.18%	2.97%
Post-NCLB	24.34%	28.95%	23.47%	15.51%	7.64%

In comparing the fifth grade African American student scores before the implementation of NCLB (2000-2001) and during the implementation of NCLB (2002-2007) decreases in academic warning and approaching standard categories were found and increases in meets standard, exceeds standard, and exemplary categories. Table 4.1 shows the percentage of African American fifth grade students in each performance category before and during the implementation of NCLB.

The dependent variable for the initial quantitative analysis was the total score of the state reading assessment. It was entered into a 2 (Time of Measurement; Pre NCLB vs. Post NCLB) x 3 (District; A vs. B vs. C) analysis of variance (see Table 4.2). The results of this analysis indicated that there were significant main effects of Time of Measurement,  $F(1, 13,554) = 14.45, p < .0001$  and District,  $F(2, 13,554) = 7.56, p < .0005$ , with an interaction of Time of Measurement and District,  $F(2, 13,554) = 3.25, p < .0389$ .

**Table 4.2: Analysis of Variance Table**

<b>Source</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P</b>
NCLB	7,700.82	1	7,700.80	14.45	.0001
USD	8,064.33	2	4,032.22	7.56	.0005
NCLB x USD	3,463.03	2	1,731.52	3.25	.0389
Error	7,225,633.68	13554	553.10		
TOTAL	7,251,983.52	13554			

As suggested in Figure 4.1, the main effect of Time of Measurement was a result of the distribution of performance level shifting toward performing significantly better after the institutionalization of NCLB than they did before NCLB. Table 4.3 shows means and sample sizes of districts pre and post-NCLB. The main effect of District must be examined within the context of the interaction. The Schéffé (1953) compared the means on Pre-NCLB and Post-NCLB. The Schéffé (1953) was chosen because it is the post-hoc test of choice when dealing with unequal sample size. Table 4.3 shows the means of District A, B, and C and sample size for the Pre-NCLB and Post-NCLB time of measurement.

**Table 4.3: Means and Sample Size Pre-NCLB and Post-NCLB**

<b>District</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
Pre-NCLB Mean ( <i>n</i> )	71.52 (1259)	69.16 (1691)	73.09 (373)
Post-NCLB Mean ( <i>n</i> )	72.89 (4592)	72.86 (4242)	74.36 (1403)

The Schéffé (1953) post-hoc analyses indicated there were significant differences between District A and District B for the Pre-NCLB time of measurement and significant differences between District A and B, and District A and C at the Post-NCLB time of measurement. Figure 3 shows these interactions, while Table 4.6 shows the Schéffé (1953) post-hoc analysis.

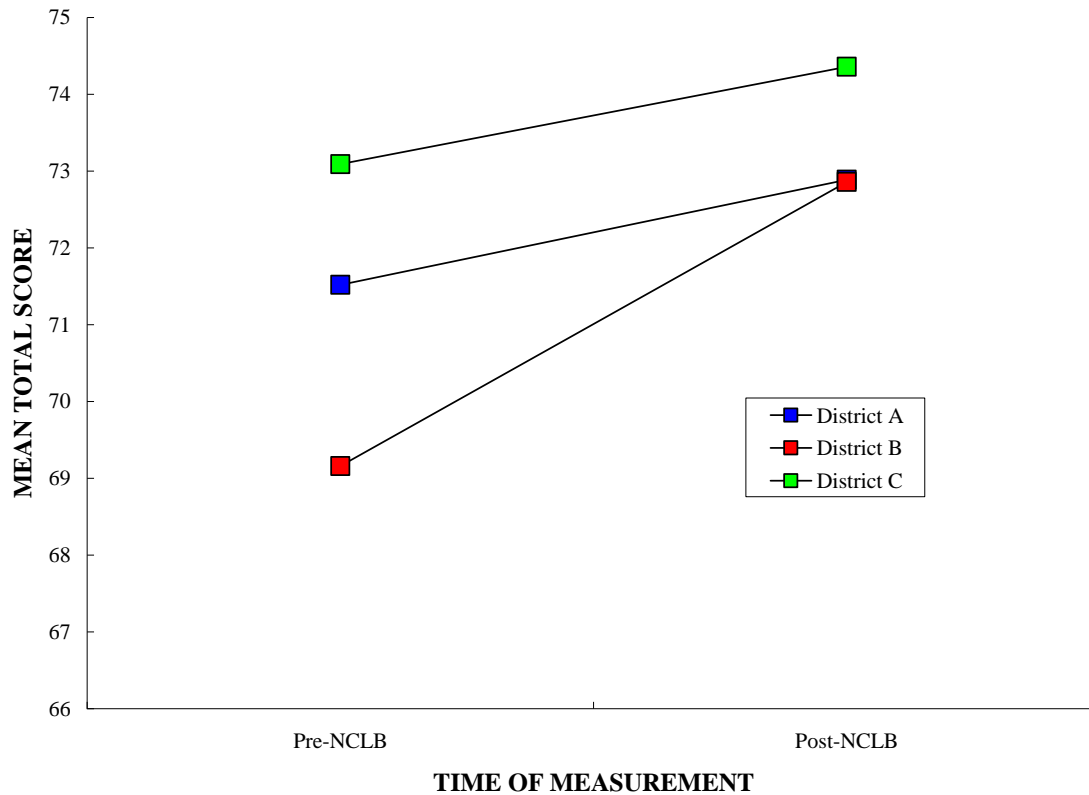
**Table 4.4: Post-Hoc Analysis with *F* value**

<b>District vs. District</b>	<b>Pre-NCLB</b>	<b>Post-NCLB</b>
A vs B	3.633605	0.001794
A vs C	0.64118	2.099285
B vs C	4.26672	2.144437

The Scheffe (1953) post-hoc revealed a significant difference in District A and B and District B and C before the implementation of NCLB. After NCLB was implemented, there were no significant differences between Districts A, B, or C. The critical value equaled 2.9957.

In comparing pre-NCLB and post-NCLB, District B was the only district that had a significant difference, with the *F Schéffé* = 14.96,  $p < .001$ . Figure 4.3 clearly shows this difference.

Figure 4.3. Mean Total Score by Time of Measurement (Pre-NCLB vs. Post-NCLB)



African American fifth grade students in the three urban school districts in the state of Kansas have made gains in reading scores since the implementation of No Child Left Behind. Increasing the number of students at or above the standard is the goal of No Child Left Behind. Since Black students have traditionally lagged White students in meeting the standards, a quantitative analysis was needed in order to determine if No Child Left Behind has had a positive affect on Black student scores.

The data reveals the three urban districts made improvements since the implementation of NCLB. The most improvement was found in District B. District B has more minority students than Districts A and C. They have a higher population of low socioeconomics. In pre-NCLB years, District B was the lowest of the three, however

through the post-hoc analysis, District B has no significant difference when compared to District A and C. District B also has instructional and literacy coaches supporting teachers in each school.

The same data received from the CETE was also used to answer research question number two. By creating a frequency table of performance categories by building, the researcher was able to identify six high performing schools (two in each district).

### **Qualitative Results**

This chapter also provides a qualitative description based on the 108 schools' state reading assessment scores from the three urban districts. Six schools were selected, two in each district, in which a population of 15 percent or more was African American. A percentage of 50 percent or more of African American students met the standard, exceeded the standard, or scored exemplary compared to other schools in the state reading assessment data, and the school's mean reading score was above 75. This chapter also provides a qualitative description of reading instruction in the six selected schools. Observations and interviews provided insight into the school environment, instructional practices, and instructional changes since the implementation of NCLB, the latter of which was explored through conversations with teachers and principals. A summary of the six schools and their commonalities are discussed at the end of the chapter. The results of this study provided a framework for answering the second research question which guided the study.

2. In urban high performing schools highly populated by African-American students, what instructional factors may contribute to fifth-grade African-American students performing at high levels on the state reading assessment?

Through observations and interviews of the six high performing schools, many commonalities were evident. Increased efforts to analyze student data were enforced in the six buildings. Teachers spent allotted time to focus on the students meeting the standards. During this allotted time, educators in the building focused on effective instructional factors to meet student needs. In order for teachers to provide proper instruction, the schools increased professional development and teacher collaboration time. A final commonality of the six schools was the importance of parental involvement. Teachers and principals created school wide efforts to inform parents of ways to provide instructional support at home, as well as the progress of the student.

Table 4.5 presents the six schools' percentage of African American students in Kindergarten through fifth grade. Table 4.5 also indicated the number of fifth grade African American students scoring at or above grade level on the Kansas Reading Assessment in 2007.



**Table 4.5: African American Demographics of Six Schools and Percentage At or Above Standard**

<b>District</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>% of African Americans (AA)</b>	<b>% AA 5<sup>th</sup> Graders Meeting Standards</b>	<b>% AA 5<sup>th</sup> Graders Exceeding Standards</b>	<b>% AA 5<sup>th</sup> Graders Exemplary</b>
*A	A-7	14.85	10.9	25.5	63.6
A	A-9	38.82	36.8	21.1	26.3
B	B-5	57.84	8.3	4.2	37.5
B	B-29	53.03	25.0	25.0	5.0
C	C-15	37.14	31.3	12.5	37.5
*C	C-19	23.81	19.4	32.3	35.5

\*Percentages include scores of all ethnicities. Data were not disaggregated because of the low number of African American students in each grade level.

Table 4.6 shows the number of students in the fifth grade classrooms and the number of students in different ethnic groups. Schools A-9, B-5, B-29, and C-15 had higher numbers of African American students. African American students were the majority in these schools. Schools A-7 and C-19 had smaller numbers which resulted in no disaggregated data from the Kansas Reading Assessment. The state of Kansas has a low number of minority students in the population: African Americans are 7.87% of the student population, Hispanics are 11.90%, White is 73.18% and 7.05% are other groups. The six selected classrooms were not a representation of the state of Kansas.

**Table 4.6: Demographics of Six Selected Schools**

<b>Classroom</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>School</b>	<b># of Students</b>	<b># of African American</b>	<b># of White</b>	<b># of Hispanic</b>	<b># of Other</b>
Mrs. Jones	A	7	19	7	9	2	1
Mrs. Smith	A	9	23	13	6	2	2
Mrs. Lee	B	5	22	15	5	2	0
Mrs. Thomas	B	29	19	11	5	3	0
Mr. Shaw	C	15	21	9	7	4	0
Mrs. Mack	C	19	21	5	11	3	2

**School A-7: Mrs. Jones' Fifth Grade Class**

The 2008 state reading assessment scores reflected 98.1 percent of all students in District A; School A-7 met the standard, exceeded the standard, or were exemplary. All fifth grade students in 2008 were at or above the standard, 10.9 percent met the standard, 25.5 percent exceeded the standard, and 63.6 scored exemplary. This data included Black and White students in the fifth grade class.

School A-7 consisted of 14.85 percent African American students. The mean of the Kansas Reading Assessment scores were 78 percent. Data showed 79 percent of African American students in fifth grade scored at or above the standard from the years 2000 through 2007.

Mrs. Jones is an experienced fifth grade teacher. She has taught third and fifth grades for the past 20 years in District A. She has a Bachelors and Master of Science in Education.

### ***Observation of Environment***

The classroom consisted of 19 students, seven of whom were African American. The school demographics consist of 18 percent African American, 58 percent White, seven percent Hispanic, and 17 percent other.

In the fifth grade classroom, the reading standards were posted on a wall close to the teacher's desk. In the front of the room, text types (*narrative, expository, technical and persuasive*) were posted on cards so that all students could see. In larger print, text structure (*descriptive, sequential, compare and contrast, cause and effect, and problem and solution*) was posted with a description of each. There was a big bulletin board with H.O.T.S (Higher Level Thinking Skills-Bloom's Taxonomy) posted on the side wall. Underneath the sign it had the words: *evaluation, synthesis, analysis, application, comprehension, and knowledge*.

The desks were arranged in four groups of four and one group of five. The groups of desks were arranged so that Mrs. Jones could maneuver throughout the classroom. Three groups were in the front and two were in the back. Mrs. Jones easily walked around the room during instruction. A classroom library was on the east side of the room with books sorted by genres and by level of difficulty. The students went to the library after completing work and independently read self-selected texts. There was also a group of magazines for children to read in the classroom library.

### *Instructional Practices*

Reading was conducted through *whole group* instruction. Students read from the anthology of the *Treasures* (Macmillan/McGraw-Hill, 2007) reading series. The teacher activated students' prior knowledge by having them discuss dogs--fiction dogs and nonfiction dogs. Some students talked about Clifford and Lassie. Mrs. Jones moved them to talking about rescue dogs. After passing out the text, the teacher had students preview the passage *Barry the Rescue Dog* before reading. The students first had to identify the type of text, which was narrative. The teacher talked about genre and students noticed the back page of the passage said it was narrative nonfiction. The students looked at an illustration of the dog in the story and began to make predictions. Mrs. Jones asked the students for logical predictions. After making several predictions, the teacher had students focus on the underlined words, which were vocabulary words for the story. She had a student read the sentence with an underlined word.

S1: (Reading) The girl was so cold, she got numb and fainted.

T: So class, what does the word fainted mean?

S2: Fall to the ground.

T: Everyone, what does fainting mean?

All Students: Fall to the ground.

T: Okay, let's enjoy the story and learn from it.

Students raised their hands to read. Mrs. Jones had to ask students to raise their hands only if they had not read. All students were able to orally read fluently. One particular student, diagnosed as Attention Deficit Disorder, used a highlighted ruler to follow along. However, when asked to read, the student was a fluent oral reader. Each student read a paragraph. As the students read the passage, the teacher would interject with questions and comments to check for comprehension. Here is an example of Mrs. Jones working through the text:

T: Now, what's going on here?

S1: The dog is getting ready to rescue someone.

T: I think you're right. Continue reading and let's find out.

Students continue to read.

T: What is happening now?

S2: The dog rescued the little girl. She got on his back.

T: What does that connect to?

S3: The picture we talked about before we read.

The students continued reading until they were at the end of the passage. Mrs. Jones then followed up with the following questions and conversations.

T: What do you think is the author's purpose?

S1: To persuade you.

T: Do you think this was what he was doing?

S2: He might be informing us.

T: Do you think this is what his purpose was?

S3: No.

T: So what do you think he is doing?

S4: He wrote this to entertain us.

T: Okay, let's vote on it. How many think it is to inform? (All hands go up)

How many think it is to entertain us? (All hands go up). Okay, flip to the back.

What did it say the genre was?

All Students: Narrative Nonfiction

T: So it informed us and entertained us. Now let's look at text structure. Was this cause and effect? (Some students say yes and some say no) Was this comparing and contrasting? (All students say no) Was this descriptive? (All students say yes) Was there sequencing?

S5: There was some, but the whole story wasn't a sequenced story.

T: Maybe they should narrow this down, especially to prepare you for your test. There were a lot of different structures. We are going to focus on cause and effect. (Teacher pulls out the following blank graphic organizer.)

Cause	Effect
Barry went to school.	Learned to obey, rescue, and was trained.
Began to patrol	Found the girl
Warned the girl	Life was saved

Mrs. Jones and her students completed the graphic organizer on the overhead projector. Throughout the discussion and completion of the graphic organizer, the teacher explained to the students thinking things through was the key. Some key instructional strategies observed during this lesson were the following:

- Monitoring comprehension of texts
- Making predictions to guide comprehension of text
- Identifying text type
- Identifying text structures
- Defining key vocabulary words
- Making personal connections to the text
- Activating prior knowledge

### ***Instructional Changes Due to NCLB***

School A-7 has created a framework for encouraging primary classrooms (K-2) to focus on phonemic awareness and phonics. The amount of time needed based on student needs are focused on fluency, vocabulary and comprehension in the intermediate grades (3-6). The five areas of reading instruction, which are also the benchmarks for the reading standards, have been a focus by the district and the building. Professional development has been offered district wide and reinforced in the building. Students not meeting all indicators and benchmarks are then identified and the teachers and other instructional leaders work to intervene and reinforce these skills for individual students.

### ***Interview with Mrs. Jones***

Mrs. Jones believes in a balanced approach to reading. She exercises all methods of instruction. Students spend the one and a half hour reading block reading independently, shared and guided. Throughout the day, she also implements modeled reading or reading aloud. The interview selection excerpts were selected to emphasize Mrs. Jones' focus on meeting the standards through district materials. Parental involvement was another factor that Mrs. Jones identified as a factor impacting assessment scores. The following section contains selected excerpts of the interview which reveal factors leading toward high reading test scores.

**Tell me how instruction is aligned to the standards, benchmarks, and indicators.**

*I am a big one with the standards. I have the standards and pacing guides and follow them. You have the pacing guides and those I kind of try my best. But I make sure I cover those standards.*

**Tell me about the reading programs used in 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms in your school.**

*The district one is the Treasure ( Beck, Farr, & Strickland, 2005). We also have Teaching Students Nonfiction. And then I know we have Accelerated Reading (Paul, 1985), Reading Counts (Scholastic, 1999), which is a computerized reading one. I do not have programs, but I do a monthly book report and they're all very different levels of Blooms Taxonomy.*

**What are the impacts of the reading programs reflected in your test scores?**



*Yes, I see the connections, last year especially. I had some really low ones so I tried some new strategies and the kids just blew me out of the water with the MAPS, NWEA testing, and the state assessment scores. I was just amazed! It worked for them. The principal even was helping me do these strategies that fit in with the guidelines and she was telling me how the kids were just reading and thinking out loud and that is basically with it is. Just thinking out loud and using the strategies I had been teaching.*

**Tell me about parental involvement in your building.**

*Umm... we definitely have more intact structures at home. More parents and kids that live in a two parent home. A lot of them are with biological parents. And that is part of when they come here they're supposed to be involved with PTO. And the site council has come up with a paper that parents are supposed to sign that explains that's part of the deal. Like this morning I had one with too many missing assignments. So he called his mom and I talked to his mom and she said okay we'll work on it, just send it home. So those are kinds of things. That's what our school is about. Are we perfect? No way. We have some who say I send them to school, I don't have time or I don't have the desire.*

After the researcher's analysis of the interview, key components of high performance in Mrs. Jones' classroom were perceived as:

- Use of pacing guides and state standards, benchmarks and indicators
- Attention to the different levels of Bloom's Taxonomy
- Instructional support of principal's leadership
- Parental involvement in creating student accountability

### *Interview with the A-7 Principal*

The A-7 principal has been a classroom teacher, campus support teacher and an assistant principal in District A for 10 years. This is the first year in her position as principal of School A-7. The selected interview excerpts were used because of the principal's emphasis on professional development and analysis of data as factors impacting student performance on the Kansas reading assessment.

**Let me ask you a few questions that may help to see what contributes to success of your school. I want to first ask about your professional development. What do you do for reading? Tell me about the professional development in reading at your school.**

*Okay. Our professional development is actually built within the school day and what we do is ongoing throughout the year. We look at classroom data, our state data and our building growth and district wide data, and identify what our strengths and weaknesses are. And then from that, we design our staff development goals and once a month it comes out to be, each grade level has a three hour block of professional development. And so we do that on Tuesday afternoons. We've been able to build that into our schedule. For example, like yesterday our second and third grade teachers had their staff development from 1:30-4:00. And we rotate our students through special classes at that time. So they have just a once a month block of music, p.e., library, and art. That allows us to have staff development for our teachers. That allows us to look at strengths and weaknesses.*

**Now is this something they do across the district or is this something your school does?**

*That is something we do district wide and so it may look different at each building, but the district has allowed us to build in staff development within our school schedule. And we have a district level someone who is called a learning coach who can come in and assist us with that. I may help with that staff development. We may even pull in teachers who have been in the building that we recognize while they are doing really good in their classrooms with a particular skill, we work out where their classroom can be covered so they can help facilitate that staff development. We bring in other experts within the district if it's an area we feel we need some additional support with. So that is something that is occurring once a month at all grade levels. Including our specials teachers. Our specials teachers, our art, p.e., library, and music, they have one time a month they receive training. This is also another district initiative. We have something we call Professional Learning Community. And that is held every Wednesday morning across the district. Teachers report 45 minutes earlier than their normal contract time and during that time we are looking specifically at school data. That is guiding, directing what are doing and so our PLC is focused on these four driving questions. (Hands me the paper) So during our PLC time, classroom teachers are collecting again some type of data that they are going to talk about and analyze and then answer some of those questions. This is what I've seen in my classroom, this is what we are going to do about it. And that helps us also.*

(Below is an example of the paper with the four guiding questions)

Major Themes	Classroom
<b>What do we expect students to learn?</b> Curriculum/Academic Goals	<b>Indicators/Standards:</b>
<b>How will we know students have learned?</b> Monitoring, Data Analysis and Use	<b>Data Used:</b>
<b>How will we respond when students do not learn?</b> Interventions and Adjustments	<b>Interventions/Strategies:</b>
<b>How will we respond when the students do learn?</b> Rigor and Enrichment	<b>Enrichment:</b>

**Can I get a copy of this paper?**

*Yes, you can have it.*

*And these four guided questions we have taken from Richard DuFour (2004). But it is the four guiding questions our district focuses on. And so we have built our PLCs around that. If you had been here this morning at 8:00 and walked through the building, you would have seen teachers looking at everything from their DIBELS data and talking about it. Third grade just finished MAPS NWEA testing so they were looking at those scores and talking about that.*

**Tell me how instruction is aligned to the standards, benchmarks, and indicators.**

*We have shifted from themes to very much standard focused. One of the things our district has done for us is to create something we call pacing guides aligning our standards in an order we can teach throughout the year. And that really helps, not so much because we are \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary, but we are pure magnet and we don't have a lot of mobility here. The kids that come here in kindergarten are here in fifth grade. So that is an asset for us. But across the district we have lots of mobility. And so what we saw*

*as a district was we had kids working on this particular standard in this building and they moved across town and that building had already done this...so there were gaps. And so the district has created pacing guides for our language arts area and our math area. And so we have identified what those power standards are so that our kids are working toward mastery of those standards prior to state assessments in the spring. So we are very standards based.*

**Has professional development been offered in the five areas of reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension)**

*My teachers have just completed something we call Reading Symposium and it focused on the five areas, the components of reading. That was a district wide inservice. Since they did that district wide, we began to now talk about what that looks like at \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary during our own staff development.*

During analysis of the principal interview, the following information provided insight to high performance in School A-7:

- Effective use of professional development time
- Increased accountability for teachers' use of time in planning instruction
- Analysis of data to impact instructional decisions
- Administrative support of instructional resources needed to meet reading goals

**School A-9: Mrs. Smith's Fifth Grade Class**

The 2008 state reading assessment scores reflect 88.4 percent of all students in District A, School A-9 met the standard, exceeded the standard or were exemplary. For

fifth grade African American students, 93.8 percent were at or above grade level. Twenty five percent met the standard, 43.8 exceeded the standard, and 25 percent scored exemplary.

