Transforming Schools to Impact Student Learning

Title I Needs Improvement Schools

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Terminology

AIMSWeb - A benchmark and progress monitoring system based on direct, frequent and continuous student assessment. The results are reported to students, parents, teachers and administrators via a web-based data management and reporting system to determine response to intervention. (www.aimsweb.com)

APL - APL Associates is an organization providing professional development focusing on instructional and classroom management skills. (http://aplassociates.com/)

BIST- Behavioral Intervention Support Team. The BIST model utilizes four steps so educators have the ability to know when and how to intervene with students. These steps create a consistent, supervised, safe environment in order to teach and protect students. (www.bist.org)

DIBELS - Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills. An assessment system of early literacy development using Phonological Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, and Fluency with Connected Text. (www.dibels.uoregon.edu)

DRA - Developmental Reading Assessment. It not only gives teachers a reading level for each student, but it also lets the teacher know where the student's strengths and weaknesses are. DRA assesses student performance in the following areas of reading proficiency: reading engagement, oral reading fluency, and comprehension. (http://bles.groupfusion.net/modules/groups/homepagefiles/cms/14567/File/Balanced%20Literacy/What_is_DRA%5B1%5D.pdf?sessionid=25b953566bc79c78ce1d2bace0645656)

ELDA - English and Language Resources Distribution Agency. The operational body of the European Language Resources Association (ELRA), set up to identify, collect, classify, validate and produce the language resources which may be needed by the Human Language Technology (HLT) community. (www.elda.org)

ELL - English Language Learners. An academic program targeting students whose primary language is not English, and who are working to master the language as well as content in various areas in school. (http://www.netc.org/focus/challenges/ell.php)

ELLA – English Language and Literacy Assessment. A curriculum-based assessment, focused on literacy. (www.ncela.gwu.edu/files/uploads/11/rabinowitz.pdf)

ELLIS – English Language Learner Interactive Software. Individualized instruction software to learn English. (www.pearsonschool.com/index)

IEP - Individualized Educational Program. The IEP should accurately describe your child's learning problems and how these problems are going to be dealt with. An IEP Team comprised of parents, teachers, and other appropriate school individuals will meet to set specific goals toward improving a child's school performance. (www.wrightslaw.com)

Ichat - An instant messaging system which works with video and text for long-distance communication. (www.apple.com)

ITBS - Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. A norm referenced test for grades K-8. (http://itp.education.uiowa.edu/itbs/)

Lexia - A primary reading software to support the teaching of reading skills. (www.**lexia**learning.com/)

LRPs - Leveled Reading Passages. This entails using small-group instruction and developmentally appropriate books called leveled books. This approach recognizes that a wide range of reading ability exists within any grade level or age group, and that reading at the appropriate levels ensures success. Each session, 15 to 25 minutes, begins with introducing a book, eliciting prior knowledge, and building background. (www.readinga-z.com)

L to J - A formative assessment system developed by Lee Jenkins that yields data for students, classrooms, and schools about the mastery of standards. (http://www.ltojconsulting.com/Pubs.html)

McRel - Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory. A nonprofit, nonpartisan education research "laboratory" where knowledge about what works in education would be turned into practical guidance for educators. (www.mcrel.org/about)

NeSA - The Nebraska State Accountability assessment. NeSA-R is the reading, NeSA-M is the math, NeSA-S is the science, NeSA-W is the writing assessment. These are administered throughout the state, are available in Spanish and allow for special accommodations in efforts at a more balanced educational system. (www.lps.org)

NWEA MAPS – Computerized adaptive assessments make it possible to provide detailed data for educators about each child's progress and needs. (http://www.nwea.org/products-services/computer-based-adaptive-assessments/map)

NIFDI - National Institute For Direct Instruction. This is a non-profit organization providing continuous administrative and curricular support to schools and districts as they implement Direct Instruction (DI) programs; as well as conducting, promoting and publicizing high-quality research on the effects of DI implementations. (www.nifdi.org)

Para- Paraprofessional. A teaching-related position within a school generally responsible for specialized or concentrated assistance for students in elementary and secondary (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paraprofessional_educator)

PALS – Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening. This screening inventory is used to identify children's literacy strengths and predict future reading success. (http://pals.virginia.edu/)

PLAS- Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools. A rating system that combines reading and mathematics performance and ranks schools to determine the lowest achieving schools. They are identified as Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III based on their scores. These schools are then eligible for federal funding targeted at improving achievement. (http://www.education.ne.gov/ARRA/PDF/PLAS_TALKING_POINTS_5_10.pdf)

PLCs- Professional Learning Communities. A PLC is composed of collaborative teams whose members work *interdependently* to achieve *common goals* linked to the purpose of learning for all. The very essence of a *learning* community is a focus on and a commitment to the learning of each student. (www.allthingsplc.info)

PTO- Parent Teacher Organization. Single-school groups that operate under their own bylaws and by and large concern themselves with the goings-on at their building or in their town only. They are generally comprised by parents, teachers, staff and other concerned adults. (www.ptotoday.com)

QReads- QuickReads. A research-based and classroom-validated program that systematically increases fluency, builds vocabulary and background knowledge, and improves comprehension. Through a unique combination of text and consistent instructional routine, QuickReads result in improved reading proficiency for students at all ability levels. (www.quickreads.org).

RTI - Response to Intervention. A combination of high quality, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction; assessment; and evidence-based intervention; implementation will contribute to more meaningful identification of learning and behavioral problems, improve instructional quality, provide all students with the best opportunities to succeed in school, and assist with the identification of learning disabilities and other disabilities. (http://www.rti4success.org/whatisrti)

SIG - School Improvement Grants. School Improvement Grants are funded with new money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and Title I funds for the purpose of improving schools identified as "lowest achieving" regulated by the No Child Left Behind Act. *(*www.ed.gov/category/program/school-improvement-grants)

Transforming Schools to Improve Student Learning
Title I Needs Improvement Schools

Section 1: Introduction

The Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability Research Project is an independent evaluation of the success of the implementation of Nebraska Title I School Improvement Plans to improve student achievement in identified schools. This research was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) characterized by the highest level of integrity, with respect and equitable treatment for all persons involved in the study in order to maintain confidentiality and protect the privacy of participants in the study (Appendix A). The research was contracted between the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, College of Education and Human Sciences (CEHS) in 2010-2011. The research was supported jointly by the NDE and the College of Education and Human Sciences (CEHS).

Dr. Jody Isernhagen, Associate Professor, served as the Principal Investigator. Jackie Florendo, Doctoral Candidate and Graduate Assistant, assisted in the writing and completion of the report. Nadia Bulkin, Administrative Assistant, assisted in the data summary and writing of the final report. Dr. Isernhagen and Nadia Bulkin served as interviewers for the project. All researchers and members of the research team for the Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability Research Project are listed in Appendix B.

OVERVIEW

Schools are being challenged to re-conceptualize the methods they use to increase student achievement for children that have not been successful in the past. Schools in Nebraska are plagued with the same needs as schools across the nation to improve learning for all students including children living in poverty, students learning English for the first time, students with special needs, students that are mobile and students with diverse backgrounds of experience and needs. Using student performance data is critical to the process of improvement. More

importantly, using that data as the basis for decision making is critical to the success of students. Decision-making must be at the classroom level using instructional improvement strategies and interventions based on research to construct the many processes used daily in a classroom. This requires an increase in staff knowledge to clarify and translate the focus of the school into strategies, targets, and tracking of results, to enhance learning that is tied directly to the school mission, beliefs, and objectives for improvement. Educators need to identify a set of practical tools for meeting the needs of diverse learners that help schools when experiencing high needs. Ensuring excellence with every student requires strong commitments to students, teachers, leaders, and stakeholders.

The purpose of this mixed method research study was to examine the implementation of Nebraska Title I Plans for improving student achievement in schools identified as needing improvement. This research provides Nebraska educators and the Nebraska Department of Education, the State Board of Education, other policy makers, and all other stakeholders with the information to assess the effectiveness of Nebraska Title I School Improvement Plans.

SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability Research Study was conducted during the winter and spring of 2011. The report is summarized in Section II with the complete report in Section III.

The study was a mixed-methods study examining perceptions held by administrators and teachers regarding the development and implementation of their school's Title I School Improvement Plan and the improvement evident at their school. This mixed methods research study focused on Title I School Improvement Plans, Clear Focus, Culture, Instructional Strategies, Professional Development, Data/ Monitoring, Community Involvement and Overall Improvement. Both quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data were collected in the winter and spring of 2011.

FORMAT

This report has been designed to serve multiple audiences and provide the most pertinent information available relative to the implementation of Title I School Improvement Plans in Nebraska.

The report is divided into four sections beginning with an introduction of the report (Section 1); an executive summary of the findings of the study conducted (Section 2); complete research paper of the study conducted during the 2011 school year (Section 3); and the Appendices (Section 4).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the many districts and schools that opened their doors to talk with the researchers about their Title I School Improvement Plans. We offer a special thanks to the teachers and administrators who took time out of their busy schedules to complete the surveys and participate in interviews.

A special thanks to: Roger Breed, Commissioner of the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE); Marilyn Peterson, Federal Programs and Data Services Administrator; Diane Stuehmer, Title I Director; Randy McIntyre and Roger Reikofski, Title I Consultants. All have offered great assistance for the completion of the Statewide Title I Accountability Research Study.

We offer our sincere appreciation to Jackie Florendo, Doctoral Candidate and Graduate Student, and Nadia Bulkin, Administrative Assistant, for their long hours and dedication to this project. Without their support, this report surely would not have been completed.

For help in bringing this project to fruition, we thank Cindy DeRyke, Diane Gronewald, Shelia Hayes, Tammie Herrington, and Ronda Alexander for their support with the second year completion of this project. A special thanks to Marjorie Kostelnik, Dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences; L. James Walters, former Associate Dean; Larry Dlugosh, former Chair of the Department of Educational Administration, and Brent Cejda, Interim Chair of the Department of Education Administration, for their continued support for the Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability Research Project.

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Section 2: Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

Nebraska schools are being challenged to re-conceptualize the methods they use to increase student achievement for children that have not been successful in the past. Children and families in the Midwest face similar challenges impacting other rural and non-rural schools located in communities nation-wide, including children living in poverty, students learning English for the first time, students with special needs, students that are mobile and students that have diverse backgrounds of experience and needs. Some schools are forced to change their practices in order to improve learning for *all* students.

The purpose of this mixed method research study was to examine the implementation of Nebraska Title I Plans for improving student achievement in schools identified as needing improvement. This research provides Nebraska educators and the Nebraska Department of Education, the State Board of Education, other policy makers, and all other stakeholders with the information to assess the implementation of Nebraska Title I School Improvement Plans.

RESEARCH STUDIES

The Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability Research Study was conducted during the winter through summer of 2011. This study is summarized in this section of the report and presented as a complete report in Section 3.

STUDY I: Administrator and Teacher Perceptions of the Implementation of Title I School Improvement Plans

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Jackie Florendo, Doctoral Candidate, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Introduction

This study examined the way schools are implementing their Title I School Improvement Plans. This study used a mixed methods research design using both quantitative and qualitative data.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this mixed method research study was to examine the implementation of Nebraska Title I Plans for improving student achievement in schools identified as needing improvement. Quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data was collected in the winter and spring of 2011.

Research Design

This mixed-methods research study focused upon the implementation of Title I School Improvement Plans. Administrators and teachers across the state were surveyed using an online instrument regarding their perceptions about the Title I School Improvement Process.

Only those schools that were currently in "Needs Improvement" status were selected to participate. Therefore, 21 schools in 14 districts that were currently in "Needs Improvement" status were invited to participate in the surveys. Twenty schools in 13 districts agreed to participate. For the purpose of this research, Nebraska public school districts were divided into two categories, non-rural and rural, using Locale Codes as defined by the Common Core of Data (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010). These locale codes are based on proximity to an urbanized area. Non-rural districts were defined as districts in cities, suburbs, and towns less than or equal to 35 miles from an urbanized area. Rural districts were defined as districts in rural areas as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Towns more than 35 miles from an urbanized area (Town: Remote, or code 33) were also defined as rural for the purposes of this study. Of the 13 school districts participating, one district (7.7%) was classified as non-rural and 12 districts (92.3%) were classified as rural.

Of the 13 school districts participating, a total of 12 (92.3% of the districts) returned surveys for the Nebraska Statewide Title I Research Project. Of the administrator surveys returned, 61.1% were from rural districts and 38.9% were from non-rural districts. Surveys were received from administrators in 10 districts (76.9% of total districts surveyed). Of the teacher surveys returned, 63.9% were from non-rural districts and 36.1% were from rural districts. Surveys were received from teachers in 11 districts (84.6% of total districts surveyed). In comparing these numbers, it is important to take into account the fact that rural districts are likely to employ a smaller number of teachers and administrators.

Administrators responded to a 78-item survey (Appendix C), while teachers responded to a 82-item survey (Appendix C). Both surveys explored 8 themes: (1) Title I School Improvement Plans, (2) Clear Focus, (3) Culture, (4) Instructional Strategies, (5) Professional Development, (6) Data/Monitoring, (7) Community Involvement, and (8) Overall Improvement. Some items on the teacher survey were not included on the administrator survey. Where this occurs, it is noted in the results.

Second, open-ended interviews were conducted with administrators and teachers in six public school districts. Detailed perceptions were collected using an interview protocol (Appendix D) that gathered qualitative data. These six districts were selected based on geographic area, district Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) rate, and ethnicity. Twenty-two (22) individual interviews were conducted statewide during the spring of 2011. The interview protocols were structured around the same eight themes used to structure the survey: (1) Title I School Improvement Plans, (2) Clear Focus, (3) Culture, (4) Instructional Strategies, (5) Professional Development, (6) Data/Monitoring, (7) Community Involvement, and (8) Overall Improvement. Additionally, five new themes emerged in the interviews: 1) Change; 2) Reculturing; 3) Leadership; 4) Student Engagement; 5) Parent Communication and Involvement.

Instruments

The surveys (Appendix C) were designed to collect perceptions about the implementation of the Title I School Improvement Plans. The survey examined (1) Title I School Improvement Plans, (2) Clear Focus, (3) Culture, (4) Instructional Strategies, (5) Professional Development, (6) Data/Monitoring, (7) Community Involvement, and (8) Overall Improvement. Participants responded on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree. Analysis of variance was used to compare mean scores of the survey data. The reliability statistic (Cronbach's Alpha) for this instrument was .985 for administrators and .976 for teachers.

The interview protocols (Appendix D) asked for participants' demographic information and posed nine questions about their perceptions of their school's Title I School Improvement Plan. Interviews were conducted with administrators and teachers in elementary and secondary settings in six school districts. Up to five interviews were conducted in each district. Probes were identified for use with each question. Interviewers were provided a Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability Interview Manual and received training prior to conducting interviews.

Findings

Teachers' and administrators' perceptions of Title I School Improvement Plans were explored in eight categories: (1) Title I School Improvement Plans, (2) Clear Focus, (3) Culture, (4) Instructional Strategies, (5) Professional Development, (6) Data/Monitoring, (7) Community Involvement, and (8) Overall Improvement. Administrative and teacher overall survey responses ranged from 1 to 5 on the five-point Likert scale with "5" representing "strongly agree." Figure 1 shows administrators' and teachers' average ratings of the eight categories overall.

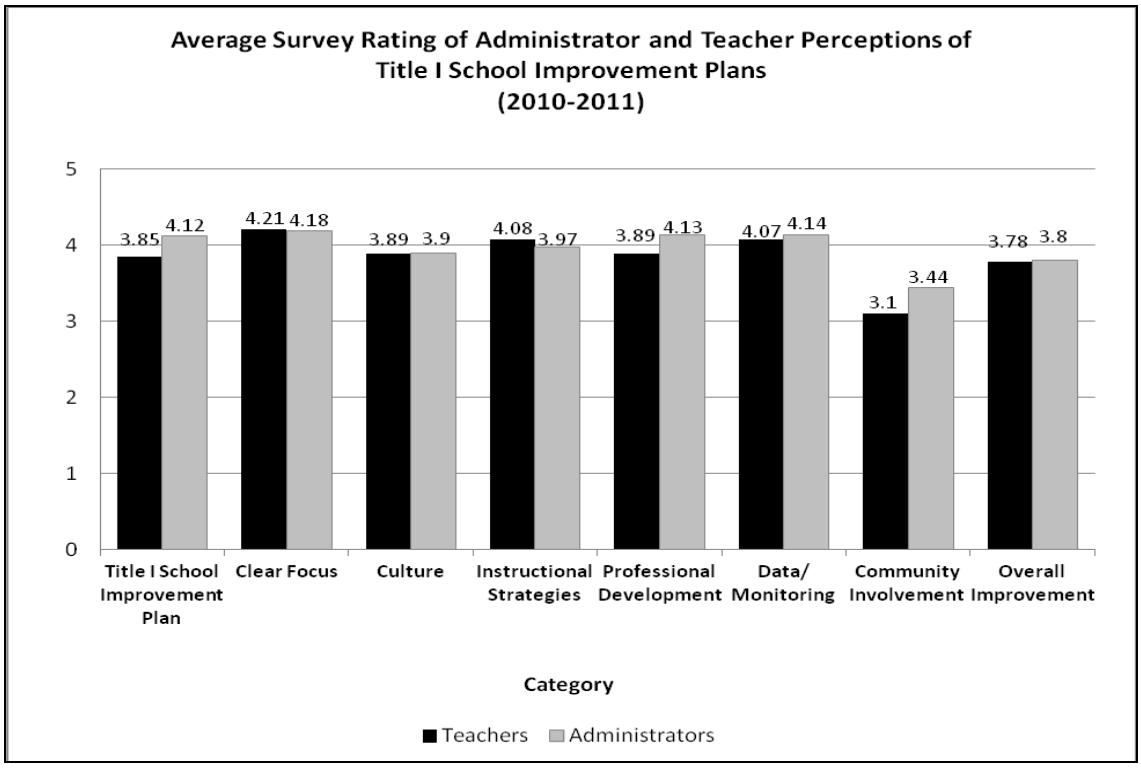

Figure 1. Average survey rating of administrator and teacher perceptions of Title I School Improvement Plans (2010-2011).

A list of the highest and lowest administrator and teacher mean ratings for the eight survey categories is located in Table 1.

Table 1
Administrators' and Teachers' Highest Mean Ratings

Mean Rate	Administrators	Teachers
Title I School Improvement Plan	"I was involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Improvement Goals." (4.50) "The planning process in my school is focused on improving student achievement." (4.50)	"The planning process in my school is focused on improving student achievement." (4.47)
Clear Focus	"Criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments are used to support instruction and enhance student learning." (4.44)	"I engage students in order to improve academic performance." (4.54)
Culture	"I am passionate about student learning." (4.78)	"I am passionate about student learning." (4.77)

Table 1 continues

Mean Rate	Administrators	Teachers
Instructional Strategies	"Research-based interventions and instructional strategies help students improve in my school." (4.39) "Our school provides additional learning time for students who need it." (4.39)	"I search for strategies by using the internet, visiting other schools, and attending conferences." (4.32)
Professional Development	"Professional development experiences have led to new classroom practices." (4.39)	"Professional development experiences have led to new classroom practices." (4.18)
Data/Monitoring	"Data are essential to our school improvement process." (4.56)	"Data are essential to our school improvement process." (4.49)
Community Involvement	"The Title I Improvement Plan is communicated to all stakeholders." (3.94)	"The Title I Improvement Plan is communicated to all stakeholders." (3.60)
Overall Improvement	"Data indicates progress toward closing the achievement gap." (4.22)	"I set specific goals for increasing student achievement." (4.26)

In four themes, teachers and administrators gave the same item the highest mean rating of the category. In four themes, teachers and administrators differed on the highest mean rating in each respected category. The items "Professional development experiences have led to new classroom practices," "I am passionate about student learning," "The Title I Improvement Plan is communicated to all stakeholders," and "Data are essential to our school improvement process" were the highest rated items in each respective categories by both teachers and administrators. It is worth noting that both teachers and administrators noted the importance of using data as a key element to increasing student academic achievement.

Table 2
Administrators' and Teachers' Lowest Mean Ratings

Mean Rate	Administrators	Teachers
Title I School Improvement Plan	"All teachers in my school were involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Improvement Goals." (3.83) "I have consistently communicated the Title I Goals to teachers in my school." (3.83) "Teachers in my school understand the Title I Goals and how to achieve these goals." (3.83)	"I was involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Goals." (3.29)

Table 2 continues

Mean Rate	Administrators	Teachers
Clear Focus	"My school has a strongly focused and cohesive instructional program." (3.94) "The curriculum in my school is aligned both between grade levels and among grade levels." (3.94)	"The curriculum in my school is aligned both between grade levels and among grade levels." (4.00)
Culture	"Our school has shared beliefs and values that clearly knit our community together." (3.50)	"Our school has shared beliefs and values that clearly knit our community together." (3.56)
Instructional Strategies	"Teachers in my school use peer coaching and peer review to improve their performance." (3.44)	"I break down and examine student performance data by grade, race, socioeconomic class, ethnicity, and disabilities." (3.61)
Professional Development	"Teachers are encouraged to observe each other in the classroom." (3.61)	"I am encouraged to observe other teachers in the classroom." (3.55)
Data/Monitoring	"Teachers in my school examine disaggregated school attendance, suspension, and expulsion data." (3.28)	"I examine disaggregated school attendance, suspension, and expulsion data." (3.21)
Community Involvement	"Community members are engaged in decision making based on data that is analyzed." (3.00)	"Community members are engaged in decision making based on data that is analyzed." (2.82)
Overall Improvement	"The teacher evaluation process in my school is tied to student achievement." (3.11)	"Community members recognize improvement as a result of our Title I Improvement Plan." (3.25)

The lowest mean ratings of teachers and administrators are identified in Table 2. In three themes, both teachers and administrators gave the same item the lowest mean of the respective category. The items, "The curriculum in my school is aligned both between grade levels and among grade levels," "Our school has shared beliefs and values that clearly knit our community together," and "Community members are engaged in decision making based on data that is analyzed" were rated the lowest in their categories. Educators and administrators both recognized the challenge of engaging the community in the school improvement process as well as establishing shared beliefs and values that forms the foundation of a culture of improvement.

Table 3
Significant Differences between Rural and Non-Rural Educators

Item	p-value
Administrators	
"I was involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Improvement Goals."	(p=.011)
"All teachers in my school were/I was involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Goals."	(p=.005)
"I have consistently communicated the Title I Goals to teachers in my school."	(p=.001)
"Specific areas of need that must be met to achieve the Title I Goals have been identified."	(p=.049)
"The curriculum in my school is aligned with the state standards."	(p=.028)
"Groups of teachers in my school have shared planning periods for professional growth."	(p=.016)
"Teachers are encouraged to observe each other in the classroom."	(p=.042)
"During teacher evaluations, I discuss with teachers about the way they are helping students in order to meet our Title I Goals."	(p=.005)
"Teachers set specific goals for increasing student achievement."	(p=.013)
Teachers	
Item	p-value
"Administrators were involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Improvement Goals."	(p=.013)
"Administrators in my school have effectively communicated the Title I Goals to teachers."	(p=.018)
"Specific areas of need that must be met to achieve the Title I Goals have been identified."	(p=.003)
"The curriculum in my school is supportive of the academic needs of students."	(p=.040)
"The curriculum in my school is aligned both between grade levels and among grade levels."	(p=.018)
"The curriculum in my school is aligned with the state standards."	(p=.033)
"Parents, teachers, the principal, and students sense something special about our school."	(p=.003)
"Our school has shared beliefs and values that clearly knit our community together."	(p=.010)
"Teachers in my school collectively focus on how they can better reach their students in a way that works."	(p=.026)
"Teachers in my school collectively reflect on instructional strategies used daily in the classroom."	(p=.039)
"Teacher collaboration in my school is a form of professional development used to enhance student learning."	(p=.011)
"I share planning periods with other teachers for professional growth."	(p=.003)
"I am encouraged to observe other teachers in the classroom."	(p=.000)
"Teachers in my school collaboratively assess student work as a professional development activity."	(p=.033)
"Teachers in my school monitor classroom instruction and student achievement collaboratively."	(p=.023)
"I adjust my instruction in order to attain our Title I Goals."	(p=.021)
"Classroom instruction is monitored to ensure implementation of my school's Title I Goals."	(p=.022)

Table 3 continues

Teachers (cont'd)	
Item	p-value
"I make decisions about what I can do instructionally to improve my students' performance based on data."	(p=.038)
"I examine data with my grade-level team to discuss what I can do to improve my students' performance."	(p=.007)
"Parents are involved in identification of the Title I Goals."	(p=.019)
"Community members are involved in identification of the Title I Goals."	(p=.007)
"Parents are engaged in decision making based on data that is analyzed."	(p=.003)
"Community members are engaged in decision making based on data that is analyzed."	(p=.004)
"Community members understand why our school has a Title I School Improvement Plan."	(p=.002)
"Community members have high expectations for student achievement."	(p=.030)
"During teacher evaluations, administrators discuss with me about the way I am helping students in order to meet our Title I Goals."	(p=.025)
"Community members recognize improvement as a result of our Title I Improvement Plan."	(p=.000)
"The teacher evaluation process in my school is tied to student achievement."	(p=.004)

Table 4
Significant Differences between Male and Female Educators

Administrators	
Item	p-value
"Teachers in my school examine disaggregated standardized test score data."	(p=.009)

Teachers	
Item	p-value
"Teachers in my school/ I engage students in order to improve academic performance."	(p=.009)
"I am implementing research-based interventions and strategies to meet Title I Goals."	(p=.004)
"Professional development was provided to support the implementation of research-based interventions and strategies."	(p=.049)
"I examine disaggregated standardized test score data."	(p=.038)
"Every classroom is implementing our Title I Goals."	(p=.033)
"I examine data with my grade-level team to discuss what I can do to improve my students' performance."	(p=.022)

Table 5
Significant Differences between Educators with Different Levels of Experience

Teachers with 0-10 Years of Experience and Teachers with 10-20 Years of Experience	
Item	p-value
"I was involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Goals."	(p=.010)
"I understand the Title I Goals and how to achieve these goals."	(p=.011)
"The curriculum in my school is supportive of the academic needs of students."	(p=.038)
"The curriculum in my school is aligned both between grade levels and among grade levels."	(p=.023)

Teachers with 0-10 Years of Experience and Teachers with 20-30 Years of Experience	
Item	p-value
"I understand the Title I Goals and how to achieve these goals."	(p=.044)
"I search for strategies by using the internet, visiting other schools, and attending conferences."	(p=.034)

Teachers with 0-10 Years of Experience and Teachers with Over 30 Years of Experience	
Item	p-value
"I was involved in the identification of the Title I Goals."	(p=.017)
"I search for strategies by using the internet, visiting other schools, and attending conferences."	(p=.049)

Teachers with 10-20 Years of Experience and Teachers with Over 30 Years of Experience	
Item	p-value
"I search for strategies by using the internet, visiting other schools, and attending conferences."	(p=.007)

Significant Differences in Survey Results

There were significant differences in many of the survey categories, most evident in two areas: rural vs. non-rural responses and teachers with more than ten years experience vs. teachers with less than ten years experience.

Teacher Responses with Ten or More Years of Experience

In the category of "*Title I School Improvement Plan,*" significant differences were found in these survey items:

"Teachers were/I was involved in the identification of the Title I Goals."
This item was rated 4.17 by administrators and 3.37 by teachers. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item mostly "undecided" at 3.01, significantly lower than the rating given by teachers with over 30 years of experience (3.77) (p=.017).

"All teachers in my school were/I was involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Goals."
Teachers with less than 10 years of experience gave this item a rating of 2.98, while those with 10-20 years of experience gave it a significantly higher rating of 3.65 (p=.010).

"Teachers in my school/ I understand the Title I Goals and how to achieve these goals."
Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.49, significantly lower than the rating given by teachers with 10-20 years (4.02) (p=.011) and 20-30 years (3.96) of experience (p=.044).

In the category of "*Clear Focus*," significant differences were found in the survey items:

"The curriculum in my school is aligned both between grade levels and among grade levels."
This item was rated lower by teachers with less than 10 years of experience (3.80), while those with 10-20 years of experience gave it a significantly higher rating (4.24) (p=.023).

"The curriculum in my school is supportive of the academic needs of students."
Teachers with less than10 years of experience rated this item 3.81, while teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated it significantly higher at 4.24 (p=.038).

In the category of "*Instructional Strategies*," significant differences were found in this survey items:

"Teachers in my school/ I search for strategies by using the internet, visiting other schools, and attending conferences."
Teachers with 20-30 years and over 30 years of experience rated this item significantly lower than teachers with less than 10 years of experience at 4.09 (p=.034) and 4.06 (p=.049), respectively. The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was significantly higher than the rating given by teachers with over 30 years of experience at 4.53 (p=.007).

Administrator and Teacher Responses in Rural and Non-Rural Schools

In the category of "*Title I School Improvement Plan*," significant differences were found in these survey items for administrators and teachers in rural and non-rural schools:

"Specific areas of need that must be met to achieve the Title I Goals identified."
The responses for this question were significantly different for rural (3.91) and non-rural administrators (4.97) (p=.049) and rural teachers (3.71) and non-rural teachers (4.11) (p=.003).

"I have consistently communicated the Title I Goals to teachers in my school."
"Administrators in my school have effectively communicated the Title I Goals to teachers."
Teachers in rural schools rated this item lower (3.60) than did non-rural teachers (3.98), a significant difference (p=.018). Administrators also gave this item the lowest rating in the Title I School Improvement Plan category. Administrators in rural schools rated this item lower (3.27) than did non-rural administrators (4.71), a significant difference (p=.001).

"All teachers in my school were/I was involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Goals."
Rural administrators rated this item lower (3.36) than did non-rural administrators (4.57). There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.005).

In the category of "*Clear Focus*," significant differences were found in these survey items:

"The curriculum in my school is aligned with the state standards."
Rural administrators rated this item lower (3.73) while non-rural administrators rated it higher at 4.71, a significant difference (p=.028). Teachers from rural schools rated this item 4.35, while teachers from non-rural schools rated this item lower at 4.08. There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.033).

"The curriculum in my school is supportive of the academic needs of students."
This item was rated higher by rural teachers (4.19), while teachers from non-rural schools gave it a significantly lower mean of 3.92 (p=.040). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.81, while teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated it significantly higher at 4.24 (p=.038).

In the category of "*Culture*," a significant difference was found in this survey item:

"Our school has shared beliefs and values that clearly knit our community together."
This item was rated significantly lower by rural teachers (3.33) than did non-rural teachers (3.68) (p=.010).

In the category of "*Instructional Strategies*," a significant difference was found in the survey item:

"Teachers in my school collectively focus on how they can better reach their students in a way that works."
Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (4.04) than did teachers from non-rural schools (4.29). There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.026).

In the category of "*Professional Development*," significant differences were found in the survey items:

"Teacher collaboration in my school is a form of professional development used to enhance student learning."
Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (3.83) than did teachers from non-rural schools (4.16). There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.011).

"Groups of teachers in my school have shared planning periods for professional growth/ I share planning periods with other teachers for professional growth."
Administrators from rural schools rated this item mostly "agree" at 4.00, whereas non-rural administrators rated it mostly "strongly agree" at 4.86, a significant difference (p=.016). Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.35, while non-rural teachers rated this item 3.84. There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.003).

"Teachers are encouraged to observe each other in the classroom/ I am encouraged to observe other teachers in the classroom."
Administrators rated this item the lowest in the category of Professional Development. Rural administrators rated this item significantly lower (3.18) than did non-rural administrators (4.29) (p=.042). Teachers also rated this item the lowest in the category of Professional Development. Rural teachers rated this item "undecided" at 2.99, significantly lower than the mostly "agree" 3.86 rating given by non-rural teachers (p=.000).

"Teachers in my school collaboratively assess student work as a professional development activity."
Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.67, lower than the 3.99 rating given by non-rural teachers, a significant difference (p=.033).

In the category of "*Data/Monitoring*," significant differences were found in the survey items:

"Teachers in my school monitor classroom instruction and student achievement collaboratively."
Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (3.99) than did teachers from non-rural schools (4.26). There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.023).

"Teachers in my school/ I examine disaggregated standardized test score data."
This item was rated 4.22 by administrators and 3.88 by teachers. Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (4.09) than did non-rural administrators (4.43). Male administrators rated this item between "undecided" and "agree" at 3.50, while female administrators rated it between "agree" and "strongly agree" at 4.58. There was a significant difference between male and female administrative responses (p=.009).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item higher (3.99) than did teachers from non-rural schools (3.82). Male teachers rated this item between "undecided" and "agree" at 3.52, while female teachers rated it closer to "agree" at 3.93. There was a significant difference between male and female teacher responses (p=.038).

"Classroom instruction is monitored to ensure implementation of my school's Title I Goals."
Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.76, while non-rural teachers rated it significantly higher at 4.08 (p=.022).

"I examine data with my grade-level team to discuss what I can do to improve my students' performance."
Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.79, while non-rural teachers rated it 4.19. There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.007). Male teachers rated this item lower (3.64) than did female teachers (4.10), another significant difference (p=.022).

In the category of "*Community Involvement*," significant differences were found in the survey items:

"Parents are involved in identification of the Title I Goals."
Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (2.67) than did teachers from non-rural schools (3.02). There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.019).

"Community members are involved in identification of the Title I Goals." Teachers from rural schools rated this item 2.60, while non-rural teachers rated this item higher at 2.99, a significant difference (p=.007).

"Parents are engaged in decision making based on data that is analyzed." Teachers from rural schools rated this item significantly lower (2.64) than did teachers from non-rural schools (3.06) (p=.003).

"Community members are engaged in decision making based on data that is analyzed."
Teachers rated this item the lowest in the Community Involvement category. Rural teachers rated this item between "disagree" and "undecided" (2.57), while non-rural teachers rated it closer to "undecided" (2.96). There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.004).

"Community members understand why our school has a Title I School Improvement Plan."
Teachers from rural schools rated this item 2.87, while non-rural teachers rated it 3.30, a significant difference (p=.002).

"Community members have high expectations for student achievement."
Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.31, while non-rural teachers gave it a significantly higher rating of 3.62 (p=.030).

In the category of "*Overall Improvement*," significant differences were found in the survey items:

"During teacher evaluations, I discuss with teachers about the way they are helping students in order to meet our Title I Goals/ During teacher evaluations,

administrators discuss with me about the way I am helping students in order to meet our Title I Goals."
Administrators from rural schools rated this item mostly "undecided" at 3.18, while non-rural administrators rated it significantly higher at 4.71 (p=.005). Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.44, while non-rural teachers rated it significantly higher at 3.78 (p=.025).

"Community members recognize improvement as a result of our Title I Improvement Plan."
Teachers from rural schools rated this item 2.93, significantly lower than the rating given by non-rural teachers (3.43) (p=.000).

"The teacher evaluation process in my school is tied to student achievement."
Teachers from rural schools rated this item significantly lower (3.21) than did teachers from non-rural schools (3.64) (p=.004).

"Teachers/ I set specific goals for increasing student achievement."
Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.82) than did non-rural administrators (4.71). There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.013).

Results by Survey Category and Theme

In this section of the report, teachers' and administrators' perceptions of their Title I School Improvement Plans will be explored in eight categories: : (1) Title I School Improvement Plans, (2) Clear Focus, (3) Culture, (4) Instructional Strategies, (5) Professional Development, (6) Data/Monitoring, (7) Community Involvement, and (8) Overall Improvement. Additionally, five new themes emerged from the interviews in the study: 1) Change, 2) Reculturing, 3) Leadership, 4) Student Engagement, and 5) Parent Communication and Involvement. Administrative and teacher overall survey responses ranged from 1 to 5 on the five-point Likert scale with "5" representing "strongly agree."

Title I School Improvement Plan

In the category of the Title I School Improvement Plan (Administrator and Teacher Survey Questions 1-7), the average response of all administrators was 4.12. The average response of teachers was 3.85. Both teachers (4.47) and administrators (4.50) gave the highest item rating in the Title I School Improvement Plan category to "The planning process in my school is focused on improving student achievement." Additionally, administrators gave the item "All teachers in my school were involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Improvement Goals" the lowest rating in the category (3.83), as did teachers (3.29).

The largest mean discrepancy between teachers and administrators in the category was "Teachers were involved in the identification of the Title I Goals." Teachers rated this item 3.37, while administrators rated it higher at 4.17. A rural, female elementary teacher explained, "I think in the past it's basically been just the principal sets up the plan and prepares what needs to be done. I think it's a trickle-down thing." However, a non-rural,

female elementary teacher coordinator explained "I'm not on the school improvement team, but as a part of our professional learning communities, we all work on those same goals."

Another inconsistency between teacher and administrator responses was "All teachers in my school were involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Goals." Teachers were more likely to rate this item closer to "undecided" with an average response of 3.29, whereas administrators rated this item closer to "agree" with an average response of 3.83, as expressed by a rural female elementary teacher (in response to involvement in monitoring the Title I improvement goals), "Not at all"; while a non-rural female teacher coordinator explained, "The teachers have looked at their data more specifically to see what their (students) needs are." Additionally, both administrators and teachers showed significant differences between rural and non-rural responses for this item.

Clear Focus

In the category of Clear Focus (Administrator and Teacher Survey Questions 8-17), administrator's average rating in this category was 4.18 while teacher's average rating was 4.21. The item rated strongest by administrators within the Clear Focus category was "Criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments are used to support instruction and enhance student learning" (4.44). The item rated strongest by teachers was "I engage students in order to improve academic performance" (4.54). Both administrators (3.94) and teachers (4.00) gave "The curriculum in my school is aligned both between grade levels and among grade levels" the weakest rating in the Clear Focus category. Another item given this lowest rating of 3.94 by administrators was "My school has a strongly focused and cohesive instructional program."

The largest mean discrepancy between teachers and administrators in the Clear Focus category was, "Teachers in my school engage students in order to improve academic performance." Both teachers and administrators agreed on this item; however teachers rated this item higher at 4.54 while administrators rated the item at 4.06. A female non-rural elementary principal explained,

> Engagement (is) huge. We actually surveyed teachers at the beginning of the year. Our engagement's up, through walk-throughs, the engagement that I've been seeing is up. 'What's your learning target?' 'This is a strategy: you need to post it, you need to tell the kids, they need to know what it is.' You have to know where you're heading. Not just you as the teacher, but kids need to know that. The other thing a lot of kids are doing [is] charting their own progress.

A female rural secondary language arts teacher on the contrary shared that she does not use goal setting with her students, "Not really. Nothing official. I would like to know how schools are making kids accountable for NeSA. Is there a tie to the grade or tie to the graduation rate?"

Average ratings for both teachers and administrator responses in the Clear Focus category were primarily in the "agree" category and both were relatively similar, administrator's average 4.18 and teacher's average rating 4.21. A rural, female elementary resource teacher explained, "We are thinking about those Title goals or the Title guidelines and requirements 100%, where parents have to be involved as well as the staff, the paraprofessionals, all the

administrators, and the community." There was no significant difference between administrators' or teachers' ratings within the category of Clear Focus for any disaggregated subgroup.

Culture

In the Culture category (Administrator and Teacher Survey Questions 18-31), the average response of all administrators was 3.90, while the average response of teachers was 3.89. The average response was almost identical, possibly revealing a shared reality of culture by stakeholders. The item rated strongest was "I am passionate about student learning." This item received the highest rating in the Culture category for both administrators and teachers. Administrators (4.78) and teachers (4.77) both rated this item between "agree" and "strongly agree." A rural female elementary teacher clarified, "I'm . . . more conscientious now that we've gone through this process of making sure you do several strategies so you're covering every kid the best you can. I did strategies before, but I'm much more conscientious now."

The largest mean discrepancy between teachers and administrators in the Culture category was "The culture of our school and our teachers includes commitment to high expectation." Teachers rated this item higher at 4.18 while administrators rated it lower at 3.89. A female non-rural elementary teacher stated,

> I still hold my students with high expectations, and I think as a building we do that very well. As far as parents, just being a part of PTO things and being at some of the activities - I think the majority of our parents want that for their kids. So I feel like that's a really strong point that we do.

Additionally, the item "Our school has shared beliefs and values that clearly knit our community together" received the lowest rating in the category for both administrators (3.50) and teachers (3.56), who rated it between "neutral" and "agree."

A non-rural female elementary teacher explained,

> I think after you got into "This is how it's going to be and this is what we need to do," then you get over the fact that "I have to do this," but "we need to do this," and we go into it with a different attitude because you can start to see those little differences, that it is making a difference.

A non-rural female elementary teacher acknowledged,

> At times there's some distrust. We come together around our issues with that. I think there's favoritism in the building, so that's hard to trust someone when you feel like you're not treated as fairly. There's a feeling that - and maybe it's just me but I know it's not because I talk to other people . . . we have a huge staff of dedicated teachers that would like to be more cohesive.

Instructional Strategies

In the Instructional Strategies category (Administrator and Teacher Survey Questions 32-42), the average response of all administrators was 3.97 while teachers average response was 4.08. The items rated strongest by administrators in the Instructional Strategies category were "Research-based interventions and instructional strategies help students improve in my

school" and "Our school provides additional learning time for students who need it" (4.39). The item rated strongest by teachers in this category was "I search for strategies by using the internet, visiting other schools, and attending conferences" (4.32).

The largest mean discrepancy between teachers and administrators in the category was "Teachers in my school search for strategies by using the internet, visiting other schools, and attending conferences." Teachers rated this item higher at 4.32, and administrators rated it lower at 3.89. A female elementary principal discussed how educators at their school visit other schools and locations to examine specific teaching strategies,

> We made a site visit to an exemplary school to look at specific areas of need that we had and that were their strengths. We've done book studies and will continue to do those and trainings. They've gone out of state and had some trainings and technology trainings to provide support in the classroom."

The smallest mean discrepancy in this category was "Research-based interventions and instructional strategies are implemented based on the data analyzed for my school's Title I Improvement Plan," which both teachers and administrators rated 4.22.

The item rated lowest by administrators in the Instructional Strategies category was, "Teachers in my school use peer coaching and peer review to improve their performance" (3.44). A teacher explained what her plan of action,

> My first plan would be to talk to my team at our next team meeting, which is every week. Some things we have tried in our team, for students that are struggling, is having them visit other classrooms and seeing if we can get a connection made with a team teacher. It's never anything against one teacher or another, it's just who that kid's going to click with and get the first spark going.

The item rated lowest by teachers was, "I break down and examine student performance data by grade, race, socioeconomic class, ethnicity, and disabilities" (3.61).

Professional Development

In the Professional Development category (Administrator and Teacher Survey Questions 43-50), the average response of all administrators was 4.13. The average response of teachers was 3.89. A non-rural female elementary teacher shared,

> I would say (there is a) building wide focus on improvement. We're all in this together. I think anytime you focus on something, you get better at it. (Professional development) has changed the way we do things. It's given us a focus and a purpose and that's huge.

The item rated strongest by both administrators and teachers within the Professional Development category was, "Professional development experiences have led to new classroom practices." Administrators rated this item 4.39, while teachers rated this item 4.18. The item rated weakest by both administrators and teachers was, "Teachers are encouraged to observe each other in the classroom." Administrators (3.61) and teachers (3.55) mostly agreed on their perception, rating this item between "neutral" and "agree." A female non-rural teacher coordinator shared,

> With all of the . . . classes they're taking and the building professional development we've done, I think it impacts because they're always bringing it back and applying it. They're having people coming, visiting and observing, so I think it's constantly being applied.

A rural female elementary teacher indicated the lack of training provided for paraeducators who work with children daily by stating,

> The paraprofessionals (paras), honestly, are probably the ones that we've noticed have about the least support. We have a lot of paras in the building. I think it's probably a communication issue. I don't know that they understand the things that they need to understand.

However, in some schools, paraeducators are included as shared by this rural elementary female principal, "We've really wanted to improve that piece so that communication was clear and we also included paraeducators when we possibly could to communicate the procedures and how we move forward."

The largest mean discrepancy in the Professional Development category was "Groups of teachers in my school have shared planning periods for professional growth/ I share planning periods with other teachers for professional growth." Administrators were more likely to rate this item "agree" at 4.33. However, teachers were more likely to rate this item between "undecided" and "agree" at 3.66. A rural female elementary principal explained, "They not only work with particular grade-levels, but they also go during those common planning times to collaborate and communicate about the process." However another non-rural elementary principal shared that time is also an issue,

> As far as our teachers watching other teachers teach? I don't think that's happening too often. Every year we'll have conversations about - it comes down to time. They have plan time where they could go to another grade-level teacher and watch, and I don't hear of that happening too often.

Data/Monitoring

In the Data/Monitoring category (Administrator Survey Questions 51-63, Teacher Survey Questions 51-67), the average response of all administrators was 4.14 while teacher's average response was 4.07.

Items 64 through 67 on the Teacher Survey were not included on the Administrator Survey thus, after Item 63, the item numbers for each survey no longer correlate. The item rated strongest by both administrators (4.56) and teachers (4.49) in the Data/Monitoring category was, "Data are essential to our school improvement process." A non-rural female elementary principal explained their area of need,

> SPED is the area where we have not made AYP in the past, so we've really had to hone in on that. We're making gains. I monitor all progress reports, every progress report of every SPED kid in the building. Four times a year I read their progress reports. So I'm really keeping on top of that. Then we talk about what we see as a team, and we do a lot of talking about that in our SPED team meetings, collaborating about that.

The item rated weakest by both administrators (3.28) and teachers (3.21) was "Teachers in my school examined disaggregated school attendance, suspension, and expulsion data." The

largest mean discrepancy between teachers and administrators in the Data/Monitoring category was, "My teachers/ I monitor students' additional learning time to ensure success." Administrators rated this item higher at 4.44, while teachers rated this item at 4.06. A rural female elementary teacher explained,

> We're school-wide Title I, so any student that needs some help, they don't have to be verified, they can get some extra help. The teacher just needs to say, "you may need a little extra help." I have a little girl that's English Language Learner (ELL) and I said, "she reads English well, she speaks it fairly well" . . . so I just worked with the Title I teacher and she said "that's fine, send her down and I'll read with her, or I'll get someone else signed up to help her get more practice to read. It works well."

Community Involvement

In the Community Involvement category (Administrator Survey Questions 64-70, Teacher Survey Questions 68-74), the average response of all administrators was 3.44. The average response of teachers was 3.10. The item rated strongest by administrators and teachers in the Community Involvement category was "The Title I Improvement Plan was communicated to all stakeholders." Administrators rated this item mostly agree at 3.94, while teachers rated it between "neutral" and "agree" at 3.60. A non-rural female elementary teacher talking about her principal attending PTA meetings stated,

> He goes to the PTA meetings and he updates them. He shares how we're doing in different areas and what the PLCs are doing in the bimonthly newsletters. We have family nights, we have a math family night and a reading family night, and at those it's stressed this is part of our goal, our improvement goal.

The largest mean discrepancy in the Community Involvement category was "Community members understand why our school has a Title I School Improvement Plan." Teachers rated this item closer to "undecided" at 3.14 while administrators rated this item closer to "agree" at 3.78. A rural female elementary teacher stated,

> I know she talked to all of the parents that she has, the ones that she spoke to about the Title I grants and accountability and the reason we need to move forward. I explained to the board with a memo of the activities that we're doing. They're very aware, I think, of how things are going. The community-at-large, that's a whole different thing, I've been working on that, kind of a question and answer FAQ thing for our web site.

A rural female elementary teacher commented on whether the community understands the Title I plan,

> Good question. I think they know generally that we are low in our math and our reading scores. The more we have the academic talk with the kids, maybe the more the kids are saying, "I'm not at the 50 percentile and that's where I need to be." We've had more of those conversations this year than I think ever was before. You were just talking about what your kids' grades were. You didn't really talk about how they did on this test, what that means. So they're probably more generally aware of it, but as far as specifically, I don't know.

Also, both administrators and teachers rated their lowest item the same in the category of Community Involvement, "Community members are engaged in decision making based on data that is analyzed" with a 3.00 rating by administrators and a 2.82 rating by teachers.

Overall Improvement

In the Overall Improvement category (Administrator Survey Questions 71-77, Teacher Survey Questions 75-81), the average response of all administrators was 3.80. The average response of teachers was 3.78. The item rated strongest by administrators in the Overall Improvement category was "Data indicates progress toward closing the achievement gap" (4.22). A non-rural female elementary principal shared,

> We can see which kids move from very far below grade-level to now they're here. You can celebrate, 'see these kids? They're shifted here. See these?' You have to stay on top of kids. You have to be able to - I don't want to say target every kid in the building, but we have to know where they are.

The largest item mean discrepancy in the Overall Improvement category was "The teacher evaluation process in my school is tied to student achievement." Teachers rated this item higher at 3.49, while administrators rated it at 3.11. The item rated weakest by administrators was "The teacher evaluation process in my school is tied to student achievement" (3.11). A non-rural female elementary principal stated,

> As a district we don't do that. I don't sit there and look at their (teacher's) kids' achievement per se. I do look at their instruction. That's what I focus on. To me, here's probably going to be more of a parallel - if instruction is weak, I'm probably going to see some progress in that room not as high as it could be. So I don't get in and look at just kids' data. But there is that connect.

The item rated strongest by teachers in this category was "I set specific goals for increasing student achievement" (4.26). The item rated weakest by teachers in the Overall Improvement category was "Community members recognize improvement as a result of our Title I Improvement Plan" (3.25).

Results by Interview Themes

In this section of the report, teachers' and administrators' perceptions of their Title I School Improvement Plans will be explored in five categories that emerged from the interviews: 1) Change, 2) Reculturing, 3) Leadership, 4) Student Engagement, and 5) Parent Communication and Involvement.

Change

Change was a theme that became apparent in the interviews. Teachers and administrators stressed how being labeled a "Needs Improvement" school had increased their desire to engage in new ways of thinking about improving student performance. According to Fullan (2004), "Strong change processes help good ideas to become embedded" (p. 242). Educators described how changes have positively impacted student achievement and produced more fluent readers. A rural female elementary resource teacher emphasized this,

> The changes have been for the better because they work. I think that with more practice that they're getting in those interventions, we can see it directly on their data. Especially

> if they come to our classroom for tutoring, it makes a difference and they become more fluent readers.

A non rural male elementary principal supported the fact that changes positively impact student learning, by stating, "They're making more of those changes. That has had an impact on student achievement. Our writing scores and our math scores have gone up the last couple of years."

Reculturing

Reculturing was another theme that emerged in the study. Reculturing is not an easy task. Gleick (1999) emphasized, "The essence of intelligence would seem to be in knowing when to think and act quickly, and knowing when to think and act slowly" (p. 114). It requires commitment and leaders that understand and are willing to guide the change process. The impact is worth the battle as successful change and reculturing can result in attaining organizational goals and ultimately increasing student achievement. A rural female elementary principal shared how this has impacted the ability to make changes in her school,

> Going through this high-stakes process has been very positive in terms of change in the school culture and being able to implement change. A lot of things I've wanted to change here have been tough to get started, and we're able to make those changes because of this. They all understand that "what we have been doing isn't working, so we've got to do something else. . . ." It has made change easier, because there is no alternative. Either change, get better, or leave.

Leadership

According to Marzano (2003), "Leadership could be considered the single most important aspect of effective school reform" (p. 172). A non-rural female elementary teacher reflected on her appreciation for leadership support, "I think the administration does a nice job of taking what we suggest and then figuring out what the best interest is for the staff, and then trying to apply it as best they can."

Fullan (2004) stated that "Reculturing is hard work . . . successful leaders need energy, enthusiasm, and hope" (p. 54). "Although change is unpredictable, you can set up conditions to guide the process" (p. 55). Without these conditions and appropriate guidelines, change can be difficult as illustrated by a female rural secondary language arts teacher who stated,

> Accountability is lacking which impacts classroom instruction and student learning, "I think there's a problem with accountability because as a teacher, you hear things from the students and when you're walking past a classroom, you just don't see the consistency from room to room." If you're accountable every year to some degree, with an evaluation or just drop-in every so often unannounced, and then talk about that things aren't always the same in this room compared to this room, (then emphasize) we're under the same rules. I just think it's difficult to manage students that way. If the kids can see that (the standards are different), then why is it fair.

Leadership also entails the monitoring of professional development and taking an active role in ensuring that data is appropriately used to monitor student performance as described by this non-rural male elementary principal,

> Every time we have a PLC meeting, at least on the early-release days, we meet in the exact same area. We're all in the gym. That allows the school improvement team to be able to monitor the work of teams. Our assistant principal and myself tried getting to all the PLC meetings and by the time we were sitting down, we were packing up and going to the next one. Now we split that up so at least we're at half of those meetings. During those August PLC meetings, the individual teams break that data down and look for the trend data and they develop that current reality as far as where those students are performing in those various academic areas. They use that to write their smart goals and their action plans. At every one of their PLC meetings, they bring a different piece of assessment or data to look at and see if the action steps that they came up with [are] having an impact on student learning. If they are, they continue with that plan of action, if not they'll adjust accordingly.

Student Engagement

Due to the fact that administrators find change easier to implement, engaging Title I teachers in collaborative efforts to share research-based strategies, interventions, and ideas on how to increase student engagement will both improve the culture of the school and student learning. Nebraska teachers are learning new ways of engaging students as explained by a rural female elementary teacher,

> We've learned a lot of new strategies since the beginning of the year to try to engage all the students . . . and one of them is "I will take responsibility for my learning." That's one of the pledges they have. So we talk about those pledges and you're making a pledge, which is like an oath, and that's something you're going to do. So doing your homework is a responsibility, listening and paying attention is your responsibility.

A rural female elementary teacher explained how students are taking responsibility by engaging themselves in conferences with parents,

> Most of the parents were beaming from ear to ear because their children were talking to them about academics, and the parents weren't having to say, "but you need to . . ." The students were saying that themselves, "I need to study more, I need to take my papers home," and so forth.

Parent Communication and Involvement

The National PTA (10) has produced the "National Standards for Family-School Partnerships: What Parents Can Do." The standards include: welcoming all families into the school community; communicating effectively; supporting student success; speaking up for every child; sharing power and collaborating with community. Possibly the most well-known researcher on parental involvement is Joyce Epstein (2001). She identified six major types of parent involvement: Parenting; Communicating; Volunteering; Learning at home; Decision making; and Collaborating with the Community. Parent communication and involvement emerged as an important factor to increasing student achievement. A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator shared how their family nights engage parents with an academic focus,

> Our family nights, we have those because we're Title schools. I love having them. They're always academic-focused. We try to have something to entice the family to come. This last time we had a reptile guy, and he brought in all these reptiles and he talked about writing. So he would show a super scary snake and then he would talk about

> "you could write the sentence this way or you could add all these descriptive words" . . . if we don't have transportation, it's hard to get our families to be able to attend just because they lack transportation. . . . So you always have to have something like that [to offer], or give something away to draw them in.

A rural male elementary principal explained how they match kids for the after school program that need additional assistance,

> We encourage the use of the library with parents. We have made a connection with the public library where the second Wednesday of each month, a staff member comes here to do activities, and then it skips a week, and then we go to the library. We have library cards for those kids so that's another connection. We're just trying to get more involvement from outside the school.

A rural female elementary principal explained that parent involvement includes parents and teachers working together to improve student performance,

> Every other Friday we have teachers and parents working together, also some community members that are on a parent committee. We're building on that so our teachers then collaborate with parents, In fact, a regional training group will be coming to do a family math night at the end of this month.

Additionally, a non-rural female elementary principal explained what can happen when there is a purposeful attempt to engage families,

> We've had our family learning nights, we've carried that over into teaching the parents what we're doing and how we're doing it and why we're doing it. We are a learning environment, and we're learning in a lot of different ways. I think our study groups do the same thing. So it contributes to our being a culture of learners.

Summary

The purpose of this mixed method research study was to examine the implementation of the Title I plan in Nebraska Title I Schools for improving student achievement as identified as needing improvement. As illustrated by the survey results and interview responses, findings indicate that Nebraska Title I "Needs Improvement" schools overall are incorporating new processes and implementing new strategies that are impacting student achievement. Administrators and teachers discussed the planning and progress of their School Improvement plan and Title I goals, categorized by these survey themes (1) Title I School Improvement Plans, (2) Clear Focus, (3) Culture, (4) Instructional Strategies, (5) Professional Development, (6) Data/Monitoring, (7) Community Involvement, and (8) Overall Improvement. During the interview process, five new themes emerged: 1) Change, 2) Reculturing, 3) Leadership, 4) Student Engagement, and 5) Parent Communication and Involvement.

Many of the Title I Schools participating in this study discussed a purposeful intent to change and implement the strategies as well as the leadership needed to successfully work through the change process. In the discussion of the change process, educators also reflected on how change influenced the school culture and the working environment. Their description of this process is consistent with Fullan's research on Reculturing. Furthermore, interview participants were often heard sharing reflections of successful change and its impact on

student achievement, indicated by both their student achievement data and optimism for future data results.

Worth noting, during the interview process, both teachers and administrators emphasized their use of data. It was more evident that data was being used this year. However the degree of understanding and knowledge on what data and how to use it effectively to improve student performance should be a focus for professional development with "Needs Improvement Schools."

Community Involvement was another area that was emphasized in both the survey and interview results. Teachers and administrators both spoke about the difficulty in connecting stakeholders in the Title I Compact planning and implementation process. A rural male secondary administrator explained how parents are made aware of the parent compact meeting, "Yes, that's done first at the parent compact meeting. We've done that directly with parents, those that have been able to be there. The plan and goals are published on our web site and also have been published in our newspaper." However, a rural male secondary administrator explained that involving parents is not easy by stating,

> Definitely not as much as we want them (parents) to be. We do have parent meetings as required by Title I, and we have been experiencing greater success out of that, where parents had written or helped us create plans, but [they] have not been as involved in school improvement plans, target area goals, as much as we want. We have parents that have said "Yes, I'll be on this committee" and then the parents have not been able to make it to any of the meetings. Parents are not as engaged as much as they should. It has been better in the past.

CONCLUSIONS

During the second year study of Nebraska's Title I "Needs Improvement" schools, researchers examined the implementation of Title I school improvement plans for improving student achievement in schools identified as needing improvement. Administrators and teachers discussed the planning and progress of their School Improvement Plan and Title I Goals.

Transforming Schools

Change and transforming schools to increase student learning has several implications. Schools can find many things they are doing good. However schools, particularly schools in which children and families they serve encounter many of the challenges plaguing society, must move from a principle of being good to one of being great. Jim Collins (2001) described this as, "the timeless principles of good to great . . . you take a good organization and turn it into one that produces sustained great results, using whatever definition of results best applies to your organization" (p. 15). For schools, this requires a definitive understanding and development of skills needed to use student performance data in the process of improvement.

More importantly, using data as the basis for decision making is critical for the success of students. Appreciating and implementing the tools necessary for decision-making at the classroom level is vital as well as using instructional improvement strategies and

interventions based on research to construct the many processes used daily in a classroom; increasing staff knowledge to clarify and translate the focus of the school into strategies, targets, and tracking of results, to enhance learning that is tied directly to the school mission, beliefs, and objectives for improvement. Change is a theme that emerged in this year's study:

> I think at first it was hard, to be honest. A lot of people don't jump at change. Some people did, but others are like "oh my gosh!" It has taken time. People deal with change differently. But I think there is more of that. I think everybody's 100% bought in on what it's going to take to help kids be successful. That part, I don't even doubt in my mind. The collaboration has really come along. (Non-rural female elementary principal interview statement, 2011 Title I Study)

Change is not easy. "Yet when things are unsettled, we can find new ways to move ahead and to create breakthroughs not possible in stagnant societies" (Fullan, 2001, p. 1). Leadership is a key to facilitating successful change. According to Fullan, leaders will increase their effectiveness and positively impact change if they: 1) pursue a moral purpose; 2) understand the change process; 3) develop relationships; 4) foster knowledge building; and 5) strive for coherence with energy, enthusiasm and hopefulness (Fullan, 2001). Leadership was a theme that emerged in this year's study as evidenced in a number of survey and interview results.

> So we have to move through that and know that it's not going to get any easier, it is going to be challenging but it is going to be great in the long-run for our kids. So I would say that 100% of them (teachers) know that we're in it, and that student achievement is at the top of the list, it's where we're at. (Rural female elementary principal interview statement, 2011 Title I Study)

> Each year, the last couple of years, little things have changed, but they've all been things that . . . when we really look back, we needed. So (as teachers, we needed) to be open to that. I really believe our administration believe[s] in us as a staff, and I think they too hold extremely high expectations for kids and I think kids know that. They truly care for kids, so they want to try to do what's best and help <u>us</u> get there. (Non-rural female elementary teacher interview, 2011 Title I Study)

Additionally, change promotes a change in structure, but structure is not enough to attain success. "Transforming the culture – changing the way things are done – is the main point . . . Reculturing" (Fullan, 2004, p. 53). Furthermore, Fullan describes leading in a culture of change as not just adopting any and all innovations, one after the other, rather "it means producing the capacity to seek, critically assess, and selectively incorporate new ideas and practices - all the time, and inside the organization as well as outside it" (p. 53). A rural female elementary teacher explained how the administration assesses their work towards meeting Title I goals when a leader visits classrooms,

> Well, we have that 5 minute observation form. I think since we have a strong purpose and that data in place. . . . We have a 5 minute observation form and it's just all directly related to our school, our mission statement, and all those goals that we're working on. I think there's even a place for - "is there evidence of the interventions being in place?"

The need to provide professional development for leaders connecting teacher evaluations, teaching effectiveness, and student engagement is critical to increasing student performance in Title I schools. The largest item mean discrepancy in the Overall Improvement category was "The teacher evaluation process in my school is tied to student achievement." Teachers rated this item higher at 3.49, while administrators rated it at 3.11. A non-rural female elementary teacher explained a classroom strategy for ensuring engagement of learners that could be used during administrative "walk throughs" or teacher evaluations to determine the level of student engagement in classrooms,

> We have learning buddies within our building. So I was observing my learning buddy and our goal was time on task and student engagement, and that's a building thing to work on. She had created a little check sheet that she could very easily put on her clipboard as she's teaching to take a tally, quick, "how many kids do you see are engaged and working?" So those quick little things, yes, it takes a little more time, but in the end you know, "I only have four kids paying attention to me. What can we do?" Those little things that help a teacher take a quick peek at what's going on.

During the interviews, teachers and leaders shared questions being used during both formal and informal teacher conversations and evaluations. Noted are questions that principals should consider when working with teachers to improve the performance of students:

- Tell me about your thought processes prior to this lesson. What was purposeful, what did you react to based off what you saw from students, and their prior knowledge that was exposed?
- What did you notice, how did that impact your instruction?
- What potential roadblocks did you anticipate going into this lesson?
- How did that impact your planning and your instruction?
- Are we getting all voices in the air, or is it I'm just calling on the hands?
- Identify something before the visit to the classroom that you would like for me to specifically target during my observation.
- What data or information do you want me to take a look at? (active participation, how students are engaged etc.)
- What does the district pacing guide say about where you're supposed to be at in instruction at this time of the year?
- What is it that you want kids to learn? What's your learning target? If this is a strategy you need to post it, you need to tell the kids, they need to know what the strategy is.
- How do you know if the kids learned what you wanted them to learn today?
- Ask teachers to bring their assessment tool and informative (results) to the post observation meeting.
- Why did you choose that idea to use in this particular lesson?
- How are you going to gear that up for the gifted students, but still include the special education students in your classroom?
- How many kids do you think can reach the goal of proficiency in math/ reading etc.? What are you going to do in order to help the kids that aren't (improving)? What kind of plans do you have in mind?
- How are you going to do things differently so you get greater gains?

- How are you really going to meet the needs of these kids based on their learning strengths and the curriculum that you need to get across to students?
- Is the objective stated, is it posted?
- Do teachers balance their lesson between "when I'm learning it" to "when I get to practice it with you" and then "I practice it by myself"? Is there a balance? Or is it all practice with the teacher, now do it by yourself.
- What is it that kids need to be able to do? How are we going to get them there? What are we going to do when they aren't there? What are those interventions going to look like?
- When we go into classrooms we're going to be focusing on proper responses, positive responses, checking and making sure your objectives of your lesson are up on the board, questioning, student responses, how many student responses are correct in a minute?
- Are teachers really getting students engaged in what they're learning?

Some principals when entering the classroom have a list of questions or a checklist of items they look for when observing the classroom. A principal stated their expectations as, "Teachers know it's my expectation that I should hear the objectives stated, a clear learning focus should be stated and posted for students, and I expect to see direct instruction and then a gradual release of that responsibility through guided practice and then independent practice, and that the lesson is brought to proper closure."

Furthermore, there was discussion of both announced and unannounced visits to classrooms as a teacher explained, "The full evaluation usually is announced, you come in first and talk about what you're going to teach and you have a date already set-up. I teach a little bit differently when I'm evaluated on a full day. I always liked it when our other principal came in unannounced, it's kept me on my toes." Teachers referred to the importance of how students recognize when principals visit their classrooms whether it's an announced or unannounced visit. It is important for administrators to note that teachers and students value visits at the beginning, at the middle, and/or at the end of the class as all need to know that administrators are interested in what is happening in classrooms.

Teachers and principals suggested walk-throughs as a way to enhance instruction and the engagement of students as shared by a female non-rural elementary principal, "Our engagement's up, through walk-throughs, the engagement that I've been seeing is up." A rural female secondary teacher also summarized the connection between monitoring classroom instruction and student achievement, "The only way is through evaluations. Someone I talked to said there is a way, power walk-throughs that [are] more data-driven, and we don't have that here."

In summary, based on the data collected in the 2011 Title I study, leaders and teachers appeared more focused upon changing the culture of their school to produce results for children that they serve on a daily basis and less worried about outside influences out of their control, which were significantly noted in the 2010 study interview. A non-rural female elementary teacher characterized it best,

A lot of times it's more the social behaviors that we have to work on that get in the way of their learning, and we have some kids obviously that come with home situations that get in their way of being real receptive to sit down and learn. But we've used the word "embrace." The idea that they're here for our time. We can't necessarily control what's out there, but we can control what we do here, so we've got to make the best of it. So that's our philosophy."

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The second year research study focused upon examining the implementation of the Title I plans in Nebraska Title I Schools identified as needing improvement. Evidence was provided in the 2011 study that **positive changes were occurring based upon the 2010 Recommendations** that were cited last year. **These items are noted below**:

Recommendation #1: Provide schools with training on how to regularly analyze and apply data, make learning and teaching adjustments, and how to use data to meet specific standards.

> A rural female elementary teacher explained, "You do DIBELS only three times a year . . . in the fall, winter, and spring. But in between you do progress-monitoring. So for particular students, we progress-monitor. For example in the fall, we have some students that didn't make their fall benchmark, so we look at those students, we keep progress-monitoring them until the next assessment time. Then if they are okay, we'll look at whatever students still need progress-monitoring. We'll keep progress-monitoring those students and working with them until the next testing time, until we can get all of our kids where they need to be at the benchmark."

Recommendation #2: Assist schools in developing interventions specifically targeting subpopulations.

> A rural female elementary teacher said, "They get a lot of assistance through SPED and through the reading intervention. We have other programs implemented where they come into the classroom or go out of the classroom; we have both pull-in and pull-out here. We're working more collaboratively with that aspect too as far as the reading intervention and the SPED, trying to use paraprofessionals . . . pulling some of the kids out, or groups of kids out."

Recommendation #6: Provide school administrators with training on leading a school improvement process.

> A rural female elementary teacher shared how her administration is leading the school improvement process, "Our administration led the meetings, they led the path that we

took. But they wanted the input of everybody; they didn't want what happened to be their sole decision."

Recommendation #7: Encourage the use of technology to motivate and engage students in learning.

Teachers are learning new ways of engaging students through technology as explained by a rural female elementary teacher, "We've learned a lot of new strategies since the beginning of the year to try to engage all the students."

Continued Recommendations from previous study:

1) Encourage schools to monitor classroom instruction to ensure implementation of the school's Title I Goals.
2) Provide suggestions and guidance to help schools increase parents and community members in Title I planning and decision making.
3) Develop a network for sharing Title I schools' successful strategies and interventions with other schools across the state.

New Recommendations based on the 2011 study:

1) Encourage classroom teachers and schools as a whole to celebrate the small steps to success so stakeholders recognize improvement as a result of the Title I plan.
2) Engage all Title I "Needs Improvement" schools in collaboration efforts to share research-based strategies and interventions that have proven successful in their schools to positively impact student achievement.
3) Provide technical assistance for leaders on the connection between teacher evaluation, teaching effectiveness, and student engagement.
4) If possible, reduce the amount of time that schools wait to receive NeSA results as they desire to use results for planning for the new school year.
5) Communicate to schools applying for Title I grant funds why they did not obtain their grant as teachers and administrators spend an extraordinary amount of time working on grant applications.
6) Encourage administrators to involve all teachers in the disaggregation of student data and the identification of Title I goals so they are actively engaged in improving student performance for all students.
7) Provide technical assistance to enhance the degree of understanding and knowledge about data; how to use it effectively for improvement of student performance, and at what time intervals it is most appropriate to use data.
8) Provide technical assistance for ensuring a standards-based cohesive instructional program that is aligned between and among grade levels to provide a continuum of expectations for student learning.
9) Provide technical assistance to schools on how to engage the school and community in developing shared beliefs and values.
10) Provide technical assistance for both the value and implementation (ways to schedule) of observation of peers in classrooms at grades at, above their grade level and below their assigned grade level that supports a continuum of learning Pre-12.

11) Provide professional development for Title I schools about the researched based models of parent involvement and ways they can engage parents of diverse cultures in informal processes within their school.

Transforming Schools to Improve Student Learning
Title I Needs Improvement Schools

Section 3: Research Study

Administrator and Teacher Perceptions of the Implementation of Title I School Improvement Plans

Administrator and Teacher Perceptions of the Implementation of Title I School Improvement Plans

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INTRODUCTION

Nebraska schools are being challenged to re-conceptualize the methods they use to increase student achievement for children that have not been successful in the past. Living in the "Heartland of America" does not imply that challenges for children and families do not exist. Many challenges impact schools and communities in rural and non-rural locations throughout the state including children living in poverty, students learning English for the first time, students with special needs, students that are mobile and students that have diverse backgrounds of experience and needs. Some schools are changing, re-vamping and even overhauling their systems to improve learning for all students.

Ensuring excellence with every student requires strong commitments to students, teachers, and stakeholders. Needed to carry out this process is technical assistance, provided by Project Managers designed to build a strong commitment to continuous improvement.

Success is a journey that requires principals, teachers, and stakeholders to recognize that as improvement is made, it develops the opportunity for continuous growth.

The purpose of this mixed method research study was to examine the implementation of Nebraska Title I plans for improving student achievement in schools identified as needing improvement. This research provides Nebraska educators and the Nebraska Department of Education, the State Board of Education, other policy makers, and all other stakeholders with the information to assess the effectiveness of Nebraska Title I School Improvement Plans.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This mixed-methods research study focused upon the implementation of Title I School Improvement Plans in Title I Needs Improvement schools. Administrators and teachers across the state were surveyed using an online instrument regarding their perceptions about the Title I School Improvement Process. Quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data was collected in the winter and spring of 2011.

Only those schools that were currently in "Needs Improvement" status were selected to participate. Therefore, 21 schools in 14 districts that were currently in "Needs Improvement" status were invited to participate in the surveys. Twenty schools in 13 districts agreed to participate. For the purpose of this research, Nebraska public school districts were divided into two categories, non-rural and rural, using Locale Codes as defined by the Common Core of Data (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010). These locale codes are based on proximity to an urbanized area. Non-rural districts were defined as districts in cities, suburbs, and towns less than or equal to 35 miles from an urbanized area. Rural districts were defined as districts in rural areas as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Towns more than 35 miles from an urbanized area (Town: Remote, or code 33) were also defined as rural for the purposes of this study. Of the 13 school districts participating, one district (7.7%) was classified as non-rural and 12 districts (92.3%) were classified as rural.

Of these 13 school districts participating, a total of 12 (92.3% of the districts) returned surveys for the Nebraska Statewide Title I Research Project. Of the administrator surveys returned, 61.1% were from rural districts and 38.9% were from non-rural districts. Surveys were received from administrators in 10 districts (76.9% of total districts surveyed). Of the teacher surveys returned, 63.9% were from non-rural districts and 36.1% were from rural districts. Surveys were received from teachers in 11 districts (84.6% of total districts surveyed). In comparing these numbers, it is important to take into account the fact that rural districts are likely to employ a smaller number of teachers and administrators.

Administrators responded to a 78-item survey (Appendix C), while teachers responded to a 82-item survey (Appendix C). Both surveys explored eight themes: (1) Title I School Improvement Plans, (2) Clear Focus, (3) Culture, (4) Instructional Strategies, (5) Professional Development, (6) Data/Monitoring, (7) Community Involvement, and (8) Overall Improvement. Some items on the teacher survey were not included on the administrator survey. Where this occurs, it is noted in the results.

Second, open-ended interviews were conducted with administrators, teachers, and parents in six public school districts. Detailed perceptions were collected using an interview protocol (Appendix D) that gathered qualitative data. These six districts were selected based on geographic area, district Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) rate, and ethnicity. Twenty-two (22) individual interviews were conducted statewide during the spring of 2010. The interview protocols were structured around the same eight themes used to structure the survey: (1) Title I School Improvement Plans, (2) Clear Focus, (3) Culture, (4) Instructional Strategies, (5) Professional Development, (6) Data/Monitoring, (7) Community Involvement, and (8) Overall Improvement. Additionally, five new themes emerged in the interviews: 1) Change, 2) Reculturing, 3) Leadership, 4) Student Engagement, and 5) Parent Communication and Involvement.

Instruments

The surveys (Appendix C) were designed to collect perceptions about the implementation of Title I School Improvement Plans. The survey examined (1) Title I School Improvement Plans, (2) Clear Focus, (3) Culture, (4) Instructional Strategies, (5) Professional Development, (6) Data/Monitoring, (7) Community Involvement, and (8) Overall Improvement. Participants responded on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree. Analysis of variance was used to compare mean scores of the survey data. The reliability statistic (Cronbach's Alpha) for this instrument was .985 for administrators and .976 for teachers.

The interview protocols (Appendix D) asked for participants' demographic information and posed nine questions about their perceptions of their school's Title I School Improvement Plan. Interviews were conducted with administrators and teachers in elementary and secondary settings in six school districts. Up to five interviews were conducted in each district. Probes were identified for use with each question. Interviewers were provided a Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability Interview Manual and received training prior to conducting interviews.

SURVEY RESULTS

As shown in Figure 1, administrator, teacher, and parent perceptions were categorized by eight themes: Title I School Improvement Plan, Clear Focus, Culture, Instructional Strategies, Professional Development, Data/Monitoring, Community Involvement, and Overall Improvement. Administrative and teacher survey overall responses ranged from 1 to 5 on the five-point Likert scale with "5" representing "strongly agree."

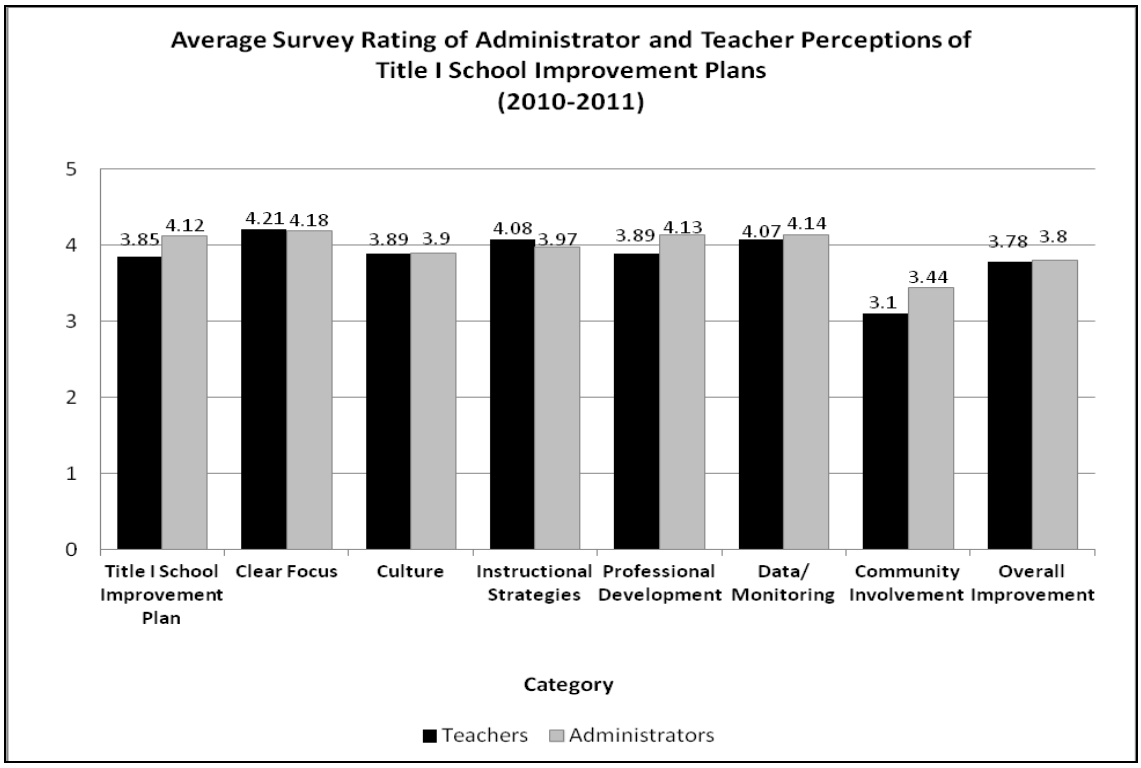

Figure 1. Average survey rating of administrator and teacher perceptions of Title I School Improvement Plans (2010-2011).

Theme 1: Title I School Improvement Plan

In the category of the Title I School Improvement Plan (Administrator and Teacher Survey Questions 1-7), the average response of all administrators was 4.12. The average response of all teachers was 3.85.

Both teachers (4.47) and administrators (4.50) gave the highest rating in the Title I School Improvement Plan category to "The planning process in my school is focused on improving student achievement." Administrators also gave "I was involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Improvement Goals" the highest rating in the category. On the other hand, they gave "All teachers in my school were involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Improvement Goals" the lowest rating in the category (3.83), as did teachers (3.29). Administrators also gave this lowest rating of 3.83 to "I have consistently communicated the Title I Goals to teachers in my school" and "Teachers in my school understand the Title I Goals and how to achieve these goals."

The largest mean discrepancy between teachers and administrators in the category was "Teachers were involved in the identification of the Title I Goals." Teachers rated this item lower at 3.37, while administrators rated it higher at 4.17.

Table 6
Title I School Improvement Plan Highest and Lowest Mean Ratings

	Administrators	Teachers
Highest Mean Rating	4.50 "I was involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Improvement Goals." "The planning process in my school is focused on improving student achievement."	4.47 "The planning process in my school is focused on improving student achievement."
Lowest Mean Rating	3.83 "All teachers in my school were involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Improvement Goals." "I have consistently communicated the Title I Goals to teachers in my school." "Teachers in my school understand the Title I Goals and how to achieve these goals."	3.29 "I was involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Goals."

Another inconsistency between teacher and administrator responses was "All teachers in my school were involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Goals." Teachers were more likely to rate this item closer to "undecided" with an average response of 3.29, whereas administrators rated this item closer to "agree" with an average response of 3.83.

Administrator responses in the category of Title I School Improvement Plan ranged from 2.00 to 5.00 with an average of 4.12. Rural administrators rated this category 3.84, whereas non-rural administrators rated it higher at 4.55. Male administrators rated the category 3.93, while female administrators rated it higher at 4.21. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience gave this category a rating of 4.04, while those with more than 20 years of experience gave it a higher rating of 4.19.

Teacher responses in this category ranged from 1.00 to 5.00, with an average rating of 3.85. Rural teachers rated this category 3.72, whereas non-rural teachers rated it higher at 3.93. Male teachers gave this category a 3.93 rating, and female teachers gave it a lower rating of 3.86. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience gave this category a rating of 3.65, while teachers with 10-20 years of experience gave it a higher rating of 4.02, teachers with 20-30 years of experience gave it a rating of 3.92, and teachers with over 30 years of experience gave this category a rating of 4.01.

The survey reliability statistic (Cronbach's Alpha) for the category Title I School Improvement Plan was .815 for administrators and .885 for teachers.

Title I School Improvement Plan Discussion
Survey Items with Supporting Interview Quotes

Item 1: "I was/ Administrators were involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Improvement Goals." This item was rated 4.50 by administrators and 4.24 by teachers.

Administrators gave this item the highest rating in the Title I School Improvement Plan category, along with one other item. Rural administrators rated this item somewhat lower (4.18) than did non-rural administrators (5.00). There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.011). Male administrators rated this item lower (4.33) than did female administrators (4.58). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.63, while administrators with more than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.40.

Teachers in rural schools rated this item lower (4.05) than did non-rural teachers (4.34). There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.013). Male teachers and female teachers rated this item similarly (4.24 and 4.23, respectively). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 4.19, while the item mean for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was 4.33. Teachers with 20-30 and over 30 years of experience rated this item similarly (4.22 and 4.23, respectively).

- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "He's a part of it. When we sit down at our school improvement meeting, we're each given a different team's action plan and we sit down as pairs and our administrator is part of a pair. So is our vice principal, she's a partner. So it's the whole team."
- A rural female administrator shared about the administration and teachers involvement in the development and monitoring of the Title I improvement plan, "(They are) extremely involved in participating in it this year. . . I think 100% (they are involved)."

Item 2: "Teachers were/I was involved in the identification of the Title I Goals." This item was rated 4.17 by administrators 3.37 by teachers.

Administrators in rural schools rated this item lower (4.09) than did non-rural administrators (4.29). Male administrators and female administrators rated this item exactly alike (4.17). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.13, while the item mean for administrators with 20-30 years of experience was 4.20.

Teachers in rural schools rated this item lower (3.28) than did non-rural teachers (3.41). Male teachers rated this item higher (3.60) than did female teachers (3.33). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item mostly "undecided" at 3.01, significantly lower than the rating given by teachers with over 30 years of experience (3.77) (p=.017). Teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated it 3.51, while teachers with 20-30 years of experience rated it 3.56.

- A rural female elementary administrator explained, "Teachers and administration work together to develop all levels of what we need. We're setting 90 day goals. . . .

They were a part of producing that. It took at least three meetings for us to finalize that, and we finalized it."

- A rural female secondary teacher explained, "We involved teachers, administrators, parents, students, and a community member to sit in if there are any changes that are made to the compact and parent involvement information. If there are any changes, we change those, so it's a collaborative effort."

Item 3: "All teachers in my school were/I was involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Goals." This item was given a rating of 3.83 by administrators and a rating of 3.29 by teachers.

Administrators gave this item the lowest rating in the Title I School Improvement Plan category, along with two other items. Rural administrators rated this item lower (3.36) than did non-rural administrators (4.57). There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.005). Male administrators rated this item 3.67, lower than the 3.92 rating given by female administrators. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.75, and administrators with more than 20 years of experience rated it 3.90.

Teachers also gave this item the lowest rating in the Title I School Improvement Plan category. Rural teachers and non-rural teachers gave this item the identical average rating (3.29). Male teachers gave this item a 3.44 rating, while female teachers gave it a lower 3.27 rating. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience gave this item a rating of 2.98, while those with 10-20 years of experience gave it a significantly higher rating of 3.65 (p=.010). Teachers with 20-30 and over 30 years of experience rated this item in between at 3.31 and 3.52, respectively.

- A non-rural female elementary teacher coordinator shared, "I'm not on the school improvement team, but as a part of our professional learning communities, we all work on those same goals. So not directly on the team, but involved with monitoring progress."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "I think in the past it's basically been just the principal sets up the plan and prepares what needs to be done. I think it's a trickle-down thing. We hear what they've put in the report and pulled in the needs and so forth. So as far as being a part of the program, I don't believe I have been."
- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "We have a committee that's made up of representatives from the kindergarten through first grade team, the second through third grade team, and the fourth through fifth grade team. We have one person from ELL on that as well. We have another person who represents our resource team, our speech pathologist. We meet several times throughout the year to evaluate progress and data and make decisions."

Item 4: "I have consistently communicated the Title I Goals to teachers in my school." / "Administrators in my school have effectively communicated the Title I Goals to teachers." Administrators rated this item 3.83, and teachers rated it 3.85.

Administrators also gave this item the lowest rating in the Title I School Improvement Plan category. Administrators in rural schools rated this item lower (3.27) than did non-rural

administrators (4.71), a significant difference (p=.001). Male administrators rated this item lower (3.17) than did female administrators (4.17). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.38, while the item mean for administrators with more than 20 years of experience was higher at 4.20.

Teachers in rural schools rated this item lower (3.60) than did non-rural teachers (3.98), a significant difference (p=.018). Male teachers rated this item 4.12, while female teachers rated the item lower at 3.81. Teachers with 10-20 years of experience, 20-30 years of experience, and over 30 years of experience rated this item similarly (3.96, 3.96, and 4.00 respectively). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item lower at 3.65.

- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "Every staff meeting that we have, we usually have a discussion and sometimes slides and graphs that are handed out."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "For teachers, I wouldn't say at every monthly PLC but at least quarterly when we have our instructional conferences, our administrator points out, 'how many kids do you think can reach the goal of proficiency in math' and 'what are we going to do in order to help the kids that aren't (improving), what kind of plans do you have in mind?' At instructional conferences, quarterly, that's when he really focuses on saying, 'this is how we have to reach our improvement (goal).'"

Item 5: "Teachers in my school/ I understand the Title I Goals and how to achieve these goals." This item was rated 3.83 by administrators and 3.79 by teachers.

Administrators also gave this item the lowest rating in the Title I School Improvement Plan category. Administrators in rural schools rated this item lower (3.55) than did non-rural administrators (4.29). Male administrators rated this item 3.33, while female administrators gave it a higher rating of 4.08. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.63, while administrators with more than 20 years of experience gave it a higher rating of 4.00.

Teachers in rural schools rated this item lower (3.69) than did non-rural teachers (3.85). Male teachers rated this item higher (3.84) than did female teachers (3.79). Teachers with 10-20 years of experience, 20-30 years of experience, and over 30 years of experience rated this item similarly (4.02, 3.96, and 3.97 respectively). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.49, significantly lower than the rating given by teachers with 10-20 years (p=.011) and 20-30 years of experience (p=.044).

- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained her understanding of the Title I goals in her school, "All students will improve their literacy in reading and writing, reading comprehension and writing through the curriculum. The math one (goal) is all students will improve their problem-solving skills and computation skills. Each PLC looked through our data and we only did one goal, either one with reading or one for math, one or the other. This year, it was, 'you need to have two PLC goals, you have to have some way to improve both (goals).'"
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "Well, we're moving from being a targeted Title I to school-wide; so we have our plan for the whole building: the academic one, family involvement, and the neighborhood and community

involvement (goals). But within the academic one is where all our smart goals are by grade-level. Within that, there are interventions. . . . Kindergarten, first and second grade have a different goal, and it might be: 'be on grade-level for reading'; the interventions within that, that's where the classroom teacher and our Title I teachers and our resource teachers work together to say, 'what are the interventions that are needed?' We get it down to individual children. We've set aside that time, so it might be re-teaching of that particular math objective that they haven't passed, formative assessments they have not gotten, so then they re-teach. We have Soar to Success with some of our children . . . it depends on whatever the smart goals are."

- A rural female secondary teacher in contrast shared, "I know it's reading, improving reading scores, that's why we're continually using the FAME (intervention). But we have not sat down this year in our SIP committees and looked at data for this year. Our curriculum person just hasn't brought that information to us."