Mrs. Smith has been a teacher for 16 years in District A. She has taught fourth and fifth grade. She originally pursued a marketing degree and then elementary education. She was rewarded for her teaching by the district in 2009.

### *Observation of Environment*

The A-9 classroom consists of 26 students, of which thirteen were African American. The school demographics consist of 38.02 percent African American, 38.02 percent White, 4.79 percent Hispanic, and 19.16 percent were other.

In the fifth grade classroom, a large bulletin board was labeled “Language Arts.” Underneath the words “Language Arts” were *spotlight words, sight words, synonyms, antonyms, verb tenses, adverbs, prepositions and adjectives*. Because the two teachers in fifth grade are separated by a partition, they easily switched rooms to team teach.

The classroom was originally the gymnasium. It consisted of high ceilings and a wide open space. Because the two fifth grade teachers’ team teach, the room was arranged to work for both teachers. The students were seated in traditional rows. One student was placed in the front of the room for behavior reasons. A classroom library was not in the room, but each student had a library book in or on his/her desk.

### *Instructional Practices*

Mrs. Smith began the reading block by reviewing the students' nightly homework of Daily Oral Language. The students raised their hands to answer the questions. The questions focused on spelling, proper and common nouns, and correcting grammar errors in sentences. Every Friday, students are assessed on the skills from the Daily Oral Language homework from Monday through Thursday. The students are rewarded by being named to the 100 percent club, 90 percent club, or 80 percent club. Two students in the class were in the 100 percent club, and the rest of the class was part of the 90 percent club. The teacher stood at the overhead projector to verify the correct answers.

Students then moved to an assignment called "Working with Words." In this lesson, the students cut out letters from a worksheet. The letters were c-r-e-a-t-u-r-e-s. They then sorted the letters by vowels and consonants. Mrs. Smith did not instruct the students to sort the letters, since this was a routine procedure and all students automatically sorted vowels and consonants. The teacher then gave the students instructions and the students created the word.

T: Spell the word 'act'.

T: What a \_\_\_\_\_ puppy!

S: cute

T: Add a letter and spell cuter.

S: cuter

T: Change one letter and fill in the blank: My friend is going to make food and \_\_\_\_\_ the party.

S: cater

T: Mix your letters and fill in the blank: We had to \_\_\_\_\_ quickly when the alarm sounded.

S: scatter

T: No, you added letters. Mix the letters from 'cater'.

S: react

T: Move the letters again and spell 'trace'.

T: Take out six letters and spell the word 'rescue'.

T: Now add one letter and spell 'rescuer'.

S: rescuer

T: Time for our "secret word". Use all your letters!

S: creatures

From this assignment, students were able to implement the skills of spelling, syntax, vocabulary, and prefixes and suffixes. The teacher then told two students to pass out white boards, markers and paper towels. The students cheered. While the students passed out the supplies, the teacher wrote vocabulary words on the board. The words were: *swagger, navigation, patriots, tyrant, governor, spunk, stark, instruct, inferences, common, ruts, barracks, and bayonets*. The teacher said each word and students echoed. The teacher then read aloud the definition and students wrote the word they thought was correct. The teacher would say "raise your boards" and the students would show their answers. The words were going to be part of the text about the American Revolution that students would be reading from the basal.



The students then moved into the hallway to play “Quiz, Quiz, Trade”. The students had cards with sentences and definitions. The key word was marked out. As students met up with each other, they had to try to guess the key word. The key word was written on the other side of the card. If the students were correct, they traded the card and moved onto another student.

During the observation, a student was talking out and Mrs. Smith asked her for \$40.00. The student pulled a checkbook from her desk and wrote the teacher a check. She then automatically went to modify the balance of her checkbook. The teacher explained that the school had a store once a month and that is how they spent their money in the checking account.

Through a series of exercises versus a chosen text, Mrs. Smith emphasized key instructional methods and a reading strategy:

- Grammar instruction
- Spelling instruction
- Defining key vocabulary words
- Syntax instruction
- Morphemic analysis instruction
- Making personal connections

### ***Instructional Changes Due to NCLB***

Since the implementation of NCLB, Mrs. Smith felt she had less flexibility in her instruction. Although Mrs. Smith focuses on meeting the state standards, the assigned reading program, *Treasures* (Beck, et al., 2005), takes priority over special projects. The

A-9 principal expressed the reality of NCLB in alerting schools to accountability. Principal A-9 emphasized the focus on data driven instruction in elementary schools has been a major change since the implementation of NCLB. Although increased professional development informs teachers of more instructional strategies to meet the needs of students, the principal of A-9 planned to take small steps in educating educators about data analysis and scaffolding instruction.

### ***Interview with Mrs. Smith***

Mrs. Smith believes team work is a factor impacting test scores. The teachers work together to plan and modify instruction of all students. Another factor impacting test scores perceived by Mrs. Smith is the preparation students receive in primary grades in School A-9. A final impacting factor is parental involvement in the building. The following section contains selected excerpts of the interview which reveal factors leading toward high reading test scores.

#### **Tell me about professional development for reading in your school.**

*We have our PD where we meet and our team meetings, which are once a week. And we really just kind of come together as an intermediate team (3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>) so there is a lot of communicating to see what we are doing and what are our needs. There is a lot of sharing information and sharing ideas. And of course in the district, there are a lot of inservices that support us like the Reading Symposium. So there are just a lot of the resources out there. But the difference about us is we don't try to hold all of our stuff to ourselves. We really do work as a team and we see the students as "our kids". It is not uncommon for teachers to know the kids outside of the school.*

*For example, one thing I am doing with grade four is looking at our kids. Not by grade level, but we are looking at them by need. And we are both focusing on a particular skill. We are grouping them up and trying to look at those tiers. It is not easy to do, we have a lot to learn but we are making the attempts. We are not afraid to try. So that is something we are trying for the first time this year.*

**Tell me how instruction is aligned to the standards, benchmarks, and indicators.**

*I feel it is pretty much aligned. When that state assessment comes, I look at the information and feel pretty good. But grant it, there are times when I look at something on the assessment and feel like we did not cover that enough.*

**What various instructional factors do you believe contribute to success in your students reading scores?**

*When you said you were coming to interview me, I laughed because I feel I have a lot to learn. But one thing I can say about kids in this school is they are not moving around much. They are here from kindergarten or first grade and staying the whole way through. They have very consistent skills they are learning. We have excellent primary teachers, so when we get them, they are prepared. We are now dealing with kids from other parts of the city since we stopped the bussing. This is new for us because there are now different abilities.*

**Tell me about parental involvement and how does it impact the reading achievement?**

*I think parental involvement affects everything. I don't have the data in front of me now, but there are parents out there asking how they can help their child. Those kids*

*do better because they know the parents have the expectations and so do we. When they get home and parents are asking about homework, there is a difference. We do a school wide program called 20/20. The kids have to read at home for 20 minutes for 20 days, they even have a contract to sign. The parents sign the contract as well saying this will get done. That helps for accountability. I can't do it all on my own, so I always appreciate parents' help. We always get homework back. I had to send a note home this week telling parents their children did not have homework because the parents thought they were lying. Every two weeks, we show all of the work and assessments we covered. We show what the child could do and couldn't do so that parents have knowledge of what we taught. They have to sign it and return it. Therefore at conferences, there are no surprises.*

Analysis of the interview comments of Mrs. Smith led the researcher to infer the following characteristics impacting high performance in this fifth grade classroom:

- Teacher collaboration on planning reading instruction
- Abundance of resources from the administration
- Teacher's desire to improve instruction
- Alignment of instruction to meet standards

### ***Interview with the A-9 Principal***

This is the first year for the principal in A-9. She went to school in District A. After attending school at a local university, Principal A-9 received a degree in elementary education. She has worked in the district for 15 years as a classroom teacher, learning coach, and assistant principal and now principal. The A-9 principal holds a philosophy

that the schools are built for the students, not the teachers. If a student fails, she believes it is due to the teacher, principal and parent mistakes. Principal A-9 believes that if parents, teachers and principals are all working for the success of the student, the student will be successful.

**Tell me about your professional development for reading in your school.**

*Okay, the district overall has great professional development workshops. For our building, we look at our School Improvement Plan (SIP) and decide what areas we were weak in, what areas we were strong in. That is how we set our goals. We have professional development over our needs. Text structure is an issue across the district, so the district offers professional development. Even though we have made a great gain that is still one area in which we struggle. The district has learning coaches and I meet with the learning coach at the beginning of the quarter and we plan our building professional development. The learning coach comes in and we plan something over text structure. We now ask teachers to go try what we show them and then come back and let's talk about what works and what doesn't. Last year, we gave the teachers a lot of information, but we did not come back and discuss it. So I think this will be beneficial for us.*

**Tell me how instruction is aligned to the standards, benchmarks, and indicators?**

*Everything we do is aligned. The district has put in extra pay for Professional Learning Communities and in that time they must talk about the data, the strategies, and how they are moving the children. Are we making gains? Then it has to be reported back to me. It is non-negotiable to meet your standards in our building. Now we have to find balance because we have worked so hard on reading alignment that we noticed math*

*had slipped away. Our racial gap is less than one percent in reading, but it is big in math. Now we are alternating, reading one month, math the next.*

After interviewing the principal from District A, School A-9; factors perceived by the researcher to impact high performance were:

- Quality professional development in creating necessary resources to meet teacher and student needs
- Analysis of data to impact instructional decisions
- Increased accountability for teacher impact on student learning

#### **School B-5: Mrs. Lee's Fifth Grade Class**

In 2008, 88.9 percent of all students passed the state reading assessment in School 5. In the fifth grade class, 85.1 percent of African American students met or exceeded the standard on the state reading assessment; 44.4 percent met the standard, 22.2 percent exceeded the standard, and 18.5 percent scored exemplary.

Mrs. Lee began her teaching career in District B eleven years ago. She has taught grades three through five. She has a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education with a middle school endorsement. She also has a Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in multicultural education. She has been in School B-5 for eight years.

#### ***Observation of Environment***

The classroom consisted of 22 students. Fifteen students were African American, two were Hispanic, and five were White.

Expectations were on the walls in the classroom. “Expect the best and accept nothing less!” One wall had a several lists made by the students and teachers. The lists were titled as the following:

- What My Teacher Expects from Me
- What My Parents Expect from Me
- What I Expect from my Teacher
- What I Expect from my Classmates
- What My Classmates Expect from Me

A poster of the four text types was on the bulletin board, as well as a poster that explained each text structure. Comprehension strategies were posted around the room as well as tips for independent reading. The students’ desks were arranged in groups. Three groups consisting of four desks and two groups with five desks were staggered around the room. Mrs. Lee easily moved throughout the classroom to work with each group. A classroom library was placed in a corner of the room. The books were on a bookshelf and sorted by genre. Each student had a library book on his/her desk and was instructed by Mrs. Lee to read them after completing work.

### ***Instructional Practices***

Before the reading instructional time began, the teacher had the students do 25 jumping jacks and ten toe touches. They then played a math game. The teacher mentioned this time was to prepare them for sitting throughout the one and a half hour reading block.

Students had been focused on a story titled *A Statue Comes Down—Declaration of Independence* since Monday. This observation took place on Thursday; therefore, students were in the rereading stage of the text. Mrs. Lee had them partner read and do a turn and talk about questions in the text. They were then told do the critical thinking questions. While students read and worked, the teacher made a few suggestions.

T: Remember to look back in your text. You may need to infer.

T: Remember you will need to write your connections.

As students continued to read and work with a partner, the teacher conferenced with each group.

T: (To Group One): Why do you make connections?

S1: To help you understand by connecting the text to what you already know.

T: Why do you want to connect the characters?

S2: It helps to understand how they feel.

T: Good job, remember to put your heads together and think.

T: (To Group Two): Why don't they want the statue to come down?

S1: They wanted to be free, but by having the statue, they didn't feel free.

S2: So tearing down the statue made them feel free—it was kind of disrespect,

T: Good, keep going!



T: (To Group Three): Where are you?

S1: Critical thinking.

T: Read the question.

S1: How did candleholders change from being symbols of loyal British citizens to symbols of resistance to the British?

T: Where did you find that in the text?

S1: I found it on page 59.

T: Read it to me.

(Student reads)

T: Keep reading because the text tells you more.

(Student reads)

T: Now, what did the candles mean?

S2: They were celebrating the birthday of the King.

T: Well, is that still happening?

S2: No, times changed and he doesn't rule them anymore. They burn candles now because they are glad he doesn't rule them anymore.

T: Now, put it in your own words and write the answer.

As Mrs. Lee conferenced with another group, students were completing the assigned sections. She told them to prepare to talk about this story whole group.

T: I want to hear your thoughts and see what you discussed with your partner. What else have you read about this period in American history?

S1: The American Revolution.

S2: The John Adams story, *Dangerous Crossing*

S3: *Give Me Liberty or Give me Death*

S4: Well, it was a movie called *The Patriot*.

T: Good, you have connected this to a lot of texts.

T: What is the Declaration of Independence?

S5: A document that symbolizes freedom.

T: Good, and the word 'document' was a vocabulary word.

T: Now, why did we make those text to text connections?

S6: It helps you understand better when you've already read another book about the war.

Mrs. Lee encourages students to make more connections with the text. They then worked on summarizing and finding the main idea of the story. For the conclusion of the lesson, they talked about the type of text was read. After debating about the text being expository and narrative, they decided it was historical fiction.

Mrs. Lee emphasized several effective instructional strategies related to comprehension of the text.

- Monitoring comprehension of text
- Critical thinking
- Making personal connections to the text
- Inferring to draw conclusions
- Locating information

- Identifying text type
- Identifying text structures

### *Instructional Changes due to NCLB*

Instructional focus has changed more over the years to concentrate on benchmark goals from the state standards. Mrs. Lee commented on how before NCLB, teachers could teach whatever they wanted to teach; now it is more structured. The principal and teacher believe more is being covered in the curriculum and connections are being made. Money is being spent more on what counts. The school is encouraging classroom money to go to student use. Money is also being spent to hire additional staff members. The school has now hired two intervention teachers. Another change since the implementation of NCLB has been teacher plan time. With the high expectation of planning to fit all students' needs, the time to plan has increased at the building and district level.

### *Interview with Mrs. Lee*

One major issue for Mrs. Lee was meeting the students' needs by making connections to the text and their lives. She believed in making instruction engaging for all students and spends most of her planning to meet this goal. Mrs. Lee knew learning about the Declaration of Independence would not interest her students unless she made connections between the fight for independence then and now. After engaging students in discussion about the text, she then had them read to compare the text to their world today. Mrs. Lee commented on how students need to have general knowledge about historical events and they have to be motivated to read to gain this knowledge. The

following section contains selected excerpts of the interview which reveal factors leading toward high reading test scores.

**Has professional development been offered in the five areas of reading instruction? (Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension)**

*I teach upper grades obviously, but it is. You still have kids in the fifth grade that need the phonemics and the fluency. The one thing I like about “Literacy by Design” (Hoyt, Marzano, Opitz, Hill, Freeman & Freeman, 2008), the program we’ve implemented, is that it goes back and it is showing me how those kids really need the phonics. The... well I kind of thought this is so babyish, it’s talking about consonant blends and short vowels when you’re doing the word work part of it. But they need it; they have lost that between primary and intermediate. So as far as professional development, I don’t know that we have spent so much time on the five areas in professional development, but the curriculum has gone back to it, which is necessary. We have talked about word work when you break down your guided reading into your word work. It is something they need. Spelling has been pushed aside and phonics. As far as professional development, we’re focused on vocabulary and comprehension. And that is our big push.*

**How much time do teachers get to collaborate in planning the teaching of reading?**

*It’s been more. Every Tuesday and Thursday we have collab time from 8:30-9:00. We are required to be with our grade level partner. Um... and that can be working on any subject but reading and math is something we stay very much on the same page.*

*Now we do group in our school. So I tend to have the higher readers and my colleague has the lower of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. But we still are teaching the same strategies. And actually we still use “Literacy by Design” (Hoyt, Marzano, Opitz, Hill, Freeman, & Freeman, 2008); we still use “Time for Kids” (Clark, Hlavaty, Housel, Miller, Null, Patton, Prior, Quesnel, Rice, Rosenberg, Rozmiarek, Smith, Summers, & Trishitta, 2000). She kind of moves at a slower pace. But it is so important to get the kids exposed to their grade level materials before the assessments. Because they are not going to have a lower grade passage when they take the test. So we plan a lot Wednesday afternoons. At least once a month she (principal) gives us once a month to just collaborate and just plan but it turns out to be more than that. Tuesday and Thursdays are our required planning time together and we get time on Wednesday together. So I feel we get plenty of time together.*

**What various instructional factors do you believe contribute to success in your students reading scores?**

*I think when you are reading and discussing something of interest, something that is relevant to their lives, something they can get into. If you get it beyond just reading and asking questions. If you try to give them some sort of project to do with it or some sort of extension that motivates them. They have to be motivated. If you’re reading like “Literacy by Design” (Hoyt, et al., 2008), it hits them. Like right now we’re reading about the Declaration of Independence. Which are things they need, they need to know that history. But are they really excited about it? Probably not. So trying to find things that they want to talk about and getting them to make connections and talk about it.*

**How does parental involvement impact the reading achievements?**

*Very much so. I always suggest to my parents to make them read every night. And not just read, but ask them what they've read and make them summarize. Tell them who were characters, where did the story take place. Try to talk to them about it and write about what they've read. And some parents really do that and you can see improvements. Others who are not reading at home and not being pushed to read before they go to bed; those are the ones who are continuing to struggle. I think it makes a large impact.*

Through analysis of Mrs. Lee's interview comments, the following characteristics were emphasized as factors of high performance:

- Teacher collaboration in the planning of reading instruction
- Emphasis on expository text structure
- Making personal connections to the texts
- Parental involvement in student accountability

### ***Interview with the B-5 Principal***

The principal of B-5 had been a classroom teacher for 20 years before becoming a principal. She has taught grades two through six. She has served as the principal of B-5 for ten years. Two factors this principal believes impact success in the building are quality professional development and strong communication with parents about student progress. The following interview excerpts reveal factors leading toward high reading test scores.