Item 6: "Specific areas of need that must be met to achieve the Title I Goals have been identified." This item was rated 4.17 by administrators and 3.96 by teachers.

Administrators in rural schools gave this item a rating of 3.91, while non-rural administrators rated it higher at 4.57. Rural administrators rated this item significantly lower than did non-rural administrators (p=.049). Male administrators and female administrators gave this item the same average rating of 4.17. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.25, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated it lower at 4.10.

Teachers in rural schools rated this item 3.71, while non-rural teachers gave it a significantly higher rating of 4.11 (p=.003). Male teachers rated this item lower (3.84) than female teachers (3.98). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience gave this item a rating of 3.79, while those with 10-20 years of experience gave it a higher rating of 4.12. Teachers with 20-30 and over 30 years of experience rated this item in between at 4.02 and 4.06, respectively.

- A rural male elementary principal explained, "When you say Title I goals, I'm going to focus on the reading, because that's what has us on the needs improvement; our AYP on the Hispanic, ELL population dropped, and the low SE (Socio-economic)."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "We really try to disaggregate the data when we look at all that information at our first PLC meeting in the fall. This year we've really looked at those subgroups and broken it down. We do that a little bit throughout the year, but then it just gets to the point where these are the kids that we really have to focus on and you don't necessarily look at the subgroup that they're in. They need support. So what are we going to for them?"

Item 7: "The planning process in my school is focused on improving student achievement." This item was rated 4.50 by administrators and 4.47 by teachers.

Administrators gave this item the highest rating of the Title I School Improvement Plan category. Rural administrators rated this item 4.55, while non-rural administrators rated this item lower at 4.43. Male administrators rated this item 4.67, and female administrators rated

this item lower at 4.42. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience and over 20 years of experience rated this item identically at 4.50.

Teachers also rated this item the highest in the category of Title I School Improvement Plans. Rural teachers rated this item lower (4.41) than did non-rural teachers (4.50). Male and female teachers rated this item similarly (4.44 and 4.47, respectively). Teachers with less than 10 and 20-30 years of experience rated this item similarly (4.43 and 4.40, respectively), while teachers with 10-20 and over 30 years of experience rated it similarly (4.55 and 4.52, respectively).

- A rural female elementary teacher explained how common planning time is used to share strategies to target Title I goals, "Well the common planning times are (used) on some of the different strategies that they've decided on . . . the vocabulary, comprehension, engagement, and behavior."
- A non-rural female elementary principal shared how she supports a collaborative planning process, "That's been my role, to support SPED (special education) staff. How do we collaboratively plan? How do I get into classrooms where it's not been such an easy thing to do? Really being helpful in that sense. SPED is the area where we have not made AYP in the plan, so we've really had to hone in on it."
- A rural female elementary teacher also stated, "That would be one area I would say we need to do a better job of. A lot of teachers get together if you're in these certain meetings, like your Response to Intervention (RTI) or your Student Assistance Team (SAT). A lot of us, if you've taught any length of time and you want to pick somebody else's brain about what would work or 'how about this' or 'what have you done with that student,' we just go and ask. But as far as setting up something to sit down and have a time set, we don't. That would be nice. We have weekly staff meetings, but it's pretty much administration-led. Then we have a once a month elementary meeting and a once a month high school meeting. You're free to say things of course, you're not limited, but usually there is an agenda and we meet in the mornings so you have to, kind of, hurry things along."

Theme 2: Clear Focus

In the Clear Focus category (Administrator and Teacher Survey Questions 8-17), the average response of all administrators was 4.18. The average response of teachers was 4.21.

The item rated strongest by administrators within the Clear Focus category was "Criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments are used to support instruction and enhance student learning" (4.44). The item rated strongest by teachers was "I engage students in order to improve academic performance" (4.54). Both administrators (3.94) and teachers (4.00) gave "The curriculum in my school is aligned both between grade levels and among grade levels" the weakest rating in the Clear Focus category. The other item given this lowest rating of 3.94 by administrators was "My school has a strongly focused and cohesive instructional program."

Table 7
Clear Focus Highest and Lowest Mean Ratings

	Administrators	Teachers
Highest Mean Rating	4.44 "Criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments are used to support instruction and enhance student learning."	4.54 "I engage students in order to improve academic performance."
Lowest Mean Rating	3.94 "My school has a strongly focused and cohesive instructional program." "The curriculum in my school is aligned both between grade levels and among grade levels."	4.00 "The curriculum in my school is aligned both between grade levels and among grade levels."

The largest mean discrepancy between teachers and administrators in the Clear Focus category was, "Teachers in my school engage students in order to improve academic performance." Teachers rated this item between "agree" and "strongly agree" at 4.54. Administrators rated the item mostly "agree" at 4.06.

Administrator responses in the Clear Focus category ranged from 1.00 to 5.00 with an average of 4.18. Rural administrators rated this category 4.09, whereas non-rural administrators rated it higher at 4.31. Male administrators rated the category 3.97, while female administrators rated it higher at 4.28. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience gave this category a rating of 4.08, while those with more than 20 years of experience gave it a higher 4.26 rating.

Teacher responses in the Clear Focus category ranged from 1.00 to 5.00 with an average of 4.21. Rural teachers rated this category 4.30, whereas non-rural teachers rated it lower at 4.15. Male teachers gave this category a rating of 4.03, and female teachers gave it a higher rating of 4.21. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience gave this category a rating of 4.10, while teachers with 10-20 years of experience gave it a higher rating of 4.35, teachers with 20-30 years of experience gave it a lower rating of 4.21, and teachers with over 30 years of experience gave this category a rating of 4.24.

The survey reliability statistic (Cronbach's Alpha) for the category of Clear Focus was .932 for administrators and .892 for teachers.

Clear Focus Discussion

Survey Items with Supporting Interview Quotes

Item 8: "My school has a strongly focused and cohesive instructional program." This item was rated 3.94 by administrators and 4.16 by teachers.

Administrators rated this item the lowest in the Clear Focus category, along with one other item. Rural administrators rated this item lower (3.82) than did non-rural administrators (4.14). Male administrators rated this item 3.83, while female administrators rated this item 4.00. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.75, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item higher (4.10).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item higher (4.23) than did teachers from non-rural schools (4.12). Male teachers rated this item lower (3.96) than did female teachers (4.19). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience and over 30 years of experience rated this item similarly (4.06 and 4.03, respectively). The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was higher at 4.41, and for teachers with 20-30 years of experience was 4.13.

- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "There is scope and sequence, and that's another thing that you look up when curriculum is chosen: you lay out the standards and go through 'where does this standard either end in kindergarten? What does it connect to in 1st grade? Where is this one left off and picked up again?' There is a scope and sequence for everything. So you can see where it's going."
- A non-rural female elementary principal shared, "We pull up their action plans in the SIP (school improvement plan) committee, and we look at and talk about those. What I think is really, really great about that is that it gives the kindergarten teacher a perspective of what 5th grade's doing, and 5th grade what 1st grade's doing, so you get a whole picture, because sometimes, as teachers - coming from being a teacher for 20 some years, you a lot of times see your grade-level or your group of kids. We have to see a building picture; we have to see the whole piece, regular (class) and SPED (special education). Everything!"
- A rural female secondary language arts teacher had a different perspective, "(They) said when they first came in, 'Do you guys have a curriculum?' We said, 'Yes, here's our standards, here's our objectives, the (Learner will. . . .) That's all we've had. When I first came here, it was 'Here are the objectives; you do it however you want to do it.' I made my own units, my own writing packets for any paper we do. I actually made my own little book for English that has the vocabulary section and the literary section and the reading workshop journal. Then there'd be a book to follow."

Item 9: "My school engages in continuous school improvement." This item was rated 4.39 by administrators and 4.47 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item 4.55, while non-rural administrators rated this item lower at 4.14. Male administrators rated this item 4.33, while female administrators rated it higher at 4.42. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience and more than 20 years of experience rated this item similarly (4.38 and 4.40, respectively).

Teachers from rural schools and non-rural schools rated this item similarly (4.45 and 4.48, respectively). Male teachers rated this item 4.32, lower than the 4.49 rating given by female teachers. The lowest rating for this item was given by teachers with over 30 years of experience, who rated it 4.32. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated it 4.43, those with 20-30 years of experience rated it 4.49, and those with 10-20 years of experience gave this item its highest rating at 4.61.

- A rural female elementary teacher explained their school's focus, "What we're doing as our focus is to move forward and that's the way it's been ever since that news came out: that we're moving forward and getting stronger. The focus is on how we can improve."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "Teams look at it monthly, but at least bimonthly we bring stuff to our school improvement meetings, because we're each talking about the progress that our kids have made, and mostly just to be able to celebrate in small ways."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained "Overall I think it has improved it. I think - I don't know the exact - I think we went up 30% in our score in our MAPS reading. Then we got the kids together and talked about that and had a big power point up on the wall and did a big Rally around their success. We have a long ways to go, but I think that shows that what we're doing has to be working."

Item 10: "There is a clear focus by teachers in my school on the identified areas of need." This item was rated 4.06 by administrators and 4.27 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.91) than did non-rural administrators (4.29). Male administrators rated this item lower (3.83) than did female administrators, (4.17). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.75, while administrators with over 20 years rated this item higher at 4.30.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item higher (4.35) than did non-rural teachers (4.23). Male teachers rated this item 4.16, while female teachers rated it higher at 4.28. Teachers with various levels of experience rated this item similarly. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience gave this item a rating of 4.20, while those with 10-20 years of experience gave it a higher rating of 4.37. Teachers with 20-30 and over 30 years of experience rated this item in between at 4.27 and 4.29, respectively.

- A rural male elementary principal explained, "We've added a new focus, it's our migrant population. That is where our lowest scores were. We are really looking at that group, adding the technology, putting more technology into our student hands."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher coordinator explained their primary focus, "I think the focus for our building has become more focused on instructional strategies the past two years. Three years ago we really focused on ELL strategies for teaching ELL students, instructional strategies for ELL students. Then it went into writing. Now it's really focused on reading."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher coordinator explained another area of focus, "You can't teach a student if they're not able to sit in a classroom and be on task and focus. You can't ignore chaos. That definitely is a huge focus in our building because there's a need there. Unfortunately, we have a lot of kids with very

significant behavioral needs and it impacts the education of many students when those kids are having an outburst in the middle of instruction. That class has to evacuate and move to another classroom. You have to focus on that. I don't think it's taking away from the instructional focus."

Item 11: "There is a clear articulation of standards in my school." This item was rated by administrators as 4.22 and by teachers as 4.14.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item higher (4.27) than did non-rural administrators (4.14). Male administrators rated this item slightly lower than did female administrators, (3.83 and 4.42 respectively). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.13, while administrators with over 20 years rated this item higher at 4.30.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (4.11) than did non-rural teachers (4.17). Male teachers rated this item lower (4.04) than did female teachers (4.16). Teachers with various levels of experience rated this item similarly. Teachers with over 30 years of experience gave this item a 3.94 rating, while teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated it 4.09. Those with 10-20 and 20-30 years of experience rated it higher at 4.31 and 4.20, respectively.

- A rural male elementary principal explained how the standards are now driving their focus, "That is where we're starting to become more focused. In June we've always come together as a staff and we would look at the standards and then we'd look at our curriculum, getting it in alignment. Our superintendent brought this on (from his former) school district which used a lesson plan system where it has the standard built into it already. We can be more focused in our lesson plans, that we're addressing this particular standard. That's the whole goal. Before we were curriculum-driven, textbook-driven. . . . Now the rules have changed. We need to look at the standards, see what's being tested, look at our curriculum and make sure we hit those using our curriculum."
- A rural female elementary principal explained, "We're still working on that. I know that they had worked on it sometime in the past here, but when I listen to my teachers talk, there really wasn't an emphasis."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "We look at the standards, especially now with the NeSA. That's why you see all of these things on the classroom, (such as) the NeSA vocabulary. The NeSA is so aligned with the standards and our district people have done a really good job of aligning and coordinating that for us."

Item 12: "Teachers in my school/ I engage students in order to improve academic performance." This item was rated by administrators as 4.06 and by teachers as 4.54.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item higher (4.18) than did non-rural administrators (3.86). Male administrators rated this item 3.67, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.25. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.00, lower than the rating given by more than 20 years of experience (4.10).

Teachers rated this survey item the highest in the category of Clear Focus. Rural teachers rated this item higher (4.61) than did non-rural teachers (4.50). Male teachers rated this item 4.28, while female teachers gave this item a significantly higher rating of 4.58 (p=.009). The item mean for teachers with less than 10, 10-20, and more than 30 years of experience was similar (4.56, 4.57, and 4.55, respectively). The item mean for teachers with 20-30 years of experience was lower at 4.49.

- A rural female elementary teacher shared, "We're really trying to come up with ways to engage the students and improve their math scores . . . more hands-on type of material and come [at] it with different ways. With the SIG grant we got the Promethium Boards, so we try to engage the students more with different things on the boards, interactive things to engage them (students) more."
- A rural female elementary principal shared how goal setting is engaging their students, "It's powerful. I just went in and visited with some 5th and 6th graders this morning who are starting some tutoring this afternoon and asked them, 'what's your goal?' They were able to tell me what their goal was. It keeps them motivated and knowing how much we care and how important their growth truly is."
- A non-rural male elementary principal explained his emphasis on student engagement, "Are we getting all voices in the air, or is it 'I'm just calling on the hands?' How are we getting students involved, and are the kids working as hard as the teacher's working?"

Item 13: "The curriculum in my school is supportive of the academic needs of students." This item was rated 4.22 by administrators and 4.02 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (4.00) than did non-rural administrators (4.57). Male administrators rated this item 4.17, while female administrators rated this item 4.25. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.00, and administrators with more than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.40.

Teachers from rural schools gave this item a mean of 4.19, while teachers from non-rural schools gave it a significantly lower mean of 3.92 (p=.040). Male teachers rated this item 3.92, while female teachers rated it higher at 4.03. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.81, while teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated it significantly higher at 4.24 (p=.038). Teachers with 20-30 years of experience and over 30 years of experience rated this item similarly (4.09 and 4.10, respectively).

- A rural female elementary teacher explained how their curriculum changes to meet student needs, "We have Reading Mastery, and we are in the process of getting Saxon Math. We felt they'd both be very beneficial to our students. We've seen some great success already from Reading Mastery. We just got it this year. We went to (some) trainings last summer as a staff. In math, we're going to have Saxon come out and do a three-day (training) program here."
- A rural female elementary teacher shared, "We see a lot more excitement in the students. They're a lot more excited about what they're doing. It is very repetitive, so some almost get a little bored, but you can move them along so they don't have to just be a 3rd grader in a 3rd grade book. We've got it so [they] can move between grades."

- A non-rural female elementary principal explained, "Within the guided reading, they might use different books for guided reading, but everybody's on the same thing. We have pacing charts so teachers know generally where they need to be. You may be a day off, but you don't want to be too much further off than that, because otherwise what will happen is you won't get through all the pieces and you do need to get to all the curriculum, because every child needs the opportunity. That's important too. Some kids just need multiple practices, so you may have to come back to it. But you don't want to hold on three objectives because then you'll never get to ten down the road. You just have to intertwine those back for practice."

Item 14: "The curriculum in my school is aligned both between grade levels and among grade levels." This item was rated 3.94 by administrators and 4.00 by teachers.

Administrators rated this item the lowest in the category of Clear Focus, along with one other item. Rural administrators rated this item lower (3.73) than did non-rural administrators (4.29). Male administrators rated this item lower (3.33) than did female administrators (4.25). The item mean for administrators with less than 20 years of experience was 3.75, and for those with more than 20 years of experience was higher at 4.10.

Teachers also rated this item the lowest in the Clear Focus category. Rural teachers rated this item significantly higher (4.19) than did non-rural teachers (3.89) (p=.018). Male teachers rated this item 3.76, while female teachers rated it mostly "agree" at 4.03. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience gave this item a rating of 3.80, while those with 10-20 years of experience gave it a significantly higher rating of 4.24 (p=.023). Teachers with 20-30 and over 30 years of experience rated this item in between at 3.98 and 4.16, respectively.

- A rural male elementary principal explained their schools' alignment, "With our reading program, it's a level program, so there's a continuation all the way through. Math is now on board like that. Saxon's not a level, but we have Saxon math, kindergarten all the way up through, (I think), grade seven. Whereas in the past, kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, would have this series, 3rd grade would have this series, 4th grade, and then as a 5th grade teacher I had this series. So there was really no continuity."
- A non-rural female teacher explained both formal and informal events that involve school alignment, "That's a district thing. Each year builds successively on the next. We do a lot of cross-team talking, 'What are the kids going to need when they get to 5th grade?' I taught 5th grade for many, many years and then was switched to 4th grade, so I know, having taught 5th grade for that many years, what my 4th graders are going to need to know. But we do have conversations. Not all of them are formal. We share lunch with 3rd grade, so we do a lot of talking at that time with 'what do they need to know.' Our primary grades are really good at saying 'what can we do down here?' My best friend is the kindergarten teacher and she's like, 'what can I be doing?' A lot of its informal, but we do have transition, formal meetings where we talk to the next grade-level about what we need, what the objectives are. When we were planning our math, what we spent some time looking at was the next (grade's objectives); like, when I taught 5th grade, we looked at the 6th grade objectives, and then we looked at the ones that were essential for 5th grade and how those correlated

to the 6th grade ones, and every grade-level below us did that for the next grade-level."

- A rural female secondary math teacher explained their process, "We went through and tried to figure out 'Who's teaching what, where'. There are a lot of overlaps, we had to realize 'to what depth of knowledge is it being taught at this level?' 'Where should you pick up so you're not re-teaching the same level each year so it's actually building instead of repeating?"
- A rural male elementary principal stated, "For the most part, yes, we require all of our teachers to include standards in all of their lesson plans. As far as the curriculum being 100% aligned, I would probably say no, especially the old curriculum. There's a lot of supplementing."

Item 15: "The curriculum in my school is aligned with the state standards." This item was rated 4.11 by administrators and 4.17 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item 3.73, while non-rural administrators rated it higher at 4.71, a significant difference (p=.028). Male administrators rated this item lower (3.83) than did female administrators (4.25). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.00. Administrators with more than 20 years of experience rated it higher at 4.20.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 4.35, while teachers from non-rural schools rated this item lower at 4.08. There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.033). Male teachers rated this item lower (4.00) than did female teachers (4.20). The lowest item mean for this item (3.99) belonged to teachers with less than 10 years of experience, while the highest item mean for this item (4.42) belonged to teachers with over 30 years of experience. Teachers with 10-20 years and 20-30 years of experience rated this item 4.29 and 4.20, respectively.

- A rural male elementary principal shared, "We just started that (state standards placement on curriculum) in January, and trying to get that caught up through the end of this year to start reviewing those over the summer."
- A rural male elementary teacher explained, "Honestly, we haven't done any more than what we did originally at the beginning. So even though some (standards) of them changed, we haven't got that far in. So that may be a process we're going to be working on more, too."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "We found that fluency, according to our district expectations - which are extremely high - that our kids just weren't there. So we really felt as a building that this was a piece that we needed to really focus on, and if we could start focusing on that in our primary grades, by the time they get to the intermediate grades, hopefully they're going to be there or be very close. As far as the problem-solving and computation, in the statewide testing that's done in the upper grades and in our own math curriculum, it was low. We felt that it involves reading and a lot of deeper thinking that kids aren't used to doing. So with all the state standards and testing that comes in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade, those were key pieces that our kids were missing out on."

- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "In the upper grades, there are some concerns with how things are aligned now that we have the NeSA and other state guidelines. My daughter's a 4th grade teacher so we've had conversations about how things don't always line up like you would like them to. But I think in the long run, things do match up pretty well."

Item 16: "Criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments are used to support instruction and enhance student learning." This item was rated 4.44 by administrators and 4.15 by teachers.

Administrators rated this item the highest in the Clear Focus category. Rural administrators rated this item 4.36, lower than did non-rural administrators (4.57). Male administrators rated this item 4.33, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.50. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.50, while administrators with more than 20 years of experience rated it 4.40.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item higher (4.28) than did non-rural teachers (4.08). Male teachers rated this item 3.88, while female teachers rated it higher at 4.19. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item mostly "agree" with 4.06. Teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated it higher at 4.22. Teachers with 20-30 years of experience rated this item 4.11, while teachers with more than 30 years of experience rated it 4.32.

- A non-rural female teacher coordinator stated, "So for literacy they're looking at their Directed Reading Assessments (DRAs) and their Leveled Reading Passages (LRPs) and their theme tests. They're looking at their writing assessments that they administer in the classroom and what we administer in intervention. They're looking at their math assessments, Cumulative Math Assessments that they're administrating to prepare them for the NeSA."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "The formal ones that would directly reflect a report card grade, those are quarterly. Formative assessments happen all the time. I can formatively assess my kids everyday based on how they're interacting with our blending and segmenting of words. We have chapter tests in math that would give us a summative for that particular unit. Reading looks a little different in kindergarten. Starting in I think 3rd grade, they do have theme tests for reading, so those would be at the end of every theme. But ours are mainly more like the quarterly big tests for K-2."
- A rural female secondary math teacher shared the need to have a better understanding of the state assessment, "That's what you'd think it would be, reading comprehension. If we would have known what it (NeSA) was going be - I just wish we had a better idea. I don't think it would be wrong for us to know more about the test, because if it's a good test, then we should know. I was always told there's nothing wrong with teaching to the test if it's a good test. So I think we need to have a clearer idea of what's on that test. If that's the important things they want students to know, we need more guidance than just the standards that are so subjective. It's very, very discouraging, this test (NeSA). I wish I knew what other schools in our position are doing, if they're doing as well or as poorly as we are."

- A rural male secondary teacher coordinator stated, "The assessment for that starts with the Stanford, but also any assessment that can be used to show grade-level reading. If the PLAN test (ACT) shows this correlates to a 9th or 10th grade reading-level, we'll accept anything that we have given to students. Any students not at that reading level go through FAME (**F**oundations; **A**dventures; **M**astery; and **E**xploration in Reading). Around February, the 8th grade students take the Stanford."
- A rural male secondary teacher coordinator explained their district's perception and usage of STARS, "We have gotten away from it. You know my feeling on that, we need to get back to it. It's hard to remember all the data that we pull up off the top of my head."
- A rural female secondary principal stated, "Because of our huge Latino population and where they are in their education, we use the SAB, and it's amazing how well they do on that if they've been acculturated in education."

Item 17: "Instructional practices and materials in my school are supportive of the academic needs of students." This item was rated 4.39 by administrators and 4.13 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (4.36) than did non-rural administrators (4.43). Male administrators rated this item 4.50, while female administrators rated this item lower at 4.33. The item mean for administrators with less than 20 years of experience was 4.50, while the mean for administrators with over 20 years of experience was lower at 4.30.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 4.27, higher than did teachers from non-rural schools (4.06). Male teachers rated this item 4.00, while female teachers gave it a higher rating of 4.15. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item mostly "agree" at 4.01, while teachers with 20-30 years of experience rated this item 4.13. Teachers with 10-20 years of experience and over 30 years of experience rated this item similarly (4.27 and 4.23, respectively).

- A rural male elementary principal explained, "We held a meeting before they (migrant parents) started to leave, we had them in. We were showing them some self-supporting reading programs and other tools that they can use, because we sent a bunch of iPads and laptops with them. They didn't have internet connection unless they went to some small town and library. So everything we put on those computers and iPods, they're downloaded, they didn't have to be web-supported." Additionally he explained, "I want to get little iPods for our 3rd graders so that they can start using that as a tool to read from. We do the electronic Quick Reads, so we're really doing a push of electronic devices to hook some of these kids into wanting to read and loving to read."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained how she received new classroom resources, "A few years ago, our desks were horrid and in need of a replacement. I went to the principal and I said, 'Either I need new desks or I want tables.' I got tables, and I love them. Now they're within groups of three to four, so there can be a lot more collaboration."

- A non-rural female teacher coordinator explained the advantage of being a Title I school, "I am always so appreciative of the resources Title I schools get. I think the demographics of Title I schools, obviously those kids come to school with so many more challenges. I think those resources make it possible to meet those students' needs. If we weren't a Title I school and [didn't] receive the resources that we get, there's no way we could be doing the things that we're doing with some of these students to help them meet the achievement goals. I'm just so appreciative of that piece of it."
- A rural female secondary math teacher responded to the most important strategies or behaviors that have changed to improve student achievement, "In the last few years we've gotten more technology available to help with teaching strategies, to pique students' interests more and kept them more engaged, which I think has helped with student success. I haven't seen the data to know if the vocabulary activities and stuff are making a huge impact. From what I've heard, the reading scores weren't very good. So if you go by that, I don't really know."
- A rural male elementary principal explained, "Prior to the new superintendent coming this year, there was a smart board in two high school rooms. This year, it's not necessarily smart boards; we put Bright Links up in every room. I think there's one room that doesn't have something. What we need to really do is start community nights to come in and see how we're using this stuff. That's one area we really need to improve on."

Theme 3: Culture

In the Culture category (Administrator and Teacher Survey Questions 18-31), the average response of all administrators was 3.90. The average response of teachers was 3.89.

The item "I am passionate about student learning" received the highest rating in the Culture category for both administrators and teachers. Administrators (4.78) and teachers (4.77) both rated this item between "agree" and "strongly agree."

Additionally, the item "Our school has shared beliefs and values that clearly knit our community together" received the lowest rating in the category for both administrators (3.50) and teachers (3.56), who rated it between "neutral" and "agree."

Table 8
Culture Highest and Lowest Mean Ratings

	Administrators	Teachers
Highest Mean Rating	4.78 "I am passionate about student learning."	4.77 "I am passionate about student learning."
Lowest Mean Rating	3.50 "Our school has shared beliefs and values that clearly knit our community together."	3.56 "Our school has shared beliefs and values that clearly knit our community together."

The largest mean discrepancy between teachers and administrators in the Culture category was "The culture of our school and our teachers includes commitment to high expectation." Teachers rated this item higher at 4.18 while administrators rated it lower at 3.89.

Administrator responses in the Culture category ranged from 1.00 to 5.00 with an average of 3.90. Rural administrators rated this category 3.74, whereas non-rural administrators rated it higher at 4.15. Male administrators rated the category 3.48, while female administrators rated it higher at 4.11. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience gave this category a rating of 3.57, while those with more than 20 years of experience gave it a higher 4.16 rating.

Teacher responses in the Culture category ranged from 1.00 to 5.00 with an average of 3.89. Rural teachers rated this category 3.85, whereas non-rural teachers rated it higher at 3.91. Male teachers gave this category a 3.77 rating, and female teachers gave it a higher rating of 3.90. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience gave this category a rating of 3.82, while teachers with 10-20 years of experience gave it a higher rating of 3.99, teachers with 20-30 years of experience gave it a rating of 3.90, and teachers with over 30 years of experience gave this category a rating of 3.87.

The survey reliability statistic (Cronbach's Alpha) for the category of Culture was .968 for administrators and .944 for teachers.

Culture Discussion

Survey Items with Supporting Interview Quotes

Item 18: "The culture of our school plays a dominant role in exemplary student performance." This item was rated 3.78 by administrators and 3.95 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item higher (3.82) than did non-rural administrators (3.71). Male administrators rated this item 3.33, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.00. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.63, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated it higher (3.90).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (3.84) than did teachers from non-rural schools (4.01). Male teachers rated this item lower (3.84) than did female teachers (3.96). Teachers with 20-30 years of experience rated this item similarly to teachers with over 30 years of experience (3.87 and 3.90, respectively). The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was 4.06, and was lower for teachers with less than 10 years of experience (3.94).

- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "With teachers, we all believe these kids can succeed. It takes more work. It takes more repetition. We have parents that - I don't think it's because they don't care, it's just that they are so busy just earning a living - that they don't necessarily spend the time that you would like. So I think teachers truly believe these kids can succeed."

- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "I think we have a staff that truly believes in the kids that are here. I think as a staff we hold high expectations for all of them."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "I think that's a big thing, I really do. Since I can't really speak for previous administrations since I wasn't here, to me the feeling I got when I first came here was that the support had not been there. That it was "they're your kids and get them where they need to be, just get them going."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator stated, "Amongst the staff, they try really hard to team and work together as much as they can. So supportive would be another word."

Item 19: "Parents, teachers, the principal, and students sense something special about our school." This item was rated 3.94 by administrators and 3.75 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item 3.73, while non-rural administrators rated this item higher at 4.29. Male administrators rated this item 3.33, while female administrators rated it higher at 4.25. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.63, while administrators with more than 20 years of experience rated it higher at 4.20.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.49, while non-rural teachers rated it higher at 3.89. There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.003). Male teachers rated this item 3.60, and female teachers gave it a higher rating of 3.77. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience and more than 30 years of experience had a similar item mean (3.74 and 3.77, respectively). The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was higher at 3.65, and was higher for teachers with 20-30 years of experience at 3.87.

- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator shared, "When I think of [our school], though, I think it's a very welcoming, caring community. I think the staff are 100% committed to the kids. They work with a challenging group of kids, and I don't think you would continue to work in a building like [our school] if you weren't dedicated and devoted."
- A rural female secondary teacher stated, "I think we could be a little bit more of an upbeat faculty, but I don't know. I try to stay away from negativity. There's moaning and groaning everywhere you go."
- Another rural female secondary teacher explained that she was leaving her school to teach at a higher-performing school, saying "I felt bad, because I don't want to feel like I am jumping ship or abandoning them, but when I had the opportunity, why wouldn't I want to do that? I've always said I loved it, the school. The community's good, too. I feel like these people here are like my family, and it's going to be really hard, that last day. I always thought we were progressive, that we got to try things, let's do FAME and see how it goes. Our department has always got to do a lot of things, and they give us a lot of flexibility and they let us do a lot of cool professional development. Just always feel like you can try new things, and you have a lot of support and the principal's wonderful, she's always been very supportive and encouraging. It's just this year has been really frustrating. The frustration has caused

me to think, 'this isn't fun.' Before, I liked coming to work. Now it's like a huge cloud."

Item 20: "Our school has shared beliefs and values that clearly knit our community together." This item was rated 3.50 by administrators and 3.56 by teachers.

Administrators rated this item the lowest in the Culture category. Rural administrators rated this item lower (3.18) than did non-rural administrators (4.00). Male administrators rated this item below "undecided" (2.83), while female administrators rated it close to "agree" at 3.83. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item "undecided" at 3.00, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item mostly "agree" at 3.90.

Teachers also rated this item the lowest in the Culture category. Rural teachers rated this item significantly lower (3.33) than did non-rural teachers (3.68) (p=.010). Male teachers rated this item 3.40, while female teachers rated it 3.58. Teachers with various levels of experience rated this item similarly. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.46, was higher for teachers with 10-20 years of experience (3.73), and was between "undecided" and "agree" for teachers with 20-30 and over 30 years of experience (3.53 and 3.58, respectively).

- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "I think we have a good school climate. It's always been very positive. A lot of things go on in the community to support the school. We have a Chamber of Commerce group that is always trying to do things. We're in the process of getting a parent-teacher organization going, and that's always been positive. It's usually a little closer to the sports side, the athletics side, because we've had some good teams. But overall, there's a lot of support for this school. We have a lot of parent support. When we have parent conferences in the elementary, we generally have 100% turnout, which is good. High school isn't quite as much, but generally pretty high numbers also."
- Another rural female elementary teacher explained, "Of course, if we as teachers all get along and collaborate more, that makes a better atmosphere for everyone, because then we're not doing different things, we're trying to work together for the success of all the kids, not just my 3rd grade. All the kids are ours, and not just the 3rd grade is mine. So we're trying to create more of a culture like that. I think we've had a culture in the past of 'these are my 1st graders, so they're mine and I'll do the best I can, but it doesn't matter.'"
- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "[Our school] is a *Behavior Intervention Support Team* (BIST) school, so it's never okay to be hurtful or disruptive. We do have the BIST continuum of the safe seat, buddy room, all those things. But it really comes down to the relationship. You're not going to do anything without the relationship first. So those first few weeks of school are huge in setting up your structures and your routines and building the relationship and getting to know each individual."

Item 21: "Our organizational culture is conducive to the successful improvement of teaching and learning." This item was rated by administrators as 3.89 and by teachers as 3.83.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.82) than did non-rural administrators (4.00). Male administrators rated this item lower than did female administrators (3.33 and 4.17 respectively). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.63, while administrators with over 20 years rated this item higher at 4.10.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (3.76) than did non-rural teachers (3.87). Male teachers rated this item slightly higher (3.88) than did female teachers (3.83). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience and more than 30 years of experience had a similar item mean (3.79 and 3.77, respectively). Teachers with 10-20 years of experience and 20-30 years of experience also had a similar item mean (3.88 and 3.89, respectively).

- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "Anytime you have culture that creates teamwork, no matter what, your instruction is going to go up, because you just feel - it's that feeling of safety and acceptance."
- A non-rural female elementary assistant principal shared, "I think it's gone up, absolutely. The other pieces you might have noticed, we have really instilled a safe and orderly environment. That's been a huge - I'm not saying it wasn't safe and orderly before - but we put lots of building expectations - this was collaborative, we had teachers go to BIST training in the summer, and we came up with building-wide expectations for the playground, for the hallways, for the lunch room, for the auditorium. How you arrive in the morning, how we leave. Teachers helped come up with all that, we broke into subcommittees. Safe and orderly is huge, because when kids walk in the door, they have to feel safe and it has to be as calm as it can be. So that's another huge piece to this collaborative effort. We collaborated for three days this summer, and then our specialist team made videos of the kids doing all the things the way of the expectations and that was shown to all the kids in the classrooms. But that piece was huge as well. 'Working together, we're doing this together and learning together.'"
- A non-rural female elementary teacher responded, "As far as staff working together, I feel like we've done that better in the last couple years, more open and not feeling like 'these are just my kids and this is what I'm doing.' That these are *our* kids, and what are *we* going to do to get these kids where we need to be, regardless of whether they're my 2nd graders now or your 3rd graders [later]. How do we work together?"

Item 22: "The culture of our school is totally focused on student learning." This item was rated by administrators as 4.00 and by teachers as 4.03.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.91) than did non-rural administrators (4.14). Male administrators rated this item 3.67, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.17. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.88, while administrators with more than 20 years of experience rated it higher at 4.10.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (3.99) than did non-rural teachers (4.06). Male teachers rated this item lower (3.76) than did female teachers (4.07). The item mean for teachers with less than 10, 20-30, and more than 30 years of experience was similar (4.00, 4.00, and 3.97, respectively). The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was higher at 4.16.

- A rural female elementary administrator reported, "The conversations that I hear are much more focused on student achievement and 'if you run into this, what do you do about it?' They're talking to each other about last year's students, 'did you try this last year? Did it work?' Those professional conversations are just much higher-level."
- A non-rural male elementary principal shared, "We haven't met in vertical teams, but they've had some of those conversations at some of our Kid Talk meetings. We meet every Friday in what's called Kid Talk meetings, and a couple of those meetings actually have met in vertical teams. But as a school improvement team we've talked about having more consistent vertical teaming meetings at those Friday meetings. But that isn't something that we've consistently put in place. I feel good about some of those conversations. The impact on student achievement . . . just early on, we've gotten about half the students who have taken the NeSA reading test. You can get those preliminary results. I feel a lot better about what I'm seeing than I did last year when I first checked."
- A rural male elementary principal stated, "We've discussed through our group of seven teachers in the elementary, 'what are you doing that's working?' 'This person uses hands-on projects every two weeks, you're not.' It's been very hard. One teacher feels like all this is her fault because she teaches 4th, 5th, and 6th grade math. She feels she hasn't been doing her job, or that everyone thinks she hasn't been doing her job. We say, 'No, not necessarily. A lot of other factors go into it. Just push even harder on these things we talked about, through our Terra-Nova exam where we dug through it. Work even harder at those, work at basic facts.' We've had other teachers step up. Our two 4th, 5th, 6th grade teachers that teach science and social studies have said, 'give us some stuff.' 'I can take ten minutes out of my day in the afternoon and work on some things. Let's work together, let's not make it only your problem.' That's one of the things I've felt best about this Title I improvement plan and School Improvement Grant and Tier I status. All our teachers want to improve and get off this, they all know what's at stake. There's just some having a hard time giving up what they've done for 25 years."

Item 23: "The culture of our school and our teachers includes commitment to high expectation." This item was rated 3.89 by administrators and 4.18 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.82) than did non-rural administrators (4.00). Male administrators rated this item 3.17, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.25. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.63, and administrators with over 30 years of experience rated this item mostly "agree" at 4.10.

Teachers from rural schools and non-rural schools gave this item a similar average mean (4.20 and 4.17, respectively). Male teachers rated this item 4.04, while female teachers rated it higher at 4.20. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 4.11. Teachers with 10-20 and over 30 years of experience gave this item a similar rating (4.25 and 4.26, respectively). Teachers with 20-30 years of experience gave this item a rating of 4.18.

- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "You always have people that don't necessarily like to do everything. There are a lot of complaints about paperwork. But for the most part, we're a pretty cohesive staff that works really hard to boost the achievement of our kids. We know bottom-line it's for them, to benefit them."
- A rural female secondary teacher shared, "There's a perception that we baby students. There's an atmosphere of enabling, that's how I say it. We've gone away from giving a lot of homework. Last year we had book groups where the principal picked out a book and then we met during our plan times and discusses the book, and one of them was this idea of not giving so much homework. It had some good points: making sure it was truly valuable and there was a real purpose for it so it wasn't just meaningless stuff that would take children away from their families in the evenings and other things they needed to do. I used to give a lot more homework. I hardly give homework any more. I don't send books home with them. We read them in class. I don't know if that's because we think they can't do it? Maybe there's some of that going on. It seems like we give them a lot of help. We're going to do this for you, we're going to make sure you pass, we're going to do this, this, this. Maybe it's too much." When asked if she didn't think they had very high expectations, she replied, "I don't think we do. I think we hold their hands."
- A rural female secondary teacher went on to elaborate on this sentiment, "One that we thought should have taken Honors English class, she opted out. We think that it's an easy way, sometimes. Sometimes they need it – single, young mothers and unusual circumstances. I think if we said, 'you do the work or you're going to fail,' or 'if your family chooses to take you out of school for a month, we're not just going to catch you up when you get back and make it all okay. You will not get credit and you're going to have to take it again.' But we don't, we figure out a way and we get everybody all set. I think the intentions are out of compassion and wanting the best for the kids. On the other hand, the classes where I had to work my butt off are the ones that I felt proud of. The ones that gave me stuff, it didn't matter if you had an A, because everybody got an A."

Item 24: "The culture of our school encourages innovation, dialogue and the search for new ideas." This item was rated 3.83 by administrators and 3.82 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.64) than did non-rural administrators (4.14). Male administrators rated this item lower (3.33) than did female administrators (4.08). The item mean for administrators with less than 20 years of experience was 3.50, and for those with more than 20 years of experience was 4.10.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (3.71) than did non-rural teachers (3.88). Male teachers rated this item 3.56, while female teachers rated it 3.85. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience and 20-30 years of experience rated this item similarly (3.75 and

3.76, respectively). Teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated this item higher at 4.10. Teachers with over 30 years of experience rated it lower at 3.61.

- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "The collaboration at our team meetings is also huge because at least in kindergarten, the goal we focused on for our team meetings is taking that engagement, looking at the curriculum that's coming up, where's the next thing we're really going to dive into? So it's collaboration on who's got what idea, what have you tried, what have I not tried, how did it go, why didn't it work. Last year when we had our team meetings, one week it would be just your team and the next week it would be K-1 together. So it was collaboration with two grade-levels combined. We didn't do that this year, I don't know why. It was nice to hear from the 1st grades too, so it would be 2-3 and then 4-5. It's hard to find that time otherwise to go and pull the whole team together. Otherwise, collaboration, the entire staff did the Gallup Strengths Finder this summer, so at our staff meetings, you don't sit with your team, you sit with your number two strength or your number . . . so then, whatever we focus on in that staff meeting, who knows who I'm collaborating with. But that's nice too because I hear things that I never would have thought of or known about. So that's good."
- A rural female elementary administrator shared, "I think they're talking to each other a lot more. They're asking questions, they're visiting each other's classrooms to see how some of the strategies are implemented. For example, ELLA, the Academic Language Program. They're really starting to talk to each other about the behaviors that they see with the students, what worked and what didn't. How certain things might go together in the reading core program or the math core program. Before there weren't a lot of conversations. They kind of winged it, it was like six or seven little country schools. They weren't together. It was forced at the start, and 'this is how it's going to be.' There were some bridges to get over, but they've made it, they've done it, they're doing it."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "Teachers help make those decisions because we're the ones that have our other team members' ideas and opinions. If he has an idea that we think people aren't going to go for or that's not going to work, he's very receptive to listening to what we think will work and what we're willing to try. So it's facilitate, lead, and be part of, as far as administration goes."
- A male rural elementary principal shared, "The culture of our school is actually pretty good in wanting kids to learn. The value of education is there amongst teachers, but we do have a lot of those teachers that are on the edge of retirement and see everything happening as a fad, 'it's cyclical, it'll go away after a while.' We're trying to explain to them that that's not necessarily true. So we're very fearful with the status we're on that we're going to have some feet-draggers, and we're already beginning to see that. Overall, as far as our staff, everyone gets along, we work together, we do a lot of good things, but we have a lot of those teachers that still have the mind, 'I've done this for 20 years and no one's told me it was wrong then, so why would I need to change it now?' That whole thought process needs to change. I think the 'I've been doing this for 20 years' has had a real negative effect on student achievement, honestly. 'I don't want to change for the times, technology is a cuss word in my room.' That's changed slowly, but we still have some of that, we have

interactive white boards, I don't think it's been turned on once. That's a real issue with me. I've seen it in use in our younger elementary classrooms, but also our younger teachers are in our younger elementary classrooms."

Item 25: "The culture of our school initiates caring, sharing, and mutual help among staff and students." This item was rated 3.94 by administrators and 3.84 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item 3.73, while non-rural administrators rated it higher at 4.29. Male administrators rated this item 3.83, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.00. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.50, and administrators with more than 20 years of experience rated it higher at 4.30.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.89, while teachers from non-rural schools rated this item lower at 3.80. Male teachers rated this item lower (3.76) than did female teachers (3.85). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item at 3.74, while teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated it higher at 4.00. Teachers with 20-30 and over 30 years of experience rated this item similarly (3.84 and 3.81, respectively).

- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "You can see people wandering down the hallways in the mornings or after school, or popping in. Even in the dining room when we're eating lunch. I think through the things they've put in place, you start getting people that make those connections, and 'I did sit with you at this meeting, I'm feeling a little more comfortable with you' as opposed to 'I don't know, you teach 4th grade and I don't ever see you.'"
- A rural female secondary principal shared, "In the last few years we've had planning meetings to build rapport, and we've had book discussions. We've taken the topic of homework and discussed that. In the last three-four years, we've read six books. We've read books on student poverty and how that affects their learning. Not Ruby Payne, but something similar. We've gone to Ruby Payne workshops. We read a book on homework, we read a book on teaching reading in all content areas."
- A rural female elementary principal stated, "Tomorrow we'll be modeling as well. They'll be presenting English Literacy and Language Assessment (ELLA) lessons with each other. We'll have intermediate teachers presenting to everyone in their own classrooms tomorrow, modeling what that looks like, and then we will be talking about strengths and weaknesses, how would we change something."

Item 26: "The culture of our school is based on respect, trust and shared power among staff." This item was rated 3.72 by administrators and 3.59 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item 3.55, lower than did non-rural administrators (4.00). Male administrators rated this item 3.50, while female administrators rated this item higher at 3.83. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.25, while administrators with more than 20 years of experience rated it higher at 4.10.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item higher (3.67) than did non-rural teachers (3.54). Male teachers rated this item 3.68, while female teachers rated it lower at 3.57. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.48. Teachers with 10-20 years of

experience and 20-30 years of experience gave this item the same rating of 3.67, while teachers with more than 30 years of experience rated it 3.61.

- A non-rural male elementary principal stated, "I'm feeling much better about where we're at in that process and that came out last year when we were having our conversations around building our professional development plan. Teachers were really starting to look at themselves and that emphasis was on their improvement of instruction. There are still some naysayers. I think that has had a positive impact on the way that we interact and work with each other and work together as a team - in the past when somebody's starting to go in that direction as far as blaming students, everybody else would have followed. Now I'm hearing teams pulling those teachers back, shifting the focus back, which is a positive thing. We're not fully there as an entire staff but I think our culture really improved to where teams are feeling a lot more comfortable about some of those difficult conversations while still staying focused on what we're about, and that's in the best interest of students."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator shared, "I think that there's definitely, like in any building, staff that have cliques, that group together and don't always agree with other people. That's something we've really worked on. There is some lack of communication between staff and one of our administrators. Frustration. But with the other administrator it's very positive and communication is great. So that's something we're trying to work on as well."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "I think it was a shift in thinking, but I think the support of helping each other and understanding that 'yes, what I'm doing in kindergarten definitely affects you in 5th grade' - I think that's a belief that most people had but it was something that might have been forgotten. So it was a shift in thinking but I think it's been embraced."

Item 27: "The culture of our school fosters school effectiveness and productivity." This item was rated 3.89 by administrators and 3.82 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.73) than did non-rural administrators (4.14). Male administrators rated this item 3.67, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.00. The item mean for administrators with less than 20 years of experience was lower (3.63) than the mean given by administrators with more than 20 years of experience (4.10).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item higher (3.87) than did non-rural teachers (3.79). Male teachers rated this item 3.64, while female teachers gave it a higher rating of 3.84. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item between "undecided" and "agree" at 3.64, while teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated this item "agree" at 4.04. Teachers with 20-30 years of experience and over 30 years of experience rated this item similarly (3.84 and 3.87, respectively).

- A non-rural female elementary assistant principal responded when asked if curriculum alignment in her school took place, "As teams they would sit and do that. That took a lot of time, I remember them talking about [it]. But they talk about how great that was because within a reading anthology, a teachers' book, whatever, there's

a lot of things there. You can't do everything. You need to do the things that align with the standards. So it really focused their instruction."

- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "I think the culture that we've created here of 'you are a team, this whole building is a team, we're supporting each other, we're going to look for your strengths and how can you dive in and help,' that's helped huge. I have other teachers that come and talk to me about kids I've never had because they're in upper grades, but we can make that connection about 'how can I help you?' I have a 3rd grader and a 4th grader that comes to my room daily, because they need something different. I think that culture's been huge in helping people bridge the gap."
- A rural male elementary teacher shared, "I see teachers feeling more and more comfortable with asking difficult questions of other teachers on their teams and also of themselves. I see teachers engaging in more conversations with teachers at other grade-levels about 'what are some of your. . . ."

Item 28: "The culture of our school improves collegiality and collaboration." This item was rated 3.78 by administrators and 3.74 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.55) than did non-rural administrators (4.14). Male administrators rated this item 3.17, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.08. The item mean for administrators with less than 20 years of experience was 3.50, lower than the mean for administrators with over 20 years of experience (4.00).

Teachers from rural schools and non-rural schools rated this item similarly (3.72 and 3.75, respectively). Male teachers rated this item 3.64, while female teachers gave it a higher rating of 3.75. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.64, while teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated this item 3.76. The highest item mean for this item was given by teachers with 20-30 years of experience (3.87). The lowest item mean for this item was given by teachers with over 30 years of experience (3.00).

- A non-rural female elementary assistant principal explained, "I think everyone's realizing, we work together, we can't just be one person making this happen. We have to work together as a team, and that's where we're getting more of a collaborative model. We've had to put structures in place to help with that collaboration. We have an instructional coach. Teams meet weekly with the instructional coach. These are strategies to help the teachers grow. We have instructional conferences with our teachers every quarter. So they bring in their report card data. [The principal] and I sit there with them and say 'talk to us about your. . . .' Then we can see which kids move from very far below grade-level to now they're here . . . we have to know where they are. Otherwise it's hard. You may lose track of them. Just as the kids up here in the higher (group), they still need to be pushed too. . . . When asked what changed to enable this development, she responded, 'I think collaborating.'"
- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "I just came up and worked on my grades yesterday, and if I had any questions, there were two other teachers right next door in my building. So I would say that would be informal. So we're able to ask each other

questions. Another way that our teachers are collaborating this year is with our tech teams. The reading coach in my room and one of the 2nd grade teachers next door and our network manager, the computer teacher, and myself. I think they have all grade-levels represented."

- A rural female elementary teacher shared that collaboration has been the most important item to produce change, "Collaboration . . . the fidelity. Making sure that what is supposed to be getting done is getting done. But the collaboration has been a huge thing (they weren't doing that before). Change needed to happen. All in all it will be good for the school. There's some that drag their feet at times, but I think they're finally starting to see that it's not a choice, and 'jump in the boat or get off.'"

Item 29: "The culture of our school fosters better communication and problem-solving." This item was rated 3.78 by administrators and 3.67 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.55) than did non-rural administrators (4.14). Male administrators rated this item 3.50, while female administrators rated this item higher at 3.92. The item mean for administrators with less than 20 years of experience was lower, closer to "undecided" (3.25), than the item mean for administrators with more than 20 years of experience, which was mostly "agree" (4.20).

Teachers from rural schools and non-rural schools rated this item similarly (3.65 and 3.68, respectively). Male teachers rated this item 3.52, lower than the 3.69 rating given by female teachers. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.54, while teachers with 10-20 years and over 30 years of experience rated this item at 3.71. The highest item mean for this item was given by teachers with 20-30 years of experience (3.82).

- A rural female elementary teacher responded when asked if adopting Reading Mastery had helped collaboration, "It's helped a lot because when we move students from one grade-level to another according to their ability, you have to be more flexible to work with someone else. It's like working with the Title I lady - we work with her closely because she's a reading coach for us too. There's a lot of collaboration where you go back and forth all the time."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "Actually for classroom management, there's a teacher that uses it daily with the secretary to let her know when she's having a need with a student. So instead of using the telephone, we can use iChat."
- On the contrary, a rural female elementary Title I teacher explained that her school had changed their focus from reading to math but this needed to have been communicated last year, "This year, at the beginning of the year we changed our focus to math. We should have switched last year. A lot of things were brought to the staff's attention as to our situation that we didn't know prior. This year we hit it hard. As far as math, we should have been dealing with it at the end of last year or during the school year last year. It was a shock to some."
- A rural female elementary Title I teacher explained why the school's climate was conducive to school improvement, "I think it is highly conducive. It's a positive environment. We try to bring students in, pull them out of other areas so that we have a higher population. We're working on the communication between staff. Everyone

here gets along really well 95% of the time. We're trying to do a better job of communicating with parents and community members so you have that positive. . . ."

Item 30: "The culture of our school fosters successful change and improvement efforts." This item was rated 3.89 by administrators and 3.88 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.64) than did non-rural administrators (4.29). Male administrators rated this item 3.33, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.17. The item mean for administrators with less than 20 years of experience was lower (3.38) than that for administrators with over 20 years of experience (4.30).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item higher (3.96) than did non-rural teachers (3.83). Male teachers rated this item 3.68, while female teachers gave it a higher rating of 3.91. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.79, similar to the rating given by teachers with 20-30 years of experience (3.80). Teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated this item higher at 4.12, while teachers with over 30 years of experience rated it highest at 3.84.

- A rural female elementary principal shared, "What I needed to do when I first came into the district was to find out the culture of the community, and how people had generally worked together. What I found was that they were pretty isolated, and so I developed a leadership team. We looked at what people needed, our evaluators came in and did a needs survey, not from the teachers' standpoint but also from parents' and para-educators'."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained commitment to the school's goals, "I think that was a discussion we had at the beginning. I think in our heads, intellectually, people said 'yes, we're ready for it.' I'm not sure that *everybody* is ready for it, but I think the majority of us are."
- A rural female elementary administrator shared regarding whether the culture at her school was conducive to successful improvement, "I think it's a very positive one. It's been hard, this change process. We reconfigured some of the grades, moved teachers around. The first semester was really difficult for everybody. It was a lot of change. But since Christmas, I've really noticed, it's coming together. People are expecting it, this is the way we're going."
- A rural female secondary teacher explained how and why she decided to embark on more professional development and culture was not a motivating factor, "I'm motivated by wanting to move over on the salary schedule. Now I'm all the way over and I'm not taking anymore."

Item 31: "I am passionate about student learning." This item was rated 4.78 by administrators and 4.77 by teachers.

Administrators rated this item the highest in the Culture category. Rural administrators rated this item lower (4.73) than did non-rural administrators (4.86). Male administrators rated this item 4.67, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.83. The item

mean for administrators with less than 20 years of experience was 4.63, while administrators with more than 20 years of experience rated it higher at 4.90.

Teachers also rated this item the highest in the Culture category. Rural teachers rated this item higher (4.83) than did non-rural teachers (4.74). Male teachers rated this item 4.72, while female teachers gave it a rating of 4.78. Teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated this item 4.76, while teachers with 20-30 years of experience rated this item the same as teachers with over 30 years of experience at 4.71. The highest item mean for this item was given by teachers with less than 10 years of experience (4.83).

- A rural female elementary teacher clarified, "I'm . . . more conscientious now that we've gone through this process of making sure you do several strategies so you're covering every kid the best you can. I did strategies before, but I'm much more conscientious now."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "I'll always show him, 'here's where you started, here's where you are now.' He's not on grade-level yet, but he's a lot farther than he was, a *lot* farther. He stands a chance at actually performing really well. So having those conversations with kids and involving them in their learning, because it's not me. We track their theme test scores, we grab them. Every other week we do the comprehension test, 'what's your goal today? Here's what you've done in the past. Is it realistic to go from here to 100? Let's set a reasonable goal.' When they meet that they're so excited. So kids can see their successes, I think it is important."
- A rural female elementary principal explained, "The curriculum mapping is where I'm really pushing to change the skills, the assessments, how things are taught. I want to show teachers, her passion for student learning by encouraging more student engagement strategies in the classroom. That's my focus with the curriculum mapping is to really push them to see, 'from August to May, you've lectured in every unit. Is there another way you can teach that without having to lecture every day?'"

Theme 4: Instructional Strategies

In the Instructional Strategies category (Administrator and Teacher Survey Questions 32-42), the average response of all administrators was 3.97. The average response of teachers was 4.08.

The items rated strongest by administrators in the Instructional Strategies category were "Research-based interventions and instructional strategies help students improve in my school" and "Our school provides additional learning time for students who need it" (4.39). The item rated strongest by teachers in this category was "I search for strategies by using the internet, visiting other schools, and attending conferences" (4.32).

The item rated lowest by administrators in the Instructional Strategies category was, "Teachers in my school use peer coaching and peer review to improve their performance" (3.44). The item rated lowest by teachers was, "I break down and examine student performance data by grade, race, socioeconomic class, ethnicity, and disabilities" (3.61).

Table 9
Instructional Strategies Highest and Lowest Mean Ratings

	Administrators	Teachers
Highest Mean Rating	4.39 "Research-based interventions and instructional strategies help students improve in my school." "Our school provides additional learning time for students who need it."	4.32 "I search for strategies by using the internet, visiting other schools, and attending conferences."
Lowest Mean Rating	3.44 "Teachers in my school use peer coaching and peer review to improve their performance."	3.61 "I break down and examine student performance data by grade, race, socioeconomic class, ethnicity, and disabilities."

The largest mean discrepancy between teachers and administrators in the category was Item 36, "Teachers in my school search for strategies by using the internet, visiting other schools, and attending conferences." Teachers rated this item higher at 4.32, and administrators rated it lower at 3.89. The smallest mean discrepancy in this category was "Research-based interventions and instructional strategies are implemented based on the data analyzed for my school's Title I Improvement Plan," which both teachers and administrators rated 4.22.

Administrator responses in the Instructional Strategies category ranged from 1.00 to 5.00 with an average of 3.97. Rural administrators rated this category 3.86, whereas non-rural administrators rated it higher at 4.16. Male administrators rated the category 3.76, while female administrators rated it higher at 4.08. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience gave this category a rating of 3.83, while those with more than 20 years of experience gave it a higher rating of 4.09.

Teacher responses in the Instructional Strategies category ranged from 1.00 to 5.00 with an average of 4.08. Rural teachers rated this category 4.03, whereas non-rural teachers rated it higher at 4.11. Male teachers gave this category a 3.97 rating, and female teachers gave it a higher rating of 4.10. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience gave this category a rating of 4.06, while teachers with 10-20 years of experience gave it a higher rating of 4.16. Teachers with 20-30 years of experience gave it a lower rating of 4.07, and teachers with over 30 years of experience gave this category a rating of 4.01.

The survey reliability statistic (Cronbach's Alpha) for the category of Instructional Strategies was .916 for administrators and .837 for teachers.

Instructional Strategies Discussion

Survey Items with Supporting Interview Quotes

Item 32: "Teachers in my school collectively focus on how they can better reach their students in a way that works." This item was rated 4.06 by administrators and 4.20 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (4.00) than did non-rural administrators (4.14). Male administrators rated this item 3.67, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.25. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.88, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item 4.20.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (4.04) than did teachers from non-rural schools (4.29). There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.026). Male teachers rated this item lower (4.08) than did female teachers (4.21). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 4.17. The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was 4.10, for teachers with 20-30 years of experience 4.33, and for teachers with over 30 years of experience 4.23.

- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "Reading interventionist. Next year it'll be math and reading. It's a combination of pulling kids out and also working with kids in the classroom, it's a blend, whatever works the best for those students. Right now they're hitting those basic skills pretty hard and getting ready for the NeSA test. As I said, things are settling in."
- A rural female elementary teacher shared, "Right now that's maybe too much for us to handle, so we're trying to just work on individual instruction, targeted instruction in the classroom right now, and maybe in the future . . . maybe, 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade on their math, take the ones in number sense that are low in this particular strand, and then one teacher works with them, and then another teacher works with this group and so on."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "We have learning buddies within our building so I was observing my learning buddy and our goal was time on task and student engagement. That's a building thing to work on that. She had created a little check sheet that she could very easily put on her clipboard as she's teaching, taking a tally, how many kids do you see are engaged and working? So those quick little things, yes it takes a little more time, but in the end you know, 'I only have four kids paying attention to me. What can we do?' Those little things that help a teacher take a quick peek at what's going on"
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator explained, "We've been really trying to focus this year on unit studies or integrated studies, so your social studies, science, whatever. That has also been when we have had our pull-out interventions."
- A rural female secondary teacher explained, "This year we've really split into PLCs with departments and worked on 'how can we teach vocabulary, how can we teach reading in our content area?' We worked through strategies that way. Our PLC is once a month and it's an early-out day, so it's for about half-hour, 45 minutes."

- A rural female secondary teacher explained forms of teacher collaboration, "Through the PLCs, their goal this year was to form common assessments to be used throughout the math department, throughout the English department. That's what we've been working on. The common assessment is a type of assessment that's common in between the classes, because we each teach our own different subject area. We can't use the exact same assessment because I teach geometry and someone else teaches algebra."

Item 33: "Teachers in my school collectively reflect on instructional strategies used daily in the classroom." This item was rated 3.94 by administrators and 4.07 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.82) than did non-rural administrators (4.14). Male administrators rated this item 3.33, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.25. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.38, while those with over 20 years of experience rated this item higher (4.40).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.91, while teachers from non-rural schools rated it significantly higher at 4.16 (p=.039). Male teachers rated this item lower (3.96) than did female teachers (4.08). Teachers with 10-20 years and over 30 years of experience rated this item similarly (3.98 and 3.97, respectively). The item mean for teachers with less than 10 years of experience and 20-30 years of experience was higher at 4.11 and 4.16, respectively.

- A non-rural male elementary principal stated, "Within those PLC meetings, they truly do need to reflect on their instructional practices and 'are they having an impact on student achievement?' and if not, developing a different course of action or 'how are we going to do things differently with hopes of greater gains?'"
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "There's definitely a lot of instructional planning going on, and thinking about 'what is the best way to get through?' One of our appraisal goals this year for everyone was to increase achievement. So we've all done some reading on it, we've all tried different things. You get to go and observe your learning buddy and see what they're doing and talk about it."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "I think some of the biggest changes I've made is really looking harder at the curriculum and figuring out the best way I can get it to students, whether it be visually, verbally, kinesthetic, auditory. How am I really going to meet the needs of these kids based on both their learning strengths and what the curriculum is that needs to get across? I think that's a huge thing."
- A non-rural female elementary principal explained, "Last year we read *Classroom Instruction That Works* (Marzano, 2004), this year we read *Arts and Science of Teaching* (Marzano, 2007). There has to be work with the teachers becoming better teachers. We have huge challenges, so we have to get better at what we're doing. So we've spent a great deal of time the last two years in professional development so that the teachers could learn strategies to improve their instruction, their Tier I instruction, in order to get the kids to improve their responses on the tests and to achieve better."

Item 34: "Teachers in my school/ I use peer coaching and peer review to improve their performance." This item was rated 3.44 by administrators and 3.77 by teachers.

Administrators rated this item the lowest in the Instructional Strategies category. Rural administrators rated this item 3.18, while non-rural administrators rated it higher at 3.86. Male administrators rated this item 3.33, while female administrators rated this item 3.50. Administrators with less than 20 years rated this item 3.25, while those with over 20 years of experience rated this item higher (3.60).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.63, while non-rural teachers rated it higher at 3.86. Male teachers rated this item between "neutral" and "agree," with an average response of 3.60, whereas female teachers rated it closer to "agree" at 3.80. Teachers with 10-20 years and 20-30 years of experience rated this item similarly (3.80 and 3.78, respectively). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated it higher at 3.86, and teachers with over 30 years of experience rated it lower at 3.48.

- A non-rural male elementary principal reflected on PLCs, "The work of our professional learning communities. I think prior to that from what I've heard, because they were put in place prior to me taking over here, there were lots of closed doors and just kind of 'leave me alone.' PLCs obviously don't allow for that. Teachers have opened up their classrooms and are engaged in more conversations around improvement of instruction and are using data to inform their practice."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher talked about the role of interventionists, "Interventionist. They work across grade-levels. They set up after the instructional meetings. When we can figure out, 'these are the kids that are just not getting it in math,' and 'these are the areas that they're not getting it in,' and then each grade has been assigned two intervention times a day. One for reading, one for math, where you are assigned these interventionists who come to your grade. Their biggest role is coming in and providing that extra boost. So for kindergarten in math, we had some students that in number sense, the only thing holding them back was being able to physically write the numbers. So that interventionist came down and was able to give some extra time in handwriting practice. It's the boost they needed to meet the standard."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher continued, "Right now with my leadership team, we had to develop how we communicate with each other, we did (book study) *Crucial Conversations* (Covey, 2002). We practiced with each other and we continue to practice."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "I might even go into one of my teachers' rooms that I'm mentoring, and then if they have questions or concerns about what they're doing, that might be something we can talk about when we collaborate. . . . Not so much an evaluation, just what worked well, like, 'I saw you did that, that was pretty good, I liked that idea, I think that would work well in my classroom,' and just take other people's ideas and talk. It helps to have somebody outside coming in, talking about what she sees as an outside person as opposed to . . . your colleague, sometimes, you're a little hesitant to say something. She'll come out and say, 'you did this, but what was *that* for?' Just ask those tough questions."

- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "We did get the training (for Reading Mastery) and we've assigned two members on staff to continually do the fidelity checks, talk with teachers and make sure they're going the route they should be. We haven't hired anybody out of Reading Mastery, but we have included our own people (to conduct the fidelity checks)."
- A rural female elementary Title I Coordinator shared, "They teach each other (teachers) too, so before they ever do it in their classroom, they have to implement it with their peers. Then our school improvement consultant, when she's here, she also goes into the classroom, does some follow-up observations with that same instrument."
- A rural male elementary principal explained, "We have created peer coaches to where I have five people in this building that oversee two or three others. If they have questions, they will submit paperwork to them or to the coach. So there are people involved that are going and meeting with teachers - if that teacher needs it. Now are they sitting down on a weekly basis and talking in small groups? That's not necessarily happening. But we do have people designated to go and be involved with certain teachers."

Item 35: "Teachers in my school act collectively to identify and solve problems." This item was rated 3.89 by administrators and 3.94 by teachers.

Administrators gave this item the lowest rating in the category of Instructional Strategies. Rural administrators rated this item 3.73, while non-rural administrators rated it higher at 4.14. Male administrators rated this item 3.67, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.00. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated the item 3.63. Administrators with more than 20 years of experience rated it 4.10.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (3.80) than did teachers from non-rural schools (4.02). Male teachers rated this item lower (3.88) than did female teachers (3.95). Teachers with less than 10 years and 20-30 years of experience rated this item similarly (3.94 and 3.96, respectively). Teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated it higher at 4.06, and teachers with over 30 years of experience rated it lower at 3.74.

- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "Each PLC, as part of the action plan, has to list some of the strategies that you hope to use. Each PLC gives many formative assessments, and that's exactly what they're used for. We look at them and say 'where is the weak point?' So we definitely use formative tests as formative tests. We've done a lot of work with staff as far as the difference between a formative and a summative, and pretty sure they all have it now."
- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "I guess you wouldn't call it a PLC, because if you define a PLC, it's more than two teachers getting together. It's essentially like a PLC. We get together and talk about what's working and not working and we talk, we write out too what we're going to do as a next step. Then we set a time and a date or whatever. For me it's with the 4th grade teacher and the 2nd grade teacher. Trying to learn what comes before and what I need to prepare my students for afterwards."

- A non-rural male elementary principal explained, "So I think restructuring that instructional day will help. What we plan on doing here is more intervention support or staffing in the classroom, more collaborative planning and co-teaching taking place rather than pulling out of students. It'll be more students in their classroom involved in Tier I instruction, re-teaching and review in the classroom rather than pulling out. Our highest needs students will still be probably getting some of that pull-out work within the SPED area, and then also some students who will be in RTI."
- A non-rural male elementary principal reflected on Rti, "Right now that's already been on their plates through Tier I+ math instruction, and that re-teaching and those flexible and fluid groupings. That is something that is taking place across the grade-levels. Classroom teachers are the ones that are responsible for that. It's going to be difficult though - I know that one challenge we sometimes have is breaking that mindset that some have, 'this student is struggling, they need to be in this group.' It's now going to be 'they're going to be in the classroom setting, but now what are you going to do as a team or how can you restructure that 30 minutes of re-teaching and review time so that you do have more of those fluid and flexible groupings? Those students who don't need re-teaching, what enrichment activities are you doing with those students?' That's going to be done at grade-level."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "I help coordinate the student assistance team meetings. I'm an active participant in that. We're constantly looking at student achievement in there, and implementing intervention, and 'are they making progress?' Then when we get to the point of moving a student into special education, I do the evaluation for that. Again we're looking at student achievement at that point. Once they are identified for special education through the IEP process, we're looking at what kind of progress are they making."

Item 36: "Teachers in my school/ I search for strategies by using the internet, visiting other schools, and attending conferences." This item was rated 3.89 by administrators and 4.32 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.73) than did non-rural administrators (4.14). Male administrators rated this item lower (3.50) than did female administrators (4.08). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.63, lower than what administrators with more than 20 years of experience rated it (4.10).

Teachers rated this item the highest in the Instructional Strategies category. Rural teachers rated this item 4.37, while non-rural teachers gave it a lower rating of 4.29. Male teachers rated this item lower (4.20) than did female teachers (4.33). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 4.41. Teachers with 20-30 years and over 30 years of experience rated this item significantly lower than teachers with less than 10 years of experience at 4.09 ($p=.034$) and 4.06 ($p=.049$), respectively. The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was significantly higher than the rating given by teachers with over 30 years of experience at 4.53 ($p=.007$).

- A rural male principal shared, "I started a book study at the beginning of this year on Marzano's instructional strategies because I honestly feel that we worksheet our kids to death, we lecture-note our kids to death."

- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "I think our school does a really good job. Most of our grade-levels are doing some type of - like the 4th grade's doing ALIS, I think each grade-level is doing that. We were going to do it anyway before it came out that it was going to be for Title I schools, our 4th grade had signed up for it. We've got teachers that have been teaching forever that still want to learn new things and new ways to meet the kids' needs. Even though we say 'oh, I've got class tonight!' you go. It just means I've got this work to do."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "I've actually gone to two conferences with other team members from the school to help with this. They're Kagan's (Dr. Spencer Kagan and Associates) Cooperative Learning Conferences. Then we come back and share what we've learned, and those Cooperative Learning strategies directly increase engagement. It just gets kids incredibly involved and motivated, it gets them up and moving and excited about what they're doing. That's a huge, huge thing."

Item 37: "Teachers in my school/ I break down and examine student performance data by grade, race, socioeconomic class, ethnicity, and disabilities." This item was rated 3.67 by administrators and 3.61 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item higher (3.73) than did non-rural administrators (3.57). Male administrators rated this item higher (3.50) than did female administrators (3.75). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.63, while those with over 20 years of experience rated this item slightly higher (3.70).

Teachers rated this item the lowest in the Instructional Strategies category. Rural teachers rated this item 3.75, while non-rural teachers gave it a lower rating of 3.53. Male teachers and female teachers rated this item similarly (3.60 and 3.61, respectively). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.47. The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was 3.75, for teachers with 20-30 years of experience was 3.53, and for teachers with over 30 years of experience was 3.87.

- A non-rural female elementary principal stated, "But what are the strategies, what can we put in place to help with that? You have to look at the instruction and you have to be really, really strategic and specific about 'what are we going to do?' This is showing us they don't know how to do this skill. What are we going to do differently next time? Because if 40% of our kids still don't know, I don't know. How are we going to find out some other strategies?"
- A rural male elementary principal stated, "They're doing the RtI interventions, kids are being taken to the Title I teacher, reading coach, they're doing 6 minute solutions in the classroom, they're doing partner reads in the classroom, they're doing daily check-outs for those students that may be struggling or at a certain tier in the RtI. Automatic word lists."
- A rural female elementary teacher said, "There's really no other way to get them beyond where they are, you can't expect them - you even have kids that are maybe in one grade that are two grades behind. In that case, they get a lot of assistance through SPED and through the reading intervention. We have other programs implemented where they come into the classroom or go out of the classroom, we have both pull-in

and pull-out here. We're working more collaboratively with that aspect too as far as the reading intervention and the SPED, trying to use paras and those people in the classroom as well as pulling some of the kids out, or groups of kids out."

Item 38: "Teachers in my school/ I reflect and compare their/my actual teaching practice to what they/ I had planned and hoped to achieve." This item was rated 3.72 by administrators and 3.89 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.64) than did non-rural administrators (3.86). Male administrators rated this item "undecided" at 3.00, while female administrators rated it mostly "agree" at 4.08. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.50, while those with over 20 years of experience rated this item higher (3.90).

Teachers from rural schools and non-rural schools both rated this item 3.89. Male teachers and female teachers rated this item similarly (3.92 and 3.89, respectively). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.98. The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was 3.92, for teachers with 20-30 years of experience was 3.87, and for teachers with over 30 years of experience was 3.65.

- A non-rural female elementary principal explained, "I really hone in on specific things, and engagement's always going to be one of them. Is the objective stated, is it posted? I look at chunks of time. Do they balance their lesson between 'when I'm learning it' to 'when I get to practice it with you' and then 'I practice it by myself?' Is there a balance? Or is it all practice with the teacher, now do it by yourself. That's not okay."
- A non-rural female elementary principal shared what strategies have been most important in passing AYP last year, "Focusing on our instruction. Focusing into what it is kids need to be able to do. How are we going to get there? What are we going to do when they aren't? What are those interventions going to look like? Master schedule was huge. Putting all of our SPED kids back in the classrooms, (that was) huge. This was more of a pull-out program here before. Therefore kids were not getting grade-level curriculum. They were not getting guaranteed and viable curriculum. There's no way they can be proficient if they've never heard it. So those pieces were huge. (Also), having targets as a staff. Using our book, really focusing on 'these are effective strategies for teaching' and really focusing on those and really bringing them into the classroom, I think has made a huge difference."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "I found myself instructionally really breaking that down for kids. So as a teacher I knew, when we got done with that problem, that they understood it and they knew how to go about breaking down a problem to solve it when it's in words. I've tried to make sure that I give my kids time to read, time to read with partners - which can be done without changing a lot of things in my classroom, and can be done in short amounts of time."
- A non-rural male elementary principal stated, "Lesson design and then lesson follow-through. I look for an active and engaging learning environment. Teachers know it's my expectation that I should hear the objectives stated, a clear learning focus should be stated and posted for students, and I expect to see direct instruction and then a

gradual release of responsibility through guided practice and then independent practice, and the lesson is brought to proper closure."

- A non-rural female elementary principal stated, "So I watch and give them feedback on those pieces to an effective lesson. Then I get them to reflect and question, because in order for them to grow, they have to reflect. I can tell them 'you're not doing that,' but you have to internalize that, reflect, and think about it, and more likely you'll get to see it in practice. These are the strategies, research-proven by Marzano, that we know, if we do these things, instruction goes up. That's our goals. Instruction, better teaching, better learning so kids can be proficient and know the information, so it all ties together."
- A rural female elementary teacher stated "Doing the fidelity checks helps me out so much because I see what they're doing, how they can improve, how I can improve, just based on what they're doing. It's just a quick sheet that we got through the Reading Mastery people. It goes through and it's like a survey, or a checklist [to see] if they're meeting it, if they're not, if it's not applicable. It covers everything, their expectations all the way to their classroom work, if they're following their curriculum to the T, because it has to be done exactly the way Reading Mastery says."

Item 39: "My teachers are/ I am implementing research-based interventions and strategies to meet Title I Goals." This item was rated 4.11 by administrators and 4.28 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.91) than did non-rural administrators (4.43). Male administrators rated this item higher (4.33) than did female administrators (4.00). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience and more than 20 years of experience rated this item similarly (4.13 and 4.10, respectively).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 4.21, while teachers from non-rural schools gave it a higher rating of 4.32. Male teachers rated this item significantly lower (3.92) than did female teachers (4.33) (p=.004). Teachers with 20-30 years of experience and over 30 years of experience rated this item similarly (4.33 and 4.32, respectively). Teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated this item higher at 4.37, while teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated it lower at 4.17.

- A rural male elementary principal stated, "Some of the interventions come from our Reading Mastery program. Other interventions, the reading coaches would search for and make sure they're scientific and research-based, and then they would build it. I don't know if either one of them pointed this out, but this is it (Points to book). . . . It has everything in here that the teachers do for interventions."
- A rural female elementary resource teacher reflected on the what she believed was the most important strategy in improving student achievement, "I would say Reading Mastery overall, and I would have to say all the interventions that we're doing, because there's not one that's any better than the other. All together then I think the bases are covered. I think, of course, being relational with the kids, and making it fun really works the best. Because when you're in such a highly-engaged program that takes so much energy both from kids and [teachers], you have to make sure you make it fun."

- A rural female elementary Title I coordinator also reflected on her perception of the strategies to improve student achievement, "I would say the Academic Language strategies, vocabulary strategies across the curriculum. They have a word-of-the-week in the elementary for both math and reading that's geared to the math and the NeSA vocabulary. Questioning and engagement strategies. Fidelity to the programs, to the core reading and math programs."
- A rural female elementary principal shared, "Every week, teachers are doing ELLA lessons and ELLA vocabulary lessons. Some of the teachers are not only doing ELLA lesson plans in reading but also science and social studies. So it's a lot of 'what do I do as a teacher, what do we do, what's your responsibility?' A lot of quantum strategies in the development. They have to do at least two ELLA lessons a week, plus vocabulary."
- A rural female elementary principal explained, "I've made a lot of major changes. The ELLA strategy on vocabulary teaching where the students have a vocabulary log, and you repeat the words, you count syllables, you look at re-spellings, depending on how deep you need to go in that particular word. The students are using it, they're discussing it with each other, then you give them more opportunities to use it in the classroom."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator explained their school's focus for instructional strategies, "Some other instructional strategies, specifically for our reading that we've really been focusing on, are repeated readings. We do a lot of that. We have the Quick Reads program here that we use, and then we also do a lot of repeated readings with texts we have within the building. I think it was 2nd grade, some of our students that aren't quite at grade-level but not really low enough that you want to do a pull-out, we've been doing some repeated readings."
- A rural female elementary principal explained their instructional strategies, "Various instructional strategies, Thinking Maps, and the Six Effective Math Strategies. That's going to be the focus."

Item 40: "Research-based interventions and instructional strategies help students improve in my school." This item was rated 4.39 by administrators and 4.29 by teachers.

Administrators rated this item the highest in the Instructional Strategies category, along with one other item. Rural administrators rated this item lower (4.36) than did non-rural administrators (4.43). Male administrators rated this item lower (4.33) than did female administrators (4.42). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.50, while those with over 20 years of experience rated this item lower (4.30).

Teachers from rural schools and non-rural schools rated this item similarly (4.28 and 4.29, respectively). Male teachers rated this item lower (4.08) than did female teachers (4.32). Teachers with 20-30 years of experience and over 30 years of experience rated this item similarly (4.22 and 4.19, respectively). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience and 10-20 years of experience rated this item higher at 4.27 and 4.43, respectively.

- A rural female elementary teacher explained their use of instructional research-based strategies, "There are times that I pull kids just for reading fluency, Quick Reads."

- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator shared "We're doing something a little different at our first grade level. The paraprofessionals (paras) are actually going in and they are a part of their centers in their reading center time. There are a couple of students that really have a hard time working independently during that time, so she's the center that they rotate to. She's there about 25 minutes."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator stated, "We use SOAR for one of our intervention groups. It focuses on reading intervention in the upper grades, and in the lower grades it has more [of a] fluency piece to it. That particular intervention has the reciprocal teaching model already built into it. Then there's a program called Lexia on the computer that looks at those phonics skills, doing some of that supplemental support within the classroom. There's so many different ones. Some other more packaged interventions that we use at the intervention level, we do Sonday, which is very phonics-based, to work on some of those phonetic skills. We use Early Success. As far as writing goes, the district created some supplemental documents."
- A rural male elementary principal commented on the first criteria they use to select the interventions, "Well, first of all, it (the interventions) needs to be scientific and research-based."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "Everything we talk about is research-based. What we're trying comes from the district. It is research-based or it wouldn't have gotten past those district leaders."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher explains, "Administration has picked a couple different things that we've really used a lot within our building, mainly because they are supposed to be research-based. We use a lot of Marzano and we're doing *The Art and Science of Teaching* (Marzano, 2007). Those are the two pieces that we as a building use a lot. Whether it be a data meeting or a SIP meeting, we talk about research-based learning a lot."
- A non-rural female elementary principal stated, "Through Marzano's book, *The Art and Science of Teaching,* [we] have honed in on several of those (interventions). Engagement's been our number one priority. Knowing the target. Through staff meetings, we model, this is what we're doing today, this is what you'll be able to do at the end of the month. That's the objective; this is where we're going. Then get teaching strategies, keep them engaged and make sure every kid gets the curriculum. That's huge. How can you be successful if you don't get the curriculum? That's very difficult to do. There are others within Marzano's book we've targeted. We've targeted 'hope' a lot this year, that all kids need to feel hopeful."
- A rural female secondary teacher addresses the discussion in her school on the use of research-based interventions, "We haven't talked about a lot of research-based interventions for staff to use."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained how their school adopts interventions, "They're research-based. We visited some schools that had them and saw them in action. We just felt confident, and both the administrators felt it would be a good choice after going to administrator conferences and asking 'what do you have? How do you like it?' I went to a couple schools and actually watched it in action."
- A rural female elementary resource teacher stated the intervention strategies she is using, "I'm using Quick Reads, which is reading a new passage with new words and

. . . I tutor kids when I'm not teaching a reading class and a spelling class and a language class. In my regular classroom, we do partner reading every day after every lesson, and so that gives the kids another opportunity to read their story one more time. We also do Endurance 6 Minute Solutions, which is a completely different passage, and that's a three-minute timed reading where they read with a partner and then we go over unfamiliar words and talk about their meaning and we even have them use it in a sentence. We have like a 5 day plan. It's just 20 minutes of the regular classroom and so they do this Endurance 6 Minute Solutions, that along with a partner reading. I also do daily reads, so that would be like a check-out passage from a familiar text, which is the lesson they just got done with. They also do a (one) minute timing on that with no more than three errors. The daily reads are - every five lessons, we have a check-out, and if the kids don't pass that on the first time, they do daily reads."

- A rural female elementary teacher shared, "The Pals strategy. They're in partners, we have a re-tell section and then we have a paragraph shrinking sentence, which, what they're going to do is paraphrase. Then the third section is predicting and inferring."
- A non-rural female elementary principal explained, "Something else we implemented was a master schedule to help with all of this. We have a master schedule in the building for interventionists. When there's intervention time, we can push a SPED intervention teacher. We have all hands on deck so we can get the groups small to really hone into 'what do these kids need? They need number sense. These guys just need to work on reading and writing their numbers. Let's do it.' So that's been - I don't know if that's a strategy - but that's a building component that's been huge. We only did that this year and again, focus. It's been better than it was last year. So those are some strategies. We've hit engagement, kids charting progress, just knowing what the learning target is."
- A rural male Title I coordinator explained a new instructional strategy at their school, "The latest has been vocabulary instruction, pre-teaching vocabulary. People were not really doing that before."
- A rural male elementary principal said, "I would say probably their daily partner reading, their 6 minute solutions, giving the kids more text in front of them during the reading time to read, and then also have regular curriculum in there. I see the scores. The kids, for their DIBELS progress-monitoring, they're moving. I had eight students just to see where they are, I tested them, and they're like 20 to 22 words above where they had the winter DIBELS. So I know it's happening out there, I just hope they can transfer it into the state NeSA. The DIBELS is something we hang our hat on, the DIBELS progress-monitoring, and the kids are hitting goals."

Item 41: "Our school provides additional learning time for students who need it." This item was rated 4.39 by administrators and 4.30 by teachers.

Administrators gave this item the highest rating in the category of Instructional Strategies, along with one other item. Rural administrators rated this item lower (4.18) than did non-rural administrators (4.71). Male administrators rated this item lower (4.17) than did female administrators (4.50). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.25. Administrators with more than 20 years of experience rated it higher at 4.50.

Teachers from rural schools and non-rural schools rated this item similarly (4.29 and 4.31, respectively). Male teachers rated this item 4.36, higher than the rating given by female teachers, 4.30. The highest mean for this item (4.41) was given by teachers with 10-20 years of experience. Teachers with over 30 years of experience rated this item similarly at 4.39. The lowest mean was given by teachers with less than 10 years of experience (4.21). Teachers with 20-30 years of experience rated the item 4.29.

- A rural female elementary resource teacher shared, "They bring their textbook over and they read in small groups or I have a few groups that are just one-on-one too. So yeah, there are quite a few interventions that we do."
- A rural female elementary resource teacher explained, "With tutoring I work on sounds, I do Quick Reads. We have the written version of the Quick Read program, and we've just purchased the online program too. So there are kids when they come three times a week they get to read the series of the Quick Reads online."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared how Rti intervention is integrated into the instruction program, "We have what's called Tier I+. That is a flexible group that each grade-level has scheduled in a time, usually a half-hour time in math, particularly, kids that are struggling on a certain objective are pulled out of - science and the social sciences - and re-taught and re-tested. That's a requirement. I would say that's one thing that every grade-level is expected to have . . . those kids go to that teacher for 30 minutes of time and are re-taught and re-tested on that specific objective. . . . But for me, that slotted amount of time where kids are focused on that is huge."
- A rural female elementary teacher shared, "Of course, the students that are on Individual Education Plan (IEPs) and things, they get a little extra too. The students that are on IEPs may not be severe special needs, so they'll work in Title too, sometimes. It just depends on her schedule, and she's very good at trying to schedule everything for you. If in the middle of the year you notice a student that's having some trouble, that's not a problem to just fit them in and figure out a time and it works."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "There is some time that our Special Ed teacher is involved in that, so Special Ed children can also get their minutes and their re-teaching done in that time too. During that hour block of time, each grade-level is given their resource teacher and interventionist. Actually, there are two, three intervention paras and two teachers, and those people are given to each grade-level for an hour each day."

Item 42: "Research-based interventions and instructional strategies are implemented based on the data analyzed for my school's Title I Improvement Plan." This item was rated 4.22 by administrators and 4.22 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (4.18) than did non-rural administrators (4.29). Male administrators rated this item 4.50, while female administrators rated this item lower at 4.08. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.38, while those with over 20 years of experience rated this item lower (4.10).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 4.16, while teachers from non-rural schools rated it higher at 4.25. Male teachers rated this item lower (4.08) than did female teachers (4.23). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated it 4.09, lower than did teachers with 10-20 years of experience (4.37). Teachers with 20-30 years of experience and over 30 years of experience rated this item similarly (4.24 and 4.26, respectively).

- A non-rural female elementary principal described her role in classroom instruction, "Definitely my role is helping with instruction. I co-facilitate instruction with the principal. I'm also the SPED coordinator for the building, so I meet with the SPED team bimonthly and we do the exact same things. What are SPED kids doing? There are some kids that are stuck, we problem solve together. We look at, what do we want to learn as a staff, where we feel our weaknesses are, where do we need growth? Since I've come here, a change for us as a district has moved to a more collaborative model for SPED kids, so our SPED teachers are going into the classroom and serving students. Therefore kids are getting guaranteed and viable curriculum, so that's been a huge shift in how we're doing business."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "I would have to say the Tier I+ is the most important intervention, it is a big one. I should say RtI, even though I'm not real crazy about the DIBELS, how they use success to assess. The fact those kids that aren't SPED still get extra help in reading. I think that's very important."
- A rural female elementary principal explained, "Unwrapping NWEA MAPS, the assessment piece (has been the most important element to improving student learning). We're still not done developing assessments and teachers' understanding of the variety of assessments, but taking NWEA MAPS first and making it an instructional tool, making it a growth model, really understanding the depth of it and utilizing it."

Theme 5: Professional Development

In the Professional Development category (Administrator and Teacher Survey Questions 43-50), the average response of all administrators was 4.13. The average response of teachers was 3.89.

The item rated strongest by both administrators and teachers within the Professional Development category was, "Professional development experiences have led to new classroom practices," as shown in Table 10. Administrators rated this item 4.39, while teachers rated this item 4.18.

The item rated weakest by both administrators and teachers was, "Teachers are encouraged to observe each other in the classroom." Administrators (3.61) and teachers (3.55) mostly rated this item between "neutral" and "agree."

The largest mean discrepancy in the Professional Development category was "Groups of teachers in my school have shared planning periods for professional growth/ I share planning periods with other teachers for professional growth." Administrators were more likely to rate this item "agree" at 4.33. However, teachers were more likely to rate this item between "undecided" and "agree" at 3.66.

Table 10
Professional Development Highest and Lowest Mean Ratings

	Administrators	Teachers
Highest Mean Rating	4.39 "Professional development experiences have led to new classroom practices."	4.18 "Professional development experiences have led to new classroom practices."
Lowest Mean Rating	3.61 "Teachers are encouraged to observe each other in the classroom."	3.55 "I am encouraged to observe other teachers in the classroom."

Administrator responses in the Professional Development category ranged from 1.00 to 5.00 with an average of 4.13. Rural administrators rated this category 3.88, whereas non-rural administrators rated it higher at 4.52. Male administrators rated the category 4.04, while female administrators rated it lower at 4.17. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience gave this category a rating of 3.91, while those with more than 20 years of experience gave it a 4.30 rating.

Teacher responses in the Professional Development category ranged from 1.00 to 5.00 with an average of 3.89. Rural teachers rated this category 3.72, whereas non-rural teachers rated it higher at 3.98. Male teachers gave this category a 3.76 rating, and female teachers gave it a higher rating of 3.90. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience gave this category a rating of 3.86, while teachers with 10-20 years of experience gave the category a rating of 3.91. Teachers with 20-30 years of experience gave the category a rating of 3.96, while teachers with more than 30 years of experience gave this category a 3.82.