**Tell me about your professional development for reading in your school.**

*Okay. Professional development around reading here is now pretty high level functioning because we are no longer working on like how to do certain things like how to give running records or how to do those we've moved on to really look at individual students and how are they successful in comprehension. And what types of activities have to be added to the reading block in order for all students to be successful. So in order to do that, we have to take a really deep look at what we are doing instructionally. So most of our professional development around reading is looking at new strategies around comprehension which is always our weakest indicator. We look at how to individualize and how to use the data from the individual scores in order to help those students make gains.*

**Tell me how instruction is aligned to the standards, benchmarks, and indicators.**

*Ok we, at the beginning of every school year, we use the CETE instructional graph from the results of our Kansas online assessments. We look at those graphs, we go through them and analyze them as an entire staff and I'm talking kindergarten through fifth grade. And then we say okay why does this continue to be a weakness in our school. Where it has to start is before 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. So we go back and look and see where areas of weakness are and we use that graph to schedule. We actually have a yearly schedule; we have a weekly focus on each one of the indicators that are weak. We don't just wait, we attack it day one kindergarten through fifth grade.*

**What various instructional factors do you believe contributes to success in your students reading scores?**

*We use a strong foundation of decoding to start them out with “Animated Literacy” (Stone, 1983). Without that, we see we get a lot of kids who can read well, but can’t comprehend what they have read. So we just stop, go back and process through that. We do a lot of writing very early. You know written comprehension goes hand in hand with listening comprehension. If they can’t write it, they can’t really read it and understand it.*

After interviewing the principal in District B, School B-5; the following factors contributing to high performance were emphasized:

- Professional development aligned to areas of need
- Analysis of data to impact instructional decisions
- Strong foundation of phonics in primary grades

### **School B-29: Mrs. Thomas’ Fifth Grade Class**

The 2008 state reading data shows 87.8 percent of students in School B-29 met the standard, exceeded the standard or scored exemplary. The data show that 86.3 percent of African American students scored at or above grade level on the state reading assessment. For African American fifth grade students, 40.9 percent met the standard, 31.8 percent exceeded the standard, and 13.6 percent scored exemplary.

Mrs. Thomas began her teaching career in B-29. This is the third year of teaching for Mrs. Thomas. She has a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. Mrs. Jones believes this school year will be better for her because of a new building principal. With the new principal, she is free to meet her instructional indicators in a variety of ways. She commented on a sense of relief this year with the new principal’s willingness to be



flexible and trust the teachers' instructional judgment, yet be a supportive authority figure in the building.

### ***Observation of Environment***

In building demographics, 51.07 percent of students are African American. In the fifth grade classroom observed, 11 students were African American, five were White, and three were Hispanic.

In the fifth grade classroom, reading posters were placed by the guided reading table. *Making Connections*, *Comprehension Strategies*, and *Reading Cues* were the titles of posters hanging on the wall. A bulletin board of vocabulary words was posted. The word, the part of speech, and the definition were displayed. These words were words used in their text for the week. The classroom library was categorized by level of difficulty of the books, as well as interest levels; one crate was labeled "Books that are Movies". The students' desks were staggered around the room with an open space in the middle for Mrs. Thomas to walk throughout the class. Mrs. Thomas uses games for the students in which sitting in teams is beneficial. This seating arrangement worked for team instruction. Students were also seated in an order in which they could easily push desks together to work as partners.

### ***Instructional Practices***

Mrs. Thomas first taught a whole group lesson on fact and opinion. She first gave them the statement, "We are the best school." She asked if this was fact or opinion. Students began discussing the question in small groups and said it could not be proven,

therefore it was an opinion. She had the students get into groups and decide on facts and opinions about the school. After student collaboration time, each group went to the board and wrote a fact or opinion about the school. The completed chart is:

<b>Facts about our school</b>	<b>Opinions about our school</b>
We are an elementary school.	We learn cool stuff.
We have teachers.	We have the best playground in the world.
We have a playground.	Mrs. E is the best teacher ever!

Mrs. Thomas then passed out a yellow piece of paper to each student. They were instructed to write a large 'F' on one side for fact, and a large 'O' on the other side for opinion. She then read six statements and the students raised their paper to show if it was fact or opinion.

Mrs. Thomas then moved students into small guided reading groups. She instructed two groups, each for 30 minutes. Each group had six students. The third group, which was a lower level than the other two groups, was sent to another resource teacher. She informed me they were learning the same skills as the other two groups, but needed more intervention. While she met with a group, the other students were instructed to complete a fact and opinion worksheet and then read silently.

The reading was titled, *Uniform Rule in Public Schools*, a persuasive article. After students read the article silently, Mrs. Thomas asked a series of questions which created a discussion of opinions and facts. She then had the students reread the article and highlight in pink the facts, and highlight in yellow the opinions. As they finished in groups, they went back to their seats to answer after reading questions.

Mrs. Thomas focused on many key instructional methods and strategies.

- Making personal connections to the text
- Determining fact and opinion
- Identifying text types
- Identifying text structure
- Monitoring oral reading fluency
- Making predictions to guide comprehension of text
- Inferring to draw conclusions

### ***Instructional Changes Due to NCLB***

The one big change noted by the principal was the increased focus on standards. Teachers are not able to teach whatever they want without it meeting a standard. Another change noted was the use of data. Data were being used more on an individual basis and not just school wide or district wide. Each teacher was keeping data and analyzing the information.

The teacher noted that they are getting more instructional support with an instructional coach in the building. The increased classroom observations from the instructional coach and the principal gave classroom teachers good feedback in ways to modify instruction.

### *Interview with Mrs. Thomas*

Mrs. Thomas is still learning about reading instruction through professional development, help from the literacy coach and teacher collaboration. She keeps her focus on meeting the state standards and scaffolding instruction to meet the needs of the students. These excerpted quotes from the interview were chosen to highlight the factors leading to success from the perspective of a third year teacher. Professional development and teacher collaboration have helped Mrs. Thomas to believe she is providing effective instruction to her students.

#### **Tell me about your professional development for reading in your school?**

*Well, every Wednesday we have an in-service. It is not always directed around reading. But if we have questions about reading, our principal is really good at taking a professional development day on Wednesday and having all of us come together and talk about those things. If someone is struggling with cause and effect he'll allow us to come together, talk about those things so that we can get ideas from other teachers who are maybe doing better with cause and effect or reading or whatever. We've also just had training for the district where we have gone and (we just got a new curriculum, "Literacy by Design" (Hoyt, et al., 2008) and we just got training on that once a month.*

*I know that every Tuesday, me and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher have a team meeting and we talk about our reading. I know our instructional coach is very good. I've gone to her and said I need help with this. And she will just sit down with you and give you all kinds of ideas and ways to help with that. So just as a school, we work really well together. I mean, there is no hiding your good strategies. We just share. "This is what's working";*

*“we need to be doing this”. That’s just helped me a lot. This is my 3<sup>rd</sup> year and every year it just gets better because I get more and more ideas from outstanding teachers.*

**Tell me how instruction is aligned to the standards, benchmarks, and indicators.**

*I have kind of an outline I use. I look at our standards that they’re tested on. We already get a copy of our 5<sup>th</sup> grade standards. And I’ve just gone through, with the other 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, and highlighted and said this is what we’re going to teach 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. So that we know that we’re doing it. And then you see it in our lesson plans that we have to do everyday anyway that we are going to teach inferencing. You see it in our lessons. We get copies of it every year. And just testing them and making sure we’re getting it done. If it didn’t get taught well, we go back and redo it.*

**Has professional development been offered in the five areas of reading instruction?**

*It has been more focused on comprehension. A little bit of decoding if the students need that. I could say that I’m not very aware of the phonemic awareness and phonics aspects because I’m intermediate. We’ve never been trained on all of it. It’s just more focused on 5<sup>th</sup> grade with comprehension.*

After analysis of Mrs. Thomas’ interview, the following characteristics were perceived as factors of high performance:

- Teacher collaboration in planning reading instruction
- Effective instructional coach support
- Increased focus in the area of comprehension

### *Interview with the B-29 Principal*

This is the first year of being an administrator for the principal of B-29. He has taught elementary grades for ten years and been an assistant principal for one year. He believed he inherited a good staff and students. The following excerpts were chosen from the interview to emphasize his goals and areas of importance to continue increasing reading achievement in his building.

**Tell me about the reading programs used in fifth grade classrooms in your school.**

*The main reading program is guided reading. That's a majority of what you'll see in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Actually both 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes start out with "Literacy by Design" (Hoyt, et al., 2008) in a whole class lesson for the first half hour. Not every day, but most days. Then they break off into anywhere between 20 and 30 minute groups for reading groups. The main thing we try to focus on is their direct instruction based on their reading levels. Another thing we really try to focus on is there is one group with this teacher but there are two other reading groups without the teacher doing other things. We want to make sure the other two groups aren't wasting time. That's our biggest focus. It is one of the big things we really work on. The teachers are doing a good job, but that is one area we can always improve on. Making sure the other two groups are ... The work they're doing, seat work, is correlating to what they're doing at the reading table. Teachers do throw in other parts of the balanced literacy program like shared reading and things like that at different points.*

*In the 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes they will throw in a lot of the social studies and science. But the guided reading and “Literacy by Design” (Hoyt, et al., 2008) are the main reading components.*

**What are the impacts of the reading programs reflected in your test scores?**

*Since last year was my first year in the school and our reading scores were in the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile, which is not bad, but not where we want to be, not where I want to be, and not where I want my teachers to be. I kinda told teachers, had conversations with teachers about how to be better. I’m very blessed because we have very great teachers in this building. And I think that one of the reasons for the big jump, we had a 20% jump this last year in our reading scores was because of the direct instruction, not doing all of these other things, but just improving our direct instruction. And that’s what we focused on. I think at other schools I’ve seen, the focus is too much on what are we going to do second tier, what are we going to do third tier, without having a real good first tier, if that makes sense. So that was my focus last year was we need to focus on how guided reading can be the best it can be. That’s not going to reach every single student, but it will the majority of them. And then we can focus on, okay, what else do we need to do. So I think that was something that really helped last year, getting the teachers to focus on that and believing in that. If we do good instruction for the two hour block, not that we’re not doing other things throughout the day, but if we do really good reading instruction. Make sure it’s focused, make sure its connected to everything we are doing, the kids will learn for academics in life but also raise reading scores. That was just kind of a mentality change. I think, to believe that would do it. And it wasn’t easy. But reality was we saw that last year and said oh wow, we jumped 20%. We’re up in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile now in*

*reading. We weren't doing a lot of fancy stuff, just good instruction. I think that was it. Working together, the instructional coach and myself with reflective teachers who looked at their lessons and say that didn't go well and they come and ask questions. That's the good thing about this staff, they are not afraid to ask, they are not competitive with each other. That 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher will go to the other 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, or the instructional coach or myself.*

**What various instructional factors, outside of direct instruction, do you believe contribute to success in your students reading score?**

*We have a strong primary. From what the teachers told me last year, which of course won't affect the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, but the kindergarten teachers said we had more kindergarteners coming out reading than any year ever before. That sets the foundation. They are already there. So I tell the 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers, they are already there, now where are you going to take them? So hopefully that will work. Good primary teachers are a big part of it. Honestly, I think a big part is collaboration among teachers. They ask each other questions, they'll push each other. They will use their plan time to observe other teachers classrooms. Which you don't see at most buildings. Again, it is nothing I've mandated and said they had to do that. It is something they choose to do. So I think that is a big part. The staff does a real good job of looking at data and using that data. They do it themselves, although we do it as a staff.*

*I was in the computer lab the other day and one of the teachers was taking the reading test over expository. And she was going through taking notes on every kid and what they missed. Like this one missed author's purpose and so on. She made notes on every kid so she can go back and say okay 10 kids are struggling with author's purpose,*



*so she goes back to teaching that. I only have one kid struggling with this, so I don't need to focus all my teaching on this, but address it with this one kid. Using that data on an individual bases makes a difference.*

*Also our instructional coach, she is someone that is not seen as an authority figure, she's not seen as a threat. So our teachers will come and ask questions. They invite her to watch them teach a lesson and give suggestions, so they are open. In a lot of buildings teachers aren't comfortable with someone watching them and giving feedback. They will say can you come teach this today and then watch me tomorrow.*

*Another thing is, not really instructionally, but I know it has made a difference too, is my presence in the classroom. I try to be in the classroom at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the day. Again it is not threatening, they know I'm going to be there. It works two ways: one it helps me get back to what's going on, being a former teacher, I can give feedback. But it serves another purpose as far as accountability. Fortunately, not a lot of the teachers need the accountability, they don't need somebody to watch over them to make sure they are doing their job, but it's always a factor know. Whatever job you're doing you know your boss is coming in.*

Based on the analysis of the principal's interview in District B, School 9; the following factors which impact high performance are:

- Teacher accountability for active engagement during literacy instruction
- High expectations as a staff for student performance
- Teacher collaboration in planning reading instruction
- Support of the instructional coach

### **School C-15: Mr. Shaw's Fifth Grade Class**

The 2008 state reading assessment data shows 70.6 percent of all students in School C-15 met the standard, exceeded the standard or scored exemplary. The fifth grade African American population had 63.7 percent of students at or above grade level. For the African American fifth grade, 27.3 percent of student met the standard, 27.3 exceeded the standard, and 9.1 percent were exemplary. However, the largest percent of African American fifth grade students, 36.4 percent, approached the standard. In 2007, 81.3 percent of African American students were at or above grade level.

Mr. Shaw is an experienced teacher. He has taught grades four through eight for the past 30 years. He has a Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction. He has been in School C-15 for 24 years.

### ***Observation of Environment***

The building population has 38.53 percent African American students. The fifth grade classroom observed had 21 students; nine were African American, seven were white, and four were Hispanic.

In the fifth grade classroom, a large word wall was posted. Posters with the author's point of view information and comprehension strategies were posted. The teacher used the ELMO machine for shared reading. Students were staggered in groups of five and four around the room. Mr. Shaw would walk to the back of the room in order to be close in proximity to the students in the back, which were redirected to pay attention once. While students were brainstorming answers or reading the text, Mr. Shaw

moved around the room. While writing on the ELMO, Mr. Shaw sat on a tall stool in front of the room.

### ***Instructional Practices***

Mr. Shaw taught the class in a whole group instruction. *Time for Kids* (Clark, et al., 2000) was used in the shared reading experience. The teacher used discussion for introducing the text. The ELMO was used in order for all students to see the text. He first activated the students' prior knowledge.

T: How many of you have or had pop up books? (All students raise hands)

T: Why do you think the author gives you a pop up book?

S1: To entertain us.

S2: To get our attention.

T: Exactly, now that they have your attention they can have you pay attention to the print on the page. So first we get your attention and then we teach you.

Motivating you is first drawing you in so that you will read the printed words.

Students read the passage silently. The passage was followed by a series of questions relating to the author's purpose, vocabulary, and text structure. After completing the passage and the questions, students began working on writing. Another teacher, the inclusion teacher, entered the room to help with writing section. The students were doing the writing process. In days before, Mr. Shaw had them brainstorm and create a rough

draft. Students were then instructed to collaborate with partners about the rough drafts and make changes. Students used a six trait writing rubric to make editing changes.

Instructional strategies and methods observed were related to the text read. Mr. Shaw focused on the following:

- Identifying text type
- Identifying text structure
- Making personal connections to the text
- Defining key vocabulary words
- Making predictions to guide comprehension of the text
- Monitoring comprehension of text
- Visualization of text images
- Inferring in drawing conclusions

### *Instructional Changes due to NCLB*

Literature selection for African American students has been an implemented change since NCLB. Teachers have more available literature relevant to lives of African American students. Increased technology in the building has been another change. Mr. Shaw believes having more technology aids his reading instruction.

More consistency and high expectations have also been an implemented change in C-15. Teachers were well trained on the current reading program and believe in its effectiveness. As new teachers enter the building, they are immediately aware of the high expectations in implementing effective reading instruction. High expectations for student

performance has always been in C-15, but it is emphasized even more with public school performance reports.

### *Interview with Mr. Shaw*

Mr. Shaw believes that before educators can teach students, they must first nurture students. Being able to nurture students also means knowing their background. Although Mr. Shaw is an African American male, he believes the students come from a different culture than he does, no matter the race. He lives in the same neighborhood as the students and tries to make strong connections with parents. Mr. Shaw has taught many of his students' parents and believes that impacts his instruction and test scores. The bond he has with the families creates motivation for the students and parents. The following excerpts from Mr. Shaw's interview reveal factors leading toward high reading test scores.

**How do you feel instruction is aligned to the standards, benchmarks, and indicators. How does your Harcourt (Beck, Farr, & Strickland, 2005) series do with this?**

*Very well, very well. We have some liaisons come in and work with us in terms of saying this is what you need to cover. Without saying this is going to be on the state assessment, they let us know this is what needs to be covered. Now going on year five with this, I have highlighted things in there they will be hit with. They have kind of backed off of us, because of the scores. But once again, I look at some of the people coming in worry about what they are being taught in terms of work ethic.*

**How much time do teachers get to collaborate in planning the teaching of reading?**

*We have collaboration across grade level. I have collaboration with another fifth grade teacher every Wednesday. We also grab each other in the hallway and talk about things. With her being another veteran, we bounce things off of each other often. Even though the reading is pretty much there, we now have an ELL population and we need to figure things out. That is our group that is struggling for whatever reason. We did not have that group three years ago. We try to stay on the same page. Most of our African American students are on top. We disagree with each other in staff development quite often. We are hard on ourselves, but we are here to do what we need to do. I still want to get better, so we have to work together. We have some new teachers that aren't sure what they don't know and we don't want to mess up our progress.*

**Tell me about the reading programs used in fifth grade classrooms in your school.**

*Well, Harcourt (Beck et al., 2005) is a very effective program as we've talked about.*

**What are the impacts of the reading programs reflected in your test scores?**

*Once again, it hits everything. The entire curriculum is aligned well to SBI's. (Standards, benchmarks and indicators)*

**What various instructional factors do you believe contribute to success in your students reading scores?**

*A good foundation in primary, I have watched our first grade teachers who have been here for quite some time. They have great work ethic. Our past reading specialist*

*just retired and she was top notch. And again, I think there has always been an understood thing here that expectations are pretty high. I also believe we have a number of teachers here that are very nurturing. It impacts our test scores. While the students are taking their assessments, we are walking around rubbing backs and giving them pep talks. It's okay, you will do fine. We send them cards a week or two before the test. Just letting them know you will do fine. You hear the kids in the hall saying you will be fine. We can't help them too much, but I will just sit beside them and rub their backs. I think we some times forget how young they are and that lack of nurturing they are not getting at home.*

**What are some of the changes you have seen in grade level reading instruction in the past years?**

*We have gone from here is a story, highlight the vocabulary words and write the definitions. We have gone to picking stories that can relate to their lives. I give that credit to the district. Bridging that gap. It is very obvious that some kids get more when they are away from here. But with that machine there (the ELMO), we can go to all parts of the world with that. It puts us more on the same playing field.*

*About eight years ago, we were focused more on trade books. I liked that. We spent thousands of dollars buying them and trying to figure out ways to get them excited about it. Right when we figured out what we were doing, they decided to switch. I wasn't really happy about that. But the district hasn't led me wrong in all these years, so I thought I would follow along with them. We still have the trade books out and the students are reading and reading. Some are trying to sneak them home in their book bags. I blow up a big bubble and we all get inside and just read. I am in there reading*

*with them. When I can sit down and tell them, I like this book. I like this part of the book and the kids will say, "You have read this." We had a lot of staff development over the trade books and teachers wondering what to do. So we went to quite a few conferences that showed us how to set them up and the groups, really the mechanics of it. I was feeling really good, our scores were still good. Then they switched us to this. But I still use my trade books because I have 30 minutes each day of sustained silent reading.*

After interviewing Mr. Shaw, the researcher identified the following factors impacting high performance.

- Instructional support from administration
- Teacher collaboration in planning reading instruction
- Alignment of instruction and standards
- Strong foundation in primary grades

### ***Interview with the C-15 Principal***

The principal in School C-15 has been an administrator for the past 15 years. He has been principal of C-15 for four years. The C-15 Principal taught sixth, seventh, and eighth grade for 11 years. The interview with the principal was briefer than others due to less professional development as a staff and district and less administrative involvement in classroom instruction than District A and District B principals. The following interview excerpts were used because they were answered more extensively than other interview questions. Although the C-15 principal has had concerns about instruction and management with teachers in his building, the concern is not with the fifth grade teachers.



Due to the fifth grade teachers being veterans, he works closer to the newer teachers in the building.