The survey reliability statistic (Cronbach's Alpha) for the category of Professional Development was .929 for administrators and .860 for teachers.

Professional Development Discussion

Survey Items with Supporting Interview Quotes

Item 43: "Professional development needs at my school were based on analysis of data." This item was rated 4.22 by administrators and 3.85 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (4.09) than did non-rural administrators (4.43). Male administrators rated this item 4.50, while female administrators rated this item lower at 4.08. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.25, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated it lower at 4.20.

Teachers from rural schools and non-rural schools rated this item similarly (3.84 and 3.85, respectively). Male teachers rated this item lower (3.64) than did female teachers (3.87). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.83, similar to the 3.80 rating

given by teachers with 10-20 years of experience. The item mean for teachers with 20-30 years of experience was 3.91, and for teachers with over 30 years of experience was 3.87.

- A non-rural male elementary principal explained, "This year our focus was specifically on guided reading, and that came out of the data. Our NeSA scores last year in the area of reading were not where we wanted them to be. The school improvement team came up with a survey for staff as far as 'here's what our current information is telling us, what are areas you would like to identify for professional growth and what would you like to see us focus on for staff development?' Out of that came two things: guided reading and technology."
- A non-rural male elementary principal shared, "We had one hour of professional development in the use of technology or implementation of technology in classrooms. The data informed us on where it is that we needed to focus our time and efforts, and it was on how we can improve as educators so we can have that impact on student achievement."
- A non-rural male elementary principal continued, "What our school improvement team has done mainly at the beginning of the year [is] to educate staff as far as what the data means [and] then what this entire process means and needing to meet adequate yearly progress two years in a row. We did have a couple of sessions on that at the beginning of the school year. It hasn't been on-going, it was more isolated to our August staff development session. We ask teachers to come with the data prepared rather than sitting down, going through it . . . takes too long, and you've got ten minutes at the end to make adjustments."
- A non-rural female elementary principal described, "The principal and I, along with the SIP committee, look at building staff development. Where are we going, what do we want to show staff as far as on PLC days? What do we want staff to be working on this day? . . . (We determine this) based on where we feel the need is. We looked at action plans the other day, and we were like, 'wow, we need to be more specific on our strategies.' So we talk to teams about that, and then the next week, we said 'be more specific in your strategies, like what specific theme are you going to do?' Not talking generalities. We were being too broad. You have to hone in on being specific. The other staff meetings, we go back to Marzano, *The Art and Science of Teaching* (2007), and we let that guide [us]. That's consistent for us, we're focusing on instruction. So tying that back, that comes from everywhere. That guides us with our staff meetings."
- A rural male secondary Title I coordinator explained measuring the impact of professional development, "That's lacking, we have really not done that (measure whether professional development experiences have some impact). We know that teachers are doing them, but whether or not those specific things have made an adjustment to what we're doing, or made improvement in what the students are learning, I wouldn't say that we've done anything to measure that."
- A rural male secondary Title I coordinator shared, "Mostly whatever our ESU offered, there really was never straight guidance as to what we needed to do for professional development. We weren't a very data-driven school. We saw the data and what we needed to improve on, but we never set goals to go that direction. This is the first year for that. When we had our ILCD goal and direction is where we brought in the *Reaching the Hard to Teach* (Wood, 2002) and some reading in the

content field, because I felt our high school staff needed it. As far as elementary, I never did really see, other than what the ESU offered. They had letters training and rewards training and some other things along those lines but nothing that was fidelity-checked to make sure it was being used once they got it. That's been one of the major reasons we're at where we're at."

Item 44: "Professional development was provided to support the implementation of research-based interventions and strategies." This item was rated 4.28 by administrators and 4.02 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (4.09) than did non-rural administrators (4.57). Male administrators rated this item 4.33, while female administrators rated this item lower at 4.25. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.13, while those with more than 20 years of experience rated it higher at 4.40.

Teachers from rural schools gave this item a rating of 4.07, higher than the 4.00 rating given by non-rural teachers. Male teachers rated this item lower (3.72) than did female teachers (4.07), a significant difference (p=.049). The item mean for teachers with less than 10 years of experience was 3.91. Teachers with 10-20 years and over 30 years of experience rated this item similarly (4.06 and 4.03, respectively). Teachers with 20-30 years of experience rated this item 4.18.

- A rural female elementary administrator explained, "I think that professional development, this process - for example, the academic language, ELLA, it's on-site, and then she does follow-ups online. So we Skype in, and she has kind of a virtual meeting every month. Then she comes out four times a year to actually train some more, then she observes in classrooms, and coaches. It's that coaching model, that follow-up, that we have not ever really had the time to do. It's working. Some of the teachers that are the hardest core, [who] I didn't think would change, love it. They said that is the most valuable thing that they've had for a long time."
- A non-rural female Title I coordinator stated, "We're always using instructional strategies. This year one of our focuses has been our building professional development time. We've brought out some of the curriculum leaders from the district and have really focused on reading strategies and reciprocal teaching. The teachers have really taken those strategies back to the classroom. Last year our big focus was writing, so we had a lot of literacy coaches coming out and giving writing instructional strategies. Taking that time and reviewing those throughout the year and learning some new things has been really valuable in helping teachers take those back and apply them."
- A rural male secondary Title I coordinator discussed, "That's been a big part of our in-service plans. In-service plans always coordinate with our school improvement plans, which would be the same as our Title I goals. As an example, the academic vocabulary work, there is an expectation of teachers to use that. Another thing we've done is look at reading within the context area. They're decent, but I'm not an evaluator of the school. I can't say that I get into classrooms as often as I'd like to."
- A rural female elementary Resource teacher shared, "The NIFDI, the National Institute, they consulted with us - we're used to having people come in and observe

and give us feedback and critique us. This is our first year that we haven't . . . so now, our reading coaches and our curriculum director, they are taking over where they left off, so they come through and do our observations. It has been very helpful. You get over all the nervousness."

- A rural male elementary principal stated, "We try and schedule what we call practice sessions, where the teachers come together and the reading coach will bring something up that was brought at the beginning of the year, where we just need to bring some focus back to it. Then we'll say 'okay, for the next two weeks, when we go into classrooms this is going to be our focus, we're going to be focusing on the student teacher or we're going to be focusing on proper responses, positive responses, check and make sure your objectives, if your lesson is up on the board, questioning, student responses, how many student responses are correct in a minute.' So teachers always know exactly what we're going to be looking for. The last thing I want is for them to feel as if it's an 'I gotcha' system. I don't want that."
- A non-rural female elementary principal explained the most important strategy for improving student achievement, "Number one would be behavior. Being systematic, supportive, clear, and involving the parents so that they know, 'this is how it's going to be, this is how it is.' So behavior is critical. Setting up all the systems that we've set up for our teachers to be learners, so that they are viewing themselves as that and therefore, continuing to try to maintain their morale. I would say that an instructional coach, somebody on a weekly basis that's in there talking with them about instruction . . . I can't do that, I know I can't do that. But it's really important. I think that made a difference."

Item 45: "Professional development experiences have led to new classroom practices." This item was rated 4.39 by administrators and 4.18 by teachers.

Administrators rated this item the highest in the category of Professional Development. Rural administrators rated this item lower (4.09) than did non-rural administrators (4.86). Male administrators rated this item lower (4.17) than did female administrators (4.50). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.13, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item higher at 4.60.

Teachers also rated this item the highest in the category of Professional Development. Rural teachers rated this item lower (4.15) than did non-rural teachers (4.20). Male teachers rated this item 4.04, lower than the 4.20 rating given by female teachers. The item mean for teachers with less than 10 years of experience was 4.06, similar to that given by teachers with over 30 years of experience (4.03). Teachers with both 10-20 and 20-30 years of experience rated this item higher, at 4.29 and 4.36, respectively.

- A rural female secondary principal explains how reading the same book and discussing it with colleagues impacts classroom instruction, "It just depends upon the individual and how they've taken it. The last book we read was about homework. Some people have changed how they grade homework. Those that really needed to, have made some progress."
- A non-rural female elementary principal, "I've grouped kids really differently this year. That came from Kagan (Cooperative Learning Conferences), but it was

something I hadn't really thought about and put into practice - that there is a certain way that you should have them sitting together, and a reason behind it."

- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained that professional development has made a major impact on their teaching, "It's been major. Since I've gone to them I've been able to bring them to other people and staff. So my learning buddy, she hasn't gone to a conference. But she's seen what I've done and taken it back."
- A non-rural female elementary principal stated, "When I came I maybe saw one projector. I worked with the PTO and used some of our accountability money because we were in need of improvement, and not only did we buy the technology so every single classroom has their own laptops, a projector, a digital camera, and that's been a team effort of funding sources. We have provided professional development for all of that because how is that going to make you a better teacher, and how is that going to affect kids as learners? We've had instructional technology coaches in, and they worked in professional development but then also have come into the classroom and worked with the teachers to help them be better teachers."
- A non-rural male elementary principal stated, "As a staff and as a school improvement team our focus has been on the improvement of instruction. Our building professional development plan, our building flex plan, at some schools they put together a menu of options and teachers can select however they'd like to - well, the last two years we've been a lot more specific about what it is that we're doing as an entire staff. Last year, our focus was in the area of writing, because we had some of the lower writing scores within the state and we had a new writing curriculum that was coming on. So all seven of our buildings flex session hours were devoted to the new writing curriculum and improvement of instruction in writing. We partnered with the literacy coaches and they came out and I worked closely with teachers and the school improvement team. We helped develop areas of emphasis for those sessions."
- A non-rural male elementary principal shared, "The teachers also have been participating in ELLIS classes. They are constantly taking those classes and coming back and applying those skills and learning new things, so that's [at] the forefront for them."
- A rural male elementary principal stated, "The Quick Reads (Q-Reads), we had a person from Texas come in and all the 3rd and 4th grade teachers, the Title I, I even had two paras there because - oh, I forgot the after school program. We had after school program staff there so that they're familiar with the Quick Reads, the Q-Reads. Our after school program, there's only supposed to be a certain amount of time for homework but they pay attention and help a student with their reading and things like that."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "It's just been a lot of long hours. So you learn something new and then you implement it and then we learn something else new and we add it on."
- A non-rural female elementary principal stated, "Another piece we've done a lot with, we've involved coaches. We've had the math coaches out there, we've had reading coaches out here, SPED coaches out here. The district provides coaching.

We've had technology coaches out. The staff have loved that piece. It's learning. It's not pointing fingers. There's so much learning in education, because things change all the time. The staff has been appreciative to that. We've done some release times where staff has done a whole day with a coach and they've done cooperative planning and learning together, and they love that piece. Then they go back and can apply it right away. We've had SPED coaches come out and model strategies -sometimes it's easier to implement it, if you understand all the parts of it."

- A rural female elementary principal stated, "We also have Jim Fay's Teaching with Love and Logic, and we are now trainers. We're still practicing and piloting with each other before we build with other teachers that weren't a part of that."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator stated, "But I think these last two years, having the district coaches coming out and really working with our staff has really made the staff - I don't want to say focused - but just really value, appreciate, and carry out those strategies and realize the importance of them. It's really put it in the forefront for them because it's constantly being brought up in front of them. . . . You know what I think has been huge, is those instructional coaches coming out and working with teachers. I think that has been great. It's been time-consuming for teachers, but it has really been a good thing. It's really helped them focus on certain things. It's been good."
- A rural female elementary resource teacher stated, "We've done APL training, which is another professional development. So with APL we are teaching bell ringers, and so I've been able to use my overhead to put bell ringers right up on the screen, and kids come in and they read their words with a partner and then we read them together and it's just a way to review what we did the day before."
- A non-rural elementary principal shared, "We've gone in and done some baseline data last year and this year again with our school psychologist, collecting data about 'are the kids on-task? Because if they aren't, they're not going to learn as well.' So we've been looking at their on-task behavior and also their opportunities to respond. The data told us that would be a place where we're not doing so well. So that's also been part of the professional development, our engaging strategies. Marzano's book helps us with that. We're going to continue that next year. We know that if the kids aren't engaged, they aren't learning as well as they need to be. So those are a number of things that we've tried to drill down."

Item 46: "Teacher collaboration in my school is a form of professional development used to enhance student learning." This item was rated 4.28 by administrators and 4.04 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item 4.18, lower than the rating given by non-rural administrators (4.43). Male administrators rated this item 4.17, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.33. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.13, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated it higher (4.40).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (3.83) than did teachers from non-rural schools (4.16). There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.011). Male teachers gave this item a rating of 3.92, while female teachers gave it a higher rating of 4.05. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience and 20-30 years of experience rated this item similarly (4.07 and 4.09, respectively), while teachers with 10-20 and over 30 years of experience rated this item lower (4.00 and 3.94, respectively).

- A rural female elementary resource teacher explained, "My reading coach, she's willing to come in and teach my class or watch me when I teach. I can get assistance from my principal on classroom management things. Other teachers. We've had peer groups; I don't have any qualms at all about going to any teacher in our building to ask how they do things."
- A rural female elementary resource teacher continued, "We did another book, the *Seven Secrets to Effective Teaching* (Breaux & Whitaker, 2006), and we had small groups and we each got to present a chapter to the rest of the staff. It was really cool. Now the one that we just got, we're just going to meet and discuss at our staff meeting. So we have a different approach this time."
- A rural female secondary principal explained how data is used to match an instructional strategy, "There are a few teachers that use L to J. Modifying instruction when it isn't working, re-teaching. Some of us do a better job of writing a test and teaching to the test, those kinds of things."
- A non-rural female elementary principal stated, "We're not doing grade-level professional development. It's achievement by the Marzano strategies that they're learning about and reading about, [which] will affect their teaching, which will in turn affect how they're working with kids and what the kids are going to learn. So our professional development has been around behavior and those instructional strategies."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "A lot of us are taking classes to improve and learn new strategies and skills. That's what's cool about the district, because our cadre this year was all Title I schools. So that's how we did things. This school would work on this part and this school would work on that part instead of one person having to do it all, it was really nice."
- A non-rural elementary principal shared, "With study groups with teachers, we have read books. Last year we read *Classroom Instruction That Works* (Marzano, 2001), this year we read *Arts and Science of Teaching* (Marzano, 2007). There has to be work with the teachers becoming better teachers. We have huge challenges, so we have to get better at what we're doing. So we've spent a great deal of time the last two years in professional development so that the teachers could learn strategies to improve their instruction, their Tier I instruction, in order to get the kids to improve their responses on the tests and to achieve better."

Item 47: "Groups of teachers in my school have shared planning periods for professional growth/ I share planning periods with other teachers for professional growth." This item was rated 4.33 by administrators and 3.66 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item mostly "agree" at 4.00, whereas non-rural administrators rated it mostly "strongly agree" at 4.86, a significant difference (p=.016).

Male administrators and female administrators gave this item an identical average rating of 4.33. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.13, while administrators with more than 20 years of experience gave this item a higher rating of 4.50.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.35, while non-rural teachers rated this item 3.84. There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.003). Male teachers rated this item 3.60, whereas female teachers rated it 3.67. Teachers with less than 10 years and 20-30 years of experience rated this item identically at 3.69. This was higher than the item mean given by teachers with 10-20 years of experience (3.65) and over 30 years of experience (3.58).

- A rural female elementary administrator stated, "Our principal has created a different schedule which allows some common planning time."
- A rural female elementary principal explained, "We have collaborative time three days a week. It's Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. We also use that collaboration time to go into other classrooms to see what other teachers are doing. So I might collaborate with the two teachers I collaborate with maybe once or twice depending upon what we've talked about at leadership and what's happening during the week, and then I might go into another teacher's room to observe and see what's going on, to see how they're doing things."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator stated, "I think it comes through the PLCs. I'm on the 4th grade PLC, we've talked a lot about the NeSA test and the language and vocabulary and helping prepare the kids for that with different things. I think the PLC time gives teachers an opportunity to collaborate together. They meet on a weekly basis as a team, but I think it's just a way to find that time in your day when it's so busy to talk with your colleagues about those kinds of things."

Item 48: "Teachers are encouraged to observe each other in the classroom/ I am encouraged to observe other teachers in the classroom." This item was rated 3.61 by administrators and 3.55 by teachers.

Administrators rated this item the lowest in the category of Professional Development. Rural administrators rated this item significantly lower (3.18) than did non-rural administrators (4.29) (p=.042). Male administrators rated this item 3.67, while female administrators rated this item lower at 3.58. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.25. Administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item higher (3.90).

Teachers also rated this item the lowest in the category of Professional Development. Rural teachers rated this item "undecided" at 2.99, significantly lower than the mostly "agree" 3.86 rating given by non-rural teachers (p=.000). Male and female teachers rated this item similarly (3.52 and 3.55, respectively). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.59, similar to the rating given by teachers with 20-30 years of experience (3.60). The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was lower at 3.55, and for teachers with over 30 years of experience was even lower at 3.35.

- A rural female elementary administrator explained, "We went to an exemplary school to look at specific areas of need that we had and that were their strengths. We've

done book studies and will continue to do those and trainings. They've gone out of state and had some technology trainings to provide support in the classroom."

- A rural female elementary administrator continued, "They go to each other's classrooms and visit and see how these things are implemented."
- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "Yes, we went last summer to a week-long workshop about that. We went and visited another public school, visited there for a whole day, and actually sat in their classrooms and participated. Several of us have just moved [to] different places. I went to another community to see the Saxon Math and sit in on their math for a morning, and we've had others that went to other schools."
- A non-rural male elementary principal explained, "Our 4th grade team, when they worked with our math coach, our math coach actually collaboratively planned a math lesson. She went into one classroom and taught that lesson, and then she went in and taught in the other rooms, which freed those teachers to go and watch the other teachers at their grade-level teach. Then they all sat down and debriefed. Next year we are planning on hiring a K-2 and a 3-5 instructional coach, and I would see that happening more often."

Item 49: "Teachers in my school/ I seek technical assistance to develop new skills for examining data." This item was rated 4.11 by administrators and 3.91 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (4.00) than did non-rural administrators (4.29). Male administrators rated this item 3.67, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.33. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.88. Administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item higher at 4.30.

Teachers from rural schools and non-rural schools rated this item similarly (3.89 and 3.92, respectively). Male teachers rated this item 3.84, while female teachers gave the item a higher rating of 3.92. Teachers with less than 10 years (3.86) and 20-30 years of experience (3.89) gave this item similar ratings. The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was higher at 4.08, and for teachers with over 30 years of experience was lower at 3.77.

- A rural female elementary administrator explained how professional development is determined, "I think our superintendent is very much focused on technology, so one of the things that we started out with right away in the beginning of the year was iChat. Our superintendent wanted us to make sure that we all knew how to do that so that we could talk to each other throughout the building."
- A rural female secondary teacher explained the extent that data is used to determine professional development needs, "With the areas we're weak in, this year, our professional development is lacking. I don't feel like teachers get a lot of PLC time. I feel like there could be other training that may benefit the staff more in helping our students succeed in those areas. Obviously reading comprehension and writing, those are our weaknesses, because our students are just learning English."
- A non-rural male elementary principal stated, "We had one hour of professional development in the use of technology or implementation of technology in classrooms. The data informed us on where it is that we needed to focus our time and efforts, and

it was on how we can improve as educators so we can have that impact on student achievement."

- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "We've done a lot with the district math 4th grade teacher/coach, we would meet with her monthly, and she's demonstrated lessons and planned coordinated lessons with her, the three of us that teach the same lesson."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "We are aligned with those district coaches and they're always giving us ideas, strategies, and resources. Can't tell you how many different books I've gotten this year in guided reading, because that's been our focus, and that reciprocal teaching part of guided reading has been showing huge progress."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "Over the last couple years, having the opportunity to have district coaches come in and being able to spend time with particular classrooms or teachers, the teachers can get together with that coach and say 'we need some help, how can you help us with that?' I think some of that not knowing in primary [is because] we have not had the math coaches come into our area."

Item 50: "Teachers in my school collaboratively assess student work as a professional development activity." This item was rated 3.78 by administrators and 3.88 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.36) than did non-rural administrators (4.43). Male administrators rated this item 3.50, while female administrators rated this item higher at 3.92. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.38. Administrators with over 30 years of experience rated this item higher (4.10).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.67, lower than the 3.99 rating given by non-rural teachers, a significant difference (p=.033). Male teachers rated this item 3.76, while female teachers gave the item a higher rating of 3.89. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience and 10-20 years of experience rated this item similarly (3.83 and 3.84, respectively). The item mean for teachers with 20-30 years of experience was 3.93, and for teachers with over 30 years of experience was 3.97.

- A rural male secondary Title I coordinator stated, "We are trying to do more train-the-trainer types of activities, in that we get some of our teachers to be experts within the building. We are working towards implementing professional learning communities within the district. We've gone somewhat slowly with that and have not named them yet, so as not to give teachers a target to say 'I hate these.' What we centered them on this year was our action plan, so teachers within their teams - generally, curriculum area teams, and those teachers like a P.E. teacher, we put him in with other groups where it makes sense, 'look at it through your health piece that you teach,' for example - they were to look at the action plans and find an intervention that they could really focus on. They wrote descriptions of how they could meet that intervention and then actually worked together to create a common assessment piece amongst everybody to show that they met that goal."

Theme 6: Data/Monitoring

In the Data/Monitoring category (Administrator Survey Questions 51-63, Teacher Survey Questions 51-67), the average response of all administrators was 4.14. The average response of teachers was 4.07.

Items 64 through 67 on the Teacher Survey were not included on the Administrator Survey – thus, after Item 63, the item numbers for each survey no longer correlate.

The item rated strongest by both administrators (4.56) and teachers (4.49) in the Data/Monitoring category was, "Data are essential to our school improvement process," as shown in Table 11. The item rated weakest by both administrators and teachers was "Teachers in my school examine disaggregated school attendance, suspension, and expulsion data." Both teachers (3.21) and administrators (3.28) gave this item a mostly "neutral" rating.

Table 11
Data/Monitoring Highest and Lowest Mean Ratings

	Administrators	Teachers
Highest Mean Rating	4.56 "Data are essential to our school improvement process."	4.49 "Data are essential to our school improvement process."
Lowest Mean Rating	3.28 "Teachers in my school examine disaggregated school attendance, suspension, and expulsion data."	3.21 "I examine disaggregated school attendance, suspension, and expulsion data."

The largest mean discrepancy between teachers and administrators in the Data/Monitoring category was Item 58, "My teachers/I monitor students' additional learning time to ensure success." Administrators rated this item higher, between "agree" and "strongly agree" at 4.44. Teachers rated this item mostly "agree" at 4.06.

Administrator responses in the Data/Monitoring category ranged from 1.00 to 5.00 with an average of 4.14. Rural administrators rated this category 4.07, whereas non-rural administrators rated it higher at 4.25. Male administrators rated the category 3.91, while female administrators rated it higher at 4.26. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience gave this category a rating of 4.25, while those with more than 20 years of experience gave it a lower rating of 4.05.

Teacher responses in the Data/Monitoring category ranged from 1.00 to 5.00 with an average of 4.07. Rural teachers rated this category 3.98, whereas non-rural teachers rated it higher at 4.12. Male teachers gave this category a 3.89 rating, and female teachers gave it a higher rating of 4.09. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience gave this category a rating of 4.04, while teachers with 10-20 years of experience gave the category a rating of 4.11. Teachers with 20-30 years of experience gave the category a rating of 4.03, while teachers with more than 30 years of experience gave this category a 4.11.

The survey reliability statistic (Cronbach's Alpha) for the category of Data/Monitoring was .964 for administrators and .930 for teachers.

Data/Monitoring Discussion

Survey Items with Supporting Interview Quotes

Item 51: "Data are essential to our school improvement process." This item was rated 4.56 by administrators and 4.49 by teachers.

Administrators rated this item the highest in the category of Data/Monitoring. Rural administrators rated this item 4.64, while non-rural administrators rated it lower at 4.43. Male administrators rated this item 4.67, while female administrators rated this item lower at 4.50. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.63, higher than the rating given by administrators with over 20 years of experience (4.50).
Teachers also rated this item the highest in the category of Data/Monitoring. Rural teachers rated this item higher (4.52) than did non-rural teachers (4.47). Male teachers rated this item lower (4.28) than did female teachers (4.51). The item mean for teachers with less than 10 years and 20-30 years of experience was similar (4.43 and 4.44, respectively). The mean for teachers with 10-20 years and over 30 years of experience was also similar (4.57 and 4.55, respectively).

- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "Our data always supports that we need more help in reading, writing, and math."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "Well, we looked at the MAPS scores and the NeSA scores from last year. We were low in vocabulary, and that was one reason that we did go ahead with the academic language, and then comprehension strategies, of course, are built right into that whole process. But it was looking at the MAPS scores, looking at the NeSA results, and what the teachers know, what they see in the classrooms."
- A rural female elementary teacher shared, "School improvement goals, we have meetings every so often. We have in-service days and we go through a bunch of those things. The school improvement team every so often gets together to collect some data and tell the other teachers what data they need and where we're going with some of that."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "The teachers have looked at their data more specifically to see what their needs are. So for example, 4th grade, they are noticing that reading comprehension is definitely a need for them, so their PLC goal is reading comprehension, and their math PLC goal is computation. They've taken those more general building goals and then looked at grade-level-wise, 'how can we help them meet that goal, what are our needs?' Then focusing more specifically on them."

Item 52: "Data are used to monitor and focus our school/district's Title I Improvement goals and other successes." This item was rated 4.33 by administrators and 4.42 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (4.27) than did non-rural administrators (4.43). Male administrators rated this item "agree" at 4.00, while female administrators rated this item between "agree" and "strongly agree" at 4.50. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.25. Administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item higher at 4.40.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 4.40, whereas teachers from non-rural schools rated this item 4.44. Male teachers rated this item lower (4.32) than did female teachers (4.44). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 4.36, and teachers with over 30 years of experience rated it similarly (4.39). Teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated this item 4.55, while teachers with 20-30 years of experience rated this item 4.42.

- A rural female elementary teacher explained how data is collected and reported, "We all have the data and we pull that data off so we can use that data in our school improvement to show what we need to work on. We do that every year. At the end of the year, all the teachers are required to have all their data in so that we can pull that data off and use it."
- A rural female elementary teacher indicated how they monitor their goals, "As far as the actual monitoring of the goal, the principal is very involved with that. She and I talk quite a bit about those things. The teachers, they know the direction that they *need to go, and I know they know what level they have to attain to reach that goal.* But as far as really consciously thinking 'this is a Title I goal, and we have to get this far - I don't think they do that particularly, it's just that they know we need to improve. Most recently they've used the MAPS scores from winter; we've never taken the *winter MAPS scores. I know they've had a data meeting about that, the PLC groups,* and designed some short-term goals from now until spring. They use their weekly assessments in reading. But those are the two big ones and the DIBELS progress too."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained how reading data is monitored, "I would say daily, weekly, and I guess when you say extent I would say 100%. They are monitored daily and weekly and the data would be the names of all the kids, what grade they're in, what their DIBELS score is for fall, winter, and spring. It's written right there. Then our reading coach has a weekly meeting with the curriculum director and the principals and the other reading coach."
- A rural female elementary teacher explains who monitors school-wide performance, "The staff does, to some extent. All the staff are supposed to help put in their data, and then our data team puts the data together, and the whole school looks at the data to try to determine. . . ."
- A rural female elementary teacher continued, "With math, it's real tough, because some of it's reading. Even though they have the opportunity to read it and can ask for words, they don't always do that. So you kind of have to determine whether they really have a problem with the skill or if they just didn't."

Item 53: "The faculty and staff/ Teachers in my school monitor classroom instruction and student achievement collaboratively." This item was rated 4.11 by administrators and 4.16 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item slightly lower (4.09) than did non-rural administrators (4.14). Male administrators rated this item lower (3.83) than did female administrators (4.25). Administrators with less than 20 years and over 20 years of experience rated this item similarly (4.13 and 4.10, respectively).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (3.99) than did teachers from non-rural schools (4.26). There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.023). Male teachers rated this item 3.92, while female teachers rated it higher at 4.19. Teachers with less than 10 years and 20-30 years of experience gave this item a similar rating of 4.22 and 4.20, respectively. Teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated this item lower at 4.06, and teachers with over 30 years of experience rated it higher at 4.10.

- A rural male Title I coordinator shared, "We're using the state tests and for trend data, we have been using the STARS assessment which no longer will come into play with this. We do use a norm-referenced test, and that had been Terra-Nova up until two years ago. This is our second year using the PLAN test. So we have made some adjustments through this. Then one of our goals is writing as well, so we use statewide writing and local writing assessments as a part of that data."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "The data is compiled by the administration. They put together our packets. That and our data coach. Then as a team, you are the ones that really dive into it. Data happens at the very beginning of the year, when you're really starting to set up your goals for the current year. It's diving into the data from the previous year. Then at each one of our PLC meetings every month, you're looking at the data from that month, analyzing it . . . so I would say mainly, it's the teams analyzing it. Then, I'm school improvement rep, I take it back. It's us looking through it, analyzing it. Then we have documents that go up that anyone in our district can look at and see what we're doing this month."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared their focus for a PLC, "We meet monthly, because that's our professional learning community. At least our group, our focus is comprehension. So we do comprehension checks every other week, and then we bring that data and we look at it, and then we really look at 'they did really well on this one, what was it about this one or what was it that we did differently that allowed them to be more successful?'"

Item 54: "Teachers in my school/ I examine disaggregated standardized test score data." This item was rated 4.22 by administrators and 3.88 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (4.09) than did non-rural administrators (4.43). Male administrators rated this item between "undecided" and "agree" at 3.50, while female administrators rated it between "agree" and "strongly agree" at 4.58. There was a significant difference between male and female responses (p=.009). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.00, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item higher at 4.40.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item higher (3.99) than did teachers from non-rural schools (3.82). Male teachers rated this item between "undecided" and "agree" at 3.52, while female teachers rated it closer to "agree" at 3.93. There was a significant difference between male and female responses (p=.038). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.72, while teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated this item 4.02. Teachers with 20-30 years and over 30 years of experience gave this item similar ratings of 3.98 and 3.94, respectively.

- A rural male elementary principal /Title I coordinator explained, "We've started doing the DIBELS next. We've also used our Terra-Nova data, and we've been really looking at all of that data very thoroughly. We even broke down the Terra-Nova into sections to find out where our kids are struggling the most. We found that fractions and decimals is a real low point as well as order of operations in mathematics. So our focus for the upcoming NeSA test is to improve that and also improve our basic facts, because we found our kids are not very strong in basic facts."
- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "With Reading Mastery, we have scores all the time for fluency and they take mastery tests every ten lessons, so we keep track of that data. We have DIBELS. We try to keep track of our Terra-Nova scores and go over them. Of course we don't grade that, but we keep track of that. With math, we also have DIBELS math that we keep track of."
- A rural female elementary teacher shared, " I think the summative data would be collected with MAPS scores at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Of course NeSA is just at the end. But I know that they are looking at their reading scores, they're looking at their DIBELS regularly. We really don't have any good thing in place for math right now, just the core program is all. So we're looking at AIMSWeb as maybe a place to get some progress monitoring and benchmark assessment."
- A rural female secondary teacher explained, "The data we have that is analyzed is just our standardized testing. The ELL teacher works with all the English Language Learners, so she works with all the ELDA testing and looks at those scores. The other data is just working on more of our demographics. That's the only data I see. There's probably more data, but I don't know. Report card data (is analyzed). I consider that classroom data. Then standardized test scores and we have our formative assessments, like our comprehension, every-other-week tests, for both reading and math."
- A non-rural male elementary principal stated, "About half the students who have taken the NeSA reading test, we can get those preliminary results. I feel a lot better about what I'm seeing than I did last year when I first checked. I think that has come out of the collaboration within teams but also with our work with our district literacy coaches and our district technology coach. Last year I really felt that our students weren't adequately prepared by the teachers for these online assessments. This year they took that on early and brought the mobile labs into the classroom so that was something students were used to. They were used to all the tools that were on there, and truly that assessment could be a reflection of their learning. I've seen teachers making more informed decisions based off data and then making adjustments, instead of 'this is the way we're going to do it, this is the way that we've always done it.'

They're making more of those changes. That has had an impact on student achievement."

- A non-rural female elementary teacher voiced, "In the beginning of the year, we have an all-staff meeting. We get ready to start our new PLCs and we have what's called a Data Dig. In the past it was always just the SIP team that would look at it, but this year, every team is given a packet and it has the results of the two NeSAs, NeSA-R and NeSA-M, the results of the state writing, and print-outs of the end of the year report card grades. So truly, each team digs through that."
- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "If you're talking about a reading assessment or a math assessment that we have on a topic, the math is divided into topics. So if we're doing meaning of division, I have the kids take the test and a certain percentage doesn't do very well, then we need to take those and work on specifically what they didn't get, trying to catch them up to what they missed. Maybe there's just a certain thing that you didn't understand and then they missed . . . you don't always know when they miss a question if it's because they didn't read it correctly."

Item 55: "Every classroom is implementing our Title I Goals." This item was rated 4.22 by administrators and 3.91 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item 4.00, lower than the 4.57 rating given by non-rural administrators. Male administrators rated this item 4.00, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.33. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.38, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item lower (4.10).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.79, while non-rural teachers rated it higher at 3.98. Male teachers rated this item significantly lower (3.56) than did female teachers (3.96) (p=.033). The item mean for teachers with less than 10 years of experience was 3.88, for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was 3.98, for teachers with 20-30 years of experience was 3.93, and for teachers with over 30 years of experience was 3.84.

- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "We use that data strongly when PLCs form their goals for the next year. We even looked at it to determine what the 2nd grade goals would be, what areas are they weak in that they couldn't quite get to. That's a big focus. It does go right into the school improvement goals, because those are both the areas where obviously we need to be proficient in."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "They are able to meet with grade-level teams during that PLC time - and then also, each quarter, each grade-level is required to have an instructional conference with administrators. At that time we bring our goals and assessments for that particular quarter. Then we take a look at our team goals and our school improvement goals and see how well we're getting things met."
- A non-rural female elementary principal shared, "It might be 'we' as the group sit and review the data, the smart goals, the action plans, the results. Every month the professional learning teams - they are in charge at each grade-level - they're in charge of their own data, and they monitor that. They are obligated to go in every month and

put in a summary of their data as well as a reflection about that. We can review that then as a team, so there's that monitoring that goes on as a school improvement team."

Item 56: "Teachers in my school/I adjust my instruction in order to attain our Title I Goals." This item was rated 4.11 by administrators and 4.11 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item 4.00, while non-rural administrators rated it 4.29. Male administrators rated this item lower (3.83) than did female administrators (4.25). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.25. Administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item lower at 4.00.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item significantly lower (3.95) than did teachers from non-rural schools (4.20) (p=.021). Male teachers rated this item lower (3.84) than did female teachers (4.14). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 4.05. The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years and 20-30 years of experience was similar (4.12 and 4.13, respectively). The item mean for teachers with over 30 years of experience was higher at 4.19.

- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator explained, "With interventions, we're looking at oral reading fluency, so the interventionists assess all of those students. With the interventionists and myself, we try to meet weekly, we're looking at that data and analyzing it. It's going out to the teachers weekly. Teachers can look at as often as they want to, but we're really analyzing that in ten-week rotations. As far as the data at the PLC level, they're all collecting different things. I mentioned 4th grade. They're looking at reading comprehension and math calculation. We have other grade-levels that might be looking more at reading fluency. Some are looking at math problem-solving. It really varies, what they're looking at. In addition you're looking at your classroom assessments. So for literacy they're looking at their DRAs, their LRPs, and their theme tests. They're looking at their writing assessments that they administer in the classroom and what we administer in intervention. They're looking at their math assessments, Cumulative Math Assessments that they're administrating to prepare them for the NeSA. Plus their chapter math tests and assessments that they give to meet their objective. There's so much to look at."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained the extent that she is involved in monitoring goals, "Not at all. Other than just the goals we have that may be related back to the SIG grant, but those would be classroom goals, things we're working on to raise our test scores. So that part of it I'm involved in."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "I think that comes from assessment. Your end goal is definitely to meet the assessment, then you backtrack to see how are you going to get there, what strategies are you going to use. I have switched strategies in the middle of a lesson if I look at my kids and go, 'we're definitely tuned out today.' But it's definitely assessment and observation."

Item 57: "Classroom instruction is monitored to ensure implementation of my school's Title I Goals." This item was rated 4.22 by administrators and 3.97 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item 4.18, lower than the 4.29 rating given by non-rural administrators. Male administrators rated this item 4.17, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.25. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.38, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item lower at 4.10.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.76, while non-rural teachers rated it significantly higher at 4.08 (p=.022). Male teachers rated this item 3.76, lower than the 3.99 rating given by female teachers. The lowest mean for this item (3.88) was given by teachers with less than 10 years of experience. The highest mean for this item (4.13) was given by teachers with over 30 years of experience. Teachers with 10-20 years of experience and 20-30 years of experience rated this item similarly (4.00 and 3.98, respectively).

- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "The principal gives us a structure, 'here's the kind of things to look for. Look for high points, look what the kids are really good at, but also look at the weak points.' That's where we had to really dig and find, what area are we going to focus on, just for our grade-level. We only had basically report cards, but we did look at [the NeSA] to see if there was something in the NeSA that they were lacking in. We not only looked at the end of the year grades for the kids that we were going to get that year, but also our kids that we had to see if we have a weakness in our teaching. Those are the ones we use."
- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "I use the data from right here. Listen to my reading coach; she's very in tune to what the staff needs at a particular time. We focus on supplying any in-service that's in the best interest of the district."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared classroom achievement and instruction are monitored, "Administration, for the most part, is in and out of our classrooms. They are in and out, seeing what we're doing, seeing what kids are doing, and letting everybody know that they're involved in what's going on in the building."
- A non-rural female elementary principal explained how data is reviewed, "They're a building-wide representative group. So there is someone from every grade, and we have SPED, so we have a resource representative, we have two parent representatives, and we have early childhood representatives. So we cover the gamut. Those are people that are overseeing and on a monthly basis, depending on where we are in the process, they might plan the next thing to do at our professional learning communities. Twice a year, we go to an instructional conference with the district, and the district is having us bring our data, share our data and talk to them about how we're doing as a school, what are our concerns, what are our challenges."
- A rural female secondary principal stated, "Classroom instruction is monitored by going into the classrooms. We have an academic eligibility list that's published every Monday, and when one teacher has too many kids on the fail list, they'll get a personal visit from me or an email, 'tell me why this is going on.' I have expectations that they follow-up with their students, make sure they get their assignments turned in, have them call in. We've also incorporated an incentive day for grades, behavior and attendance. We've done little presentations for them on how

to be successful, and if they don't stay they have to make up the time. I arrange it with the classroom teacher or they stay with me and we talk and get 'er done."

Item 58: "My teachers/ I monitor students' additional learning time to ensure success." This item was rated 4.44 by administrators and 4.06 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (4.36) than did non-rural administrators (4.57). Male administrators rated this item 4.33, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.50. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.63, higher than the item mean given by administrators with over 20 years of experience (4.30).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item higher (4.16) than did non-rural teachers (4.01). Male teachers rated this item 3.84, lower than the 4.09 rating given by female teachers. Teachers with less than 10 years rated this item 4.04. The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was 4.08, for those with 20-30 years of experience was 4.16, and for those with over 30 years of experience was 3.97.

- A rural female elementary principal stated, "We also have our after-school program that utilizes Study Island, and she accesses reports there for us. That's for reading and math."
- A rural male elementary principal shared extra learning time provided for struggling students, "It's a sense of urgency to try and get them up to grade-level as soon as we possibly can. We're always looking at those students that are the most serious that we need to get up to grade-level, provide more interventions and more tutoring time."
- A non-rural elementary principal shared, "We found that kids were not getting whole group instruction. By the master schedule and the non-negotiable, SPED kids would have two guided reading groups and then would be a part of the whole group. Our next group of kids that were not making it, that we also needed to work with but were not SPED, that collaborative model was what we were focusing on, making sure that those kids had an intervention that it was not an intervention that pulled them out of whole group reading."

Item 59: "Changes in grade-level classroom performance are monitored on a continuous basis as the Title I Goals are implemented." This item was rated 3.94 by administrators and 3.98 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.82) than did non-rural administrators (4.14). Male administrators rated this item 3.83, lower than the 4.00 rating given by female administrators. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.25, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item lower at 3.70.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (3.87) than did teachers from non-rural schools (4.04). Male teachers rated this item lower (3.80) than did female teachers (4.00). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.89, similar to the rating given by teachers with 20-30 years of experience (3.87). The item mean for teachers with 10-20

years of experience was 4.14, and for teachers with more than 30 years of experience was 4.10.

- A non-rural male elementary principal stated, "The data packets that we use at the beginning of the year have the following information - and would depend on grade-level because of the assessments - but they'll see 4th quarter report card data and graphs as far as the percentage at that grade-level that scored a 1, 2, 3, or a 4 in reading, writing, and math. We'll have a list of all students that either had a 1 or a 2, which would not be meeting district expectations. On the report card the teachers will have a list of all of those students in reading, writing, or math. We will have within those, the results of ITBS, both grade-level information and individual student information. In the past it was our CRT results, our criterion-referenced tests, but now they'll have the NeSA-R results, so the state snapshot and data package, but then also the data listing as far as how students performed, was it a 'met' or 'not met?' They'll have that now with the NeSA-Math too. 4th and 5th grade also get the results of statewide writing assessment and those students that met, didn't meet and percentage of students that met and didn't meet."
- A non-rural male elementary principal explained the extent of data use in making decisions, "Data is always used for that. We're always looking at the data, making data-based decisions. We look at it on a regular basis. Administrators have instructional meetings quarterly with the staff, and those are all data-based, looking at how students are progressing and what changes we can make or what we should continue to do."
- A rural male elementary principal explained the use of data, "We use it every week. Every Thursday the paperwork comes in, and then on Tuesdays the reading coaches throughout the district, the principals, and the curriculum director view the data and make decisions on each student. Then we'll either make a decision, whether to really watch a student and put some other interventions in, or just let it go. It's like individual IEPs throughout the building. I've been telling my teachers, 'I'm tired of playing the game of persuasion. I want to engage.' So in the past - we've had this reading program for quite a while now - teachers weren't really in the decision-making (of what each student needs to do). In the last month or two, we've been bringing in the Special Ed teacher or the regular classroom teacher to receive their input and say 'what do you think is best for this child at this time, because right now things are not going as well as what we want.'"
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator stated, "They (teachers) have access. This graph or whatever, this is photocopied. The teacher can review it, and send it home. That's every week. Building-wide, this is a document that has all students that are currently in intervention. So you could look at, for example, in the fall, this is all the students and this is their progress. This is live, so we're constantly updating every week. For example, this was the first ten weeks, the second ten weeks, and now she's actually not in a pull-out intervention anymore. She is getting some extra support in the classroom. So they at all times have access to this. This is shared with them."
- A non-rural female elementary principal shared "Each month we pull up (our data) - our teachers meet in PLCs and they record their data based on their goal, 'this was our goal in math, this is how our kids did, what this is telling us [about] how our kids

are doing? What did we learn from that, where are we going next?' We also have spreadsheets where we can see a whole grade-level, their reading, all their objectives, how they're doing in reading and math."

Item 60: "Changes in school-wide performance are monitored on a continuous basis as the Title I Goals are implemented." This item was rated 4.17 by administrators and 4.06 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (4.09) than did non-rural administrators (4.29). Male administrators rated this item 4.00, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.25. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.38, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item lower (4.00).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.93, while teachers from non-rural schools gave it a higher rating of 4.13. Male teachers rated this item lower (3.88) than did female teachers (4.08). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.99. The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was 4.14, for teachers with 20-30 years of experience was 3.96, and for teachers with over 30 years of experience was 4.26.