**Tell me about your professional development for reading in your school.**

*It is more as a district. When we adopt a new series, we pull first of all by grade level. If we see something we need to focus on, we have some type of district training to learn that concept.*

**What are some of the changes you have seen in grade level reading instruction or just instruction period in the past eight years?**

*No Child Left Behind. I think one of the real important things is alignment of what is being taught and what is being assessed. We talk about fidelity and there is a set way of teaching things. There is more of a focus on everyone trying to teach the things that are being assessed, but in the best way that is benefits the kids.*

**Do you believe the reading scores of the state reading assessment reflect the reading ability of your students?**

*Our scores are high, so I want to say yes (laughing).*

**Tell me about parental involvement in your building and how it impacts the reading achievement in your building.**

*I know in a lot of low income areas, we hear that parents aren't really involved. But I think our parents are really involved. Individually our teachers have planned the ways they will communicate with parents whether by planners or letters. The teachers communicate early about expectations throughout the year and the parents respond well. The kids who do the best have parents really involved and some of our kids who struggle*

*have less involvement from parents. I think that is where we have to identify those kids and do what we can as a school, kind of pick up the slack.*

After analyzing interview transcripts of the principal from District C, School C-15, the following factors were perceived to impact reading performance:

- District wide professional development for reading program
- Parental involvement in student accountability
- High expectations as a staff for student performance

### **School C-19: Mrs. Mack's Fifth Grade Class**

The 2008 state reading assessment scores shows 82.1 percent of all students in School 19 met the standard, exceeded the standard or scored exemplary. In the fifth grade class, 81.5 percent of all students were at or above the standard. No students scored in the lowest scoring category, academic warning.

Mrs. Mack has been in the district and C-19 for 25 years. She has taught primary and intermediate grades in the building. She has a Bachelor of Science in teaching grades K-9.

### ***Observation of Environment***

The school is 21.59 percent African American. The number of African American students in fifth grade classes were lower than 30, so disaggregated scores were not published.

The researcher observed the small group instruction versus the whole group instruction in the classroom. The reading teachers who provided the pull out service for

the classroom teacher did not have much print on bulletin boards around the room. However, there were small posters with text type and text structure that were visible for students at the small work table. The students were seated at a kidney-shaped table. Two kidney-shaped tables were in the classroom, separated by a tall and wide bookshelf. Although the students were reading the same story and the teachers were doing identical instruction, the students did not seem to notice. The teachers' desks were across the room. It was obvious the room was used to store leveled books for the building because one area of the room was filled with shelves labeled with book levels.

### ***Instructional Practices***

The two small groups were instructed by Mrs. Mack and a colleague in the building. They pulled 50 percent of the students out of the classroom. The two groups were reading the same text. The researcher observed one reading teacher closely. The students reviewed vocabulary words introduced the day before in the story. The words were on cards. Mrs. Mack would give a definition and the students would match it to the word. The students would give an example of how to use the words. She then prepared them to read the text.

T: Now we are going to see these words in our book. Our story is called *Raindrop in the Sun*. You may use the Table of Contents to find out which page to turn.

S1: Oh, page 78.

T: Tell me something that is similar to the book we read yesterday.

S2: They are Native American.

T: Good.

S3: Can we popcorn read?

T: Yes.

(Student 1 reads text fluently).

T: Is this a fiction or nonfiction text?

S2: Fiction.

T: So what do we look for here?

S2: Character, problem, setting and resolution.

T: What's between the problem and resolution?

S1: The events.

T: How are we going to tell the events?

S1: By what is most important?

T: Yes, but....

S1: Oh yeah, beginning, middle, and end.

T: Okay back to the story.

(Students continue reading).

T: So what is the problem?

S2: Lani wants to gather abalones, but the men won't let her because she is a girl.

Now, can we guess the resolution?

T: Yes, and what do we call it when we guess?

S1: Plot?

T: Well, it does start with a 'p'.

S3: Prediction, oh yeah, we did that last year.

Students continue reading. The teacher continued to stop the reading and ask questions. Questioning was focused on prediction and inference.

The groups met for 30 minutes. The instruction delivered by Title I teachers was the same instruction the teacher was doing in the classroom. The Title I teacher said she felt the two small groups worked better for the students. All three students in the observed lesson were English as a Second Language students. Key instructional methods and strategies used in the observation of small groups were:

- Monitoring oral reading fluency instruction
- Identifying text types
- Identifying text structure
- Identifying story elements
- Making predictions to guide comprehension of text
- Inferring to draw conclusions
- Making personal connections to the text

### ***Instructional Changes due to NCLB***

Since the implementation of NCLB, C-19 has increased focused on reading standards, benchmarks, and indicators. Alignment of instruction to the Kansas standards has been developed through pacing guides. Title I reading staff is responsible for ensuring teachers understand the effective reading strategies and methods for increasing test scores in the building.

### *Interview with the Mrs. Mack*

Mrs. Mack believes the Title I staff has a major impact in test scores and the success of school C-19. Professional development and alignment of instruction is conducted by the liaisons. The Title I staff also helps Mrs. Mack by teaching her struggling readers during the scheduled reading time in the day. Although the researcher interviewed Mrs. Mack, the observation was done in the Title I teacher's small group session. The following interview excerpts from Mrs. Mack reveal factors leading toward high reading test scores.

**Tell me about your professional development for reading in your school.**

*Um...traditionally the title, the title people that are employed by our district do most of the staff development that is related to reading. The title liaisons address when we have concerns about particular items on the assessment, like fact and opinion. We contact them and they can get together some stuff and show it to us or whatever is needed. So most of our inservice is done by the title people.*

**Tell me how instruction is aligned to the standards, benchmarks, and indicators.**

*Oh, it is really aligned. That is another thing that our Title people do. They know the standards backwards and forward so they are always busy pulling stuff that matches. Which also helps.*

**Has professional development been offered in the five areas of reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension)?**

*Um, you know we have talked some about each of those areas. But generally we*

*make it more specific to the grade level. So at fifth grade we don't spend a lot of time on phonemic awareness. We work more on comprehension.*

**What various instructional factors do you believe contribute to success in your students reading scores?**

*I think the good foundation in primary helps. Even before school, I think children have been talked to and read to. Knowing nursery rhymes before they get to school helps. And I do think that your primary instruction is critical. Fluency has to be automatic before you can work on the comprehension. It's like playing a piano. If you are still working on reading the notes, you can not work on the dynamics. So once you memorize it, you can work on the dynamics. I think reading is like that, once the fluency is there, all of other things can come. One thing that we do is literature sets. Because I think they need lots of practice reading something besides a story that lasts for five days. So we do literature sets. Sometimes we read it together, sometimes I will make up worksheets of questions to go along with the chapters. I really try to get them interested in something longer than they want to read.*

**What are some of the changes you have seen in grade level reading instruction in the past five years?**

*I have been here 25 years, so I have seen changes. When we were first here, I taught in the primary. We did small round robin groups where children were grouped at their level. Then there was a push for everybody in the same book. Whole language. Not so much work on fluency. It wasn't a good period. And then we went to whole group share reading and guided reading separately. And I think that is the best approach*

*because you can teach the skills to the whole group and then work at their level more. I think this is the best approach so far.*

**Do you believe the reading scores of the state reading assessment reflect the reading ability of your students?**

*You know, just yesterday the fifth grade teachers looked at our scores, the district scores and the state scores all on the same page. And basically, they all pretty much matched. So I felt like I am doing as well as other people in the state, but I could also see where I was not doing well. Whereas if everyone in the state is doing poorly, that tells me that it is a flawed test item. For instance, text structures we are all doing poorly and perhaps it is not a good test item. So I think state scores aren't always the best indicator.*

Analysis of the interview with Mrs. Mack revealed factors contributing to high performance in the classroom.

- Instructional support of Title I liaisons
- Professional development in the area of comprehension
- Strong foundation in primary (K-3) instruction
- Analysis of data to impact instructional decisions

### ***Interview with the C-19 Principal***

The C-19 principal taught physical education, special education and fifth grade for ten years. He has been a principal for 15 years and at C-19 for three years. The principal in C-19 had brief answers to interview questions. Since District C has less professional development and spends less time as a staff analyzing data and planning, many comments were brief or directed to teacher interview. The principal in C-19



believes his staff is strong enough to teach without the high level of accountability used by some principals. The following interview excerpts reveal factors leading toward high reading test scores.

**Tell me about your professional development for reading in your school.**

*The district provides professional development, and then we take that concept at the building level and work on it.*

**What various instructional factors do you believe contribute to success in your students reading scores?**

*Probably the fact that we test them, see where they are and monitor progress.*

**What are some of the changes you have seen in grade level reading instruction in the past years?**

*I think we are on the same page as a whole school. We are taught more.*

**Do you believe the reading scores of the state reading assessment reflect the reading ability of your students?**

*Looking at the scores, we are 80.5%. I would say yes. We have great support and with the librarian, she does a lot to help with that.*

**Tell me about parental involvement in your building.**

*I think for a small school we do well and parents are overall involved.*

Analysis of the interview with the principal from District C, School C-19 reveal factors contributing to building performance.

- Analysis of data to impact instructional decisions
- Teacher collaboration in planning reading instruction
- Extra reading support from school librarian

- Parental involvement in creating student accountability

### **Meeting the Indicator**

The standards, benchmarks, and indicators are the main components of a classroom teacher's lesson plans. The standards are guides for teachers to follow in order to develop the schema each year for students. The indicators provide specific information for what students should be learning at grade level. In fifth grade classrooms observed in the study, a variety of indicators were taught. However, all events were related to the state reading assessment items. Through field notes, observation transcripts and focused coding, the researcher analyzed the events and teacher comments to match instruction to meeting the indicator. The teaching objective is focused on the indicator. In the observations, specific indicators were apparent by teacher instruction.

Table 4.7 provides examples of instruction by the classroom teachers' interview comments that supported meeting the following indicators: text types, text structures, making connections, phonics, vocabulary and comprehension.

**Table 4.7: Instructional Indicators Identified in Coding of Observations**

<b>District</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Example of Instruction</b>
			<b>Considered in Coding</b>	
A	A-7	Mrs. Jones	Vocabulary	<i>What does the word fainted mean?</i>
A	A-7	Mrs. Jones	Text Type	<i>What do you think was the author's purpose?</i>
A	A-7	Mrs. Jones	Text Structure	<i>We are going to focus on cause and effect.</i>
A	A-9	Mrs. Smith	Phonics	<i>Spell the word 'act'</i>
A	A-9	Mrs. Smith	Vocabulary	<i>Fill in the blank. What a _____ puppy!</i>
A	A-9	Mrs. Smith	Phonics	<i>Add one letter to spell 'cuter'. Take six letters and spell 'rescue'. Add one more later and spell 'rescuer'.</i>
B	B-5	Mrs. Lee	Comprehension	<i>Remember to look back. You may need to infer.</i>
B	B-5	Mrs. Lee	Making Connections	<i>T: Write your connections. Why do we make connections? S: To help you understand by connecting to the text what you already know.</i>
B	B-29	Mrs. Thomas	Comprehension	<i>Students answered a series of questions about a persuasive passage orally and in writing.</i>
C	C-15	Mr. Shaw	Text Type	<i>Why do you think the author gives you a pop up book?</i>
C	C-19	Mrs. Mack	Text Structure	<i>You may use the Table of Contents to find out which page to turn.</i>
C	C-19	Mrs. Mack	Text Type	<i>Is this fiction or nonfiction?</i>
C	C-19	Mrs. Mack	Text Type	<i>So what do we look for (in this type of text)?</i>

Instructional reading indicators were identified during classroom observations. Text types and text structures were emphasized in District C. Text types, text structures, vocabulary, phonics, and vocabulary was observed Districts A and B. The Kansas reading standards, benchmarks, and indicators were explicitly taught in the six schools during observations. These indicators were aligned with Kansas reading assessments items. Examples of assessment items can be found in Appendix F.

### **Factors of High Performance**

Through interview transcripts with the classroom teachers and principals, many characteristics emerged from each school. Audiotapes were analyzed to determine characteristics that were perceived to impact the Kansas State Reading Assessment. A factor was determined through conversations and interviews with teachers and principals.

Broad coded factors include:

- quality professional development
- teacher collaboration in planning reading instruction
- parental involvement in creating student accountability
- analysis of data to impact instruction
- high expectations as a staff for student performance

Table 4.8 provides examples of conversations by the teachers and principals that supported the factors of professional development, parental involvement, analysis of data and high expectations that were perceived to impact test scores. Although many of the

interviews and conversations were between five to fifteen pages, the researcher provided key examples of each school in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Events Identified in Coding of Interviews**

<b>Factors Considered in Coding</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Teacher or Principal</b>	<b>Example of Event (Interviews)</b>
<b>Professional Development</b>	A	A-7	Principal	<i>Our professional development is actually built within the school day and what we do is ongoing throughout the year.</i>
	A	A-9	Mrs. Smith	<i>We have professional development where we meet and our team meetings once a week. We really just kind of come together as an intermediate team (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grades). And of course in the district, there are a lot of inservices that support us. So there are a lot of resources out there.</i>
	B	B-5	Principal	<i>Professional development at our school is pretty high level functioning because we are no longer working on how to do certain things like how to give running records, we've moved onto really looking at individual students and how are they successful in comprehension.</i>
	B	B-29	Principal	<i>We have staff development every Wednesday for two hours. What we do during that time is we basically base our staff developments on the needs of the teachers.</i>
	C	C-15	Mr. Shaw	<i>We spend so much time on the area of reading, getting kids to read and trying to get them to understand what makes it all flow. Our writing has been put on the backburner and as a result, our writing scores have plummeted.</i>
	C	C-19	Mrs. Mack	<i>The Title I liaisons do most of the staff development related to reading. They address concerns about particular items on the assessment, like fact or opinion. We contact them and they can get together some stuff and show it to us or whatever is needed.</i>

<b>Teacher Collaboration</b>	A	A-7	Principal	<i>Besides the PLC time, we also create a master schedule for common plan times at the grade level. Out of all of those, each of them has at least three common planning times. One of those times is designed that teachers meet as a grade level. I really want, not that teachers are going to teach everything the same, the exact same day, but there needs to be some common threads, some consistency.</i>
	A	A-9	Mrs. Smith	<i>Well, we are able to meet as a 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade team once a week. It just depends on how we use that time.</i>
	B	B-5	Mrs. Lee	<i>Every Tuesday and Thursday we have teacher collaboration time from 8:30AM to 9:30 AM. That can be working on any subject but reading and math is something we stay very much on the same page.</i>
	B	B-29	Mrs. Thomas	<i>I know that every Tuesday we (5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers) have team meetings and we talk about reading. So just as a school, we work really well together. I mean there is no hiding good strategies. That's helped me a lot.</i>
	C	C-15	Principal	<i>In our building it was kind of a staff decision to take one day for grade level. We also break it up into clusters like K, 1,2, and then 3,4, and 5. That way the kindergarten teachers are aware of the first grade curriculum and that way we can keep the curriculum moving.</i>
	C	C-19	Principal	<i>Teachers probably do not get enough collaboration time, but we do have 30 minutes a couple times a week. We try to also use their plan time.</i>
<b>Parental Involvement</b>	A	A-7	Mrs. Jones	<i>We definitely have more intact structure at home, more parents and kids that live in two parent homes. When parents come here, they're supposed to be involved with the Parent Teachers Association.</i>
	A	A-9	Mrs. Smith	<i>I think parental involvement affects everything. I don't have the data in front of me now, but there are parents out there asking how they can help their child. Those kids do better because they know the parents have the expectations and so do we.</i>

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	B	B-5	Mrs. Lee	<i>I always suggest to my parents to make them read every night. And not just read, but ask them what they've read and make them summarize.</i>
	B	B-29	Principal	<i>I think our parent involvement varies per child. I think the district perceives we have a lot of involvement based on our side of town, which I don't perceive.</i>
	C	C-15	Principal	<i>I think our parents are really involved. Individually, our teachers have planned the ways they will communicate with parents whether by planners or letters. The teachers communicate early about expectations throughout the year and the parents respond well.</i>
	C	C-19	Mrs. Mack	<i>Well I think most people will agree we would like more parental involvement. Now that we have the math series where they are expected to do the math homework every night, we can really see who has help at home.</i>
<b>Analysis of Data</b>	A	A-7	Principal	<i>We look at classroom data, our state data and our building growth and district wide data and identify what our strengths and weaknesses are.</i>
	A	A-9	Principal	<i>A change since NCLB has been the accountability for data. We have data coaches and data leaders. We received more learning coaches. The support for special ed has increased. I think just the fact that data is required is different. We have PLCs that are about instruction and data. You can not talk about the field trips; you can not talk about the party. It is has to be focused around data and instruction. We have even had to train on analyzing the data because teachers were collecting data, but not analyzing data. Now we make sure kindergarten teachers and first grade teachers start looking at their focus earlier. We can't wait until the end to catch a child that is behind. I do like the MAPS NWEA to do progress monitoring. I had to learn when I got here that we needed to start with baby steps in analyzing data and monitoring progress.</i>

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<b>High Expectations</b>	B	B-5	Principal	<i>Most of our professional development around reading is looking at new strategies around comprehension which is our weakest indicator. We look at how to individualize and how to use the data from the individual scores in order to help those students make gains.</i>
	B	B-29	Principal	<i>Some changes I've seen over the years is the focus on standards. One of the benefits of NCLB, although I am not a big supporter of it, it is more accountability for teachers in the classroom. The use of data has definitely changed. In the last few years I've seen data being used on more of an individual basis.</i>
	C	C-15	Principal	<i>Once thing I would say is the teachers work really hard to find out where our kids are when we get them to move them forward.</i>
	C	C-19	Principal	<i>Something contributing to student reading scores is the fact that we test them, see where they are and monitor progress.</i>
	A	A-7	Mrs. Jones	<i>I see the connection between our reading programs and the test scores, especially last year. I had some really low students so I tried some new strategies and the kids just blew me out of the water with the MAP NWEA testing and the state assessment scores. I was amazed!</i>
	A	A-9	Principal	<i>It is non negotiable to meet our standards in our building. Now we have to find balance because we worked so hard on reading alignment that we noticed math slipping away. Our racial gap is less than one percent in reading, but it is big in math. So now we are alternating, reading one month and math the next.</i>
	B	B-5	Mrs. Lee	<i>We use high interest materials because they are relevant and up-to-date. I also try for my high readers to just randomly pull stuff like by going to the teacher store and getting seventh and eighth grade passages.</i>
	B	B-29	Principal	<i>Our reading was in the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile, which is not bad, but not where we want to be, not where I want to be, and not where I want my teachers to be.</i>

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C	C-15	Mr. Shaw	<i>We disagree with each other in staff development quite often. We are hard on ourselves, but we are here to do what we need to do. I still want to get better, so we have to work together.</i>
C	C-19	Mrs. Mack	<i>I have had some really good students. I remember having two or three boys who were rewarded for their achievements; they were African American, and most of the times they (African American boys) struggle more than the girls. I don't believe their parents were more involved than others, I think they were just involved at home.</i>

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The instructional indicators in Table 4.7 were addressed during the observed reading times. These reading indicators are aligned to the Kansas reading standards as well as the Kansas reading assessment. Aligning instruction to the reading indicators was a critical factor in high African American student performance on the fifth grade Kansas state reading assessment. Table 4.8 aligned interview comments with instructional reading factors that have also led to high performance on reading assessment scores.

### **Summary of Six Schools**

Commonalities were found among the six high performing schools. These common factors are specific indicators of factors leading to the high performance in the schools as perceived by the researcher. The commonalities include the following:

- Increased efforts to analyze data as the basis for focused reading instruction
- High expectations in reading for *all* students
- Quality professional development in reading for teachers
- Teacher collaboration for effective reading
- Alignment of instruction and state standards, benchmarks and indicators in reading

- Parental involvement in monitoring student test scores in reading

One commonality of the six schools is increased efforts to analyze reading data. Schools in District A (A-5 and A-9) and B (B-5 and B-29) utilize the MAP NWEA (Measures of Academic Progress-Northwest Evaluation Association). The assessments are aligned to the state standards and computerized for schools to use the information to modify instruction each quarter. District C schools (C-15 and C-19) utilize the Stanford Assessment, which is an assessment with the Harcourt (Beck et al., 2005) reading program. In the interview, the teacher from School C-19, Mrs. Mack, stated the Stanford Assessment does not provide much information because it is only given in October. Districts A and B use the MAP scores quarterly and analyze the data during professional development to modify instruction.

All six schools use data from daily reading classroom work and reading assessments. With instruction closely aligned to the state reading standards, the classroom teachers have used reading assessments to monitor progress. Teachers and schools are now able to look at classroom assessments and make accommodations for students not meeting the reading indicators and enrichment for students meeting the indicators.

The six teachers and principals commented on the change from teaching themes or whatever the teacher desired to now focusing on meeting the state reading standards, benchmarks and indicators. The teachers in the six selected schools commented on their freedom to select their own tools to meet the reading standards since test scores were much higher. If the reading test scores were low in their buildings, they perceived they would have more scripted and structured reading instruction.

Although all six teachers commented on reading instruction being more structured with the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), they emphasized the challenge of finding relevant reading materials for lives of African American students. The teachers used a variety of reading resources to meet the needs and interest of the students including the internet, *Time for Kids* (Clark, et al., 2000) and *Literacy by Design* (Hoyt, et al., 2008). These programs are supplemental resources to provide high interest expository text to motivate students and meet state standards.

The selected six schools have increased professional development in reading and teacher collaboration time. Professional development was offered in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension in the three districts. Specification was made to grade levels and skills. The fifth grade teachers were coached more in the areas of fluency, vocabulary and comprehension compared to phonemic awareness and phonics, which was emphasized more in the primary grades. Due to professional development in the five areas of reading instruction, the six schools stated the success in fifth grade students was a result of strong instruction in the primary grades in phonemic awareness and phonics. By time the students entered fifth grade, the skills of decoding and fluency were already mastered. The fifth grade teachers were able to focus their instruction on vocabulary and comprehension.

At the district level of professional development, the schools sent other educators to be trained in reading and the educators would then come back to the school to train the classroom teachers. In District A, the professional development in reading was offered to the classroom teachers and the principal. When a problem or question in reading instruction was presented, the principal was a resource to help. If the principal could not

aide the teachers, he/she would then call in a literacy coach from the district office. In District B, literacy coaches and instructional coaches are trained by the district and become the teacher resource to help modify reading instruction. In District C, Title I reading teachers are used to receive professional development by the district and become the main resource for classroom teachers.

Each district has increased professional development time in reading. District A teachers report to school 45 minutes earlier on Wednesdays, while in District B, students are released early on Wednesdays for professional development time. In District C, early reporting or release is not used, but more time for collaboration and faculty meetings are used to focus on instructional issues. The six selected schools have built in time throughout the school day for grade level teachers to collaborate.

Parental involvement was an essential goal in the six schools. Each district had its own system of involving parents in students learning to improve their reading scores. In District A, the school had parents sign a contract. The parents had to help students with reading homework each night. When the teachers notice the students are not reading nightly, they call the parent and remind them of the contract. The parents immediately respond to the feedback in most cases. In District B, the principals and teachers send home expectations for the students and parents at the beginning of the school year. The teachers send home nightly homework with specific instruction. If the child is reading a book, the teacher may ask the parent to have the child summarize the text. In District C, the teachers personally know the parents because of living in the neighborhood. The teachers communicate with the parents on a weekly basis. The principals stated that if the parents are not meeting the needs of the students, the school

takes over the responsibility to ensure the best situation and success for the student. High expectations for all students' success in reading involved the educators, parents and students.

### **Summary**

This chapter presented the quantitative and qualitative data gathered to answer the research questions. Quantitatively, comparisons were made in order to determine if African American fifth grade students have improved reading achievement since the implementation of No Child Left Behind. The results of the study indicated that African American students have made statistically significant gains in reading test scores since the implementation of the new law.

Based on the data, six high performing Kansas urban schools were selected and a qualitative method of research involving observations and interviews was conducted. Each school was described by demographics and two fifth grade reading classrooms were observed in each district. Each teacher and the principals of the school were interviewed. Components emerging through observation of reading instruction showed teachers teaching text types, text structure, making connections, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehensions. Factors impacting high performance emerged throughout the interviews, which were analysis of data, high expectations, quality professional development, teacher collaboration, alignment of instruction and state standards, and parental involvement.

Chapter Five follows with a discussion of the findings, summary of the study, and conclusions drawn by the researcher. Implications for policymakers, administrators,

teachers, professional development, and teacher preparation programs in reading are also discussed. Chapter Five ends with recommendations for further reading research and the final thoughts of the researcher.

## **CHAPTER 5 – Discussion**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a discussion of the findings related to how the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) impacted fifth grade African American reading achievement in urban schools in Kansas. Discussion of the findings is based on quantitative data from state reading assessment scores and performance categories. Discussion of the findings is based on an analysis of observational field notes, and interview transcripts. Analysis of this data lead to the description of environment, instructional reading practices, instructional changes due to implementation of NCLB, parental involvement, and conversations with teachers and principals. Implications for instructional decisions in reading for future research and classroom practice are examined.

### **Summary of the Study**

Given the requirements of No Child Left Behind, teachers and administrators have to emphasize meeting the literacy needs of the child and meeting the state reading standards. Focus in the Kansas urban schools has shifted to teaching the state reading standards effectively while meeting the literacy needs of many students. This study explored the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) based on state reading assessment scores of Kansas urban fifth grade students.

The quantitative study was conducted based on the state reading assessment scores of urban African American fifth grade students in Kansas. Out of three urban districts in Kansas, six high performing schools were selected for high reading

achievement scores and studied qualitatively. The study was conducted between May 2008 and December 2008. Observational field notes were kept and audiotaped interviews of principals and teachers were transcribed for data analysis.

The quantitative data were analyzed to reveal the impact of state reading assessment scores on African American fifth grade students before NCLB (2000-2001) and during NCLB (2002-2007). The quantitative data were also analyzed to identify instructional factors that thought to be effective in selected high performing schools. Commonalities in practice, methods, and strategies for effective instruction were explored and experiences were noted based on each classroom setting. The following commonalities were determined as factors of high performance:

- Analysis of data as the basis for focused reading instruction
- High expectations for *all* students in reading
- Quality professional development for teachers to improve reading instruction
- Teacher collaboration for effective reading instruction
- Alignment of instruction and state standards, benchmarks, and indicators in reading
- Parental involvement in monitoring student reading abilities and skills

## **Findings**

Through analysis of data of state reading assessment test scores and field notes, audiotapes, and interview transcripts, the following responses address the two research questions that framed this study. Each question includes findings from the study and



correlates them to theoretical foundations and research studies which served as background for this study. Piaget's (1963) theory of cognitive development was described in the study by the connections made for students to assimilate information by making text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections. The classroom teachers in the study had students to activate prior knowledge by making personal connections to the new information. Students connected concepts to their lives, other books read or events that happened in the world. This strategy motivated the students to read with comprehension in order to process more personal connections. Vygotsky's (1962) theory of social constructivism was defined in the study by the language development and group discussions during instruction. Classroom teachers' analyses of data were used to find the student's zone of proximal development in order to scaffold instruction for to meet student reading needs. Freire's (1970) theory of critical literacy was defined by the high expectations the school expressed for each student. The parents were also involved in having high expectations for their child.

Research studies described in Chapter Two included preschool studies conducted by Edmonds (1979), Reynolds (2000), and Schweinhart (2002a) found the characteristics which impacted test scores and future academics for students due to exposure to multicultural materials, effective reading instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics, language development and encouraging parental involvement. The study by Weber (1971) showed third grade building scores increased due to strong leadership, a good atmosphere, high expectations, analysis of data to impact reading instruction, and the use of phonics. The Sizemore (1983) study found parental involvement and parental communication reflected achievement in urban elementary schools. The urban high

school study by Marnell and Hammond (2005) found reading comprehension skills were critical and had to be reinforced in the secondary institution. The results of this study add to and support these findings.

**1. Is there a significant difference between/among fifth-grade reading scores of African American students in Midwest urban schools in 2000-2001, before the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, compared to 2002-2007, during the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act?**

The purpose of NCLB is to ensure that public school students achieve important learning goals in safe classrooms by well prepared teachers. The law requires that all students meet the standard by the year 2014. NCLB also requires schools to close racial achievement gaps.

NCLB requires states to implement a statewide assessment system aligned to state standards in reading. Data were disaggregated into racial subgroups. The purpose of the state tests is to enable stakeholders to understand and compare performances of schools in meeting the standard as set by the states (Yell & Drasgow, 2005). If schools do not meet the goal set by the state for two consecutive years, parents are given options to send their children to better performing public schools within their district.

In the year before implementation of NCLB (2000-2001), the percentage of African American fifth grade students classified as performing below the standard was over 70 percent of the state. Since the implementation of NCLB (2002-2007), the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standard increased each year, decreasing

the number of students failing or approaching standard. Before NCLB, 71.41 percent of African American fifth graders were below the reading standard, while 28.59 percent of African American students were at or above the standard. During the implementation of NCLB (2002-2007), 53.29 percent of fifth grade African American students scored below the reading standard, while 46.72 percent were at or above the standard. The exception is year 2006. In the year 2006, the percentage of students below the standard increased perhaps due to a change in the Kansas reading standards. The 2006 change in the Kansas reading assessment reflects more test items in the area of text types and text structures. However, in 2007 the percentage of African American fifth grade students below grade level decreased again. In the years 2001-2007, with the exception of 2006, the number of African American fifth grade student's reading scores in Kansas below grade level decreased and the number at or above grade level increased.

In the analysis of the Kansas reading assessment data, data were subjected to a 2 (Pre and Post-NCLB) x 3 (School District) analysis of variance. The analysis examined the effect of school districts (A, B, and C), year of assessment (prior to vs. during NCLB) and reading scores.

The analysis revealed the number of fifth grade African American students in Kansas urban schools declined in the lower performance category of Academic Warning and Approaches Standard, while students increased in the higher performance categories (Met Standard, Exceeded Standard, and Exemplary) in the years 2000-2007. Mean percentages increased each year for fifth grade African American students in urban schools in Kansas from the year 2000-2007. There were significant main effects; therefore the Schéffé (1953) post-hoc analysis was performed. The Schéffé (1953) post-

hoc analyses indicated there were significant differences between District A and District B for the Pre-NCLB time of measurement and significant differences between District A and B, and District A and C at the Post-NCLB time of measurement. There were significant differences between pre-NCLB and post-NCLB only in District B. Although there has been an improvement of scores in the three urban districts, District B had significant improvements compared to Districts A and B. Before NCLB (2000-2001), District B interacted with District A and C because it was the lower performing district. In the post-NCLB data, there is no significant difference between Districts A, B, or C. This analysis reveals that District B made the greatest gains in the state reading scores.

**2. In urban high performing schools highly populated by African-American students, what instructional factors may contribute to fifth-grade African-American students performing at high levels on the state reading assessment?**

The following instructional factors were identified by teachers and principals as having contributed to improved performance by African American students:

- Analysis of data to impact reading instruction
- High expectations of all students in reading
- Professional development in reading
- Teacher collaboration in the planning of reading instruction
- Alignment of instruction and state standards, benchmarks, and indicators in reading

- Parental involvement in creating student accountability in reading

Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray (1994) described the negative experiences of African American students in incompatible school systems because of the need for awareness of learning styles, relevant curriculum, raising expectations and increased time on task. Believing the achievement gap between White and Black students exists due to genetics leaves no solution to raising reading achievement of African American students. This belief actually lowers expectations of African Americans' performance on reading assessments.

In the six selected schools, the principals and teachers held high expectations for all children in reading. Therefore, during changes with No Child Left Behind in the years 2001-2007, they became more focused on reading instruction and how to improve instruction for struggling readers. Increasing parental involvement, professional development, and teacher collaboration time in planning reading instruction were identified as having contributed to these schools higher performance.

District A and District B increased professional development time in reading and teacher collaboration in planning more than District C. However in pre-NCLB mean total reading scores (2000-2001) and post-NCLB mean reading scores (2002-2007) on the state reading assessment, District C consistently held higher mean scores. The sense of urgency for professional development in the reading area was greater for District A and District B.

District A, School A-7 fifth grade students met the goal set by NCLB for 2014 in 2007. One hundred percent of students met or exceeded the relevant standards on the state reading assessment. The teachers and principals identified parental involvement as

a major contributing factor. Students had nightly reading assignments and parents were expected to monitor and ensure reading was done effectively. In this school, the principal also served as an instructional literacy coach for teachers. With the extended professional development time, she was present for accountability and coaching of reading instruction. Teachers were given time to collaborate and look closely at assessments and daily work to monitor and modify reading instruction. School districts must ensure that all district administrators, teachers, and staff are well trained in their reading-focused responsibilities under NCLB (Yell & Drasgow, 2005).

Another strength of District A and District B was the use of the Measure of Academic Progress Northwest Evaluation Association (MAP NWEA) assessment. Each quarter the students took the computer based assessment, which is aligned to the state reading standards. Teachers and principals used this information to make instructional reading decisions. One teacher said this assessment helped her to group her students instructionally. Some needed work on “author’s purpose”, while others needed work in the area of “cause and effect.” Once she gave them relevant materials to work on these reading skills, she was able to create an assessment for instructional feedback. District C used an assessment that comes from the reading program. It was only given in October; therefore, the teachers were not yet informed by the results.

Alignment of instruction to state reading standards not only ensured high test scores, but students understood the meaning of the text more deeply. Effectively teaching text types and text structures resulted in students gaining a deeper understanding of the text. Comprehension strategies were taught throughout the lessons in all six selected schools. Making personal connections was observed in each reading classroom.

All reading teachers used a graphic organizer. A graph is a diagram or pictorial device that displays relationships hence the term, graphic organizer (Harris & Hodges, 1995).

Many instructional changes in reading occurred due to the implementation of NCLB. Yell and Drasgow (2005) highlight a major change and responsibility of classroom teachers:

For teachers to be successful in improving the achievement levels of their students, especially students with academic difficulties, they must have expertise in (a) constructing and implementing relevant assessments, (b) gathering information using these assessment, (c) interpreting these assessments, (d) matching instruction programs and strategies to the assessment results (p.113).

The principals and teachers in the six selected schools commented on the use of reading assessments as data to analyze in order to determine instructional focus and monitor the progress of students as readers due to the NCLB mandate. Another change noted by the six schools was more emphasis applied to ensuring state reading standards were taught due to required testing.

### **Conclusions**

All students enter schools with expectations from parents, teachers, administrators and policy makers. The achievement gap between Black and White has been discussed throughout the United States; however, it has been highlighted even more with the implementation of NCLB. The achievement gap should not be an accepted reality by any race, any educator or any policymaker.

The ability to read and comprehend is a critical element in the lives of African Americans. Motivation can be achieved by providing meaningful experiences for the students. Teachers, administrators and policy makers must be aware of the possibilities of producing effective readers as well as meeting state reading goals for all students. The following conclusions have been drawn based on interpretations of the findings of this quantitative and qualitative study exploring data and instructional factors that lead to high performance in reading achievement for African American students.

- *High expectations in districts, schools, and classrooms result in increased efforts to ensure all children meet the goals and become lifelong readers.* First, educators have to believe high performance can be achieved through effective reading instruction. If educators settle with the issue of the reading achievement gap, less effort is made to increase reading achievement of African American students. In the six selected schools, teachers and principals believed that all children can learn. If the teacher was not making the gains desired in reading instruction, he or she immediately went to find more resources. Giving up on the child was not an option for any of the six teachers. The most frustrating issue for the principals was knowing particular students could score exemplary, but they only exceeded the standard or met the standard by one point on the reading assessment.
- *Communication with parents ensures a team effort for the success of the students as readers.* Communication with parents is the key to reading success for students and schools. Instead of just reporting on behavior, teachers and principals in the six selected schools were consistently communicating about student achievement in reading. The schools had homework policies in which



parents were aware and that increased accountability for parents and students.

Kunjufu (2002) listed eight questions African American parents should ask during a parent-teacher conference:

- a. What were the child's reading and math scores at the beginning of the school year?
- b. What are the teacher's goals for year end?
- c. What are the teacher's strategies to achieve those goals?
- d. What is the homework policy?
- e. What is the grading policy?
- f. What has been the teacher's track record over the years concerning statewide averages?
- g. What can I do to assist you? (p. 123)

In the six high performing schools, this information was readily available for parents. NCLB requires parents receive reading assessment scores. Principals and teachers commented that most parents were involved and if they were not, the school staff would increase its time and effort in working with the student. Teachers and principals believed explicit instruction of expectations to parents increased reading achievement. All schools had nightly homework policies. Whether the goal was to read with the child or monitor their work, parents were informed to expect this homework each night.

- *Making connections between literacy experiences and student lives enhances reading instruction and motivation.* Third, teachers focused on making personal connections between reading content and self in all six schools. Whether students

were reading about a rescue dog or the Declaration of Independence, teachers first had the students connect their life experiences to the text. Once the connection was made between the text and their lives, teachers reported that the students became more motivated in reading the print. One teacher in District B, School B-29 stated she wished the state reading assessments had an option for the student to choose the topic of the passage. By reading high interest materials, more connections and knowledge of skills can be better demonstrated. While reading about the Declaration of Independence, students tied the election between Barack Obama and John McCain to the information in the story. This sparked a grand conversation in which the teacher seemed to enjoy and reference throughout the story. The students in three of the six schools were asked why it was important to make personal connections to the reading text. The answer was always about deepening their comprehension of what was read.

- *Professional development and collaboration time for teachers reinforces effective instructional strategies for students to read.* Professional development and collaboration time for teachers is identified as a critical element in raising reading achievement of African American students. Teachers reported that they were able to use the collaboration time to plan reading lessons and share effective instructional reading strategies with one another. Since the implementation of NCLB, professional development and teacher collaboration time had increased in all six schools. The professional development offered by the district and the schools allows teachers the time to look at effective and ineffective reading instruction and make a decision of how to accommodate or enrich each student as

a reader. The time to accomplish this goal is limited; therefore, District A and District B allowed for early release of students or early reporting for teachers.

- *Analysis of data is critical to find strengths and weaknesses for students as readers and provide effective reading instruction.* Finally, one could infer that analysis of data has been the most critical element of NCLB and the six schools' method of success in reading achievement. Through analyzing assessment results, the teachers were able to prescribe reading instruction for each child and monitor the progress. The teachers are able to assess each quarter and decide which state reading standards the students needed to master the skill. Daily instruction then focused on students' strength and weaknesses.

The reading assessment results also helped teachers' group children to work on specific literacy skills. Professional development was needed to provide teachers with the skills of data analysis. Teacher collaboration time was needed in order for teachers to plan effective reading instruction to fit the needs of readers. Once student needs are identified, this is communicated with parents in order for them to be aware of the literacy instruction needed to help their child succeed as lifelong readers.

## **Implications for Superintendents and Boards of Education**

District superintendents will be responsible for ensuring accountability for administrators and teachers in raising reading achievement and reading test scores of African American students. In addition to increasing accountability, superintendents should require all educators in the district to attend diversity training. In order to make personal connections to text and provide relevant reading materials, it is essential for educators to believe in the impact of these factors in increasing reading skills and test scores.

*Time for increased professional development and relevant text* was needed in support of these high performing schools. This study demonstrated an increased reading achievement by African American fifth grade students since NCLB; however, more funds are needed to provide qualified persons in these urban school districts. Inner city school teacher and principal salaries have been consistently lower than high performing suburban schools that serve mostly middle class or upper class White students. In order to close the gap, the profession of teaching and administrating in urban schools has to appear more attractive. Once teachers graduate from a pre-service program and begin searching for a career district, the amount of the salary will be taken into consideration.

Another goal for policymakers is *providing the reading resources and appropriate professional development possible for achieving the yearly ongoing annual goals*. In 2001 when the law was implemented, many districts were left with fixing the problem with a limited amount of resources. A list of commercial reading programs was available, but supplemental resources and appropriate training on other methods was not. Along with the needed reading resources should have also been additional highly

qualified personnel, including literacy coaches. With the many demands of meeting state reading standards, it would have been ideal for an increased number of teachers or literacy coaches at primary and intermediate levels to help analyze the data, as well as plan and deliver the reading instruction for the students. The reading goals are attainable with the correct resources. More information on ways to increase the reading achievement scores would be beneficial for school districts, administrators, and teachers seeking instructional methods for success. This information could be available with further research on high performing schools and their instructional factors that lead to success.

Another implication is *literacy information for parents*. Explicit information to African American parents not sure of the NCLB law and its many goals will help parents understand the reason behind the assessment pressures. With parental empowerment, it should not just be left up to schools to inform parents. If the goal was initiated by the federal government, the federal government should have made sure all parents were receiving information through the mail and television, not only through the school districts. Making it a mandate for schools to actively inform parents each year of the reading goals would be more beneficial than sending a pamphlet or brochure home with the child. Information explaining the grade level reading standard, benchmarks and indicators would help parents know the specific goals for the year. Mandatory reading as homework would also be beneficial in increasing reading test scores.

## Implications for Administrators

Literacy is a crucial element for students to be successful, productive adults in life. Literacy is even more crucial for African Americans as a means by which to gain economic independence.

In order for teachers to meet these needs, principals have to not only *hold teachers accountable for quality literacy instruction*, but the principal also needs to be a resource and provide reading resources when teachers are in need. One resource principals can provide teachers is *time to collaborate and gain knowledge through professional development*.

*Holding teachers accountable for quality reading instruction* is the job of the administrators. When teachers are trained in new methods of giving classroom reading assessments to inform and influence their instruction, principals have to hold teachers accountable for meeting that critical requirement. Accountability for knowing students' reading levels and behaviors have to be met before teachers can instruct based on the needs of the students as readers.

*Professional development* is required for teachers to learn how to properly analyze data and provide the proper instruction based on the identified reading needs of students. This professional development time needs to be consistent in order for teachers to continue to monitor student reading progress.

In addition to professional development, *teacher collaboration time* is also important. Grade level teachers need time to communicate about instructional success and failures in order to continue to learn what works best for all readers. Intermediate

teachers need to communicate with primary teachers to ensure continuous delivery of the reading curriculum.