- A rural male elementary principal explained how data is monitored, "Data's being monitored once every two months. We have an in-service every two months, and we spend about an hour looking over our data as a whole school."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "We monitor as a staff, monthly in our PLC meetings. As a grade-level team, as a 2nd grade team, we meet on our PLC days, we gather data that we have taken over the course of that time or the course of a quarter, however we have set up our documentation to be taken, and we put that into a spreadsheet. That is how we as teachers tweak what we need to do in order to continue to meet our goals for the next point in time. So it's monitored monthly."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator explained, "Obviously the school improvement team is going to gather that data from all the educators in the building. It's a collaborative effort. But they're probably analyzing that data a little bit more closely than as we do as a whole building. We're looking at little fragments of it in different days, but they're probably looking more at the big picture."

Item 61: "Data are used to monitor the closing of the achievement gap between student subpopulations." This item was rated 4.17 by administrators and 4.08 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item slightly higher (4.27) than did non-rural administrators (4.00). Male administrators rated this item 4.00, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.25. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item higher (4.25) than did administrators with over 20 years of experience (4.10).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 4.05, and non-rural teachers rated it 4.09. Male teachers rated this item lower (4.00) than did female teachers (4.09). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience and 10-20 years of experience rated this item 4.06, similar to the rating given by teachers with 20-30 years of experience (4.04). The item mean for teachers with over 30 years of experience was higher at 4.19.

- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "The CRTs and the state assessments, those things that you would have at the beginning of the year, those have already been pretty much broken down. They come back to us broken down into the subgroups. But I think the focus for our building has become more focused on instructional strategies the past three years. Three years ago we really focused on ELL strategies for teaching ELL students, instructional strategies for ELL students. Then it went into writing. Now it's really focused on reading."
- A non-rural male elementary principal explained, "Where we're seeing the biggest gap is our students that are in RtI, and how they're performing on DIBELS versus how they're performing on the DRAs and leveled reading passages."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "We have intervention groups where children that are targeted Title students or that are working at maybe a little bit below the grade-level and are working with our interventionists, they take data. On PLC days, they do a lot of progress monitoring, our SPED people do progress monitoring to put into that PLC data. I believe it's monthly, but our interventionist will do DIBEL(ing) with our intervention students to see where their progress is. At another point, the teams meet with the Title I interventionist to go over the data, so we as a team know where our targeted kids are within their intervention times."
- A rural female secondary teacher stated, "There's a lot of data. There is a system [where] all the data (is) displayed. Male, female, race, age, ethnicity. The data can be punched out whether its test scores, attendance, everything. Teachers don't have access to it, but administrators have access. One of the last meetings we actually got to look at the district profile and see all the information on the scores separated by subgroups."

Item 62: "Teachers in my school/ I examine disaggregated school attendance, suspension, and expulsion data." This item was rated 3.28 by administrators and 3.21 by teachers.

Administrators rated this item the lowest in the Data/Monitoring category. Rural administrators rated this item higher (3.36) than did non-rural administrators (3.14). Male administrators rated this item 3.00, while female administrators rated this item higher at 3.42. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item between "undecided" and "agree" at 3.63, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item "undecided" (3.00).

Teachers also rated this item the lowest in the Data/Monitoring category. Rural teachers rated this item 3.12, and non-rural teachers rated it higher at 3.26. Male teachers rated this item higher (3.48) than did female teachers (3.17). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.10, and for teachers with 20-30 years of experience was 3.09. The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years and over 30 years of experience was higher, at 3.41 and 3.35, respectively.

- A rural male elementary principal shared the attention provided for struggling students, "Our most struggling students, we focus on them, we try and provide more interventions for them, because they need it. It's a sense of urgency to try and get them up to grade-level as soon as we possibly can. We're always looking at those

students that are the most serious that we need to get up to grade-level, provide more interventions and more tutoring time. There's some kids that went from three days a week of reading, tutoring time for 20 minutes, to five days a week. Those that are just on the fence that finally went over that hurdle, we're still focused on them because they're fragile, they can go right back, so we really focus on them to give them that support that they need to continue to move forward."

- A non-rural female Title I coordinator stated, "Then PLCs, sometimes this data is brought up. But then every ten weeks, at the end of the intervention round, we meet with each of those teams to discuss just these kids that are in pull-out intervention. If that student's not making adequate progress, they're going to the student assistance team process, having individual meetings with the parents, the teacher the interventionist, and myself."

Item 63: "Teachers in my school are/I am engaged in early identification of at-risk behavior indicators impacting student performance (i.e., attendance, behavior, etc.)." This item was rated 4.06 by administrators and 3.95 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.73) than did non-rural administrators (4.57). Male administrators rated this item 3.67, while female administrators rated this item higher at 4.25. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.13, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item lower (4.00).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.77, and non-rural teachers rated it higher at 4.05. Male teachers rated this item lower (3.88) than did female teachers (3.96). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.99. Teachers with 20-30 years of experience rated it lower, at 3.67, while teachers with 10-20 years and over 30 years of experience rated it higher, at 4.04 and 4.10, respectively.

- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "We have instructional conferences twice a year where we are expected to bring our data. That's just with your team. Your team and the specialists and our Title I support interventionist all come together and really examine the goals, who's meeting it, who's exceeding, who's struggling, where can we dive in and help them. Based on that we also have intervention time built into our schedule, and from those meetings, it's determined, who are those targeted kids that we really need to have an intervention with to get them to where they need to be, get them that extra support."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator explained, "Alot of those students that come into Title I schools sometimes are really lacking in knowing that, so sometimes that group is a lot larger. So we start out there, we benchmark everyone, and then the students that are performing below the 25th percentile are the ones that we look at a little more closely. We look at classroom assessments, then, just what the teacher knows of them from the previous year, if they had them in intervention before. That's how we decide it at the beginning of the year, we meet with the teachers."
- A rural female secondary principal explained what the current data indicated about the school's progress meeting Title I goals, "That's another story in itself. The counselor and I watch our kids very closely. I said, 'Let's go look at our sophomores

and our juniors, because we don't want to wait until they're [in their] senior year and they don't have enough credits to graduate.' Somebody's not doing well in the class, let's pull them in. If they're below 50%, something's wrong. Something's happening for a variety of reasons."

Item 64 [Teacher Only]: "I use individual student data to understand the academic needs of my students." This item was rated 4.32 by teachers.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (4.24) than did teachers from non-rural schools (4.36). Male teachers rated this item 4.20, while female teachers rated it higher at 4.33. Teachers with less than 10, 10-20, and over 30 years of experience rated this item similarly (4.36, 4.35, and 4.39, respectively). The item mean for teachers with 20-30 years of experience was 4.16.

- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "For each student, as far as regular grades I'm going to see those daily. We're encouraged to look at DIBELS not only when we give it - we're always told, 'don't just look at it when you give it, look back and see how they're improving' - so if you're working on DIBELS probes with a student that's been low, some of those you're looking at weekly. Some you're looking at monthly. We're looking at it because of keeping track of Accelerated Reader also. We're looking at them at least a couple times a month."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "I think it depends on the student. If it's a student that they are worried about . . . I think they're looking at these graphs, because it's easy, it's in their mailbox every week. This blue line represents the twelfth percentile. The twelfth percentile is what we have identified as a district as being - if you don't meet your goal for two consecutive rounds, you fall below the twelfth percentile, that's when you could qualify for special education. Then the red line represents the 25th, which is below average range, the yellow circle. So it's just a nice visual to show parents and to monitor . . . so each kid has their own graph."
- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "They take that information and for instance, one of my students, he was doing so well on his check-outs, and his language scores, they looked good. Our reading coach gave him a placement test and he was able to move to another reading group."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "We use data all the time. At the beginning of the year, that's how we form our goals, and for our professional learning communities as well, we look at new test score data, we look at report card data, we look at classroom formative assessment data, we look at all - and then we look at it monthly."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator clarified how individual students are monitored, "We take a look at our ten-week intervention rounds. Every ten weeks we're looking at the data again, is it matching, what's happening in the classroom, so we don't just base it off of that DIBELS assessment. We try to look at the whole picture to determine who goes in and out. We really try to focus on our lowest kids. Unfortunately when you look at the 25th percentile that's below average, there tends to be a number of kids. You can't put all those kids in intervention. So you look at the kids who are most at-risk, the most needy, and get them in that pull-out. If we think they can make those same gains with just the Tier I+ and support,

then that's we do. We have Reading Recovery, a one-on-one intervention. Then our RtI groups, the largest they can be is six students. For our writing interventions we limit that at four students."

Item 65 [Teacher Only]: "I make decisions about what I can do instructionally to improve my students' performance based on data." This item was rated 4.28 by teachers.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (4.16) than did teachers from non-rural schools (4.35). There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.038). Male teachers rated this item lower (4.12) than did female teachers (4.31). Teachers with 20-30 years of experience rated this item mostly "agree" at 3.96. The item mean for teachers with less than 10 years of experience was 4.30, and for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was 4.37. Teachers with 20-30 years of experience gave this item a rating similar to the rating given by teachers with over 30 years of experience (4.20 and 4.23, respectively).

- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator explained, "Going back to the data again - I think it's looking at that data and seeing if progress is being made. You got to give it time. You don't want to be looking at it every week and thinking that there's going to be major changes."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "I take little anecdotal notes that I know my kids are getting those things down. Or they're not getting it and I've made a note that next time we have guided reading group, I really need to work on this particular skill."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "I think just looking at tests and assessments and things that we do with kids and as a teacher, taking that apart and not just looking at it as a number, but 'how am I going to increase whatever it is that I need to increase?'"
- A rural female secondary teacher stated, "I always make changes, always, depending on my kids. Not only do we do reading but we also do writing. It all depends from year to year. I test these students, and I get the testing information, so I get the data through the Stanford testing, through FAME. I'm the one that's looking at that information and having a summer school reading. I pretty well know the types of kids that are coming into the school, as incoming freshmen . . . so if it's lower, and I'm going to have quite a few kids, then I do merge in some corrective reading things for some of those kids, try to get them up to speed if I can."
- A rural female elementary teacher shared a final observation, "The one thing I can think of - we've talked about it as a staff - is to see some of the data before the end of the year. See some of those things a little sooner, like mid-year or as soon as tests are given. We have talked about that, but haven't really got that all implemented yet. I think it would help us to make some changes different. We moved Terra-Nova tests, for example. We had Terra-Nova tests in the spring, we decided if we had it in the fall, maybe we could see those results and we could do something with them. If you have a group that's low in math or reading or science or whatever, then you can work with those students on those specific things. That has helped some. But just knowing with that data, so you can see 'Tommy's low in this, now I can work with him'

instead of 'it's May, oh well, have fun, go on to the next teacher.' So you have a little information ahead of time."

- A rural female secondary teacher shared, "I know we as teachers need to be a part of this. I think if you go in the right direction instead of backwards and around things - if we can look at the data early, start from day one. . . . We have the data coming up, the end of the school year. If we can get together before the next school year, generate some of this stuff, the beginning of the school year we just work on the action plans, and then we start looking at in-service information before school starts. Not 'we'll talk about this and then maybe we'll talk about this other thing.' It just doesn't mesh. If we could streamline that, I think we as teachers would be able to have more time in the classroom and teach more, if we can get all this stuff done early enough."

Item 66 [Teacher Only]: "I examine data with my grade-level team to discuss what I can do to improve my students' performance." This item was rated 4.04 by teachers.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.79, while non-rural teachers rated it 4.19. There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.007). Male teachers rated this item lower (3.64) than did female teachers (4.10), another significant difference (p=.022). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 4.17. The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was 3.88, for teachers with 20-30 years of experience was 4.07, and for teachers with over 30 years of experience was 3.94.

- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator, "At the beginning of the school year, when we have our professional development days, the first couple of days that we're back, there's a time when we spend a lot of time looking at the data from the previous year and setting our PLC goals for the next year. Then every month during our PLC meetings we're sharing out the data with individual grade-level teams."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "We have a lot of teachers take a lot of ownership of why their kids learn something or why they didn't. We look at stuff quite frequently after math tests. We will even look at the math test, we'll take it together before we teach that unit or that chapter, so we know and we anticipate mistakes the kids might make and really focus on 'this is the lesson we really think they're going to struggle with.'"
- A non-rural female elementary principal shared, "Different teams look at different things. They look at their classroom assessments, and every grade-level has different things they look at. You'll hear DRA levels, the reading levels of kids. They'll look at their chapter tests in math. There are some practice tests they take for NeSA. There are benchmark tests in all - depending on grade-level, what those look and sound like - but those are all the components that they stop and take a look at. That's usually part of their goal when they set their goal – 'at the end of the quarter, our benchmark test is coming up, so what percent of the kids are going to be proficient?' Then they go back and look at, 'were they?' Then we get into interventions. What interventions go in place? Who's going to do the intervention? So that's what that PLC time is [for], to look at that and look at your data and say 'who needs what, and how are they going to be taught that?'"

- A non-rural male elementary principal explained, "Every time we have a PLC meeting, at least on the early-release days, we meet in the exact same area. We're all in the gym. That allows the school improvement team to be able to monitor the work of teams. Our assistant principal and myself tried getting to all the PLC meetings and by the time we were sitting down, we were packing up and going to the next one. Now we split that up so at least we're at half of those meetings. During those August PLC meetings, the individual teams break that data down and look for the trend data and they develop that current reality as far as where those students are performing in those various academic areas, and they use that to write their smart goals and their action plans. At every one of their PLC meetings, they bring a different piece of assessment or data to look at and see if the action steps that they came up with [are] having an impact on student learning. If they are, they continue with that plan of action, if not they'll adjust accordingly."
- A rural female secondary teacher shared, "I just know our grades are put in Infinite Campus. I think our principal can look at that information. As for a document or anything of how our students do in our classroom from semester to semester? I don't think anybody has to turn in anything."

Item 67 [Teacher Only]: "I plan and implement interventions for specific students based on their achievement data." This item was rated 4.24 by teachers.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (4.21) than did teachers from non-rural schools (4.26). Male teachers rated this item lower (4.04) than did female teachers (4.27). Teachers with 10-20 years and 20-30 years of experience rated this item similarly (4.18 and 4.16, respectively). The item mean for teachers with less than 10 years of experience was 4.32, and for teachers with over 30 years of experience was 4.26.

- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "As a classroom teacher, we're looking at the data and we're driving our instruction using the data. For example, our MAPS test scores, we've taken a look at those and we're dividing our students into groups based on their lowest writ score on the MAPS test and their highest writ score. Celebrating the highest, of course. We're working in small groups on their lowest writ strands, so in mathematics if they were low in number sense, and there's two or three of them, those two or three are working together to work on that specific strand, to improve their scores. We're using the data to try to determine what our students need to work on, and then taking that and breaking them up into smaller groups. Right now, just within the classroom we have talked about possibly doing something where we work with kids across the grade-levels."
- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "We looked at the NWEA MAPS test, we looked at the scores, we became a lot more familiar with the Descartes, which we had heard of but hadn't utilized it. Now we're using the Descartes to work on the students' low scores. Our principal was able to find a web site that had activities tied to each one of the math and reading standards or strands."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "Teachers are looking at it at least twice a month within the PLCs, and then as far as our intervention groups go, we don't make major changes 'til ten weeks. We really give it a chance. If we see that a kid is progressing and doesn't need extra support, we're going take them out,

obviously. But every ten weeks we're looking at the interventions that we're using in our RtI groups and making decisions as to whether 'is that the most appropriate for that student, for that group?' If it's working, okay, let's continue what we're doing, if it's not working, let's make some changes."

- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared "I would say the majority of the time it's from different testing or assessments that was done. We regroup frequently with kids, so that data is used to say, 'this person has made huge gains in their last DIBELS, so we need to move that person into a different Quick Reads group.' So when we meet with our interventionist, we may be revamping. Our groups are pretty fluid. We don't leave a kid if he doesn't need to be there."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "We try to use your DIBELS, and any child that hasn't make benchmark is supposed to be getting probed, then we're supposed to discuss it as a group. RtI is K-6, it's everybody. Then we discuss those probes and interventions, whether they're working or not working. It's at least once a month."

Theme 7: Community Involvement

In the Community Involvement category (Administrator Survey Questions 64-70, Teacher Survey Questions 68-74), the average response of all administrators was 3.44. The average response of teachers was 3.10.

The item rated strongest by administrators and teachers in the Community Involvement category was "The Title I Improvement Plan was communicated to all stakeholders." Administrators rated this item mostly agree at 3.94, while teachers rated it between "neutral" and "agree" at 3.60. Also, both administrators and teachers rated the item "Community members are engaged in decision making based on data that is analyzed" the lowest in this category. Both administrators (3.00) and teachers (2.82) rated this item mostly "neutral."

Table 12
Community Involvement Highest and Lowest Mean Ratings

	Administrators	Teachers
Highest Mean Rating	3.94 "The Title I Improvement Plan is communicated to all stakeholders."	3.60 "The Title I Improvement Plan is communicated to all stakeholders."
Lowest Mean Rating	3.00 "Community members are engaged in decision making based on data that is analyzed."	2.82 "Community members are engaged in decision making based on data that is analyzed."

The largest mean discrepancy in the Community Involvement category was "Community members understand why our school has a Title I School Improvement Plan." Teachers rated this item closer to "undecided" at 3.14. Administrators rated this item closer to "agree" at 3.78.

Administrator responses in the Community Involvement category ranged from 1.00 to 5.00 with an average of 3.44. Rural administrators rated this category 3.34, whereas non-rural administrators rated it higher at 3.61. Male administrators rated the category 3.38, while female administrators rated it higher at 3.48. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience gave this category a rating of 3.27, while those with more than 20 years of experience gave it a higher 3.59 rating.

Teacher responses in the Community Involvement category ranged from 1.00 to 5.00 with an average of 3.10. Rural teachers rated this category 2.87, whereas non-rural teachers rated it higher at 3.24. Male teachers gave this category a 2.91 rating, and female teachers gave it a higher rating of 3.13. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience gave this category a rating of 2.99, while teachers with 10-20 years of experience gave it a higher rating of 3.18. Teachers with 20-30 years of experience gave the category a 3.15 rating and teachers with over 30 years of experience gave the category a 3.21 rating.

The survey reliability statistic (Cronbach's Alpha) for the category of Community Involvement was .823 for administrators and .927 for teachers.

Community Involvement Discussion

Survey Items with Supporting Interview Quotes

Item 64 [Administrators]/ Item 68 [Teachers]: "Parents are involved in identification of the Title I Goals." This item was rated 3.39 by administrators and 2.89 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.18) than did non-rural administrators (3.71). Male administrators rated this item 3.50, while female administrators rated this item lower at 3.33. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item "undecided" at 3.00, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item higher at 3.70.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item lower (2.67) than did teachers from non-rural schools (3.02). There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.019). Male teachers rated this item lower (2.68) than did female teachers (2.92). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 2.74. The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was 3.00. Teachers with 20-30 years and over 30 years of experience rated this item similarly (2.98 and 2.97, respectively).

- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator shared, "I would like to see our parents more involved (in the process of the Title I plan) than they are."
- A non-rural elementary principal explained, "How could we involve them better as parents? Our two academic family night events [are] always geared towards educating parents on ways that they can help their child at home in reading, writing, and math, while also engaging in interactive, fun activities, and they can take those ideas home with them. That was attended by two parents. My very first year here when I had my annual meeting and I had that separate from PTA, nobody showed up. So I started to do it in conjunction with our PTA meetings because I knew that we had a core group of parents that attended those meetings, so at least I knew I would get the input from at least a handful of parents. I have a parent [who has] attended

one of our before-school sessions and is part of our school improvement team, but her schedule with her children has not allowed her to always be there side-by-side with the school improvement team. It means a lot of time after our SIP team meets where we have our planning sessions, I then give her a phone call and talk about what we ended up doing and ask for her ideas and her input. So that is definitely an area that I would like to see improve here, and in the four years that I've been here, that's been a struggle. It sounds like that's been a consistent struggle here. I know it's my job as principal to find ways to get more parents involved. But I do feel really good about where we're at as far as our entire staff through this process."

- A non-rural female elementary principal stated, "Seeing a lot of the same parents. . . . One thing we just did back in January or February is we had a visioning meeting, and we purposely invited as much diversity as we could, parents of color or diversity, parents that have students with disabilities, any kind of variety that we could get. We invited about 70 people, and we got about 60. It was a huge group. But they even said as we met, because one of their jobs was to write an action plan and this was with our PIRC funds, they said, 'We wish there was more diversity here,' because they knew it didn't represent what our school is. There was diversity in the sense that there were lots of moms and dads, there were different ages, different grades, parents of different grade-levels. But we didn't get the ethnic diversity that we needed. People said, 'they were purposely invited, we had a group that even called on the phone.' People work. We provided childcare, food, all that. So we still have some work to do on that."
- A rural male secondary administrator explained about the extent of parent involvement, "Definitely not as much as we want them to be. We do have parent meetings as required by Title I, and we have been experiencing greater success out of that, where parents had written or helped us create plans, but [they] have not been as involved in school improvement plans, target area goals, as much as we want. We have parents that have said 'yes, I'll be on this committee' and then we just have not had the parents be able to make it to any of the meetings. Parents are not as engaged as much as they should. It has been better in the past."
- A rural male secondary administrator explained how parents are made aware of the parent compact, "Yes, that's done first of all at the parent compact meeting. We've done that directly with parents, those that have been able to be there. The plan and goals are published on our web site and also published in our newspaper."

Item 65 [Administrators]/ Item 69 [Teachers]: "Community members are involved in identification of the Title I Goals." This item was rated 3.06 by administrators and 2.85 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.00) than did non-rural administrators (3.14). Male administrators rated this item 3.17, higher than the rating given by female administrators (3.00). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 2.75, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item higher (3.30).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 2.60, while non-rural teachers rated this item higher at 2.99, a significant difference (p=.007). Male teachers rated this item 2.64, whereas female teachers rated it higher at 2.88. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 2.68. The item mean for teachers with both 10-20 years of experience was higher at 2.92. Teachers with 20-30 years and over 30 years of experience rated this item similarly (2.98 and 3.00, respectively).

- A rural female elementary teacher shared, "Not as much as I'd like to see. I think people sometimes are so involved in living their lives - it's a fairly poor economic area, so they're thinking of survival, working, lot of both parents work, or there's only one parent and that parent has to work - so I think those issues play a part. I think that sometimes the consensus in the community is 'well, you're to educate them at school, and not as much support at home.' But it just depends on the families. We get a lot of support from some families but then other families you don't get the support you want to see. I'm not sure how to change that, we've talked about different ways to change that by involving the community. We've had meetings and different things to involve parents. We've talked about different nights, like a Math Game Night, to do different things to bring parents in. You have some (parents) that are (engaged), that are part of the process, the ones that are in committees. I think they try to communicate with other community members."
- A rural male secondary administrator talked about parent and community members' roles in identifying and monitoring goals, "No (no role). As far as getting that information out to them and getting that shared at parent meetings, these are published. The goals are not held within the school, and there would be parent or community members that are invited to be a part of the teams that create these. Whether they have actually had that opportunity to be a part of it . . . I wouldn't know, 100%. I would very much doubt it."
- A rural female elementary teacher shared their thoughts on parents and community members' understanding of Title I school improvement, "I think parents get confused about 'targeted' versus 'school-wide.' We have a school-wide plan and sometimes they think that not a lot happens because it's a school-wide plan. So there's some confusion there. They know it's based on income, the poverty level in the district. So it's not really anything extraordinary. It's just how it is. I think they understand that our school improvement grant is related to Title I but I don't know that they've really got the two meshed together in their own minds. We think people know what we're talking about, and sometimes the teachers don't even know when we start using the acronyms which we're noted for."

Item 66 [Administrators]/ Item 70 [Teachers]: "Parents are engaged in decision making based on data that is analyzed." This item was rated 3.33 by administrators and 2.91 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item 3.09, lower than the rating given by non-rural administrators (3.71). Male administrators and female administrators gave this item the same average rating of 3.33. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item lower (3.25) than did administrators with over 20 years of experience (3.40).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item significantly lower (2.64) than did teachers from non-rural schools (3.06) (p=.003). Male teachers rated this item between "disagree" and "undecided" at 2.68, while female teachers rated it closer to "undecided" at 2.94. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item between "disagree" and "undecided" at 2.69. The item mean for teachers with 10-20 years of experience and 20-30 years of experience was 3.04, similar to the 3.06 item mean given by teachers with over 30 years of experience.

- A rural female elementary teacher shared, "Yes, it's a little bit hard sometimes in a small school, but there are three on my Title I accountability compact committee. I think one of them is the same and two are different. The communication we send out to the parents, we tell them, 'call me, come up and talk to me.' I very seldom get questions about it. I have to go to them, or give them food. That's when we really get good turn-out is when we offer food."
- A rural female elementary teacher shared how it was difficult transferring to a new reading intervention when parents were not a part of the decision making process, "The Reading Mastery was, because it was new and we didn't do the legwork we should have. We learned that we didn't get the parents on-board to start with, and it was a huge change. It was not 'Johnny's bringing home his reading book tonight to read his story,' because they don't do that. It was very different. The spelling was tremendously different. They didn't have spelling lists to study every week. We needed to do our P.R. a little better. It caused a bit of chaos in the community at first, so our principal wrote up a nice letter and got it out and by the time we had our first parent conference, a lot of people were asking questions and we could actually answer. Now we know you have to do P.R. ahead of time."
- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "I think they woke up and they've heard both the pros and the cons with our new reading program. So I think they're more aware and I think they're talking more. When we first started our Reading Mastery program we had a meeting in the gym for the community, and we had a couple of teachers teach a few classes and we had students there too, interacting with them, so that they could see just what we're doing. We always invite parents to come and visit at any time. I think a lot of parents are working. But we've had really good turn-outs for conferences, we've had book fairs and videos set up of what we've been doing in school."

Item 67 [Administrators]/ Item 71 [Teachers]: "Community members are engaged in decision making based on data that is analyzed." This item was rated 3.00 by administrators and 2.82 by teachers.

Administrators rated this item the lowest in the Community Involvement category. Rural and non-rural administrators rated this item exactly the same (3.00). Male administrators rated this item 2.83, whereas female administrators rated this item 3.08. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 2.75, while administrators with more than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.20.

Teachers also rated this item the lowest in the Community Involvement category. Rural teachers rated this item between "disagree" and "undecided" (2.57), while non-rural teachers

rated it closer to "undecided" (2.96). There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.004). Male teachers rated this item lower (2.64) than did female teachers (2.85). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 2.68, and teachers with over 30 years of experience rated it 2.97. Teachers with 10-20 years and 20-30 years of experience rated this item similarly (2.88 and 2.91, respectively).

- A non-rural female elementary principal explained ways parents and community members are engaged in data, "Every year we've had two to three meetings where we have offered to have them come and look at the data. We don't have very big attendance - we have huge attendance at everything . . . we've just never gotten big crowds to that."
- A rural male elementary principal explained the extent of parents and community members understanding why the school is in 'Needs Improvement' status, "For the most part a lot of people are confused about it. They've been informed in many ways - whether through board members or through publications we've put out or different things we've said through the Accountability Compact Team - there's been a lot of discussion done, but even in the first PTA meeting we had a week ago, I re-explained why we were in 'Needs Improvement' and what we were needing and why we feel it's necessary that a PTA be formed."

Item 68 [Administrators]/ Item 72 [Teachers]: "The Title I Improvement Plan is communicated to all stakeholders." This item was rated 3.94 by administrators and 3.60 by teachers.

Administrators gave this item the highest rating in the category of Community Involvement. Rural administrators rated this item slightly lower (3.82) than did non-rural administrators (4.14). Male administrators rated this item 3.83, whereas female administrators rated this item higher at 4.00. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.00. Administrators with more than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.90.

Teachers also gave this item the highest rating in Community Involvement category. Rural teachers rated this item lower (3.43) than did teachers from non-rural schools (3.69). Male teachers rated this item lower (3.44) than did female teachers (3.62). Teachers with less than 10 years and 10-20 years of experience gave this item similar ratings of 3.58 and 3.61, respectively. Teachers with 20-30 years of experience rated it lower at 3.53, while teachers with over 30 years of experience rated it higher at 3.71.

- A non-rural female elementary teacher talking about her principal attending PTA meetings, "He goes to the PTA meetings and he updates them. He puts how we're doing on different areas and what the PLCs are doing in the bimonthly newsletters. We have family nights, we have a math family night and a reading family night, and at those it's stressed this is part of our goal, our improvement goal. So I think that's an area we always struggle with, because our parents, I don't know if they could tell you if you asked any of them, what our goals are. Which I know are supposed to be something they should almost be able to do. They would just say 'to be good at math and reading."
- A non-rural female elementary principal stated, "When we have any of our other events or family learning nights, we pack the place. So we've tried to put our Title I

meetings in our auditorium, the same night as our family learning night, so I could pull from that crowd - they don't seem interested. We do have it on the web site, and have a great web site. We encourage people to look at the web site, but it does not seem to be what our parents seem to be interested in, (which is) 'how is my child doing?'"

- A rural male elementary principal clarified, "There's been a lot of negative lash back on that transferring to (Reading Mastery), and we've learned a lot from that. As we move towards Saxon Math, one of the trainings we're going to have Saxon do is a parents' night, and have them explain 'what's going to change with your kids' math, and when they come home with homework, this is what to expect and this is how you can help out with it.' Things we should have done with Reading Mastery."
- A rural female elementary teacher shared, "Communication is huge, not only with staff members but with the public and the parents."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained how much she understood about the Title I plan, "Not a lot. An average amount. I somewhat know what they've used the monies for, as far as being part of the SIG grant. I don't know a lot of things that the Title I funds are for. I know a little bit."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "We've got a record of all the things we've done this year. So it's primarily communicating the SIG goals and objectives and the transformation model to the staff, the school board, and the community. So it's communication and monitoring."
- A rural female elementary teacher shared, "The paraprofessionals (paras), honestly, are probably the ones that we've noticed have about the least support. We have a lot of paras in the building. I think it's probably a communication issue. I don't know that they understand the things that they need to understand. We have paras that are on Title I planning (team)."
- A rural female elementary principal stated, "We've really wanted to improve that piece so that communication was clear. We also included para-educators when we possibly could to communicate the procedures and how we move forward."
- A rural female elementary principal talked about the support a parent liaison can offer, "A parent liaison would help make sure that those compacts are in. She has met with elementary parents twice this year, either making home visits or inviting them into school to not only communicate the direction that we're going, but also to communicate student achievement. So we did, for instance, fall testing and winter testing in MAPS, she communicated that. She also communicated the NeSA testing from the previous year, so she is our connection."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator discussed, "I know when our principal has those meetings where he invites all the parents to talk about our Title I goals, they're not well-attended."
- A rural female secondary teacher explained, "Faculty meetings, and in-service is sometimes focused on what we're doing with school improvement. As far as the community, the principal sent home a survey. The web site, they usually post information about the tests, the statewide assessments and the scores. There was an article in the newspaper about our efforts in language arts. We had review sessions and there was an article about that."

- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "We get letters in our mailboxes. We also get an email. The parents get an email, and it's also put in our school newsletter and school website, so hopefully they get it more than once. As far as being part of the meetings, we more than welcome [them], we invited several of them to be a part of it. We try to keep them informed with the newsletters, letters and the web site."
- A rural male elementary principal shared, "We have a monthly newsletter that goes out (with) a lot of information. Especially this year, we've sent out a lot of information in terms of Title I, RtI, you name it. In terms of the goals, we communicate through our board. Otherwise when we were going through the Title I improvement plan or the grant, one of the things we noted was our parental involvement and community involvement was not good. We need to communicate better."
- A non-rural male elementary principal explained the limited parent participation in identifying and monitoring goals, "As far as communication for where we're at in needs improvement, twice this year we sent out the letter. We had a parent meeting, unfortunately that was only attended by six parents. That was in October. We walked through all of our achievement information and what 'needs improvement' means, what their options are for school choice, how that would work, transportation."

Item 69 [Administrators]/ Item 73 [Teachers]: "Community members understand why our school has a Title I School Improvement Plan." This item was rated 3.78 by administrators and 3.14 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item higher (3.82) than did non-rural administrators (3.71). Male administrators rated this item 3.50, while female administrators rated this item higher at 3.92. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.75, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item higher at 3.80.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 2.87, while non-rural teachers rated it 3.30, a significant difference (p=.002). Male teachers rated this item 3.00, lower than the rating given by female teachers (3.16). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience and 20-30 years of experience each rated this item 3.07, lower than the ratings given by teachers with 10-20 years of experience (3.27) and over 30 years of experience (3.23).

- A rural female elementary teacher shared whether community understands the Title I plan, "Good question. I think they know generally that we are low in our math and our reading scores. The more we have the academic talk with the kids, maybe the more the kids are saying, 'I'm not at the 50 percentile and that's where I need to be.' We've had more of those conversations this year than I think ever was before. You were just talking about what your kids' grades were. You didn't really talk about how they did on this test, what that means. So they're probably more generally aware of it, but as far as specifically, I don't know."
- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "The parents, I would say they are informed. Sometimes they hear about things from the newspaper. Also, by letter, our principal will send out a letter, include it with our grades and send it home."

- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "Our principal got the 4th grades to play recorders (there) and there was a door prize. It was all positive to get more parents there. She has a student council for the elementary, which we've never had before, and those students led the group in the pledge. The student council also works with the Rally, and the kids really enjoy(ed) it."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator, "We have a number of programs here that involve our families and the community. One's our Community Learning Center. We also have our family literacy program. Then we have a number of community businesses or agencies that support our school. So we really try to get them involved in our family nights, our bike rodeos, Christmas distribution, get them here, meeting our families, getting to know our families, getting to know our students, what our goals are that we're working on. So we really try to get them involved as much as we can."
- A rural female elementary principal stated, "It's gone beyond our walls. We're also putting in a park behind the school. We're not only collaborating here, we're collaborating with parents, we're partnering with parents, it's bigger than our walls. We have teachers that go to PTO, we have parents that are involved on all these committees. We have several parent groups that are involved, - School Neighborhood Association and Walk-a-Thon group, coming up to earn more money. So I see us partnering more."
- A rural female secondary teacher shared her feelings about concerns of the community, "About the reading scores? Some are. Some of them don't probably realize, but definitely, there's concern about that. We went down again on the statewide reading test."
- A rural female elementary principal stated, "I wouldn't say that we're there 100% with parents and families yet, but I think we're on the way. I think they're excited about the student-led conferences, they're excited about some of the things that we've done, getting the kids excited about school, the Rallies that we do every other week and getting kids pumped up about learning. But I'm not sure they know their part yet, how they can be supportive."
- A non-rural female elementary principal stated, "I think from last year to this year they're seeing the structures go in place. They've seen master schedules, more interventions, grouping and regrouping of kids to meet their needs. I think they see more evidence of that, because last year they didn't really know us. So they're seeing more evidences of that, like the learning nights. I think they're concerned but they're willing to get in there and partner with us or just learn more about it. We did not have a lot of kids take the option to go to a different school. Very, very limited number. If they didn't think things were happening, they would take the option, maybe."
- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "We've had a few people once in a while that have been concerned, and this math thing stirred up some stuff, when our math scores were low. There was a lot of 'oh my gosh, we need to fix this.' Not negative, just genuine concern about 'what can we do, what should we do, what are you going to do?'"
- A rural male elementary principal shared, "Our goal is to get some PTA started beyond parents providing food for parent-teacher conferences or having a school coloring book, doing more than that, getting them to volunteer, getting them to have

ownership. We want to host parent nights to give them information from the school or information about technology and why they need to be aware of what their kids are doing on their cell phones or computers. Parenting classes. There's a lot of ideas we have that we've been throwing around that we would like to get accomplished either through our PTA or the school itself to get parents more involved and to start getting a culture in town that's more positive. It's not 100% negative, it's about 60 positive, 40 negative. A lot of the culture in town is 'all you do is spend our money, what are you doing to educate our kids?' We need to start getting out what we're doing to educate their kids. We need our parents' help to do that."

- A rural male elementary principal stated, "At a staff meeting, we'll discuss results. Especially around DIBELS time and NWEA time. We talk about the results. Keeping them on board, just small conversations that I have with the teachers coming in. I have a fourth-grade staff meeting that we meet every once in a while - they always meet for lunch once a week and just talk about the positives and what's going on. So it's mostly just small-group, when we just talk about the reading."
- A rural male elementary principal explained, "I've been very transparent with what 'needs improvement' means, and I've talked with them about the ramifications of it, but then how can we respond as a community to this, to meet the diverse needs of our students?"
- A non-rural female elementary principal stated, "We have a school neighborhood advisory council. That group is made up of parents, teachers, community members, and neighbors. They meet monthly. One of their jobs, besides developing our park - which we are raising funds for - we have a format of putting our three main building goals - one academic, one about family and community, and one about the involvement of parents - they review that, they see what additions they want to make, but they have input there, we try to do that twice a year at the meeting."

Item 70 [Administrators]/ Item 74 [Teachers]: "Community members have high expectations for student achievement." This item was rated 3.61 by administrators and 3.51 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.45) than did non-rural administrators (3.86). Male administrators rated this item 3.50, while female administrators rated this item higher at 3.67. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item closer to "undecided" at 3.38. Administrators with over 20 years of experience closer to "agree" (3.80).

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.31, while non-rural teachers gave it a significantly higher rating of 3.62 ($p=.030$). Male teachers rated this item 3.28, lower than the rating given by female teachers (3.54). Teachers with a variety of experience levels all gave these item similar ratings. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.48, those with 10-20 years of experience rated it 3.55, those with 20-30 years of experience rated it 3.51, and those with over 30 years of experience rated it 3.52.

- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "I think the culture is fun. They have a common goal. Everyone wants to see the students do well, whether it's staff, parents, whoever, the community. The community has definitely connected more

with our school in the past two years. That is a huge impact from primarily the principal."

- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "We explain it too, on that piece of paper, that this is where the benchmark is and where we'd like to see your student by this such-and-such a time."
- A rural male elementary principal shared, "We held a meeting before they (parents) started to leave. We had them in, we're showing them some self-supporting reading programs and other tools that they can use, because we sent a bunch of iPads and laptops with them. They didn't have internet connection unless they went to some small town and library. So everything we put on those computers and iPods, they're downloaded. They didn't have to be web-supported. How is it conducive? I feel that, first of all, this community isn't terribly involved in the schools. When it comes to parent-teacher conferences, even though we had 86% participation, a lot of those parents had to be contacted by the teachers to come in. When we have Writers' Night, great showing, Open House, great showing, but there's just a separation there. We need to get better in involving our parents and getting on [with having] a parent committee group. But I do have some parents that want to start - and I'm all on-board with that. . . . We need to get parents more involved. One way we did it this year, when the students took the NeSA writing test, I had a bunch of parents on-board that brought in yogurt, muffins, cheese slices, juice, and all the 4th grade got together and they just had a small breakfast before they went in and did the test. That was very successful. So that was a change that we've never done before."
- A rural female elementary teacher talked about student led conferences, "I think they really liked it, I think they liked having their kids telling them. They seemed like they were pretty interested in listening to their students. Kids could tell them in their own words, which might be a little simpler than what we would explain, but then we'd fill in where, 'okay, now explain what your lowest score was.'"
- A rural female elementary teacher shared, "Sometimes you'll send things home and it's still in the kid's folder. We do also have progress folders each week that get sent home. So it has their student's progress report and their papers and it's supposed to come back signed. We try to communicate but it's not always reciprocal."
- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "I think some parents are concerned and I think some, not so much. I think some think the school's fine and the kids are fine. Sometimes it depends on their expectations. I don't always think that some parents have very high expectations for their children, so it depends on the parent."
- A rural female elementary principal stated, "I had parents stop in after conferences and they were just really tickled and pleased and really surprised that their students shared. So that's a start for them."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator stated, "I want to have a meeting before the end of school, a bring-your-bag lunch and talk about some of the things that parents . . . how we need to collaborate, and how they can help us at home. I send out a newsletter every month with some things that they can do at home, some reading web sites, and there's also Study Island, they all have a password and they can do that at home."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator explained, "Our family literacy program, we have families that are actively participating in that, and I think they get a

better understanding of the school and what their kids are working on. We've had some families come in and help out in the classroom and stuff like that, so it really gives them a sense of the school culture."

- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator continued, "With our Community Learning Center program, they have a huge family component. They have different family nights, where they're bringing the families into the school and introducing them to the different things the kids are working on after school, which aligns very closely with some of the things we're working on in the classroom. We just had a family night last week where we had parents come in, where we focused on writing, and the parents were working with their kids on different writing lessons. A mom and her child [were] creating a poem together."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator continued, "When you're looking at a book for different headings and subtitles and maybe try to find the onomatopoeia, they were sitting down with the parent coming up with those things, introducing them to some of that vocabulary that maybe the parents didn't even learn when they were in school. So it was neat to see the parents really getting involved with the students' learning in school. We had a great turn-out at our family night last week. Some families that I hadn't seen at a family night before that came out, that was really good to see."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "I think the parents really trust us to help their kids succeed. They come to conferences and really want to know 'how are my kids doing?' And they do ask 'what can I do to help?' You hope they follow through, but it doesn't always work. But they do care. Our principal always tells us, they send us the best kids they have. I will say that there are times that we find ourselves saying 'it's really hard' because you feel like you're having to do the parent job as well as teaching."
- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "I would say a lot of them are very engaged. The only ones that aren't on-board are people that absolutely don't know how to help their children. We've also been organizing in-service things to bolster that and to help parents, parent nights to allow those parents to have some education about how to help. I think they're genuinely concerned about how their students are doing and how to make it better."

Theme 8: Overall Improvement

In the Overall Improvement category (Administrator Survey Questions 71-77, Teacher Survey Questions 75-81), the average response of all administrators was 3.80. The average response of teachers was 3.78.

The item rated strongest by administrators in the Overall Improvement category was "Data indicates progress toward closing the achievement gap" (4.22). The item rated strongest by teachers in this category was "I set specific goals for increasing student achievement" (4.26).

The item rated weakest by administrators was "The teacher evaluation process in my school is tied to student achievement" (3.11). The item rated weakest by teachers in the Overall Improvement category was "Community members recognize improvement as a result of our Title I Improvement Plan" (3.25).

Table 13
Overall Improvement Highest and Lowest Mean Ratings

	Administrators	Teachers
Highest Mean Rating	4.22 "Data indicates progress toward closing the achievement gap."	4.26 "I set specific goals for increasing student achievement."
Lowest Mean Rating	3.11 "The teacher evaluation process in my school is tied to student achievement."	3.25 "Community members recognize improvement as a result of our Title I Improvement Plan."

The largest item mean discrepancy in the Overall Improvement category was "The teacher evaluation process in my school is tied to student achievement." Teachers rated this item between "undecided" and "agree" at 3.49, while administrators rated it lower, closer to "undecided," at 3.11.

Administrator responses in the Overall Improvement category ranged from 1.00 to 5.00 with an average of 3.80. Rural administrators rated this category 3.64, whereas non-rural administrators rated it higher at 4.06. Male administrators rated the category 3.62, while female administrators rated it higher at 3.89. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience gave this category a rating of 3.61, while those with over 20 years of experience gave it a higher 3.96 rating.

Teacher responses in the Overall Improvement category ranged from 1.00 to 5.00 with an average of 3.78. Rural teachers rated this category 3.65, whereas non-rural teachers rated it higher at 3.85. Male teachers gave this category a 3.63 rating, and female teachers gave it a higher rating of 3.79. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience gave this category a rating of 3.73, while teachers with 10-20 years of experience gave it a higher rating of 3.86. Teachers with 20-30 years of experience gave the category a 3.77 rating and teachers with over 30 years of experience gave the category a 3.75 rating.

The survey reliability statistic (Cronbach's Alpha) for the category of Overall Improvement was .817 for administrators and .836 for teachers.

Overall Improvement Discussion

Survey Items with Supporting Interview Quotes

Item 71 [Administrators]/ Item 75 [Teachers]: "Data shows that progress is being made in implementing our Title I Goals." This item was rated 3.89 by administrators and 3.94 by teachers.