### **Implications for Teachers' Professional Development**

Classroom teachers need to find ways to meet state reading indicators and testing requirements, but if students are not motivated to read the material, these attempts are unsuccessful. Teachers must recognize the strength of the comprehension strategy of *making connections*. African American students require relevance of the text to their lives. If teachers are able to use authentic literary resources outside of commercial reading programs, connections can continuously be made and standards will still be met.

Teachers also have to decrease excuses for African American students' low reading abilities and *raise expectations* for all students. Once teachers have the belief system that all children can learn, effective ways of meeting this goal will immediately follow. Sending home expectations to parents with information guiding them in ways to work with their children is important for children to succeed in reading. More time needs to be spent finding literacy resources to match instructional needs and interest to the students. An increased effort and management of time will be spent analyzing each child's needs and finding ways to meet their reading needs. Once instruction is delivered, teachers will seek ways to make accommodations or enrich the reading skills and strategies of the student.

Districts and schools need to ensure professional development opportunities are providing the literacy resources and reading instruction information needed by classroom teachers. The professional development opportunities should not be extended only to

teachers, but to administrators as well. It is impossible for administrators to hold teachers accountable for reading instruction about which they are not knowledgeable.

Items and indicators on the Kansas State Reading Assessment need to be internalized in order for teachers to deliver *appropriate effective reading instruction*. This way, teachers will not believe they are just teaching to the test, but they are teaching required knowledge to create lifelong learners and readers. Professional development for reading should be well planned just as teachers plan for students. Assessments should be given for information on what reading strategies teachers need to help monitor progress in the classroom. For example, many of the six school principals believed more information was needed on teaching text types and text structures in the classrooms. They knew this based on feedback from teachers and students' reading assessment scores. Providing teachers with informational, useful professional development and then holding them accountable for using the information will make classroom reading instruction more effective.

### **Implications for Teacher Preparation Programs in Reading**

Teacher preparation programs in reading have to be well equipped to prepare pre-service teachers to use scientifically-based and research-based instructional practices in reading and to become themselves educated in consumers of research (Yell & Drasgow, 2005). These programs also have to prepare teacher educators for the accountability enforced by NCLB. Analyzing reading data and monitoring student progress should begin at preparation level for pre-service teachers. Field experiences should include the



methods of reading assessments, analysis of reading assessments, monitoring student reading progress, and making instructional decisions based on the data analysis.

Teacher preparation programs should first introduce the reading achievement results before the NCLB law was enacted and then move to the rationale for implementation of NCLB. With a comparison of results of pre-NCLB (2000-2001) and post-NCLB (2002-2007), it will become apparent that reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act should occur. Motivating pre-service teachers to move into the field with content knowledge about how to teach reading strategies effectively and skills will make a difference in their students' reading performance across the United States.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

This study explored the impact of NCLB on the reading achievement of African American fifth grade students in urban settings. In consideration of the data collected and analyzed for this study, several suggestions for future research can be offered.

Additional *longitudinal research* is suggested to explore the percentage of the African American students in high performing elementary schools placed in high performing secondary schools. It will also be informative to align the high performing state reading assessment goals with ACT scores. If the high performing African American students on the state reading assessment are able to score equally high on the ACT or SAT for college entrance, it will be apparent the goals set by the state in reading is an effective measure of performance needed for access to higher education.

Future research should focus not only on quantitative data, but also on *qualitative case studies*. Locating high performing schools in each state and identifying what instructional factors appear to lead to the schools' success in reading will provide helpful advice. With schools moving quickly to make adequate yearly progress, some classroom teachers and principals have not had the privilege of spending time in a high performing, successful setting in which test scores reflect students' reading ability gained through quality reading instruction.

More research on *effective reading programs* would be useful for classrooms and schools. Scientifically and researched-based reading materials have been listed for schools to use. Research of other reading programs would provide schools with a variety to choose from in order to fit the reading needs of the student. Reading programs that focus on text structure and different text types would be highly beneficial. One teacher in the study commented on the difficulties of locating persuasive and technical texts for students to read. Herein lies another area for identified instructional materials.

The same reading research could be conducted with *other minority groups*. With the many ethnic groups in the United States of America, this research could be conducted on other populations such as Hispanic, multiethnic, and Asian American populations. In addition to opening the reading research to other minority groups, it could also be conducted on *gender groups* in the total and minority populations.

This study examined high performing schools in order to determine instructional factors contributing to high reading assessment scores. A study examining high and low performing schools would provide more information in order to determine if the same instructional factors are implemented, but not impacting test scores.

In conclusion, future reading research should be expanded to *large urban areas in other states*. In efforts to improve reading research and provide instructional factors for African American students in high performing schools, this study would need to be conducted in many other states. This future research would be useful in states with a high number of African American students in the population to ensure reading achievement and test scores are meeting ongoing yearly goals.

### **Final Thoughts**

The quantitative data gathered and the qualitative observations and interviews conducted during this study provided important information on the direction of policy impacting the reading achievement of African American children in these Kansas districts and schools. Once children are literate and able to comprehend many different types of texts, opportunities increase in their lives. No Child Left Behind is a policy that is far from perfect. Now policymakers and educators need to perform the tasks we are asking children to complete on the state assessments: compare and contrast information, find the cause and effect, make connections and look at the problems to find solutions.

The main point in No Child Left Behind is that educators have to first identify the problem with reading. Many educators knew before No Child Left Behind that African American reading test scores were lower than Whites', but instead of finding solutions to the problem, some accepted this failure. With the introduction of publicized building scores on the internet and mandated information to parents, the Black community now has to step back and look at the reading data more closely. Instead of waiting on schools to fix the problems, the Black community has to hold schools and their children

accountable for teaching literacy and learning the information through reading. This will eventually strengthen the broken relationship between schools and the Black community. Students have to first be motivated to read in order to comprehend the information in the text.

As Barack Obama took the oath to become the first African American President of the United States, many African Americans viewed the occasion as historical change for America. Many African American parents on the news said their children can now be whatever they want to be in life. As long as these children are sitting in failing schools and lack the motivation to read, however, they will not have these opportunities. Barack Obama, Martin Luther King, Jr., Carter G. Woodson, and W.E.B. DuBois all received quality educations, becoming the role models that Americans know. These men did not receive second class educations and their communities made sure to provide them with high quality educational opportunities.

Conducting this quantitative and qualitative study has been to emphasize what works for Black children in America. However, based on historical facts and cultural differences of which educators should be aware, the instructional factors, methods and strategies used to meet the goals will have to be differentiated. Problem solving techniques for improving reading instruction by school districts will have to be based on data and the direct expectation that *all* children can learn to read effectively. The reading standards provided by states are not a method of holding children back, but making sure all students have reading skills and strategies to gain common knowledge in all content areas. The ongoing issue focuses on providing the instructional support to meet the

standard of knowledge essential to becoming a productive citizen in the future for this country.

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## **Appendix A-Kansas Reading Standards**

Standard 1 - Reading: The student reads and comprehends text across the curriculum.

Benchmark 1: The student uses skills in alphabets to construct meaning from text.

Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade	Sixth Grade	Seventh Grade	Eighth Grade	High School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies sounds of both upper and lower case letters of the alphabet. (Letter-sounds Relationships)</li> </ul>	Identifies sounds of both upper and lower case letters of the alphabet. (Letter-sound Relationships)								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies names of both upper and lower case letters of the alphabet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies names of both upper and lower case letters of the alphabet.</li> </ul>								
Distinguishes letters from words by recognizing that words are separated by spaces.	Identifies and distinguishes between letters, words and sentences.								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates phonemic awareness skills by hearing and orally manipulating sounds (e.g., phoneme isolation, identification, categorization, blending, segmentation, deletion, addition, substitution). (Phonemic Awareness)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies and manipulates phonemes in spoken words (e.g., phoneme isolation, identification, categorization, blending, segmentation, deletion, addition, substitution). (Phonemic Awareness)</li> </ul>								
Identifies and makes oral rhymes and begins to hear onsets and rimes (e.g., alliteration, intonation). (Phonological Awareness)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies onsets and rimes in spoken words (e.g., alliteration, intonation, rhyme). (Phonological Awareness)</li> </ul>	Manipulates onsets and rimes in spoken syllables. (Phonological Awareness)							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates an understanding of graphemes and phonemes (i.e., sounds-symbol relationships) in written and spoken language. (Phonics)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses knowledge of letter-sound correspondences (e.g., constant-vowel patterns, blends, diagraphs, word families) when reading unknown words. (Phonics)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses knowledge of developmentally appropriate decoding skills (E.g., constant-vowel combinations, blends, diagraphs, word families) when reading unknown words. (Phonics)</li> </ul>	Uses decoding skills that include knowledge of phonetics and structural analysis when reading unknown words.	Uses decoding skills that include knowledge of structural analysis automatically when reading.					
	Manipulates onsets and times in spoken words (e.g., alliteration, intonation, rhyme). (Phonological Awareness)	Categorizes onsets and rimes in spoken syllables. (Phonological Awareness)							

# Standard 1 - Reading: The student reads and comprehends text across the curriculum.

## Benchmark 2: The student reads fluently.

Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade	Sixth Grade	Seventh Grade	Eighth Grade	High School
Demonstrates an understanding of concepts of print (e.g., front-to-back, top-to-bottom, left-to-right) and begin to track print.	Applies concepts of print when reading (e.g., front-to-back, top-to-bottom, left-to-right, capitalization).								
Locates periods, question marks, and exclamation points.	Uses punctuation at instructional or independent reading levels while reading.	▲ Uses knowledge of conventions (e.g., question marks, exclamation points, commas, apostrophes) to read fluently at instructional or independent reading levels.	Uses knowledge of conventions (e.g., question marks, exclamation points, commas, apostrophes, italics, graphics, hyphens) to read fluently at instructional or independent reading levels.	Uses knowledge of conventions (e.g., question marks, exclamation points, commas, apostrophes, colons, semi-colons, dashes) to read fluently at instructional or independent reading levels.	Uses knowledge of conventions (e.g., questions marks, exclamation points, commas, apostrophes, asterisks, ampersands) and text features to read fluently at instructional or independent reading levels.	Uses knowledge of conventions and text features to read fluently at instructional or independent reading levels.	Uses knowledge of conventions and text features to read fluently at instructional or independent reading levels.	Uses knowledge of conventions and text features to read fluently at instructional or independent reading levels.	
Imitates the rhythm of speech in emergent oral reading.	Reads expressively with appropriate pace, phrasing, intonation, and rhythm of speech with familiar text.	Reads expressively with appropriate pace, phrasing, intonation, and rhythm of speech.	Reads expressively with appropriate pace, phrasing, intonation, and rhythm of speech.	Reads expressively with appropriate pace, phrasing, intonation, and rhythm of speech.	Reads expressively with appropriate pace, phrasing, intonation, and rhythm of speech.	Reads expressively with appropriate pace, phrasing, intonation, and rhythm of speech.	Reads expressively with appropriate pace, phrasing, intonation, and rhythm of speech.	Reads expressively with appropriate pace, phrasing, intonation, and rhythm of speech.	
	Uses knowledge of sentence structure to read fluently at instruction or independent reading levels.	Uses knowledge of sentence structure to read fluently at instructional or independent reading levels.	Uses knowledge of sentence structure to read fluently at instruction or independent reading levels.	Uses knowledge of sentence structure to read fluently at instruction or independent reading levels.	Uses knowledge of sentence structure to read fluently at instruction or independent reading levels.	Uses knowledge of complex sentence structure to read fluently at instructional or independent reading levels.	Uses knowledge of complex sentence structure to read fluently at instructional or independent reading levels.	Uses knowledge of complex sentence structure to read fluently at instructional or independent reading levels.	
	Uses a variety of word-recognition strategies (e.g., practicing words in isolation) to read fluently.	Uses a variety of word-recognition strategies (e.g., practicing words in isolation, practicing reading words in text) to read fluently.	Uses a variety of word-recognition strategies (e.g., practicing words in isolation, practicing reading words in text) to read fluently.	Uses a variety of word-recognition strategies (e.g., practicing words in isolation, practicing reading words in text, orthographic patterns) to read fluently.	Uses a variety of word-recognition strategies (e.g., practicing words in isolation, practicing reading words in text, orthographic patterns) to read fluently.	Uses a variety of word-recognition strategies (e.g., orthographic patterns, reading and writing text) to read fluently.	Uses a variety of word-recognition strategies (e.g., orthographic patterns, reading and writing text) to read fluently.	Uses a variety of word-recognition strategies (e.g., orthographic patterns, reading and writing text) to read fluently.	
		Begins to adjust reading rate to support comprehension when reading narrative and expository texts.	Adjusts reading rate to support comprehension when reading narrative, expository, and technical texts.	Adjusts reading rate to support comprehension when reading narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.	Adjusts reading rate to support comprehension when reading narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.	Adjusts reading rate to support comprehension when reading narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.	Adjusts reading rate to support comprehension when reading narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.	Adjusts reading rate to support comprehension when reading narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.	Adjusts reading rate to support comprehension when reading narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

# Standard 1 - Reading: The student reads and comprehends text across the curriculum.

## Benchmark 3: The student expands vocabulary.

Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade	Sixth Grade	Seventh Grade	Eighth Grade	High School
Reads one-syllable and often-hears words by sight.	Demonstrates automatic recognition of sight words	Demonstrates automatic recognition of sight words	Expands sight-word vocabulary						
Uses picture clues to identify unknown words and meanings.	Determines the meaning of unknown words or phrases using picture clues and context clues from sentences.	▲ Determines the meaning of unknown words or phrases using picture clues and context clues from sentences and paragraphs.	▲ Determines the meaning of unknown words or phrases using context clues (e.g., definitions, restatements, examples, descriptions) from sentences or paragraphs.	▲ Determines the meaning of unknown words or phrases using context clues (e.g., definitions, restatements, examples, descriptions) from sentences or paragraphs.	▲ Determines the meaning of unknown words or phrases using context clues (e.g., definitions, restatements, examples, descriptions) from sentences or paragraphs.	▲ Determines the meaning of words or phrases using context clues (e.g., definitions, restatements, examples, descriptions, comparison-contrast, clue word) from sentences or paragraphs.	▲ Determines the meaning of words or phrases using context clues (e.g., definitions, restatements, examples, descriptions, comparison-contrast, clue word) from sentences or paragraphs.	▲ Determines meaning of words or phrases using context clues (e.g., definitions, restatements, examples, descriptions, comparison-contrast, clue words, cause-effect) from sentences or paragraphs.	▲ Determines meaning of words or phrases using context clues (e.g., definitions, restatements, examples, descriptions, comparison-contrast, clue words, cause-effect) from sentences or paragraphs.
Identifies synonyms and antonyms to determine the meaning of words.	Identifies synonyms and antonyms to determine the meaning of words.	Identifies and uses synonyms, antonyms, and homophones to determine the meaning of words.	Identifies and uses synonyms, antonyms, and homophones to determine the meaning of words.	Identifies and uses synonyms, antonyms, homophones, and homographs to determine the meaning of words.	Uses synonyms, antonyms, homophones, and homographs to determine the meaning of words.	Uses synonyms, antonyms, homophones, and homographs to determine the meaning of words.			
		Uses a picture dictionary, dictionary, or glossary to understand word meaning.	Uses a dictionary or a glossary to determine an appropriate definition of a word.	Uses a dictionary or a glossary to determine an appropriate definition of a word or uses a thesaurus to expand vocabulary.	Chooses reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, glossaries, thesauri, on-line reference materials) appropriate to the task.	Understands and uses the references available in the classroom, school, and public libraries (e.g., dictionaries, thesauri, atlases, encyclopedias, internet) that are appropriate to the task.	Locates and uses the references available in the classroom, school, and public libraries (e.g., dictionaries, thesauri, atlases, encyclopedias, internet) that are appropriate to the task.	Locates and uses the references available in the classroom, school, and public libraries (e.g., dictionaries, thesauri, atlases, encyclopedias, internet) that are appropriate to the task.	Locates and uses the references available in the classroom, school, and public libraries (e.g., dictionaries, thesauri, atlases, encyclopedias, internet) that are appropriate to the task.
Determines meaning of words through knowledge of word structure (e.g., compound nouns, contractions, inflectional endings).	▲ Determines meaning of words through knowledge of word structure (e.g., ▲ base words, ▲ compound nouns, ▲ contractions, inflectional endings).	▲ Determines meaning of words through knowledge of word structure (e.g., ▲ base words, ▲ compound nouns, ▲ contractions, inflectional endings).	▲ Determines meaning of words through knowledge of word structure (e.g., compound nouns, contractions, ▲ root words, ▲ prefixes, ▲ suffixes).	▲ Determines meaning of words through knowledge of word structure (e.g., compound nouns, contractions, ▲ root words, ▲ prefixes, ▲ suffixes).	▲ Determines meaning of words through knowledge of word structure (e.g., contractions, ▲ root words, ▲ prefixes, ▲ suffixes).	▲ Determines meaning of words through knowledge of word structure (e.g., ▲ root words, ▲ prefixes, ▲ suffixes).	▲ Determines meaning of words through structural analysis, using knowledge of ▲ Greek, ▲ Latin, and Anglo-Saxon ▲ roots, ▲ prefixes, and ▲ suffixes to understand complex words including words in science, mathematics, and social studies.	▲ Determines meaning of words through structural analysis, using knowledge of ▲ Greek, ▲ Latin, and Anglo-Saxon ▲ roots, ▲ prefixes, and ▲ suffixes to understand complex words including words in science, mathematics, and social studies.	▲ Determines meaning of words through structural analysis, using knowledge of ▲ Greek, ▲ Latin, and Anglo-Saxon ▲ roots, ▲ prefixes, and ▲ suffixes to understand complex words including words in science, mathematics, and social studies.
			Identifies the difference between literal and figurative language when reading similes, metaphors, and idioms.	Determines the meaning of figurative language by interpreting similes, metaphors, idioms, and analogies.	Determines the meaning of figurative language by interpreting similes, metaphors, idioms, analogies, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, and personification.	▲ Identifies and determines the meaning of figurative language, including ▲ similes, ▲ metaphors, ▲ analogies, ▲ hyperbole, ▲ onomatopoeia, ▲ personification, and idioms.	▲ Identifies and determines the meaning of figurative language, including ▲ similes, ▲ metaphors, ▲ analogies, ▲ hyperbole, ▲ onomatopoeia, ▲ personification, and idioms.	▲ Identifies and determines the meaning of figurative language, including ▲ similes, ▲ metaphors, ▲ analogies, ▲ hyperbole, ▲ onomatopoeia, ▲ personification, ▲ idioms, ▲ imagery, and symbolism.	▲ Identifies, interprets, and analyzes the use of figurative language, including similes, metaphors, analogies, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, personification, idioms, imagery, and symbolism.
			Identifies the connotation and denotation of new words.	Recognizes the differences between the meaning of connotation and denotation.	Identifies word connotations and word denotations.	Identifies word connotations and word denotations.	Distinguishes between connotative and denotative meanings.	Discriminates between connotative and denotative meanings and interprets the connotative power of words.	