Administrators gave this item the highest rating in the Overall Improvement category, along with one other item. Rural administrators rated this item lower (3.73) than did non-rural administrators (4.14). Male administrators rated this item 3.50, while female administrators

rated this item higher at 4.08. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.75, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated it higher (4.00).

Teachers also rated this item the highest in the category of Overall Improvement. Rural teachers rated this item lower (3.89) than did non-rural teachers (3.97). Male teachers rated this item lower (3.72) than did female teachers (3.97). Teachers with various levels of experience all rated this item mostly "agree." The item mean for teachers with less than 10 years of experience was 3.90, for teachers with 10-20 years of experience was 3.96, for teachers with 20-30 years of experience was 3.96, and for teachers with over 30 years of experience was 4.00.

- A rural male elementary principal shared, "Math is a goal. We have great math scores, but I'm curious to see how the NeSA math lines up. We were like 98 to 99% successful, so I'm expecting (a little bit of a drop) in that, but math is also an NCA goal. Those are our two top goals."
- A rural male elementary principal shared his perceptions of progress by stating, "I feel really good about it. I do. The teachers are telling me some good things about being further than they have in previous years. I mean, even in the math area the teachers are saying, 'Wow, we are so much further ahead, the kids are performing, you know, at a better rate.' I feel good. I'm not sure if it's faith or hope or what, you don't want to hang your hat, but we've been doing things in this building that should get us further. I am worried because it's the same reading program that we've had - how do we get over that hump? So I do have some worries but I really think our scores are going to be better, I really do. I don't see how they can't be."
- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "We have raised our test scores in reading quite a bit from when I came - before I was the 3rd grade teacher I was the reading intervention[ist], the last three years. This is my first year in the classroom here. So we have improved our reading, but math is pretty low, I think we still have issues with having kids really grasp and understand math, not just to do the skill, to understand. So that comes more with the manipulatives, and of course, maturation. In third grade, as you get older this should build and they should become more proficient I think as time goes on."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "Well, we have set a reading goal of 70%. We would like 70% of our class to be proficient. We haven't set the math goal, that's what we are going to work on this week, but I think it might be similar. We're not there yet. Some are further behind, but no one is at 70% proficient. Mine is 69%, math and reading. We're close, but we're still not . . . and we have some in the 50s, some even in the 40 percent proficient."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "We've already seen a difference in the Reading Mastery. Their fluency has increased. We noticed DIBELS scores went up because of that. Our reading scores so far are showing that we're making improvement. As far as math, that's why we're getting a new math series, our math scores are way lower than they need to be. We've been trying to do as many extra little things everybody can do to try to help improve math, because we know the state math test is coming soon."

Item 72 [Administrators]/ Item 76 [Teachers]: "During teacher evaluations, I discuss with teachers about the way they are helping students in order to meet our Title I Goals/ During teacher evaluations, administrators discuss with me about the way I am helping students in order to meet our Title I Goals." This item was rated 3.78 by administrators and 3.66 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item mostly "undecided" at 3.18, while non-rural administrators rated it significantly higher at 4.71 (p=.005). Male administrators rated this item higher (3.83) than did female administrators (3.75). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item between "undecided" and "agree" at 3.50, while administrators with more than 20 years of experience on average rated this item "agree" at 4.00.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 3.44, while non-rural teachers rated it significantly higher at 3.78 (p=.025). Male teachers rated this item 3.40, lower than did female teachers 3.69. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.57, while teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated it 3.84. Teachers with 20-30 years of experience rated it 3.71 and those with over 30 years of experience rated this item 3.52.

- A rural male elementary principal explained, "There's a possibility there, absolutely. Frequency of interaction, building relationships, going from one classroom to another, teachers have their . . . it doesn't sound the same. Maybe they're teaching RM-4, it just doesn't sound the same, this one is following the curriculum to a tee where this one is veering off, doing more teacher talk than is really needed. So there are pockets. It's just a matter of being involved with those teachers, working with them, trying to help them become better with what they're doing and following the curriculum."
- A rural male Title I coordinator explained, "The format for our teacher evaluation is ITIP, the Madeline Hunter. All of our teachers were trained two years ago. Those teachers that are new, if they do not have anything in their transcripts to show that they have done that - our ESU puts on ITIP courses, then new teachers are required to participate in those courses. That's a consistency across the district, we know everybody is doing a lesson that is based on instructional theory into practice. Now to say 'we have learned this instructional activity, now we expect to go in and see it in the classrooms?' I can't say that's happening."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained how teacher evaluations will change in the future to focus on the Title I goals, "I think they will. They haven't yet. I think they're rewriting their evaluation. So I think it will go there."
- A non-rural female Title I coordinator explained teachers analyzing their own instruction, "I would say so. They team a lot with their other grade-level teachers. But at their instructional meetings with their administrators, they're looking at all of the data. They have about a 50 minute conference quarterly with the administrators, and they bring all of the data to those meetings, those instructional conferences."
- A non-rural female elementary principal shared, "To make sure, we have quarterly instructional conferences with the administration, because you're accountable when they pull up the screen of your reading grades and your math grades. Additionally we have instructional conferences every quarter, the assistant principal and I and the

instructional coach, we meet with every team and ask them to bring summary data for that quarter for their grade-level, so it's not any individual teacher bringing their data, it's that whole team. Then they bring the data, we look at it, and they are to make summary statements about the data there. We've used the same form so that it's predictable each quarter - it's cumulative - so we then begin to compare data, quarter to quarter. What are the concerns, what are the challenges, what are the celebrations, and that kind of thing? So it's monitored that way."

- A non-rural female elementary principal, "Our observations are really important, our walk-throughs. But also, our teams meet on a weekly basis in some fashion or another - and I'm not meaning that like loosey-goosey, I mean one week it's Kid Talk that the teams meet every week with our instructional coach, so every week they are bringing data with the instructional coach in some fashion to say, it might be they were working on guided reading, so 'how is guided reading going?' So the instructional coach is then feeding that back. This is really important to me."
- A non-rural female elementary principal shared to what extent classroom data is used in teacher evaluations, "That's a really good question. We've had conversations about this as a district, because Doug Reeves has been in and we've talked about 'how do you single out a classroom teacher's data, compared to the other classrooms' data?' We're not so good at that. One way that we have gotten closer to it is when the instructional coach is meeting with them, they do bring data, and with conversations they have - and I'm not a part of those conversations - this is when teachers start getting very fretful. That's when I begin to see some real strong emotion. Why are they able to get this data and this data isn't over here? We actually have had that happen in a couple of grade-levels. One thing that came up was a teacher wasn't on-pace. The instructional coach said that to me. I had to meet individually with that teacher – 'what's it going to take for you to get on-pace and I'm wondering about that affecting the data.' Our classrooms are heterogeneous. That's something for us to struggle with, how we're going to be able to do that."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "Through the drop-in observations and then through your appraisal goals is where it is (determined if classrooms are implementing Title I goals). Your appraisals, you have to have meetings throughout the year. But it would be very easy to see if a strategy wasn't being done based on our PLC meetings, because the data wouldn't be there. That would be pretty simple."
- A rural female secondary principal explained, "Every term teachers have to turn in three writing samples. They can be good, bad, indifferent, and they turn them in and they're asked to use the Six-Trait rubric for grading. We've had training for that. Depending upon the discipline, a lot of people just do conventions and that's okay, because conventions are huge, especially in certain disciplines, and those [teachers] don't understand the other components as well, voice and all that. That's used extensively, especially by our language arts people. Then the vocabulary we did, we did a booklet and they are to turn in a vocabulary sample of a lesson that they've taught. That's how we hold them accountable for that."
- A rural female secondary teacher shared how each teacher must turn in writing and vocabulary activities related to the school goal, "Each term we have to make sure we hand in our writing activities and vocabulary activities and explain how we did those in each class. So each teacher teaches three classes in the term, so every term we

have to hand those in to the principal. That's part of your evaluation. We do not talk about it in teacher evaluations, we just hand those in. I know she's talked to other teachers who haven't gotten them in. I just assumed if she didn't talk to me, it must have been what she needed. We get assessed as to 'what do we do if the students didn't understand and how did we change that.' Not so much during evaluation - she doesn't usually wait for evaluation - if a student's persistently low in your class, they'll come and have a conversation. 'What are you doing to get them up, what have you tried?"'

- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator explained, "The principal has tried different ways of getting more parents to come. Our family nights are pretty well-attended, so we've really tried to communicate with the parents then. Our conferences are attended pretty well. But I know those community meetings that he has aren't as well-attended. If there's something tied to it, like food or an activity, we can usually get our parents to come. But if you don't tie something like that, it's a little bit harder. They don't come just for the information. I don't want to say they're not as invested, but it seems that way. If you had a dinner, they're going to be here. It's hard to have that funding to provide that, and then sometimes you have to have daycare available. . . ."

Item 73 [Administrators]/ Item 77 [Teachers]: "Data indicates progress toward closing the achievement gap." This item was rated 4.22 by administrators and 3.92 by teachers.

Administrators gave this item the highest rating in the Overall Improvement category. Rural administrators rated this item lower (4.18) than did non-rural administrators (4.29). Male administrators rated this item lower (4.17) than did female administrators (4.25). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 4.13, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item higher (4.30).

Teachers from rural schools and non-rural schools rated this item similarly (3.91 and 3.92, respectively). Male teachers rated this item lower (3.76) than did female teachers (3.94). Teachers with 10-20 years of experience rated this item "agree" at 4.06. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience and over 30 years of experience rated it 3.84, while teachers with 20-30 years of experience rated it 3.96.

- A non-rural female elementary principal stated, "Every grade is different. We're noticing that our kindergarteners are much stronger than our kindergarteners last year. Some of it is because we have five rooms instead of four, so smaller class sizes. No matter what, class size, especially at that grade, makes a difference. Last year our 2nd grade was very, very frustrated, because there were so few kids that were reading at grade-level. This year the data was showing us that so many more of them, [a] higher percentage are reading at grade-level. It depends on the grade-level. Most of our SPED kids are doing so much better. Just yesterday, the fact that they're taking the test and they're feeling fairly confident themselves, and that they sat through it the whole time and nobody misbehaved. Then we'll just see how they do on the test."
- A rural female secondary teacher explained, "Obviously what we've done is not working. I want to know if other schools (with similar demographics) are meeting the standards, and if they are I want to know what they're doing. Who's having

success, what are they doing, and what are we doing wrong? We found out on Friday morning we were about 50% proficient and it needed to be higher. So it's going to be more this year, I'm sure, by the time they figure all the cut scores. We were certain we would go up a little. How could you not after you go over all those terms and author's purpose and 'how do you figure out what does author mean?' That's unofficial, because of the cut score thing, but still! In reading? I already know. Well, I guess I don't know. Our cut scores, are raw scores, were worse than last year's cut scores, raw score. I may be wrong after they . . . but down deep inside, I don't think it's going to be real good."

- A rural female elementary principal explained, "I think we're showing growth. When we took the winter testing, we were well above the NWEA norm in reading. We're not showing that kind of growth in math yet, but we are showing more growth in reading."
- A non-rural female Title I coordinator shared, "Our 3rd graders last year struggled academically big-time, and if you look at the 4th grade data this year, they are making huge, huge academic gains. Those teachers have put so much time and energy into those students. I think that group of students alone has made tremendous progress. Our 2nd graders, that's definitely a bunch that is struggling in reading. So they're probably not making as much progress as one would maybe hope. The big picture, I can't really speak on that, but at individual grade-levels I think we're seeing some great improvements with certain students."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher talked about how emotions can play a part, "As a teacher, you can't let that get you down. You have to know that what we're doing - I have to look at the progress, not the fact that they're not on grade-level, but every time we've met they've made some progress. And that's important, Yes, (we're seeing incremental improvement). They're making progress. Administration sees that too. They understand, and that is a piece of the puzzle that we need to see, that no, we're not where they need to be, and nor will, maybe, at the end of the year will they be there, but at each level or at each point that we've taken pretty structured data, they're improving."
- A rural male elementary principal shared, "Yes (improvement), and we're constantly looking at improving it. We've got things in place this year that we're seeing the kids become better readers."

Item 74 [Administrators]/ Item 78 [Teachers]: "The use of our research-based interventions is leading to the attainment of our Title I Goals." This item was rated 4.00 by administrators and 3.91 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools and non-rural schools rated this item exactly the same (4.00). Male administrators rated this item 3.83, lower than the 4.08 rating given by female administrators. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.88. Those with over 20 years of experience rated it 4.10.

Teachers from rural schools and non-rural schools rated this item similarly (3.89 and 3.92, respectively). Male teachers rated this item 3.76, lower than the 3.93 rating given by female teachers. Teachers with less than 10 years of experience rated this item 3.81. Teachers with

more experience rated it higher. Those with 10-20 years of experience rated it 4.02, those with 20-30 years of experience rated it 3.93, and those with over 30 years of experience rated it 3.97.

- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "It (Title I improvement process) will have improved the student process just because our main focus has gone that way. We've pushed for more time, 10 minutes here, 15 minutes here, make sure that these kids are meeting the standards or getting those standards covered. So it should. We've done the DIBELS with the math, but they don't have probes yet so we can't do that, unfortunately. But we will, next year. It has improved, but it's slow-going."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "A lot of the strategies have been really good. So it's not like we're doing something that's just a waste of our time. Which I think was maybe the feeling at the beginning, and the fear, that you're just [doing] another fad. Yeah, we've seen a lot of improvement. I think 30% in our reading scores, from the beginning of the year to the winter. Maybe not as much as we need to see. So the strategies have to be helping. I think the strategies help the kids be more engaged. We talk about it more, there's more academic talk about 'okay, well, these are the expectations, engagement is part of learning, if you're not engaged, how can you remember, how can you answer on a test if you weren't engaged when you were talking about it in class?'"

Item 75 [Administrators]/ Item 79 [Teachers]: "Community members recognize improvement as a result of our Title I Improvement Plan." This item was rated 3.44 by administrators and 3.25 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.27) than did non-rural administrators (3.71). Male administrators rated this item 3.33, while female administrators rated this item 3.50. Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.38, while administrators with over 20 years of experience gave it a higher rating of 3.50.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item 2.93, significantly lower than the rating given by non-rural teachers (3.43) (p=.000). Male teachers rated this item higher (3.28) than did female teachers (3.25). The lowest rating for this item (3.03) was given by teachers with over 30 years of experience. The highest rating for this item (3.39) was given by teachers with 10-20 years of experience. Teachers with less than 10 years and 20-30 years of experience rated this item in between (3.28 and 3.18, respectively).

- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "The principal has to communicate the fact that our kids can do well, our kids can succeed. Just the fact that he says 'I appreciate your hard work; I know you work hard. . . .' We just had a family night, so he sent out an email saying, 'I know you worked hard, it was well-received, we had a lot of good comments from parents.' He often says, 'you know what we do, we may not see it today but we'll see it down the line.' He was so excited about how well the kids seemed to do, and just the fact that yeah, we really did prepare, these kids really are ready for it. He felt really good about that, and told the teachers about it."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "Yeah, at every meeting. And then we actually have, like DIBELs scores and those results that we hand out to the parents

too, like at report card time. So they get their DIBELs score and they can see graphs and in fact I handed one out to my 2nd graders and they had their kindergarten, 1st, all of their scores. From even a few years back."

Item 76 [Administrators]/ Item 80 [Teachers]: "The teacher evaluation process in my school is tied to student achievement." This item was rated 3.11 by administrators and 3.49 by teachers.

Administrators rated this item the lowest in the Overall Improvement category with rural administrators rating this item higher (3.27) than did non-rural administrators (2.86). Male administrators rated this item lower (2.83) than did female administrators (3.25). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 2.75, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item higher at 3.40.

Teachers from rural schools rated this item significantly lower (3.21) than did teachers from non-rural schools (3.64) (p=.004). Male teachers rated this item slightly lower (3.44) than did female teachers (3.49). Teachers with less than 10 years and 10-20 years of experience rated this item similarly, at 3.48 and 3.49, respectively. Teachers with 20-30 years of experience rated it higher at 3.56, while teachers with over 30 years of experience rated it lower at 3.39.

- A rural male elementary principal stated, "We do it (discuss classroom individual student data) individually - teachers will come in and visit, I'll go right to the classroom I'll ask for a teacher to give me some samples of paragraph writing. Evaluation, when they come in, we'll discuss, you know, 'how are you feeling,' 'self-evaluate yourself on the progress of your kids.' So there's always conversation. Teachers will stop me in the hall, and [I'll] say, 'okay, let's go to the office and we'll discuss the situation.' There's always a conversation. As far as scheduling certain times on a regular basis, my door's open, you can come and talk to me, or I go right in the classroom and ask and just have dialogue."
- A non-rural male elementary principal stated, "During my pre-observation conferences and post-observation conferences, I really try getting into the heads of teachers as far as 'tell me about your thought processes prior to this lesson, what was purposeful, what did you react to based off what you saw from students and their prior knowledge that was exposed? As you were roaming around the classroom, what did you notice, how did that impact your instruction?' One key question I ask teachers is 'What potential roadblocks did you anticipate going into this lesson? How did that impact your planning and your instruction?' I'm always looking for some type of assessment tool, and [teachers] bring that information to our post-observation meeting. Usually it's what they assess that day but they also usually bring a chapter test if it's math or a theme test if it's a strand of literacy. Biggies though: student engagement and active participation. 'Are we getting all voices in the air,' or is it 'I'm just calling on the hands?' How are we getting students involved, and are the kids working as hard as the teacher's working?"'
- A non-rural female elementary principal shared, "One of the questions for the post-observation for summative, and also for the formative goals - is 'how did this lesson impact your smart goal for your grade-level?' It's something I expect to be able to

talk with them about, and 'what did you find out, how do you know if the kids learned what you wanted them to learn today? How did that relate to your smart goal?' That's always a conversation in those formal conversations. I think the biggest part of the teacher evaluation is more the process of what you're doing 'Why did you choose that idea to use in this particular lesson?' 'How are you going gear that up for the gifted students I have but then really include those SPED students I've got?' I think it's more almost lesson development or focus. Achievement's in there, but . . . it's the path to where you're going."

- A rural female secondary teacher explained what observations are based on, "They're based on ITIP, setting up your lesson that way. This could be a huge area where we need improvement - we as tenured teachers are evaluated once every three years. If you weren't a person that was really going to do your best no matter what because you feel bad if you slacked off for the kids, it would be easy to be lazy. Non-tenure get evaluated more frequently. My one friend that's not tenured, she's been evaluated at least a couple times already this year. We used to have an evaluation system that was pretty much all surprise, and he would drop in either at the beginning, the middle, or the end of class, and there were different expectations depending on the time that he showed up as far as getting them set for the lesson, getting going right away getting them engaged, teaching right up to the bell, and summarizing. Lesson plans were supposed to be on the desk so he could look at them. That changed the way I taught, because I knew I was not going to be caught unprepared. It was very good. I was not going to be left with nothing to do at the end of that block and have that be the day he came in. That really made me aware of planning appropriately."
- A rural female secondary teacher explained, "No, not at all. The last time I got evaluated in a class, which was 'here, everybody, gather round the desk, let me show you how to do this page.' I'm fine with it because it's not that fun to have somebody come in and evaluate you, but I know that it's not the most credible way to evaluate."
- A rural female secondary teacher explained, "They do (evaluations) when it's the third year. This really surprises the heck out of me, because our other principal, even if it wasn't your full evaluation, would still come in unannounced, at the beginning one time, and the middle one time, and the ending time. The full evaluation usually is announced, you come in first and talk about what you're going teach and you have a date already set-up. I teach a little bit differently when I'm evaluated on a full day. I always liked it when our other principal came in unannounced, kept me on my toes. This administrator, if it's not your full year . . . I remember asking - it's almost a week before the end of school year, and I'm like, 'are you coming in?' 'This isn't your third year.' I'm like, 'so you *don't* come in.' I thought by the state you had to get evaluated at least once a year in some regards or another."
- A rural female secondary teacher explained, "The only way is through evaluations. Someone I talked to said there is a way, power walk-throughs that [are] more data-driven, and we don't have that here. After each evaluation we have a post-evaluation conference where I have to fill out what I think I did well, what I should do differently, and they have something similar, and then we discuss it, sign off on it."
- A rural male elementary principal stated, "That's what I'd like to do. One thing I don't like about this district's evaluation policy is their evaluation process is 'one and done, show me your dog and pony show and that's it.' There is no other formal

anything, and I'd like to see two to three walk-throughs instead of one formal and done for that exact reason. I've seen this and you really need to change what you're doing. We have those conversations in those 'one and done' evaluations, but it's just like any other training. I've told you, you file away, next year we'll come back and I see the same thing."

Item 77 [Administrators]/ Item 81 [Teachers]: "Teachers/ I set specific goals for increasing student achievement." This item was rated 4.17 by administrators and 4.26 by teachers.

Administrators from rural schools rated this item lower (3.82) than did non-rural administrators (4.71). There was a significant difference between rural and non-rural responses (p=.013). Male administrators rated this item lower (3.83) than did female administrators (4.33). Administrators with less than 20 years of experience rated this item 3.88, while administrators with over 20 years of experience rated this item higher at 4.40.

Teachers rated this item the highest in the Overall Improvement category. Rural teachers and non-rural teachers rated this item similarly (4.24 and 4.27, respectively). Male teachers rated this item lower (4.08) than did female teachers (4.28). Teachers with less than 10 years and 10-20 years of experience rated this item similarly, at 4.25 and 4.27, respectively. Teachers with over 30 years of experience rated this item higher at 4.48, while teachers with 20-30 years of experience rated it lower at 4.11.

- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "I have such great hopes! I really think our learning curve is so much higher than it was. I'm excited, and I want to see how their tests are going to come out. Our math in many cases is better."
- A rural female elementary teacher shared, "I know their MAPS scores went up. I'm having students more aware of what is expected of them on their daily work. I'm seeing a trend with their grades themselves going up. Maybe I'm even more clear now on what my expectations are."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "I see the kids coming up with innovative ways of re-stating what I have said. I give them just a piece of it with the Prometheum, and they're coming up with the rest of it. . . . I'm seeing us improving in the long-run. Yes, it's stressful. Yes, I spend a lot of time here. I don't regret a bit of it."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "I'm always showing him, 'here's where you started, here's where you are now.' He's not on grade-level yet, but he's a lot farther than he was, a *lot* farther."
- A rural female secondary teacher explained, "I see students that really have grown. I have one girl that is a senior and when she started I was thinking 'holy cow!' I could hardly understand her sentences because they were so fragmented and made no sense at all. 'I don't even know what to do with it, how do I grade this? Boy, she's really improved.' Her vocabulary sentences make sense; she's done a lot better with everything, just making a lot more sense. She's only been with me a couple months so I don't know why that is. Maybe the beginning of those words was just more difficult for her. We see growth, because we take the Stanford test at the beginning of the class and at the end."

- A rural female secondary principal explained, "We have a 9th grade reading requirement to graduate. That's probably been in place for over ten years. I did that because the kids needed to know they had to learn how to read, when they came in not knowing how to read. The guidelines I set up were that they have to be able to read and comprehend at the 9th grade level. I believe if you can read in any language, eventually you can learn in another language."

INTERVIEW RESULTS

During the interview process, five additional themes emerged. The number of comments per theme ranged from 40-59. The themes, and the number of comments are noted:

1. Change (46)
2. Reculturing (49)
3. Leadership (58)
4. Student Engagement (40)
5. Parent Communication/ Involvement (59)

Transforming schools requires a culture be in place that can support the transformation of schools. "Structure does make a difference, but it is not the main point in achieving success. Transforming the culture-changing the way things are done-is the main point. I call this reculturing" (Fullan, 2004, p. 53). A rural male elementary principal explained, "Going through this high-stakes process has been very positive in terms of change in the school culture and being able to implement change. A lot of things I've been wanting to change here have been tough to get started, and we're able to make those changes because of this (Reculturing: changing the culture). They all understand that 'what we have been doing isn't working, so we've got to do something else.' It has made change easier, because there is no alternative. Either change and get better, or lose your job."

Interview Theme 1: Change

The first two themes, "Change" and "Reculturing" are inseparable when initiating school transformation. In the first theme "Change." Changes were noted in the use of data, classroom interventions, curriculum, engagement of students, professional development practices and interaction with stakeholders.

Changes were seen in how data was used:

- A rural male elementary principal shared, "We'll use that data to move forward and continually use all the data we possibly can to re-evaluate where we're at. Prior to this year we have not been a data-driven school. Moving in that direction, I feel we're much better off than we were even a year ago. Working towards becom[ing] a data-driven school (has been the most important change that we've made for improving student achievement). We never really were before. With the change in our administration - that's the way they want business done - that has probably been the biggest thing that's worked us towards improving student achievement."

The use of classroom interventions has been another positive change in schools:

- A non-rural female elementary principal stated, "The changes have been for the better because they work. I think with more practice, they are getting in those interventions, then we can see the benefits directly from their data. If they come to our classroom for tutoring, it makes a difference and they become more fluent readers."

An elementary principal shared academic growth due to changes made in the curriculum:

- A non-rural elementary principal stated, "They're making more of those changes. That has had an impact on student achievement. Our writing scores and our math scores have gone up the last couple of years. Our reading scores last year took a dip when we went from our reading CRTs to the NeSA-R. Based off what I've seen so far, those are heading in a positive direction. I also think that with RtI, we're having a positive (impact) with those students who are performing below grade-level, their growth isn't really met, or it doesn't come out on report cards or a leveled reading passage but when you dive into their DIBELS or where they were performing at, [at] the beginning of the year to where they are at semester and then end of the year, you can see that growth."

Changes in reducing class size at the primary grades impacts the progress of kindergarteners:

- A rural female elementary teacher, "Every grade is different. We're noticing that our kindergarteners are much stronger than our kindergarteners last year. Some of it is because we have five rooms instead of four, so smaller class sizes. No matter what, class size, especially at that grade, makes a difference."

Changes in curriculum produce hope for student success in later years of schooling:

- A non-rural female elementary principal stated, "There are steps in (a positive) direction. I think in four or five years we're going to see a big change, because the 6^{th}, 7^{th}, and 8^{th} graders have not had Reading Mastery. That's when we're going to see the change."

Change includes alerting stakeholders to changes that will impact students:

- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "With Reading Mastery . . . we didn't do the legwork we should have. We learned that we didn't get the parents on-board to start with, and it was a huge change. It was not 'Johnny's bringing home his reading book tonight to read his story,' because they don't do that. It was very different. The spelling was tremendously different. They didn't have spelling lists to study every week. We needed to do our P.R. a little better. It caused a bit of chaos in the community at first, so the principal wrote up a nice letter and got it out and by the time we had our first parent conference, a lot of people were asking questions and we could actually answer. Now we know you have to do P.R. ahead of time."

Changes in classroom instruction to engage students have been a focus for leaders:

- A rural male elementary principal stated, "I really look for explicit instructional changes. I really look for positive and negative feedback. It's all part of that explicit instruction, are our teachers really getting students engaged in what they're learning?"
- A rural female elementary teacher talked about changes in classroom instruction and school expectations, "We're learning new practices and different things that we haven't done before, so there's a lot of change, and of course when there's change, people get nervous!"

Changes occurred in professional development practices:

- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "We changed things. If you don't change anything, nothing's going to change. I think [with] the action plan every PLC has to do, you have to think about 'what do we do differently?'"

Interview Theme 2: Reculturing

It is critical when transforming to a new culture (Reculturing), to allow the time needed to move through the stages of change in order that participants have an opportunity to embrace this new culture: The second theme, "Reculturing," yielded: high expectations and procedures so students know what to expect; strong collaborative interactions with colleagues working as a team; engaging parent's knowledge and beliefs about what's in their children's best interest; the commitment to changes occurring in the reculturing process; and support for difficult conversations in order to be successful in a school setting.

Reculturing takes time:

- A rural female elementary teacher shared, "I think probably a couple of months ago, trying to change that climate. Before we were on the PLAS list, and before we started this year, I think people were just kind of self-contained and not a lot of collaboration going on. This is only my first year in the classroom, so I'm just telling you from my experience over here, what I've seen. I think it's improved a lot, just recently. It's not everything we should be doing, but it's hard to just change that much. You just can't do everything at once. So we're doing a little bit at a time and that's helping."

Reculturing requires high expectations and procedures so that students know what to expect:

- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "In having higher expectations, having set procedures so the kids know what to expect, 'it's done this way, this is the way it's always done, these are the expectations.' I think that helps. We do bell work now, that's something we hadn't done before where the kids come in and they have something in front of them, they automatically get started right away. Your transition times, that's a part of it. Shortening your transition times so you're trying to get back to work as quick as you can."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator shared, "It's gotten a lot better. When you walk in our hallways, they're quiet now. My first year, I was shocked at

how noisy they were, because I came from a rural school. It was a larger rural school, but the hallways were silent. You didn't hear anything. We didn't have behaviors like you have here either. So I think that climate, and the focus of 'these are all our kids' has really changed in that it's not this person's fault, we all need to focus on this if the kid isn't progressing behaviorally or academically."

- A non-rural female elementary principal explained, "We've set up a system by which teachers can teach kids behavior. The expectation is, you will teach what the expectations are, you will expect that you'll re-teach it, you'll practice it. These were things that just didn't exist. So we now have dismissal, arrival, lunch room, playground, and hallway. It's very clear what's expected, it's very clear that we will not be disruptive, here is how we will proceed, and it has greatly impacted the culture of the building."

Reculturing requires time to move educators through stages that allows them to embrace a new culture:

- A rural female elementary principal explained, "I've determined it's somewhat like the grieving process. Some are through the grieving process, and some are in one or more of the stages. That's why I have my leadership team to help communicate, process, and get them through that, because time is of the essence, and children expect us to be ready."

Reculturing is utilizing educator's strengths to improve learning for students:

- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "It's a small school, we had never really had the opportunity (to change grade levels or classrooms); We created a family intervention position with the SIG grant. She's got a counseling degree and was a 4th grade teacher. So that allowed me to move some people. The apple cart syndrome, I guess. We were able to put people where their strengths were. This position is an excellent example. She's a good classroom teacher, but she is really good at one-on-one intervention."
- A rural female elementary principal shared, "One of the things that I found out was that teachers wanted a common planning time where they could collaborate and work with each other. When you're in a one-track school, that's a little difficult. So we had to really re-work and look outside the box at our PE department. Over a period of a couple of weeks we were able to develop a common planning time. I also developed a leadership team, and that leadership team now is connected to grade-level teams."
- A non-rural female elementary principal stated, "We did a lot of things, we did *Strengths Finder* for our whole staff this year. At staff meetings, teachers sit in their first strength, their second strength so you get to know other staff members. We really worked on that piece (building trust). Plus not only do you get to know each other, you get to know yourself when you do the Strengths Finder. So that was really important. The other piece that's helped our staff trust each other is we have learning buddies. It's amazing. You get to see instruction and other strategies people are using."

Reculturing utilizing parent knowledge and beliefs about what is in their children's best interests:

- A rural female elementary principal shared, "What I'm not sure of from my parents and my community is 'Do we have families that believe their students will be college-bound? Or do we just expect them to graduate from high school and that's good enough and they'll just be here?' I don't know. I get a sense of something, but I really want to hear it from families. Where they really want their kids to be, how they want them to achieve, and how they want to help get them there. I have a vision, but I need to make sure that (parents agree)."

Reculturing is not easy, requiring time, difficult conversations, commitment, and support:

- A rural female elementary teacher honestly reflected about the difficulty of reculturing, "To start with I was so stressed out. I was wishing that I would have retired with my friend who retired last year. I know this is not the way we're going to do this, we're going to keep going, we're going to be open-minded . . . it was hard. I don't mind change, I really don't. But there's been a lot of change, and I am spending a lot of time at school. I'm at school at 6:30 in the morning, and I often don't leave until 5:30, 6:00 at night. . . . I don't regret the time that I spend up here."
- A rural female elementary teacher stated "One of the things our principal is having us do is a book study on *Crucial Conversations*, and I'm learning a lot from it. I have such great hopes. I really think our learning curve is so much higher than it was. I'm excited, and I want to see how their tests are going to come out."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator, "This year my Adaptive Schools team has worked really hard trying to really improve communication between staff and among staff, and trying to have positive intent at all times. It's been something that we've been working really hard on this year. We have made some good progress with that."
- A rural female secondary principal stated, "We have been one district for a few years, so you've had all the rural schools teaching their own curriculum. You had your elementary K-8 in town teaching their own curriculum. So all these things coming in the high school, that articulation wasn't there. Articulation is important. A lot of schools may have it on paper. We're finally coming together, I believe. We hope. It's always been a good system. Everybody's not been on the same page, and to change that overall culture is very difficult because people are territorial. But I think it will come. It's going to take hard work."

Reculturing is learning to work together as a team to positively impact teaching practices:

- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "In our culture, because we believe in collaborating, we know collaborating makes a difference, we're not in isolation, and our PLCs have affected that. Because they work as teams, we've had to be very specific, 'What does a team look like? How do they function? What is a dysfunctional team and what's a functional team?' That's changing our culture. We've brought in people to work with groups of people, and teams, that weren't functioning very well. We have learning buddies, and next year we're going to team

buddies, that we've connected to appraisal. Because if we're learners, we're going to learn together."

- A non-rural female elementary principal explained, "We have a door chart that says words that we talk about at arrival time. Lots of different ways that we keep reminding. We have re-teach weeks where we re-teach the common area expectations. We have a video that we made of what that looks like and sounds like, so we replay that video as many different ways as we can to keep reviewing it, re-teaching it, practicing it. So that's something that I think makes a huge difference in the culture."

Reculturing is embracing a shared vision:

- A non-rural female elementary principal shared, "Last year there were so many changes that the staff didn't seem quite ready for it. We collected some ideas about 'what are our goals, what is it that we want, who are we,' so at our first meeting this year, we set about writing our mission statement based on what we had collected from last year. So we narrowed it down. We have a mission of learning and teaching and caring to create productive citizens, and we have it on shirts, we have it on our overhead, the letterhead, we have it on a big sign . . . any place that we can, we've put (it) so people know what our mission is. When we went in to proctor the testing, we talked to the kids, 'do you remember what our mission statement is? We've been trying to be good teachers, and we care about you.'"
- A rural male secondary Title I coordinator stated, "We need that focus to be on student learning, not what teachers are teaching but what students are learning. We need to answer those questions of what it is we want students to learn . . . we need to find the absolute essentials. We need to, as best as we can, to move them forward."

Reculturing is engaging parents:

- A non-rural female elementary principal explained, "We've had our family learning nights, (where) we've carried that over into teaching the parents what we're doing how we're doing it, and why we're doing it. We are a learning environment, and we're learning in lots of different ways. I think our study groups do the same thing. So it contributes to our being a culture of learners."

Reculturing is learning to be open to vulnerability to increase one's own learning:

- A non-rural female elementary principal stated "To be honest, you have to be able to trust everybody on your team. You have to be able to be okay and say 'Yesterday's lesson was the biggest flop of my life.' You have to be able to say that and someone goes 'well, tell me about it.' And just say, 'I'm looking at your data and your kids are rocking on that, they're doing awesome, can you tell me, what are you doing?' But you have to be able to trust and it has to be open, and we really have worked a lot on trust this year. We did a trust survey last year with our whole staff when we first came in, and I know we were new and trust was really low among teams. We just did a trust survey again about a month or so ago, and trust was not even in the top concerns anymore with the teams. The teams felt trust."
- A non-rural female elementary principal shared, "Change, we know, can happen slowly. We had some people get off the bus last year. Not very many. Some

buildings do it better than others but you're not going to find a building that isn't collaborating. Because this is hard work and you're not going to do it by yourself. You just can't. That is the truth of it, you'll die trying. It takes a lot of strengths and a lot of knowledge, but you can get that if you put people together, you can really be more successful."

Reculturing can be difficult at times as it requires a shift in thinking and a focus on believing that all students can be successful:

- A rural male elementary principal stated, "We have a couple that 'this is the way I want to do it.' But with all the stuff that's been going on, the Tier I status and all these different grants, it's been a real culture shift as 'I don't want to lose my job, so I want to be accountable to these kids and I'm going to make sure they know something.' So it has been real positive, being put on this status, because it has caused some real people who in the past would have said 'I'm not doing anything wrong.' So we do have a culture of change, and all our staff K-12 has been really pushing towards getting ourselves towards the top of the list instead of the bottom."

Interview Theme 3: Leadership

"Leaders in a culture of change realize that accessing tacit knowledge is crucial and that such access cannot be mandated. Effective leaders understand the value and role of knowledge creation, they make it a priority and set about establishing and reinforcing habits of knowledge exchange among organizational members" (Fullan, 2001, p. 87).

Although leadership styles vary, monitoring classroom performance is a major responsibility of successful leaders. Principals have a responsibility for leading school improvement and utilizing data in those efforts. Based on evidences acquired from teacher monitoring and evaluations, school leaders can provide teacher support to improve classroom instruction and ensure best practices while engaging teachers in decision making that leads to transformation of schools. Leadership emerged as a theme in several areas.

Leading school improvement and improving student performance:

- A rural female elementary teacher shared, "Then she lets everyone know at staff meetings or by email, what they need to be doing and when their kids need to be doing it. So we definitely have a plan that we follow. That's good to have."
- A non-rural female elementary principal shared, "We really do look at the data and then the principal will do a survey, 'what do you see as the most important?' The data's right there, you can't really disagree with [it]. We really evaluated the data at staff development. It went through January and February. We sat down and said 'what was good about it, what was not so good about it, and what would make it better;' because he really does want it to be meaningful to teachers and be able to make a difference."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "I think our principal is well on top of that. He's constantly looking at those things and monitoring students. I think they're pretty on top of it."

Leadership styles vary; monitoring classroom performance is sometimes left up to classroom teachers:

- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained her responsibility as a classroom teacher leader in monitoring performance, "As far as monitored by administration, I would say I don't think that. He's busy doing other things. It's up to us I think to self-monitor how we think our kids are doing, but also rely on our team to converse with them."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained the process for monitoring classroom performance, "We have a cumulative instructional spreadsheet, and it's a new document that was created last year as part of our school improvement process where we took four main areas across grade-levels that we can input their report card grades every quarter and track students and see the progress as they go. That was something that kindergarten was really struggling with. A couple of those areas we do and can record in the 4th quarter of the school year, but it wasn't something that applied to us (Kindergarten) at the beginning of the year because they just weren't there yet. I feel like the administration was really good about taking that input and helping us figure out the skills that we want to put in place that would lead to the cumulative part."

Teachers defined the role of leadership in their schools:

- A rural female elementary teacher defined the role of her principal, "Our principal style is more looking at the data and keeping the actual staff on-board with 'I noticed that Johnny's having trouble in this, have you talked to his parents?' He tries to leave it up to the classroom teacher as much as possible, the special education, the Title (teacher), but if there's a problem, I don't have a problem with going to him and asking, 'what do you think about. . . ?' I think everybody's pretty comfortable asking the principal questions about things."

Evidence indicates that most principals are responsible for school improvement and data collection.

- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "The principals and other appointed school personnel are the ones that really gather (the data) . . . then we have a data team. All the staff is supposed to help put in the data, and then our data team puts the data in and the whole school looks at the data."

Some school leaders are finding creative ways to utilize funds to better communicate and reach out to parents:

- A rural female elementary principal shared, "That's a part where we're lacking (parents). We try and get some of them to come in. There was a parent on our school improvement committee, but since I joined in January he hasn't been at any of our meetings. Our parent liaison, has met with elementary parents twice this year, either making home visits or inviting them into school visits to not only communicate the direction that we're going, continue that process, but also to communicate student achievement. So we did, for instance, fall testing and winter testing in MAPS, so she communicated that. She also communicated the NeSA testing from the previous

year, so she is our connection. The principal handles the compacts and gets that back in from teachers, communicates and collaborates on that."

Leadership involves teacher monitoring and evaluations:

- A rural male Title I coordinator explained leader expectations in the teacher evaluation process, "It's not used as part of the evaluation other than the expectation that it's there, "yes, you have turned this in,' but it's not performance: 'you only had 75% of your kids and that's not good enough.' Data is collected as far as any kind of student scores, student activities, but it's not as formalized as when we're using our NRTs and state tests."
- A non-rural male elementary principal explained the evaluation processes within their school, "During my pre-observation conferences and post-observation conferences, I really try getting into the heads of teachers as far as 'Tell me about your thought processes prior to this lesson, what was purposeful, what did you react to based off what you saw from students and their prior knowledge that was exposed? As you were roaming around the classroom, what did you notice, how did that impact your instruction?' One key question I ask teachers is 'What potential roadblocks did you anticipate going into this lesson? How did that impact your planning and your instruction?' I'm always looking for some type of assessment tool, and [teachers] bring that information to our post-observation meeting. Usually it's what they assess that day but they also usually bring a chapter test if it's math or a theme test if it's a strand of literacy. Biggies though: student engagement and active participation. Are we getting all voices in the air, or is it 'I'm just calling on the hands?' How are we getting students involved, and are the kids working as hard as the teacher's working?"

Leadership involves classroom observations to monitor and provide focus for grade level team's action plans:

- A non-rural male elementary principal shared, "I go into an observation, I look into the team's action plan and look for those things reflected in what they're doing in the classroom. I ask teachers in our pre-observation conference to identify something that they would specifically like for me to target. I also think about that when I'm going into a classroom. What data or information are they wanting me to take a look at. Last week when I was in a 2nd grade teacher's class, he specifically wanted me to take a look at the level of active participation and 'are all students involved?' So tracking that information. I wanted to give them some meaningful feedback also, on something that they were targeting or an area they wanted to improve. I will also then take a look at where teachers are at pacing-wise. 'What does the district pacing guide say where they're supposed to be at? Where are they at in relation to that?'"
- A rural female secondary teacher explains the teacher evaluation process, "They focus on teaching to the standards. They have a checklist, a rubric of information. Ask us if we do six-traits writing. . . . I don't know. There's a whole checklist. What really surprises the heck out of me, because our other principal, even if it wasn't your full evaluation, he would still come in unannounced, at the beginning one time, and the middle one time, and the ending time. The full evaluation usually is announced, you come in first and talk about what you're going to teach and you have a date already set-up. I teach a little bit differently when I'm evaluated on a full day. I

always liked it when our other principal came in unannounced, kept me on my toes. This administrator, if it's not your full year . . . I remember asking her - it's almost a week before the end of school year, and I'm like, 'Are you coming in?' 'This isn't your third year.' I'm like, 'so you *don't* come in?' I thought by the state you had to get evaluated at least once a year in some regards or another."

A leader shared the evaluation process from their perspective:

- A rural male elementary principal stated, "I really look for explicit instruction changes. I really look for positive and negative feedback. It's all part of that explicit instruction, are our teachers really getting students engaged in what they're learning? Or are we just teaching kids to be rote memorization people?"

A classroom teacher shares their perspective on the evaluation process:

- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "In my classroom, the principal has been in to watch the different lessons on vocabulary development, and the principal also has provided us with specific words that are going to be on the NWEA MAPS test, which I'm sure are going to occur in the NeSA tests."

Leadership provides teacher support to improve classroom instruction and the use of best practice strategies:

- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared her appreciation for leadership support to improve classroom performance, "I thought it sounded interesting and brought it back to the administration and said 'what do you think? Do you think we could send a team to this and go check it out?' They were very open to doing that. I know in some of the grade-levels too, they've brought out district leaders and they've given them paid subs for the day that allow the team to meet with the district leaders and really look at the instruction and figure out best practice strategies to help them get through on those types of things. That hasn't happened at all the grade-levels, but from what I hear it's in the works."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher reflected on her appreciation for leadership support, "I think the administration does a nice job of taking what we suggest and then figuring out what the best interest is for the staff, and then trying to apply it as best they can."

Leadership understands and supports the engagement of teachers in decision making:

- A rural female elementary teacher shared, "Our administration led the meetings, they led the path that we took. But they wanted the input of everybody, they didn't want what happened to be their sole decision."