# Standard 1 - Reading: The student reads and comprehends text across the curriculum.

## Benchmark 4: The student comprehends a variety of texts (narrative, expository

### technical, and persuasive

Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade	Sixth Grade	Seventh Grade	Eighth Grade	High School
Participate in discussions about narrative and expository texts read to them or text read independently.	Locate and discusses title, author, illustrator, and illustrations.	Locates and discusses text features (e.g., title, graphs/charts and maps, table of contents, boldface type, italics, glossary, index) and uses such features to understand information.	Recognizes the differences between narrative, expository, and persuasive texts.	Identifies characteristics of narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.	Identifies characteristics of narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.	Identifies characteristics of narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.	Identifies characteristics of narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.	Identifies characteristics of narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.	Identifies characteristics of narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.
Identifies and discusses title, author, illustrator, and illustrations.	Locate and discusses title, author, illustrator, and illustrations.	Locates and discusses text features (e.g., title, graphs/charts and maps, table of contents, boldface type, italics, glossary, index) and uses such features to understand information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands the purpose of text features (e.g., title, graphs/charts and maps, pictures/illustrations, boldface type, italics, glossary, index) and uses such features to locate information in and to gain meaning from appropriate-level texts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands the purpose of text features (e.g., title, graphs/charts and maps, pictures/illustrations, boldface type, italics, glossary, index, headings, subheadings, topic and summary sentences, captions) and uses such features to locate information in and to gain meaning from appropriate-level texts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands the purpose of text features (e.g., title, graphs/charts and maps, table of contents, pictures/illustrations, boldface type, italics, glossary, index, headings, subheadings, topic and summary sentences, captions) and uses such features to locate information in and to gain meaning from appropriate-level texts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands the purpose of text features (e.g., title, graphs/charts and maps, table of contents, pictures/illustrations, boldface type, italics, glossary, index headings, subheadings, topic and summary sentences, captions, sidebars, underlining, numbered or bulleted lists) and uses such features to locate information in and to gain meaning from appropriate-level texts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands the purpose of text features (e.g., title, graphs/charts and maps, table of contents, pictures/illustrations, boldface type, italics, glossary, index headings, subheadings, topic and summary sentences, captions, sidebars, underlining, numbered or bulleted lists) and uses such features to locate information in and to gain meaning from appropriate-level texts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands the purpose of text features (e.g., title, graphs/charts and maps, table of contents, pictures/illustrations, boldface type, italics, glossary, index headings, subheadings, topic and summary sentences, captions, sidebars, underlining, numbered or bulleted lists, footnotes, annotations) and uses such features to locate information in and to gain meaning from appropriate-level texts.</li> </ul>	
Uses pictures, content, and prior knowledge to make predictions.	Uses pictures, content, and prior knowledge to make predictions.	Uses pictures, content, and prior knowledge to make predictions.	Uses prior knowledge and content to make, revise, and confirm predictions.	Uses prior knowledge and content to make, revise, and confirm predictions.	Uses prior knowledge, content, and text features to make, revise, and confirm predictions.	Uses prior knowledge, content, and text features to make, revise, and confirm predictions.	Uses prior knowledge, content, and text features to make, revise, and confirm predictions.	Uses prior knowledge, content, and text features to make, revise, and confirm predictions.	Uses prior knowledge, content, and text features to make, revise, and confirm predictions.
Responds logically to literal, inferential and critical thinking questions before, during, and after listening to the text.	Responds logically to literal, inferential and critical thinking questions before, during, and after listening to the text.	Generates and responds logically to literal, inferential and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading the text.	Generates and responds logically to literal, inferential and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading the text.	Generates and responds logically to literal, inferential and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading the text.	Generates and responds logically to literal, inferential and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading the text.	Generates and responds logically to literal, inferential and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading the text.	Generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, evaluative, synthesizing and critical thinking questions before, during and after reading the text.	Generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, evaluative, synthesizing and critical thinking questions before, during and after reading the text.	Generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, evaluative, synthesizing and critical thinking questions before, during and after reading the text.
Uses picture clues, text, and prior knowledge to make inferences and draw conclusions.	Uses picture clues, text, and prior knowledge to make inferences and draw conclusions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses illustration, text, and prior knowledge to make inferences and draw conclusions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.</li> </ul>
Develops awareness of text structure (e.g., sequence, problem-solution, comparison-contrast).	Develops awareness of text structure (e.g., sequence, problem-solution, comparison-contrast).	Identifies text structure (e.g., sequence, problem-solution, comparison-contrast, description, cause-effect).	Identifies text structure (e.g., sequence, problem-solution, comparison-contrast, description, cause-effect).	Identifies text structure (e.g., sequence, problem-solution, comparison-contrast, cause-effect).	Identifies text structure (e.g., sequence, problem-solution, comparison-contrast, cause-effect).	Analyzes how text structure (e.g., sequence, problem-solution, comparison-contrast, description, cause-effect) helps support comprehension of text.	Analyzes how text structure (e.g., sequence, problem-solution, comparison-contrast, cause-effect) helps support comprehension of text.	Analyzes how text structure (e.g., sequence, problem-solution, comparison-contrast, cause-effect) helps support comprehension of text.	Analyzes how authors use text structure (e.g., sequence, problem-solution, comparison-contrast, description, cause-effect) to help achieve their purposes.
Sequences 2-3 events in order	Sequences events according to basic story structure of beginning, middle, and end.	Sequences events according to basic story structure of beginning, middle, and end.	Sequences events and information in logical order.	Sequences events and information in logical order.	Sequences events and information in logical order.	Sequences events and information in logical order.	Sequences events and information in logical order.	Sequences events and information in logical order.	Sequences events and information in logical order.
Compares and contrasts information in illustrations, prior knowledge and texts read aloud.	Compares and contrasts information (e.g., topics, characters) between texts.	Compares and contrasts information (e.g., topics, characters) between texts and within a single text.	Compares and contrasts information (e.g., topics, characters) in a text.	Compares and contrasts information (e.g., topics, characters' traits, themes, problem-solution, cause-effect relationships) in one or more appropriate-level texts and identifies compare/contrast signal words.	Compares and contrasts information (e.g., topics, characters' traits, themes, problem-solution, cause-effect relationships) in one or more appropriate-level texts.	Compares and contrasts varying aspects (e.g., characters' traits and motives, themes, problem-solution, cause-effect relationships, ideas and concepts, procedures, viewpoints) in one or more appropriate-level texts.	Compares and contrasts varying aspects (e.g., characters' traits and motives, themes, problem-solution, cause-effect relationships, ideas and concepts, procedures, viewpoints, authors' purposes) in one or more appropriate-level texts.	Compares and contrasts varying aspects (e.g., characters' traits and motives, themes, problem-solution, cause-effect relationships, ideas and concepts, procedures, viewpoints, authors' purposes) in one or more appropriate-level texts.	Compares and contrasts varying aspects (e.g., characters' traits and motives, themes, problem-solution, cause-effect relationships, ideas and concepts, procedures, viewpoints, authors' purposes, persuasive techniques, use of literary devices, thoroughness of supporting evidence) in one or more appropriate-level texts.
		Identifies cause-effect relationships in narrative and expository texts.	Links causes and effects in appropriate-level narrative and expository texts.	Links causes and effects in appropriate-level narrative and expository texts.	Links causes and effects in appropriate-level narrative, expository, and technical texts, and identifies signal words related to cause-effect relationships.	Explains cause-effect relationships in appropriate-level narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.	Explains cause-effect relationships in appropriate-level narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.	Explains cause-effect relationships in appropriate-level narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.	Explains and analyzes cause-effect relationships in appropriate-level narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.
Retells or role plays important events and information from the text.	Retells or role plays important events and main ideas from narrative and expository texts.	Retells or determines important events and main ideas from narrative and expository texts.	Retells main ideas or events as well as supporting details in narrative and expository texts.	Retells main ideas or events as well as supporting details in appropriate-level narrative, expository, and technical texts.	Retells main ideas or events as well as supporting details in appropriate-level narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.	Uses paraphrasing and organizational skills to summarize information (e.g., stated and implied main ideas, main events, important details) from appropriate-level narrative, expository, persuasive, and technical texts in logical order.	Uses paraphrasing and organizational skills to summarize information (e.g., stated and implied main ideas, main events, important details) from appropriate-level narrative, expository, persuasive, and technical texts in logical order.	Uses paraphrasing and organizational skills to summarize information (e.g., stated and implied main ideas, main events, important details) from appropriate-level narrative, expository, persuasive, and technical texts in logical order.	Uses paraphrasing and organizational skills to summarize information (stated and implied main ideas, main events, important details, underlying meaning) from appropriate-level narrative, expository, persuasive, and technical texts in logical or sequential order, clearly preserving the author's intent.
Explains the topic of a selection that has been read aloud (e.g., What is the book about?).	Identifies the topic and main idea in appropriate-level texts.	Identifies topic, main idea, and supporting details in appropriate-level texts.	Identifies topic, main idea, and supporting details in appropriate-level texts.	Identifies topic, main idea, and supporting details in appropriate-level texts.	Identifies the topic, main idea(s), and theme(s) in text across the content areas and from a variety of sources in appropriate-level texts.	Identifies the topic, main idea(s), and theme(s) in text across the content areas and from a variety of sources in appropriate-level texts.	Identifies the topic, main idea(s), and theme(s) in text across the content areas and from a variety of sources in appropriate-level texts.	Identifies the topic, main idea(s), and theme(s) in text across the content areas and from a variety of sources in appropriate-level texts.	Identifies the topic, main idea(s), and theme(s) in text across the content areas and from a variety of sources in appropriate-level texts.

Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade	Sixth Grade	Seventh Grade	Eighth Grade	High School
			Explains the author's purpose (e.g., to persuade, to entertain, to inform).	Identifies the author's purpose (e.g., to persuade, to entertain, to inform).	Identifies the author's purpose (e.g., to persuade, to entertain, to inform).	Identifies and describes the author's purpose and basic techniques the author uses to achieve that purpose.	Explains the relationship between elements of an author's style in a text (e.g., word choice, sentence structure) and his or her purpose for writing the text.	Explains the relationship between an author's use of literary devices in a text (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback, irony, symbolism, tone, mood) and his or her purpose for the text.	Analyze and evaluates how an author's style (e.g., word choice, sentence structure) and use of literary devices (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback, irony, symbolism, tone, mood, satire, imagery, point of view, allusion, overstatement, paradox) work together to achieve his or her purpose for writing text.
			Establishes a purpose for reading or listening (e.g., to be informed, to follow directions, to be entertained).	Establishes a purpose for reading or listening (e.g., to be informed, to follow directions, to be entertained).	Establishes a purpose for reading (e.g., to be informed, to follow directions, to be entertained, to solve problems).	Establishes a purpose for reading (e.g., to be informed, to follow directions, to be entertained, to solve problems).	Establishes purposes for both assigned and self-selected reading (e.g., to be informed, to follow directions, to be entertained, to solve problems).	Establishes purposes for both assigned and self-selected reading (e.g., to be informed, to follow directions, to be entertained, to solve problems).	Establishes purposes for both assigned and self-selected reading (e.g., to be informed, to follow directions, to be entertained, to solve problems).
				Follows directions explained in technical texts.	Follows directions explained in technical texts.	Follows directions explained in technical texts.	Follows directions explained in technical texts.	Follows directions explained in technical texts.	Follows directions explained in technical texts.
					Identifies evidence that supports conclusions in persuasive text.	Identifies and describes evidence that supports conclusions in persuasive text.	Identifies the author's position in a persuasive text and describes techniques the author uses to support that position (e.g., bandwagon approach, glittering generalities, testimonials, citing statistics, other techniques that appeal to reason or emotion).	Identifies the author's position in a persuasive text and describes techniques the author uses to support that position (e.g., bandwagon approach, glittering generalities, testimonials, citing statistics, other techniques that appeal to reason or emotion).	Identifies the author's position in a persuasive text, describes techniques the author uses to support that position (e.g., bandwagon approach, glittering generalities, testimonials, citing authority, statistics, other techniques that appeal to reason or emotion), and evaluates the effectiveness of these techniques and the credibility of the information provided.
		Distinguishes between fact and opinion in various texts.	Distinguishes between fact and opinion in various texts.	Distinguishes between fact and opinion in various types of appropriate-level texts.	Distinguishes between fact and opinion and recognizes propaganda (e.g., advertising, media) in various types of appropriate-level texts.	Distinguishes between fact and opinion, and recognizes propaganda (e.g., advertising, media) bias, and stereotypes in various types of appropriate-level texts.	Distinguishes between fact and opinion, and recognizes propaganda (e.g., advertising, media, politics, warfare), bias and stereotypes in various types of appropriate-level texts.	Distinguishes between fact and opinion, and recognizes propaganda (e.g., advertising, media, politics, warfare), bias, and stereotypes in various types of appropriate-level texts.	Distinguishes between fact and opinion, and recognizes propaganda (e.g., advertising, media, politics, warfare), bias, and stereotypes in various types of appropriate-level texts.



**Appendix B-Demographic Table of Districts A, B, and C**

## B-1

Table 1  
*Demographics of Elementary Schools in District A*  
 2006 - 2007

<b>School</b>	<b>Percentage of African American Students</b>	<b>Percentage of All Students At or Above Standard</b>	<b>Percentage of Fifth Grade African American Students At or Above Standard</b>
School 1	32.96	62.3	56.3
School 2	27.77	75.9	50.1
School 3	20.83	62.9	50.0
School 4	33.47	59.7	33.3
School 5	15.36	73.8	66.7
School 6*	11.82	78.4	33.3
<b>School 7*</b>	<b>14.85</b>	<b>94.3</b>	<b>88.8</b>
School 8	12.71	79.7	54.6
<b>School 9</b>	<b>38.82</b>	<b>84.4</b>	<b>84.2</b>
School 10	17.01	61.1	72.3
School 11	17.72	75.3	72.8
School 12	23.54	72.6	61.6
School 13	42.47	60.2	47.1
School 14*	7.57	73.9	100.0
School 15*	4.21	49.7	66.6
School 16	19.91	81.5	52.9
School 17	8.26	76.6	80.0
School 18	24.24	72.0	70.6
School 19	2.74	81.5	0.0 (none assessed)
School 20	6.31	79.8	50.0
School 21	13.81	61.7	37.5
School 22	8.31	62.6	37.5
School 23	32.59	59.7	46.6

School 24	17.15	60.8	33.3
School 25	20.04	67.4	62.6
School 26	15.30	50.3	62.5
School 27	2.79	81.0	75.0
School 28	16.56	89.7	66.6
School 29	2.37	47.7	88.8
School 30	49.25	79.5	80.0
School 31	60.91	64.1	47.6
School 32	21.46	64.0	67.5
School 33	16.81	71.5	50.0
School 34	8.02	71.1	69.3
School 35	11.46	70.2	75.0
School 36	5.99	83.5	100.0
School 37	18.64	81.2	90.9
School 38	23.91	68.4	90.9
School 39	47.14	72.5	57.1
School 40	9.18	80.1	50.0
School 41	7.36	88.5	60.0
School 42	30.76	65.1	38.4
School 43	26.24	72.3	52.4
School 44	9.66	88.1	100.0
School 45	6.82	51.0	50.0
School 46	8.14	47.6	0.0
School 47	10.53	78.9	62.5
School 48	11.45	61.5	100.0
School 49	21.19	69.8	92.0
School 50	7.35	82.7	50.0
School 51	17.97	61.6	69.6
School 52	78.98	54.3	61.7
School 53	9.43	66.7	66.6
School 54	12.21	56.5	81.9
School 55	13.39	69.5	60.0
School 56	10.66	63.9	33.3
School 57	16.18	72.1	59.1

B-2

Table 2  
*Demographics of Elementary Schools in District B*  
 2006 - 2007

<b>School</b>	<b>Percentage of African American Students</b>	<b>Percentage of All Students At or Above Standard</b>	<b>Percentage of Fifth Grade African American Students At or Above Standard</b>
School 1	89.67	48.1	32.0
School 2	38.10	56.4	47.2
School 3	78.43	47.3	40.0
School 4	55.18	58.0	43.4
<b>School 5</b>	<b>57.84</b>	<b>66.4</b>	<b>50.0</b>
School 6	43.87	63.1	62.5
School 7	43.69	41.6	54.6
School 8	48.12	77.9	57.1
School 9*	7.11	60.5	100.0
School 10	34.66	61.3	79.0
School 11	71.43	40.3	57.1
School 12	65.17	68.9	60.7
School 13	62.75	64.6	52.2
School 14	14.66	48.2	53.4
School 15	57.63	48.4	46.2
School 16*	11.72	40.0	75.0
School 17	46.48	43.5	42.8
School 18*	5.6	46.3	0.0 (none assessed)
School 19*	14.7	47.4	25.0
School 20*	9.5	32.7	75.0
School 21	94.6	32.4	46.8
School 22*	40.2	39.7	50.0
School 23	32.4	65.0	73.7

School 24	25.2	82.9	63.7
School 25*	11.1	66.2	50.0
School 26	5.8	60.6	53.8
School 27	67.38	48.6	68.5
School 28	40.0	47.8	63.7
<b>School 29</b>	<b>53.03</b>	<b>63.4</b>	<b>55.0</b>
School 30	19.96	46.6	51.4

B-3

Table 3  
*Demographics of Elementary Schools in District C*  
 2006 - 2007

<b>School</b>	<b>Percentage of African American Students</b>	<b>Percentage of All Students At or Above Standard</b>	<b>Percentage of Fifth Grade African American Students At or Above Standard</b>
School 1*	55.03	44.6	37.5
School 2	26.74	88.0	80.0
School 3	34.15	72.1	42.8
School 4*	30.67	68.9	60.0
School 5	22.75	63.8	52.9
School 6*	2.76	67.2	100.0
School 7	27.72	58.1	60.0
School 8	17.31	97.0	94.5
School 9	8.36	80.2	77.4
School 10	16.31	84.4	45.5
School 11	24.39	72.8	54.5
School 12*	4.15	69.4	100.0
School 13*	32.45	62.1	60.0
School 14*	14.12	84.1	75.0
<b>School 15</b>	<b>37.14</b>	<b>80.4</b>	<b>81.3</b>
School 16	33.33	53.2	66.7
School 17*	17.37	61.8	100.0
School 18*	8.22	67.2	66.6
<b>School 19*</b>	<b>23.81</b>	<b>78.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>
School 20*	6.56	78.0	100.0
School 21	40.80	64.1	43.9

## **Appendix C-IRB Documents**

# C-1 IRB Approval Document

**COPY**



University Research  
Compliance Office  
203 Fairchild Hall  
Lower Mezzanine  
Manhattan, KS 66506-1103  
785-532-3224  
Fax: 785-532-3278  
<http://www.ksu.edu/research/comply>

TO: Marjorie Hancock  
Elementary Education  
246 Bluemont

Proposal Number: 4733

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair *RS*  
Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: May 15, 2008

RE: Proposal Entitled, "A Reading Achievement of Urban African American 5th Graders Before (1997-2001) and After (2002-2007) No Child Left Behind in the Midwest"

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Kansas State University has reviewed the proposal identified above and has determined that it is exempt from further review.

This exemption applies only to the proposal currently on file with the IRB. Any change affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation and may disqualify the proposal from exemption.

Exemption from review does not release the investigator from statutory responsibility for obtaining the informed consent of subjects or their authorized representatives, as appropriate, either orally or in writing, prior to involving the subjects in research. The general requirements for informed consent and for its documentation are set forth in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, 45 CFR 46.116-117, copies of which are available in the University Research Compliance Office and online at <http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm#46.116>. In cases of remote oral data collection, as in telephone interviews, oral consent is sufficient and the researcher is required to provide the respondent with a copy of the consent statement only if the respondent requests one. The researcher must, however, ask the respondent whether he or she wishes to have a copy. The initiative in requesting a copy must not be left to the respondent. Regardless of whether the informed consent is written or oral, the investigator must keep a written record of the informed consent statement, not merely of the fact that it was presented, and must save this documentation for 3 years after completing the research.

The identification of a human subject in any publication constitutes an invasion of privacy and requires a separate informed consent.

Injuries or any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, the University Research Compliance Office, and if the subjects are KSU students, to the Director of the Student Health Center.



## C-2 Principal/Teacher Informed Consent

**PROJECT TITLE:** The Reading Achievement of Urban African American 5<sup>TH</sup> Graders Before (1997-2001) and After (2002-2007) NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND in the Midwest

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Dr. Marjorie Hancock

**CO-INVESTIGATOR:** Trinity M. Davis, [tdavis@pittstate.edu](mailto:tdavis@pittstate.edu)

**CONTACT NAME AND PHONE FOR ANY PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS:**

Dr. Marjorie Hancock  
246 Bluemont Hall, 785-532-5917, [mrhanc@ksu.edu](mailto:mrhanc@ksu.edu)

**IRB Chair Contact/Phone Information:** Rick Scheidt: 785-532-3224

**PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:** To identify the impact of No Child Left Behind on state reading assessment scores of 5<sup>th</sup> grade African American students in three urban school districts. The research will also help determine instructional factors contributing to test performance in the six high performing schools with a large number of African American students.

**PROCEDURES OF METHODS TO BE USED:** The researcher will be using quantitative methods to determine the impact of reading achievement on 5<sup>th</sup> grade African American students in three urban school districts. After analysis of the data, six high performing schools will be identified. The researcher will observe in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms during reading instruction. Field notes will be recorded. Teacher and principal interviews will be audiotaped in order to maintain accuracy of comments. Observations and interviews will occur at times mutually agreed upon by the teachers and principals.

**LENGTH OF STUDY:** May 2008-December 2008

There are no anticipated risks from this study. No intervention is to be implemented. This case study is observational in nature and researcher will be an observer, not a participant.

**TERMS OF PARTICIPATION:** I understand this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

**Name of Participant:**

**Signature of Participant:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix D-Interview and Observation Protocol**

## **D- 1 Principal/Teacher Interview Questions**

### **Interview Protocol for Interview of School Principals and Classroom Teachers**

Audio-tape will be turned on after IRB consent is signed for conducting and for audio-taping of interview.