Interview Theme 4: Student Engagement

Schools are finding new ways to engage students in their own learning. Himmel and Himmele (2011) addressed the importance of student engagement by stating, "The more we observe excellent teachers teach the more convinced we become that the common thread in their teaching is that these teachers ensure that students become actively, cognitively and emotionally engaged in the content being taught" (p. 7).

Schools are finding new ways to engage students in their own learning. In doing so, parents have been directly involved in student led conferences, as noted by a rural female elementary principal sharing her perspective, "I think they (students) need to own it, they need to see where they're at and where their needs are, and teachers and students need to collaborate and see where they're going from there. So we had student-led conferences."

Student engagement involving peers and partner work, reflection upon their own strengths and weaknesses, setting their own goals and celebrating their successes is critical to improving student performance. It yields new values in responsibility for their own learning.

Student-led conferences as a new strategy for engaging students in learning:

- A rural female elementary teacher explained the reasoning for new strategies to engage students in their learning, "The reason we really went towards engagement was the result of some surveys that our kids took last year. It was a 'Hope' survey. It was only based off the 5th grade, but it came back that we really had some low scores in some areas of kids feeling like they didn't have hope, that this was going to be as good as they got for them, and that was really disheartening. We went to – 'we've got to get these kids engaged and get them feeling that they really do have a future, and there is a purpose to what we're doing here.' So that's where the engagement came from. That came from data."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher shared, "This year at conference time I did a self-evaluation for the kids to fill out too, how they think they're doing. So that was fun for them to see how honest they were. We also have incentives, there's a thermometer chart where the kids get to move up if they had 90% or better on their independent work and they get to celebrate for 15 minutes, that type of thing. So it's very thorough . . . and it's evolving, every year they update it and add more to it. So I think that's one way that they see."
- A rural female elementary teacher shared the student led conference process, "We started with a script for them to follow. We had practiced that in the classroom. Then when it came time for the conference, I laid it right there beside them. .. . Most of them really didn't need it, they started taking out their papers and sharing their test results and where they were, where they needed to be. I really felt that it was a learning situation all the way around."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained parents pride at the conferences, "Most of the parents were beaming from ear to ear because their children were talking to them about academics, and the parents weren't having to say, 'but you need to. . . .' The students were saying that themselves, that 'I need to study more, I need to take my papers home,' and so forth."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated "So what my reading coach and my principal talked about was actually telling the kids, 'this is what your score was, and this is where I'd like you to be,' you know, 'from winter, this is where your score was, when we have our assessment then in the spring, we'd like you to be reading at this level, so let's see if we can. . . .' When you actually tell them about it - I mean, you don't want to pressure them, but really, when *they* have a goal, the students themselves, work for it. . . . That was the kind of encouragement I got from my principal and from my reading coach, to discuss that and their score in class."

- A rural male elementary principal reflected on the change in teacher practices to engage students, "The teachers are just more involved, they're on their feet, moving around, getting student interaction. Our goal is to get 17 or 18 correct responses in a minute, get that student involvement."
- A rural female elementary teacher discussed student-led conferences to engage students in their learning, "I think the parents enjoyed having their children lead the conference, and I had all my students (do this), all but one."

Professional development has been provided for teachers to try new strategies:

- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "We've learned a lot of new strategies since the beginning of the year to try to engage all the students . . . and one of them is 'I will take responsibility for my learning.' That's one of the pledges that they have. So we talk about those pledges and you're making a pledge, which is like an oath. So doing your homework is a responsibility, listening and paying attention is your responsibility."
- A non-rural female elementary principal stated, "So we've been looking at their on-task behavior and also their opportunities to respond. The data told us that would be a place where we're not doing so well. So that's also been part of the professional development, our engaging strategies. Marzano's (2007, *The Art and Science of Teaching*) book helps us with that. We're going to continue that next year. We know that if the kids aren't engaged, they aren't learning as well as they need to be. So those are a number of things that we've tried to drill down."

Student engagement involves working with peers and partner work:

- A rural female elementary teacher shared, "Implementing new strategies to help them be engaged. We do more partner work. I do partner math, and I have math partners, the kids have reading partners, so we get together and work as partners. I think that helps a lot, too. Keeping them engaged and having dialogue with their peers helps, too. If it's just me and them, they all want to talk at once and there's no way to take that much time. So we have the kids talk to each other about their response, and they'll take two responses so that we can go on. I think those strategies have helped."
- A rural female elementary principal stated, "Something I'm looking at is Steven Covey, because I want to build leaders in students, so I'm looking at *The Leader in Me* (2008) with students."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained, "We purchased manipulatives to go with it, I teach the lesson, then we do the online lesson. They use a lot of partner-share. I'm very strict, usually, I like total quiet. We don't have that as much anymore, but there's a lot of learning going on between students. Students collaborate more to come up with a possible answer before they share it with me."
- A rural female elementary teacher shared, "Probably more interaction amongst the students. I think rather than listening to me all the time, having them figure it out amongst themselves before an answer can be shared with others and developed, I really think that they're learning. I saw one child that looked rather lost with a math lesson. Then the child that was sitting over here, reached across and said, 'now this is what we were doing, do you remember how we did this?' and took him step by step through the whole thing. So one person at the table became the teacher for the whole

group. I stood back and watched it, because he was doing a very good job of leading them through them, and sometimes student-to-student. . . . "

- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "I think a big piece has been making the students more like teachers, getting them to think like I'm thinking, so they can actually ask questions of each other, they can help each other out, they know how to dive in and coach someone if they don't know what they're doing. That's a big strategy."

Student engagement encourages students to reflect upon their own strengths and weaknesses, setting their own learning goals, and celebrating success:

- A rural female elementary principal explained, "Teachers understand, students I think more so now because we just finished student-led conferences. So what we had students do, we started the first of the year with our winter testing. From then on I asked teachers to do portfolios with the students and have them look at their data, chart their data, find out where their weaknesses are and their strengths are, and then set goals."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher reflected on student setting learning goals, "Involving students for that goal-setting, looking at their scores, and having those honest conversations with kids. We've had a whole generation of kids that feel really good about themselves but don't know why."
- A rural female elementary principal stated, "Kids are excited about that because we talk about that: 'Look at where you're at, look how far you've come, look where we are as a school.' We celebrate that. I will have a graphic up for them that shows "look where we were in the fall, look where we are now, and we're still moving on. We even want kindergarteners to celebrate. It's not every week that we show, because we're celebrating successes and they get awards. Once a month we have awards where I have a drawing, then they have lunch with me. Probably once a semester we show growth, we show where we're at. So we'll have a celebration here at the end of the year, looking at their data. We'll do spring testing starting in April and before we graduate in May, we'll have a big "r" and share what we have for our spring data there."
- A rural female elementary teacher stated, "It took most of my social studies and science time last week in order for the students to understand the process of what we were going to do. In the portfolios - which was also a new thing, the charts are where we're keeping track of the scores - building student responsibility."

Student engagement encourages student responsibility to improve student performance:

- A rural female secondary teacher reflected on the need to improve student attitude towards learning, "There were kids that got done with the science test in 5 minutes. Then it's just this whole societal, cultural thing, kids don't read as much as they used to. There's no 'I'd better do my work, because I'll fail.' It's 'it'll be all right, because I'll do some extra credit or. . . .'"
- A rural female secondary teacher shared, "Our biggest piece is trying to get the buy-in of the students, raising the expectations, and putting the priority on education. Lots of our students, they're the first to graduate high school, so to them that's an

accomplishment in itself. They're not looking toward college. We need to take that and transfer it into 'now we go to college."'

- A rural female secondary teacher stated that a lack of student engagement results in a lack of student responsibility, "We get students that don't speak any English, and the special needs students (all) take the same test. Even if they have been here for years and they're doing wonderfully, they're still not going to do very well. If they've only been here three or four years, they're not going to do very well. A lot of our white kids have done poorly, too. We don't know what to do next. I think that the test doesn't mean anything to them. They don't get a grade for it. It doesn't adversely affect them one bit if they do poorly. They just want to get through it and be done. So they have no reason to be invested in that test."

Student engagement yields new values in students:

- A rural female secondary teacher stated, "Just being on-time, being respectful of other people's time, being responsible – because if they understand the importance of being here, being on-time, being a responsible student, that's going to transfer into being a responsible employee. So that's a value a lot of teachers are trying to work hard on, that work ethic. Trying to boost that morale of working hard and really working to earn the higher grade, be successful and not being okay with settling."

Student engagement associates with discovery approaches to learning:

- A high school female teacher stated "I like to use hands-on learning, the discovery approach to math, because it gets students more involved. I do a lot more projects in my classroom."

Interview Theme 5: Parent Communication and Involvement

"Programs and interventions that engage families in supporting their children's learning at home are linked to higher student achievement" (Henderson & Mapp, 2002, p. 25). However, for decades, school systems have struggled with involving parents in their child's education. "The real barriers that negatively affect the engagement of parents and the mechanisms that encourage parents to become engaged in their children's education have not been clearly understood" (Anfara & Mertens, p. 58; Kerbow & Bernhardt, 1993). Additionally, the traditional model of parent involvement has been replaced with more contemporary models of family engagement (Constantino, 2003). Joyce Epstein's research on family involvement outlined six types of involvement which can be used to develop models and programs: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community (Epstein, 2010, p. 85).

Within this theme, teachers and administrators emphasized the importance of collaborating with families to enhance student learning, the importance of parental organizations for engaging parents in conversations about schooling, and the challenges of parent involvement, as noted by this rural female elementary principal on engaging parents, "The majority of parents I speak to always want to know what they can do to help. Now sometimes, it's difficult for them to follow through, based on what their environment is like. But I know

essentially they care." Parent communication and involved as a final theme that emerged in the interviews.

Teachers and families collaborate to enhance student learning:

- A rural female elementary principal stated, "Every other Friday we have teachers and parents working together, we also some community members that are on a parent committee. So we're building on that so our teachers then collaborate with parents. In fact a regional training group will be coming the end of this month to do a family math night."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I coordinator shared, "Our family nights, we have those because we're Title schools. I love having them. They're always academically-focused. We try to have something to entice the family to come. This last time we had a reptile guy, and he brought in all these reptiles and he talked about writing. So he would show a super scary snake and then he would talk about 'you could write the sentence this way or you could add all these descriptive words . . . if we don't have transportation, it's hard to get our families to be able to attend, because they lack transportation. . . .' So you always have to have something like that, or give something away to draw them in. Which is too bad, but it's the reality, unfortunately."

Involvement in parent organizations:

- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "We tend to be a school where there's not as much parent involvement. We've got a great PTA made up of four or five people. Our principal does a lot of stuff through the parent newsletter and through those PTA meetings. Honestly, community-wise is an area that we're trying to improve on, how to get that message out there."
- A rural female elementary teacher explained a new PTA that is trying to be implemented, "We just started a PTA that we're trying to get going. It's something that should have happened a long time ago. We had a meeting last week, and there were probably 25- 30 people that came. From the meeting, a lot of good came out, ideas and things."
- A non-rural female elementary Title I Coordinator shared about communicating Title I goals, "I know the principal holds a parent meeting, I think it's twice a year - and we have our regular PTA meetings. A lot of teachers have newsletters that go out, so it may be mentioned in some of those as well. Then as far as our kids in intervention, we do a lot of communicating on a weekly basis with parents on their progress. So we have these goals on the computer but then we have the kids monitor their progress themselves. A copy of this is sent home every week with the student. Those go home on a weekly basis. Those would probably be our most at-risk students that are in general education."

Communicating with parents:

- A non-rural female elementary teacher reflected on Parent Communication and Involvement, "This is probably one of our weaker areas. Parents are informed when we have our teacher conferences, and really, other than the communication that goes on with a small group of parents because they're here and they're invested in our kids

- and that's not to say that the parents that aren't here are not supporting and invested in their kids, it's their priorities are way different. I don't have a lot of parents jumping to volunteer, but my parents of this year's class will support me in whatever we need to do. So I think getting more parents - and that actually was one of our visions at our vision meeting that we had a month ago, how do we get parents in those front doors and get them invested in what we're doing, and help them understand why we do what we do."

- A non-rural female elementary teacher explained, "I can only really speak for kindergarten since I'm not sure what the other ones totally have - kindergarten, we would get a decent percentage (parents attending). We have probably 50% to close to 75%. As you go up in the grades, it does decrease. The first curriculum night is pretty well attended, and after that, it definitely decreases."
- A non-rural female elementary teacher stated, "So it really got some of the staff members and the parents talking and figuring out 'where the communication boundary is here, or where are we breaking down.' So we do have work in process for that. Our fun events are very well-attended, definitely. The ones that are more learning-centered and geared towards that type of thing, they're usually a little lower (attended)."
- A rural female elementary teacher shared how parents get student progress information, "They get it at conferences, and then DIBELS scores at the beginning of the year and the middle of the year are sent home."
- A rural female elementary teacher reflected on reporting student goals with parents, "The only time that we discuss it with parents is parent-teacher conference time. Or if there's going be a change, whether a student is moving up or down. I want her to make that contact with the parents, keep them involved or informed. At the beginning of the school year, she has an area where parents can come and visit with her. On our school district web page, she has an area where parents can view."
- A rural female elementary principal shared, "The parent liaison would help make sure that those compacts are in. (The parent liaison) has met with elementary parents twice this year, either making home visits or inviting them into school visits to not only communicate the direction that we're going, continue that process, but also to communicate student achievement."
- A rural male elementary principal explained, "I always send out a letter to the parents, letting them know that the testing is coming up. They have the opportunity to opt out of it if they decide they don't want their child to do it. So they always know about it, I may get a few phone calls, you know, when I sent out the needs improvement letter, around the parent-teacher conferences of last fall, last winter, I was expecting phone calls."

Parent involvement:

- A rural female secondary teacher explained the work in progress at her school to increase parent involvement, "I don't think the parents are very involved. . . . I think they are working on that . . . getting parents more involved."
- A rural male secondary Title I coordinator shared, "A couple years ago we had a parent meeting where I think four parents showed up and then we actually challenged parents, that each of them would bring two additional families to the next meeting,

[it] far exceeded that at the next meeting. The first meeting this year that we had at the beginning of the school year, there was probably 60 to 70 parents there. That's still not great, but that's really decent."

- A rural female secondary teacher explained, "What we struggle with is getting parents more involved, and (with some parents) it's a language barrier. They may not understand or feel comfortable talking to us, even if it's a phone call home. They may not feel comfortable translating or coming in for parent-teacher conferences. Our percents are usually pretty low. Until we bridge that gap, we're not going to be as successful as we could be."

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Transforming Schools to Improve Student Learning
Title I Needs Improvement Schools

Section 4: Appendices

Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

NUgrant RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM

Message

* Indicates Required Fields

Printer Friendly Version

Sent By: IRB NUgrant System
Sent On: 01/24/2011 02:38 pm
Reference: IRBProjectForm - 15346
Subject: Official Approval Letter for IRB project #11505
Message: January 21, 2011

Jody Isernhagen
Department of Educational Administration
132 TEAC, UNL, 68588-0360

Jackie Florendo
Department of Educational Administration
900 Dundee Ct Crete, NE 68333-2634

IRB Number: 20110111505 EX
Project ID: 11505
Project Title: Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability Project

Dear Jody:

This letter is to officially notify you of the approval of your project by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. It is the BoardÂ's opinion that you have provided adequate safeguards for the rights and welfare of the participants in this study based on the information provided. Your proposal is in compliance with this institutionÂ's Federal Wide Assurance 00002258 and the DHHS Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46) and has been classified as Exempt Category 2.

You are authorized to implement this study as of the Date of Final Approval: 01/21/2011. This approval is Valid Until: 11/01/2011.

1. The approved informed consent forms have been uploaded to NUgrant (files with - Approved.pdf in the file name). Please use these forms to distribute to participants. If you need to make changes to the informed consent forms, please submit the revised forms to the IRB for review and approval prior to using them.

We wish to remind you that the principal investigator is responsible for reporting to this Board any of the following events within 48 hours of the event:
* Any serious event (including on-site and off-site adverse events, injuries, side effects, deaths, or other problems) which in the opinion of the local investigator was unanticipated, involved risk to subjects or others, and was possibly related to the research procedures;
* Any serious accidental or unintentional change to the IRB-approved protocol that involves risk or has the potential to recur;
* Any publication in the literature, safety monitoring report, interim result or other

finding that indicates an unexpected change to the risk/benefit ratio of the research;
* Any breach in confidentiality or compromise in data privacy related to the subject or others; or
* Any complaint of a subject that indicates an unanticipated risk or that cannot be resolved by the research staff.

This project should be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines and you should notify the IRB immediately of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research project. You should report any unanticipated problems involving risks to the participants or others to the Board.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office at 472-6965.

Sincerely,

Becky R. Freeman, CIP
for the IRB

Close

Attachments: No Data

Appendix B

Researchers For the Project

Researchers for the Project
2010-2011

Principal Investigator

Jody C. Isernhagen, Ed.D., is an Associate Professor in Educational Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She received her doctoral degree from Virginia Tech and has been a teacher, assistant principal, principal, supervisor of elementary education, and superintendent in pre-K through 12 schools. Dr. Isernhagen served as the primary investigator for the STARS Process and is the primary instructor for the School Improvement Specialist Program and the Professional Development Leadership Certificate Program. She serves as the State Accreditation and North Central Accreditation External Leader for four school districts in Nebraska. Dr. Isernhagen was awarded the College of Education and Human Sciences Distinguished Teaching Award, the Charman Outstanding Professor Award, and the NASCD Al Kilgore Award of Excellence.

Secondary Investigator

Jackie Florendo, M.Ed., received her Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Doane College and is currently a doctoral candidate in Educational Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Project Assistant

Nadia Bulkin, B.A., currently holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Barnard College, New York City and is currently a Masters candidate at American University located in Washington, DC. Nadia was on the staff at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln until July 15, 2011.

Appendix C

2010-2011 Study I: Administrator and Teacher Perceptions of the Implementation of Title I School Improvement Plans Survey

Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability - Administrator Survey

INSTRUCTIONS: Please provide the following demographic information by responding to the questions or selecting the appropriate category for each area.

1. **District Name:** _____
2. **School Name:** _____
3. **Mark all the position(s) below that you hold in your school district:**

___ Principal	___ Asst Principal	___ Title I Coordinator	___ Intervention Program Mgr	___Other: _____
___ ELEM	___ ELEM	___ ELEM	___ ELEM	___ ELEM
___ MS/HS	___ MS/HS	___ MS/HS	___ MS/HS	___ MS/HS

4. **My Gender:** _____ Male _____ Female
5. **Highest Degree Earned:** ___ B.A. ___ M.A. ___ Ed.D. ___ Ph.D.
6. **Total Years of Experience in Education:** _____
7. **Total Years of Experience in my School:** _____

Directions: Please click on the circle that best describes your response to each statement.	Strongly	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly
TITLE I SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN					
1. I was involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Improvement Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2. Teachers were involved in the identification of the Title I Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3. All teachers in my school were involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Improvement Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
4. I have consistently communicated the Title I Goals to teachers in my school.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
5. Teachers in my school understand the Title I Goals and how to achieve these goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6. Specific areas of need that must be met to achieve the Title I Goals have been identified.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
7. The planning process in my school is focused on improving student achievement.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
COMMENTS:					
CLEAR FOCUS					
8. My school has a strongly focused and cohesive instructional program.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
9. My school engages in continuous school improvement.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
10. There is a clear focus by teachers in my school on the identified areas of need.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
11. There is a clear articulation of standards in my school.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
12. Teachers in my school engage students in order to improve academic performance.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
13. The curriculum in my school is supportive of the academic needs of students.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
14. The curriculum in my school is aligned both between grade levels and among grade levels.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
15. The curriculum in my school is aligned with the state standards.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
16. Criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments are used to support instruction and enhance student learning.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
17. Instructional practices and materials in my school are supportive of the academic needs of students.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability - Administrator Survey

COMMENTS:

Directions: Please circle the number that best describes your response to each statement.	Strongly	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly
CULTURE					
18. The culture of our schools plays a dominant role in exemplary student performance.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Parents, teachers, the principal, and students sense something special about our school.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Our school has shared beliefs and values that clearly knit our community together.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Our organizational culture is conducive to the successful improvement of teaching and learning.	1	2	3	4	5
22. The culture of our school is totally focused on student learning.	1	2	3	4	5
23. The culture of our school and our teachers includes commitment to high expectation.	1	2	3	4	5
24. The culture of our school encourages innovation, dialogue and the search for new ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
25. The culture of our school initiates caring, sharing, and mutual help among staff and students.	1	2	3	4	5
26. The culture of our school is based on respect, trust and shared power among staff.	1	2	3	4	5
27. The culture of our school fosters school effectiveness and productivity.	1	2	3	4	5
28. The culture of our school improves collegiality and collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5
29. The culture of our school fosters better communication and problem-solving.	1	2	3	4	5
30. The culture of our school fosters successful change and improvement efforts.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I am passionate about student learning.	1	2	3	4	5

COMMENTS:

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES					
32. Teachers in my school collectively focus on how they can better reach their students in a way that works.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Teachers in my school collectively reflect on instructional strategies used daily in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Teachers in my school use peer coaching and peer review to improve their performance.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Teachers in my school act collectively to identify and solve problems.	1	2	3	4	5
36. Teachers in my school search for strategies by using the internet, visiting other schools, and attending conferences.	1	2	3	4	5
37. Teachers in my school break down and examine student performance data by grade, race, socioeconomic class, ethnicity, and disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Teachers in my school reflect and compare their actual teaching practice to what they had planned and hoped to achieve.	1	2	3	4	5
39. My teachers are implementing research-based interventions and strategies to meet Title I Goals.	1	2	3	4	5
40. Research-based interventions and instructional strategies help students improve in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
41. Our school provides additional learning time for students who need it.	1	2	3	4	5
42. Research-based interventions and instructional strategies are implemented based on the data analyzed for my school's Title I Improvement Plan.	1	2	3	4	5

COMMENTS:

Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability - Administrator Survey

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT					
43. Professional development needs at my school were based on analysis of data.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
44. Professional development was provided to support the implementation of research-based interventions and strategies.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
45. Professional development experiences have led to new classroom practices.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
46. Teacher collaboration in my school is a form of professional development used to enhance student learning.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
47. Groups of teachers in my school have shared planning periods for professional growth.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
48. Teachers are encouraged to observe each other in the classroom.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
49. Teachers in my school seek technical assistance to develop new skills for examining data.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
50. Teachers in my school collaboratively assess student work as a professional development activity.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
COMMENTS:					
DATA/MONITORING					
51. Data are essential to our school improvement process.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
52. Data are used to monitor and focus our school/district's Title I Improvement Goals and other successes.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
53. The faculty and staff monitor classroom instruction and student achievement collaboratively.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
54. Teachers in my school examine disaggregated standardized test score data.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
55. Every classroom is implementing our Title I Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
56. Teachers in my school adjust their instruction in order to attain our Title I Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
57. Classroom instruction is monitored to ensure implementation of my school's Title I Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
58. My teachers monitor students' additional learning time to ensure success.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
59. Changes in grade-level classroom performance are monitored on a continuous basis as the Title I Goals are implemented.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
60. Changes in schoolwide performance are monitored on a continuous basis as the Title I Goals are implemented.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
61. Data are used to monitor the closing of the achievement gap between student subpopulations.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
62. Teachers in my school examine disaggregated school attendance, suspension, and expulsion data.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
63. Teachers in my school are engaged in early identification of at-risk behavior indicators impacting student performance (i.e., attendance, behavior, etc.).					
COMMENTS:					
Directions: Please circle the number that best describes your response to each statement.	**Strongly**	**Disagree**	**Uncertain**	**Agree**	**Strongly**
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT					
64. Parents are involved in identification of the Title I Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
65. Community members are involved in identification of the Title I Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
66. Parents are engaged in decision making based on data that is analyzed.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
67. Community members are engaged in decision making based on data that is analyzed.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
68. The Title I Improvement Plan is communicated to all stakeholders.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
69. Community members understand why our school has a Title I School Improvement Plan.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability - Administrator Survey

70. Community members have high expectations for student achievement.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
COMMENTS:					
OVERALL IMPROVEMENT					
71. Data shows that progress is being made in meeting our Title I Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
72. During teacher evaluations, I discuss with teachers about the way they are helping students in order to meet our Title I Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
73. Data indicates progress toward closing the achievement gap.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
74. The use of our research-based interventions is leading to the attainment of our Title I Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
75. Community members recognize improvement as a result of our Title I Improvement Plan.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
76. The teacher evaluation process in my school is tied to student achievement.					
77. Teachers set specific goals for increasing student achievement.					
COMMENTS:					
MODEL OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN					
Directions: **For Question 78 please use the area provided to respond to the question.**					
78. Describe the most prevalent instructional strategy or intervention being used in your school.					

On behalf of the Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability Project, thank you for sharing your knowledge and thoughts.

Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability - Teacher Survey

INSTRUCTIONS: Please provide the following demographic information by responding to the questions or marking the appropriate category for each area.

1. **District Name:** _____
2. **School Name:** _____
3. **Primary Position: Please mark the primary position you hold in your school**

Teacher:			
___ Elementary/Grade___	___ Middle School	___ High School	
___ SPED	___ Language Arts	___ Language Arts	
___ ELL	___ Math	___ Math	
___ Other	___ SPED	___ SPED	
	___ ELL	___ ELL	
	___ Other	___ Other	

4. **My Gender:** _____ Male _____ Female
5. **Highest Degree Earned:** ___ B.A. ___ M.A. ___ Ed.D. ___ Ph.D.
6. **Total Years of Experience in Education:** _____

Directions: Please circle the number that best describes your response to each statement.	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Undecided**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN					
1. Administrators in my school were involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Improvement Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2. I was involved in the identification of the Title I Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3. I was involved in the disaggregation of student data to identify Title I Improvement Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
4. Administrators in my school have effectively communicated the Title I Goals to teachers.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
5. I understand the Title I Goals and how to achieve these goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6. Specific areas of need that must be met to achieve the Title I Goals have been identified.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
7. The planning process in my school is focused on improving student achievement.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
COMMENTS:					
CLEAR FOCUS					
8. My school has a strongly focused and cohesive instructional program.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
9. My school engages in continuous school improvement.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
10. There is a clear focus by teachers in my school on the identified areas of need.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
11. There is a clear articulation of standards in my school.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
12. I engage students in order to improve academic performance.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
13. The curriculum in my school is supportive of the academic needs of students.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
14. The curriculum in my school is aligned both between grade levels and among grade levels.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
15. The curriculum in my school is aligned with the state standards.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
16. Criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments in my school are used to support instruction and enhance student learning.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
17. Instructional practices and materials in my school are supportive of the academic needs of students.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability - Teacher Survey

COMMENTS:					
Directions: Please circle the number that best describes your response to each statement.	**Strongly**	**Disagree**	**Uncertain**	**Agree**	**Strongly**
CULTURE					
18. The culture of our schools plays a dominant role in exemplary student performance.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
19. Parents, teachers, the principal, and students sense something special about our school.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
20. Our school has shared beliefs and values that clearly knit our community together.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
21. Our organizational culture is conducive to the successful improvement of teaching and learning.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
22. The culture of our school is totally focused on student learning.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
23. The culture of our school and our teachers includes commitment to high expectation.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
24. The culture of our school encourages innovation, dialogue and the search for new ideas.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
25. The culture of our school initiates caring, sharing, and mutual help among staff and students.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
26. The culture of our school is based on respect, trust and shared power among staff.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
27. The culture of our school fosters school effectiveness and productivity.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
28. The culture of our school improves collegiality and collaboration.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
29. The culture of our school fosters better communication and problem-solving.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
30. The culture of our school fosters successful change and improvement efforts.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
31. I am passionate about student learning.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
COMMENTS:					
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES					
32. Teachers in my school collectively focus on how they can better reach their students in a way that works.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
33. Teachers in my school collectively reflect on instructional strategies used daily in the classroom.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
34. I use peer coaching and peer review to improve my performance.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
35. Teachers in my school act collectively to identify and solve problems.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
36. I search for strategies by using the internet, visiting other schools, and attending conferences.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
37. I break down and examine student performance data by grade, race, socioeconomic class, ethnicity, and disabilities.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
38. I reflect and compare their actual teaching practice to what they had planned and hoped to achieve.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
39. I am implementing research-based interventions and strategies to meet Title I Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
40. Research-based interventions and instructional strategies help students improve in my school.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
41. Our school provides additional learning time for students who need it.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
42. Research-based interventions and instructional strategies are implemented based on the data analyzed for my school's Title I Improvement Plan.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
COMMENTS:					
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT					
43. Professional development needs at my school were based on analysis of data.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability - Teacher Survey

44. Professional development was provided to support the implementation of research-based interventions and strategies.	1	2	3	4	5
45. Professional development experiences have led to new classroom practices.	1	2	3	4	5
46. Teacher collaboration in my school is a form of professional development used to enhance student learning.	1	2	3	4	5
47. I share planning periods with other teachers for professional growth.	1	2	3	4	5
48. I am encouraged to observe other teachers in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
49. I seek technical assistance to develop new skills for examining data.	1	2	3	4	5
50. Teachers in my school collaboratively assess student work as a professional development activity.	1	2	3	4	5
COMMENTS:					
DATA/MONITORING					
51. Data are essential to our school improvement process.	1	2	3	4	5
52. Data are used to monitor and focus our school/district's Title I Improvement Goals and other successes.	1	2	3	4	5
53. Teachers in my school monitor classroom instruction and student achievement collaboratively.	1	2	3	4	5
54. I examine disaggregated standardized test score data.	1	2	3	4	5
55. Every classroom is implementing our Title I Goals.	1	2	3	4	5
56. I adjust my instruction in order to attain our Title I Goals.	1	2	3	4	5
57. Classroom instruction is monitored to ensure implementation of my school's Title I Goals.	1	2	3	4	5
58. I monitor students' additional learning time to ensure success.	1	2	3	4	5
59. Changes in grade-level classroom performance are monitored on a continuous basis as the Title I Goals are implemented.	1	2	3	4	5
60. Changes in schoolwide performance are monitored on a continuous basis as the Title I Goals are implemented.	1	2	3	4	5
61. Data are used to monitor the closing of the achievement gap between student subpopulations.	1	2	3	4	5
62. I examine disaggregated school attendance, suspension, and expulsion data.	1	2	3	4	5
63. I am engaged in early identification of at-risk behavior indicators impacting student performance (i.e., attendance, behavior, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
64. I use individual student data to understand the academic needs of my students.	1	2	3	4	5
65. I make decisions about what I can do instructionally to improve my students' performance based on data.	1	2	3	4	5
66. I examine data with my grade-level team to discuss what I can do to improve my students' performance.	1	2	3	4	5
67. I plan and implement interventions for specific students based on their achievement data.	1	2	3	4	5
COMMENTS:					

Directions: Please circle the number that best describes your response to each statement.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT					
68. Parents are involved in identification of the Title I Goals.	1	2	3	4	5
69. Community members are involved in identification of the Title I Goals.	1	2	3	4	5
70. Parents are engaged in decision making based on data that is analyzed.	1	2	3	4	5
71. Community members are engaged in decision making based on data that is analyzed.	1	2	3	4	5
72. The Title I Improvement Plan is communicated to all stakeholders.	1	2	3	4	5
73. Community members understand why our school has a Title I School Improvement Plan.	1	2	3	4	5
74. Community members have high expectations for student achievement.	1	2	3	4	5

Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability - Teacher Survey

COMMENTS:					
OVERALL IMPROVEMENT					
75. Data shows that progress is being made in meeting our Title I Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
76. During teacher evaluations, administrators discuss with me about the way I am helping students in order to meet our Title I Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
77. Data indicates progress toward closing the achievement gap.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
78. The use of our research-based interventions is leading to the attainment of our Title I Goals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
79. Community members recognize improvement as a result of our Title I Improvement Plan.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
80. The teacher evaluation process in my school is tied to student achievement.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
81. I set specific goals for increasing student achievement.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
COMMENTS:					
MODEL OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN					
Directions: **For Question 82, please use the area provided to respond to the question.**					
82. Describe the most prevalent instructional strategy or intervention being used in your school.					

On behalf of the Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability Project, thank you for sharing your knowledge and thoughts.

Appendix D

2010-2011 Study I: Administrator and Teacher Perceptions of Title I School Improvement Plans Interview Protocol

NEBRASKA STATEWIDE TITLE I ACCOUNTABILITY
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL—Administrators
2010-2011

Qualitative Research Purpose: *Examine the success of the implementation of Nebraska Title I School Improvement Plans to improve student achievement in identified schools.*

Date of interview: _____ Time of interview: _____

Interviewer: _____

Participant Profile

Participant Code: _____

Position: ____Title I Coordinator @ HS MS ELEM ____Principal/Asst. Principal @ HS MS ELEM

Years at present position and site: _____ Total Years in Education: _____

Introduction:

1. Thank you for taking the time to visit with me today.
2. I am serving as an interviewer for the Nebraska Statewide Title I Accountability Project conducted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This research is being conducted so that the Nebraska Department of Education has a better understanding of how Title I Improvement Plans are developed and implemented in identified Nebraska Title I Schools.
3. First, I want to assure you that this interview is strictly confidential. Information provided by school and district staff is reported or released in aggregated form only. Districts, schools, and individuals are not identified.
4. I have an Informed Consent form outlining your rights as a research participant. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw from the study at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or the Nebraska Department of Education. Contact persons for the project and the Institutional Review Board are provided on the Informed Consent Form in case you have questions or concerns. I have a copy for you to sign and one for you to keep for your use.
5. It is important that educators participating in this research be willing participants. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw from the interview at any time without harming your relationship with your district, this project, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or the Nebraska Department of Education. Should you decide not to participate you may either return to your normal activities or sit with me for the interview period. Are you willing to participate in this interview?
6. I am going to record this interview so that the interview can be transcribed (a typed copy of the interview will be made) and we have an accurate rendering of your responses.
7. It is important that I maintain the integrity of your words and intentions; therefore, I may ask you to review the transcription if I have any difficulties with the interpretation.
8. We are interested in finding out about the perceptions that you hold regarding the development and implementation of your Title I Improvement Plan relative to the focus of the plan, classroom interventions used, professional development, data monitoring, community involvement, and overall improvement.
9. Please feel free to discuss your views openly. From time to time, I may have additional questions to further understand a concept that you have shared.
10. Let's begin. Please state your name, school, district, and give verbal permission to record this interview by repeating this statement, "I (your name) at (school/district name) willingly give my permission to record this interview."

Interview Questions

DIRECTIONS: *Place a check when the participant mentions each probe so that you do not repeat the probe.*

1. To what extent are the administration and teachers involved in the development and monitoring of the Title I Improvement Plan?

Probes

_____ a. What is the role of your Academic Compact Team in monitoring the goals for the Title I Improvement Plan?
_____ b. To what extent are you involved in monitoring the Title I Improvement Goals?
_____ c. To what extent are teachers involved in monitoring the Title I Goals?
_____ d. To what extent is data used to determine the achievement of the Title I Goals?
_____ e. In what ways have you communicated the progress of your Title I Goals to teachers, staff, and parents?

Descriptive Notes:	**Reflective Notes**

2. What is your school's focus, and how does it relate to your identified areas of need?

Probes

_____ a. To what extent is there a school-wide focus on improvement?
_____ b. What processes are implemented to build your school's capacity to improve?
_____ c. How is curriculum aligned to state standards? How is curriculum aligned between and among grade levels?

Descriptive Notes:	**Reflective Notes**

3. To what extent is your school culture conducive to successful school improvement?

Probes

_____ a. How would you describe your school culture and the values it promotes?
_____ b. What effect has the school culture had on student achievement and teacher instruction?
_____ c. What processes do you use to share your school beliefs, values, and understandings related to Title I within the school community? How do you ensure that your teachers have embraced it?
_____ d. How do the school's shared values and beliefs affect the community?

Descriptive Notes:	**Reflective Notes**

4. To what extent do your teachers use instructional strategies to meet your school's Title I Goals?

Probes

_____ a. What instructional strategies are teachers in your school using?
_____ b. How do teachers make sure they are using the most effective strategies for student improvement in their classrooms?
_____ b. Where can teachers get assistance or training for their instructional strategies?
_____ c. How was data used to select instructional strategies?
_____ e. How have changes in instructional strategies affected student learning?
_____ f. To what extent has professional development been provided to address the instructional strategies being used?

Descriptive Notes:	**Reflective Notes**

5. To what extent is professional development provided to support your school's Title I Goals?

Probes

_____ a. How is data used to determine the professional development needs of teachers in your school?
_____ b. What forms of teacher collaboration are in place in your school?
_____ c. In what way does professional development support the implementation of research-based interventions and instructional strategies?
_____ d. How have new professional development experiences impacted classroom instruction?

Descriptive Notes:	**Reflective Notes**

6. To what extent is data used to monitor the implementation of the Title I Improvement Goals in your school?

Probes

_____ a. What data is analyzed? How are the results of the analysis used?
_____ b. How is classroom instruction and student achievement monitored?
_____ c. How is school-wide performance monitored?
_____ d. What processes are used to ensure that every classroom teacher is implementing the Title I Goals?

Descriptive Notes:	**Reflective Notes**

7. To what extent are parents and community members engaged in the Title I Improvement process?

Probes

_____ a. To what extent are parents and community members engaged in identifying and monitoring the Title I Goals?

_____ b. To what extent are parents and community members involved in using data to make decisions about student performance?

_____ c. To what extent do parents and community members understand why the school is in Title I Improvement?

Descriptive Notes:	Reflective Notes

8. To what extent has the overall Title I Improvement process improved student performance so far?

Probes

_____ a. How do you as an administrator focus on the Title I Goals during teacher evaluations?

_____ b. To what extent do you discuss specific classroom student achievement data with teachers?

_____ c. How much do you know about the student achievement data of each classroom?

_____ d. What does your current data indicate about your school's progress in meeting the Title I Goals?

_____ e. What strategies, interventions, or other changes have been most important in improving student achievement for your school?

Descriptive Notes:	Reflective Notes

9. What comments, recommendations, or final observations would you like to make about your Title I Improvement Plan or student performance that we have not discussed?

Descriptive Notes:	Reflective Notes

NEBRASKA STATEWIDE TITLE I ACCOUNTABILITY
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL—Teachers
2010-2011

Qualitative Research Purpose: *Examine the success of the implementation of Nebraska Title I School Improvement Plans to improve student achievement in identified schools.*

Date of interview: ____ Time of interview: ____

Interviewer: _____

Participant Profile

Participant Code: _____

Position: ___ Teacher ELEM MS HS Subject: _____

OTHER: _____

Years at present position and site: _____ Total Years in Education: _____

Introduction:

1. Thank you for taking the time to visit with me today.
2. I am serving as an interviewer for the Comprehensive Evaluation conducted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This research is being conducted so that the Nebraska Department of Education has a better understanding of how Title I Improvement Plans are developed and implemented in identified Nebraska Title I Schools.
3. First, I want to assure you that this interview is strictly confidential. Information provided by school and district staff is reported or released in aggregated form only. Districts, schools, and individuals are not identified.
4. I have an Informed Consent form outlining your rights as a research participant. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw from the study at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or the Nebraska Department of Education. Contact persons for the project and the Institutional Review Board are provided on the Informed Consent Form in case you have questions or concerns. I have a copy for you to sign and one for you to keep for your use.
5. It is important that educators participating in this research be willing participants. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw from the interview at any time without harming your relationship with your district, this project, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or the Nebraska Department of Education. Should you decide not to participate you may either return to your normal activities or sit with me for the interview period. Are you willing to participate in this interview?
6. I am going to record this interview so that the interview can be transcribed (a typed copy of the interview will be made) and we have an accurate rendering of your responses.
7. It is important that I maintain the integrity of your words and intentions; therefore, I may ask you to review the transcription if I have any difficulties with the interpretation.
8. We are interested in finding out about the perceptions that you hold regarding the development and implementation of your Title I Improvement Plan relative to the focus of the plan, classroom interventions used, professional development, data monitoring, community involvement, and overall improvement.
9. Please feel free to discuss your views openly. From time to time, I may have additional questions to further understand a concept that you have shared.
10. Let's begin. Please state your name, school, district and verbally give permission to record this interview by repeating this statement, "I (your name) at (school/district name) willingly give my permission to record this interview."

Interview Questions

DIRECTIONS: *Place a check when the participant mentions each probe so that you do not repeat the probe.*

1. To what extent were the administration and teachers involved in the development and monitoring of the Title I Improvement Plan?

Probes

_____ a. What is the role of your Academic Compact Team in monitoring the goals for the Title I Improvement Plan?
_____ b. To what extent are you involved in monitoring the Title I Improvement Goals?
_____ c. To what extent is the administration involved in monitoring the Title I Goals?
_____ d. To what extent is data used to determine the achievement of the Title I Goals?
_____ e. In what ways has the administration communicated the progress of your Title I Goals to teachers, staff, and parents?

Descriptive Notes:	**Reflective Notes**

2. What is your school's focus, and how does it relate to your identified areas of need?

Probes

_____ a. To what extent is there a school-wide focus on improvement?
_____ b. What processes are implemented to build your school's capacity to improve?
_____ c. How is curriculum aligned to state standards? How is curriculum aligned between and among grade levels?

Descriptive Notes:	**Reflective Notes**

3. To what extent is your school culture conducive to successful school improvement?

Probes

_____ a. How would you describe your school culture and the values it promotes?
_____ b. What effect has the school culture had on student achievement? What effect has it had on your instruction?
_____ c. What processes does the administration use to share your school beliefs, values, and understandings related to Title I within the school community? Have all the teachers embraced it?
_____ d. How do the school's shared values and beliefs affect the community?

Descriptive Notes:	Reflective Notes

3. To what extent do you use instructional strategies to meet your school's Title I Goals?

Probes

_____ a. What instructional strategies are you using? What changes have you made in what you do in the classroom?
_____ b. How do you make sure you are using the most effective strategies for student improvement in your classroom?
_____ c. Where can you get assistance or training for your instructional strategies?
_____ d. How was data used to select instructional strategies?
_____ e. How have changes in instructional strategies affected student learning?
_____ f. To what extent has professional development been provided to address the instructional strategies being used?

Descriptive Notes:	Reflective Notes

5. To what extent is professional development provided to support your school's Title I Goals?

Probes

_____ a. How is data used to determine teachers' professional development needs?
_____ b. What forms of teacher collaboration are in place in your school?
_____ c. In what way does professional development support the implementation of research-based interventions and instructional strategies?
_____ d. How have your new professional development experiences impacted your classroom instruction?

Descriptive Notes:	**Reflective Notes**

6. To what extent is data used to monitor the implementation of the Title I Improvement Goals in your school?

Probes

_____ a. What data is analyzed? How are the results of the analysis used?
_____ b. How is classroom instruction and student achievement monitored?
_____ c. How is school-wide performance monitored?
_____ d. What processes are used to ensure that every classroom is implementing the Title I Goals?

Descriptive Notes:	**Reflective Notes**

7. To what extent are parents and community members engaged in the Title I Improvement process?

Probes

_____ a. To what extent are parents and community members engaged in identifying and monitoring the Title I Goals?

_____ b. To what extent are parents and community members involved in using data to make decisions about student performance?

_____ c. To what extent do parents and community members understand why the school is in Title I Improvement?

Descriptive Notes:	**Reflective Notes**

8. To what extent has the overall Title I Improvement process improved student performance so far?

Probes

_____ a. How does the administration focus on meeting the Title I Goals during teacher evaluations?

_____ b. To what extent does the administration discuss your classroom's student achievement data with you?

_____ c. How much do you know about your classroom's student achievement data?

_____ d. What does your current data indicate about your school's progress in meeting the Title I Goals?

_____ e. What strategies, interventions, or other changes have been most important in improving student achievement for your school?

Descriptive Notes:	**Reflective Notes**

9. What comments, recommendations, or final observations would you like to make about your Title I Improvement Plan or student performance that we have not discussed?

Descriptive Notes:	Reflective Notes