1. Tell me about your professional development in the area of reading.
2. How much time do teachers get to collaborate in planning?
3. Tell me about the reading programs you use in your fifth grade classroom.
4. How do you believe the reading programs impact the state reading assessment?
5. What instructional factors do you believe contribute to high performance (or growth) in your state reading assessment scores?
6. What are some of the changes you have seen in reading instruction in the past eight years?
7. Tell me about your parental involvement.
8. How does parental involvement impact the student achievement in your school?

## **D-2 Observation Protocol for Fifth Grade Classrooms**

1. Reading instructional time
  - a. How much time is spent on reading instruction?
  - b. Are students pulled for other classes (speech, gifted, Title I, etc) during reading instruction?
2. Five components of reading instruction
  - a. Do teachers incorporate all five areas of reading instruction?
  - b. How?
3. Indicators addressed
  - a. Which indicators are addressed?
4. Evaluation of indicators
  - a. How did the teacher ensure students met the indicator?
5. Attempts to motivate students
  - a. Are students extrinsically and/or intrinsically motivated?
  - b. How are students motivated to participate?
6. Instruction related to real world situation
  - a. How do teachers relate instruction to real world situations?
7. Reading materials
  - a. Is multicultural literature available throughout the classroom?
  - b. Is there a variety of text structure throughout the classroom?
  - c. What type of reading materials are used during instruction?

8. Organization of instruction

- a. Are teachers using whole group or small group instruction, or both?
- b. How much time is spent on whole and/or small group instruction?
- c. If using small groups, how are the groups organized?
- d. If using small groups, what are the other students doing while the teacher instructs?

9. Cooperative learning

- a. Is cooperative learning used?
- b. Is cooperative learning encouraged?

10. Active engagement

- a. Are students actively engaged?
- b. If so, what evidence is given to show active engagement?

## **Appendix E-Example Coding**

## E-1 Sample Interview Transcript with Mrs. Jones

Interview with 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Mrs. Jones

**Tell me about your professional development for reading in your school.**

*The district has some like when I went to a summer workshop and we have some just with new textbook series. But as a staff, a lot of it is just helping each other. We brainstorm together, especially when we have problems. The lower ones are always a big concern. What can we do differently? Sharing with each other. We've also said we would really like to go into each other's rooms more to see. Because right here in our staff we have a wealth of developments and knowledge we need to share. So we do, we just communicate a lot.*

Professional  
Development

**Tell me how instruction is aligned to the standards, benchmarks, and indicators.**

*I am a big one with the standards. I have the standards and pacing guides and follow them. You have the pacing guides and those I kind of try my best. But I make sure I cover those standards.*

**Has professional development been offered in the 5 areas of reading instruction?**

*Yes. I have had some summer workshops and some in-services. So yes.*

Professional  
Development

**How much time do teacher get to collaborate in planning the teaching of reading?**

*Not enough! Not enough! I think all of the teachers say that. It still, I think a lot of times, is more independent. We do it on our own. We follow the pacing guides and work it out. But as the two 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, we're bouncing ideas off from each other*

*and sharing. I did a vocabulary... well she did a vocabulary thing; so she shared it with me and I did it. So we touch bases and then bounce!*

Teacher  
Collaboration

**Tell me about the reading programs used in 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms in your school.**

*The district one is the Treasures (MacMillan/McGraw-Hill, 2007). We also have Teaching Students Nonfiction. And then I know we have Accelerated Reading (Renaissance Learning, 2008), Reading Counts (Scholastics, 1999), which is a computerized reading one. I do not have programs, but I do a monthly book report and they're all very different levels of Blooms Taxonomy.*

**What are the impacts of the reading programs reflected in your test scores?**

*Yes I see the connections, last year especially. I had some really low ones so I tried some new strategies and the kids just blew me out of the water with the MAPS, NWEA testing, and the state assessment scores. I was just amazed! It worked for them. The principal even was helping me do these strategies that fit in with the guidelines and she was telling me how the kids were just reading and thinking out loud and that is basically with it is. Just thinking out loud and using the strategies I had been teaching.*

Analysis of  
Data

**What various instructional factors do you believe contribute to success in your students reading scores?**

*I believe it is firmly the primary grades, Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grades with phonics. I bring in the other things like the social studies. It's reading and doing the same skills like cause and effect, problem and solution. And I teach explorers and the American Revolution, it's reading.*



**What are some changes you have seen in grade level reading instruction in the past years?**

*I have been in the district for 20 years and I am the only original teacher left in this building. We started with open court and that was the adoption because it was a strong phonics based and parents wanted that. And it is researched based in the primary. That was basically taken away from us. We would have had to foot the bill ourselves and that was astronomical. And in the last go round they wouldn't even let us foot the bill ourselves. And we still believed in open court phonics. So yes, we now have to use what the district chose and we feel a little forced into their confines of how they tell us to run our classrooms. We are blessed at \_\_\_\_\_ because the last principal and the one before them said you're professional and your test scores show that you know what you're doing. So we have a little more freedom than some of the other schools that maybe aren't making AYP and we know that!*

High  
Expectations

**Do you believe the reading scores of the state reading assessments reflect the reading ability of your students?**

*Uh no. We are testing too much. It is a one shot deal. It just... No. And too much emphasis is put on it. That I feel very strongly about. Too much time and effort spent and we don't spend as much time preparing for the state like other schools do. Last year I did far less localized than I have ever done and I thought oh no, what is going to happen. And they did well.*

**Tell me about parental involvement in your building.**

*Umm... we definitely have more intact structures at home. More parents and kids that live in a two parent home. A lot of them are with biological parents. And that is part*

Parental  
Involvement

*of when they come here they're supposed to be involved with PTO. And the site council has come up with a paper that they're suppose to sign that talks they're realizing that that's part of the deal. Like this morning I had one with too many missing assignments. So he called his mom and I talked to his mom and she said okay we'll work on it, just send it home. So those are kinds of things. That's what our school is about. Are we perfect? No way. We have some who say I send them to school, I don't have time or I don't have the desire.*

High Expectations
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**Okay, the final question. How does parental involvement impact the reading achievement?**

*Okay, um... We can send homework home and get it back and they are supposed to do it independently. So it is just an extension and a support system.*

**Do you have parents come in and help with reading?**

*We don't, I mean I don't have as many because it is fitting in time because we are mandated it has to be a 90-minute uninterrupted block with all of our other stuff.*

**Well thank you that was great!**

## E-2 Sample Interview with Principal A-7

### Principal Interview Transcript: 10/1/08

**Let me ask you a few questions that may help to see what contributes to success of your school. I want to first ask about your professional development. What do you do for reading? Tell me about the professional development in reading at your school.**

*Okay. Our professional development is actually built within the school day and what we do is ongoing throughout the year. We look at classroom data, our state data and our building growth and district wide data...and identify what our strengths and weaknesses are...and then from that, we design our staff development goals and once a month it comes out to be, each grade level has a three hour block of professional development. And so we do that on Tuesday afternoons. We've been able to build that into our schedule. For example, like yesterday our second and third grade teachers had their staff development from 1:30-4:00. And we rotate our students through special classes at that time. So they have just a once a month block of music, p.e., library, and art. That allows us to have staff development for our teachers. That allows us to look at strengths and weaknesses.*

Professional  
Development

**Now is this something they do across the district or is this something your school does?**

*That is something we do district wide and so it may look different at each building, but the district has allowed us to build in staff development within our school schedule. And we have a district level someone who is called a learning coach who can come in and assist us with that. I may help with that staff development. We may even*

Professional  
Development

*pull in teachers who have been in the building that we recognize while they are doing really good in their classrooms with a particular skill, we work out where their classroom can be covered so they can help facilitate that staff development. We bring in other experts within the district if it's an area we feel we need some additional support with. So that is something that is occurring once a month at all grade levels. Including our specials teachers. Our specials teachers, our art, p.e., library, and music, they have one time a month they receive training. This is also another district initiative. We have something we call Professional Learning Community. And that is held every Wednesday morning across the district. Teachers report 45 minutes earlier than their normal contract time and during that time we are looking specifically at school data. That is guiding, directing what are doing and so our PLC is focused on these four driving questions. (Hands me the paper) So during our PLC time, classroom teachers are collecting again some type of data that they are going to talk about and analyze and then answer some of those questions. This is what I've seen in my classroom, this is what we are going to do about it. And that helps us also.*

Teacher  
Collaboration

Analysis of  
Data

**Can I get a copy of this paper?**

*Yes, you can have it.*

*And these four guided questions we have taken from Richard DeFour. But it is the four guiding questions our district focuses on. And so we have built our PLC's around that. If you had been here this morning at 8:00 and walked through the building, you would have seen teachers looking at everything from their DIBELS data and talking about it. Third grade just finished MAPS NWEA testing so they were looking at those scores and talking about that.*

Analysis of  
Data

**Tell me how instruction is aligned to the standards, benchmarks, and indicators.**

*We have shifted from themes to very much standard focused. One of the things our district has done for us is create something we call pacing guides aligning our standards in an order we can teach throughout the year. And that really helps, not so much because we are \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary, but we are pure magnet and we don't have a lot of mobility here. The kids that come here in kindergarten are here in fifth grade. So that is an asset for us. But across the district we have lots of mobility. And so what we saw as a district was we had kids working on his particular standard in this building and they moved across town and that building had already done this...so there were gaps. And so the district has created pacing guides for our language arts area and our math area. And so we have identified what those power standards are so that our kids are working toward mastery of those standards prior to state assessments in the spring. So we are very standards based.*

High  
Expectations

**Has professional development been offered in the five areas of reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension)**

*My teachers have just completed something we call Reading Symposium and it focused on the five areas, the components of reading. That was a district wide inservice. Since they did that district wide, we began to now talk about what that looks like at \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary during our own staff development.*

Professional  
Development

**How much time do teachers get to collaborate in planning the teaching of reading?**

*They have definitely their PLC. That is 45 minutes every Wednesday morning. We also have when we create a masters schedule, we also try to have their planning times at the grade level at the same time. And out of all of those, each of them has at least three common planning times. But out of those, one of those planning times is designed that they have to meet as a grade level. One, because we are a small building. I really want, not that teachers are going to teach everything they same, not that teachers are going to teach everything the same, the exact same day, but there needs to be some common threads, some consistency. So one of those common times is a time they are requested to meet together and I come into that planning time. It is also opportunities for me to touch base on who are our red flag kids and what are we doing for these kids. As a grade level, what do you need that I can support you with?*

Teacher  
Collaboration

Analysis of  
Data

**Tell me about the reading programs used in fifth grade classrooms in your school.**

*About three years ago as a district, we adopted a reading curriculum district wide, so that all elementary schools have the same curriculum. The framework within how we teach may look different. A couple of things that are different here at \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary is than in a traditional thematic school. We do teach specifically grammar, handwriting, and spelling. Those are components district wide we do not do. So that is how we have supplemented within the building. But as a district we all use the same reading program.*

High  
Expectations

**What are the impacts of the reading programs reflected in your test scores?**

*It definitely makes a big difference. I think not only just the basic reading curriculum, but our building inservices that allow us to look at deficiencies within our own building. And as staff we talk about what kind of resources we need to pull in.*

Analysis of  
Data

**What various instructional factors do you believe contribute to the success in your students' reading scores?**

*PLCs, inservice, reading programs, supplemental resources.*

**What are some of the changes you have seen in grade level reading instruction in the past years?**

*I will tell you of something else that is district wide, but looks different building to building. We have something called our core reading instruction time. We have designed our schedule where core reading is uninterrupted when a fifth grade classroom has reading we don't have any special breaks. There is a solid 60 minutes of interrupted reading in every grade level. We may have breaks within social sciences and other areas, but that is interrupted area. We have really defined more of what that looks like. We have created a framework that so many minutes of that we are teaching (at primary level) phonemic awareness and phonics. So many minutes are focused on just comprehension or fluency. So we have broken that down into components. But in addition to that 60 minutes we also have our intervention time. We have 30 minutes a day of interventions in reading, and 30 minutes a day of interventions in math. This is where I really see this evolving. We are really beginning to target more on classroom needs. Using this information, identifying who are those read flag kids, what are they struggling most with. The past week we have done some reading screenings in our intermediate classes to see what our deficiencies are. We have been able to identify*

Analysis of  
Data

*while these kids are having trouble with C and D. These kids are having trouble with CVC blends. And we are able now to put these kids into groups during that intervention time to focus on these skills to help them.*

**Where do you get the number of staff members to help with that intervention skill?**

*That is where we are struggling. We know that we need to be pulling them out one on one, but we don't have staff personnel always to make it work the way we want. We are a non-title building, so we don't have the funds for some of the extra staff members to be here to help with that. So that's where we are trying to be more creative. One of the things we are fortunate about is that we do have very strong parental involvement. That is part of the contract our parents sign when they come here. This is a school of choice.*

Parental  
Involvement

*This is not a neighborhood building. We have kids who live across the street, but they don't get to come here necessarily. So our parents that choose to have their kids here have bought into this program and we have their support as well. We don't have at every grade or at every classroom paras to go in and out.*

High  
Expectations

**Do you believe the reading scores of the state reading assessment reflect the reading ability of your students?**

*Not always no. There are some areas we are not scoring extremely high and I can think of text structures off hand. We have kids that we know are very good readers phonemically, we know they are able to comprehend. But at times some of the questioning on the state assessment, we don't feel reflects how they are performing. That's, that's frustrating at times.*

Analysis of  
Data

**Tell me about parental involvement in your building and the impact of reading achievement.**



Well, one of our requirements (by in's) at \_\_\_\_\_, we pride ourselves in rigor and challenge. In fact when you visit some of our classrooms, you'll see 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers are pulling 5<sup>th</sup> grade resources. Our 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers are pulling 6<sup>th</sup> grade resources. We pride ourselves in challenging and that rigor. So there is a commitment that comes with that as far as working on those skills at home. Every grade level and every classroom, there is nightly homework. Our parents sign that commitment that they will help their kids with this at home. I talk to some of my colleagues that say, "We have a hard time getting back homework". You know well, we don't. It's not a problem here. We tell parents here at \_\_\_\_\_, it's not that it means you are here helping in the classroom, but you are also helping at home with what our teachers send home. They buy into that.

High  
Expectations

Parental  
Involvement

**That concludes my interview questions. I'll go into a 5<sup>th</sup> grade room and observe. Thank you.**

## E-3 Example of Qualitative Data Coding Sheet

### Focused Coding Grid

Observation: District A School 7 Teacher Mrs. Jones

Method of Instruction	Indicator	Example
WG	TT	Identify the text structure
	TS	What is the structure? Graphic Organizer
	V	What does the word fainted mean?
	C	What do you think will happen next? (Predicting)

#### Coding for Observations:

- WG = Whole Group
- SG = Small Group
- PW = Partner Work
- TT = Text Type
- TS = Text Structure
- MC = Making Connections
- PH = Phonics
- V = Vocabulary
- C = Comprehension

Interviews: District A School 7 Teacher/Principal P

Factor	Comment
AD	Look at classroom data, state data, building data to identify strengths and weaknesses
PD	From data, professional development goals are designed
TC	Teachers collaborate 45 minutes every Wednesday morning
HE	Every kid has homework each night. We expect to get it back
PI	We tell parents they must help their child with homework each night

Coding for Interview Transcripts:

- PD = Professional Development
- TC = Teacher Collaboration
- PI = Parental Involvement
- AD = Analysis of Data
- HE = High Expectations

## **Appendix F-Sample Test Items**

### **Kansas State Reading and Assessment Guide**

(based on the KS State Reading Standards  
approved by the Kansas State Board of Education on July 2003)

Grade 5th

Developed by the Kansas State Department of Education  
and Reading Specialists from the Private Sector in Kansas  
Revised November 2007

Standard/Benchmark/Indicator	State Assessment Sample Item
<p>Determines the meaning of words or phrases by using context clues (e.g., definitions, restatements, examples, descriptions) from sentences or paragraphs.</p>	<p>In Step 10, the word <u>erupt</u> probably means</p> <p>In the third paragraph, the word <u>convey</u> means</p> <p>In the first paragraph, the phrase “keen on” probably means</p> <p>Read the sentence below from the passage.</p> <p>Because of the famine, people left their homes in search of food.</p> <p>In the sentence, the word famine probably means</p>
<p>Determines meaning of words through knowledge of word structure (e.g., contractions, root words, prefixes, suffixes).</p>	<p>Knowing the meaning of the suffix <i>-ish</i> helps the reader understand that the word “warmish” means</p> <p>A. warm again.  B. somewhat warm.  C. warm before.  D. the most warm.</p>
<p>Understands the purpose of text features (e.g., title, graphs/charts and maps, table of contents, pictures/illustrations, boldface type, italics, glossary, index, headings, subheadings, topic and summary sentences, captions) and uses such features to locate information in and to gain meaning from appropriate-level texts.</p>	<p>The purpose of the picture is to</p> <p>The phrase <i>Raging Sea</i> is printed in italics PROBABLY because it is</p> <p>A. the title of a book.  B. difficult to pronounce.  C. the name of a ship.  D. written in another language.</p> <p>Under which subheading can the reader find information about volcanoes?</p> <p>The author uses subheadings MAINLY to</p> <p>According to information under the subheading <b>Special Delivery</b>, the main purpose of the Pony Express was to</p> <p>According to the map, which city is closest to Albany?</p>
<p>Uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.</p>	<p>Based on the passage, Jill gave up on Malcolm PROBABLY because</p> <p>Based on the passage, adding more flour to the mixture would PROBABLY</p>

<p>Identifies text structure (e.g., sequence, problem-solution, comparison-contrast, description, cause-effect).</p>	<p>Which text structure does the author use in the passage?</p> <p>A. sequence B. comparison and contrast C. description D. problem and solution</p> <p>Which is the MAIN text structure used in the passage?</p> <p>In the last paragraph, which text structure does the author use?</p>
<p>Compares and contrasts varying aspects (e.g., topics, characters' traits, themes, problem-solution, cause-effect relationships) in one or more appropriate-level texts.</p>	<p>During the story, Justin's feelings about swimming changed from</p> <p>According to the passage, how is driving in the rain DIFFERENT from driving in the snow?</p>
<p>Links causes and effects in appropriate-level narrative, expository, and technical texts, and identifies signal words related to cause-effect relationships.</p>	<p>What would PROBABLY happen if Malcolm kept feeding the fish at the wrong time?</p> <p>What caused Emily to choose Meredith as her running partner?</p> <p>Read the sentence below from the passage.</p> <p>Sandy was able to pass the test because of the time she spent studying.</p> <p>Which word in the sentence is a cause and effect signal word?</p>
<p>Retells main ideas or events as well as supporting details in appropriate-level narrative, expository, persuasive, and technical texts.</p>	<p>Which BEST retells the story?</p> <p>A. Paul met Katherine in the schoolyard. B. Paul asked Katherine if she wanted to play a game of tennis. C. Paul and Katherine became friends after they played tennis together.</p>
<p>Identifies the topic, main idea(s), supporting details, and theme(s) in appropriate-level texts.</p>	<p>What is the MAIN idea of the passage?</p> <p>The passage is MAINLY about</p> <p>What is the MAIN topic of the passage?</p> <p>Which detail from the passage BEST supports the main idea?</p> <p>According to the passage, why did Jerry confess that he lied?</p> <p>What was the FIRST thing Glen did after he left the restaurant?</p>

<p>Identifies the author's purpose (e.g., to persuade, to entertain, to inform).</p>	<p>The author's MAIN purpose for writing the passage is to</p> <p>A. inform. B. persuade. C. describe. D. entertain.</p> <p>What is the author's MAIN purpose for writing the passage?</p> <p>A. to inform the reader about humpback whales B. to entertain the reader with a story about humpback whales C. to inform the reader about where to study humpback whales D. to entertain the reader with a story about a girl who studies humpback whales</p>
<p>Distinguishes between fact and opinion and recognizes propaganda (e.g., advertising, media) in various types of appropriate-level texts.</p>	<p>Which sentence from the passage is a fact?</p> <p>Which statement based on the passage is an opinion?</p>
<p>Identifies and describes characters' physical traits, personality traits, and feelings, and explains reasons for characters' actions and the consequences of those actions.</p>	<p>How did Cathy feel when Cindy left her in the park?</p> <p>What about Tim made Conor trust him?</p> <p>The MAIN reason Alex bought the car was to</p>
<p>Identifies and describes the setting (e.g., environment, time of day or year, historical period, situation, place) and explains the importance of the setting to the story or literary text.</p>	<p>What is the setting of the passage?</p> <p>The passage takes place during which season?</p> <p>Which BEST describes how the farm setting affects events in the passage?</p>
<p>Identifies and describes the major conflict in a story and major events related to the conflict (e.g., problem or conflict, climax, resolution).</p>	<p>The MAJOR conflict in the story is resolved when</p> <p>What is the MAJOR conflict in the passage?</p> <p>Which is the resolution of the story?</p> <p>Which is the climax of the story?</p>

