

IMPROVING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS IDENTIFIED AS
LOW-PERFORMING BY GEORGIA'S ACCOUNTABILITY FORMULA UNDER NO
CHILD LEFT BEHIND (NCLB)

By

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2014

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This dissertation is dedicated to my wife and daughters who have stood by me personally and professionally through every endeavor. I could not ask for a better wife and role model for my daughters than you, Lori. I could not ask for children with greater character than you, Sarah Beth, Abbey, and Maggie.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to offer my sincere thanks and appreciation to my committee chair, Dr. Bernard Oliver, for his advice and encouragement through my coursework and the writing of this dissertation. In addition, I would like to thank the other members of my committee, Dr. Linda Eldridge, Dr. Ruth Lowery, and Dr. Jane Townsend, for their time and guidance. A special thank you is also extended to other members of the University of Florida LEAD cohort who were a constant source of support and assistance throughout the program. I would also like to express my gratitude to Angela Rowe for keeping me in line and on target for required deadlines.

Special thanks are owed to my parents, Ray Parlier and Connie Rensberger, and my sisters, Carla Niblett and Holli Shipman, for their love and encouragement. I appreciate that my parents impressed upon us the value of a strong work ethic and character. My parents instilled at an early age the value and importance of education. I would also like to acknowledge my step-mom and in-laws, Renee Parlier, Sonny Ellis, and the late Deborah Ellis, for all of their help and support throughout my college education years.

Finally, words can never express my love and gratitude to my wife, Lori, and daughters, Sarah Beth, Abbey, and Maggie. The sacrifices they willingly made in order for me to accomplish this goal and support my career as a school leader are too numerous to count.

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LIST OF DEFINITIONS

Accountability	A school's responsibility for student performance in language arts and mathematics as it relates to predetermined measureable objectives determined by the state department of education
Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)	An absolute measurement comparing student performance to a predetermined measureable objective determined by the state department of education
Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO)	Predetermined performance levels that schools must meet in language arts and mathematics to make Adequate Yearly Progress
Assessment	The collecting and analyzing of student performance data to identify patterns of achievement or underachievement in order to design and implement appropriate instructional interventions (Georgia School Keys, 2013, p. 13)
Consequence	The sanction imposed by the state education agency for a school not making Adequate Yearly Progress
Contract Schools (CS)	Schools required to enter into an improvement contract with the Georgia Department of Education because of their status as needs improvement level seven and eight schools
Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT)	Annual assessments, designed to measure student learning as it relates to a predetermined curriculum, that are administered to students in grades 3 – 8 in the areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies
Economically Disadvantaged (ED)	A designation for a student who qualifies for free or reduced lunch based on federally-established criteria
Curriculum	A system for managing and facilitating student achievement and learning based upon consensus-driven content and performance standards (Georgia School Keys, 2013, p. 9)
Family and Community Engagement	A community of learning that involves parents and community members as active participants with consistent and growing evidence of parental involvement and volunteerism, participation in workshops and enrichment activities, and a process of two-way communication (Georgia School Keys, 2013, p. 37)
Feeder School	A school from which another school receives its students at

	the beginning of a new school term (Example: The elementary schools that send their students to a common middle school are considered feeder schools.)
Full Academic Year Student	A designation given to a student who is enrolled in the same school on both the fall and spring dates for state reporting
Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE)	Georgia's State Education Agency that is responsible for setting policy and procedure for the K-12 education system in Georgia
Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA)	Appointed by Georgia's Governor to ensure the implementation of laws passed by Georgia's General Assembly
Intervention	Action of support taken by the state education agency to support schools not meeting academic performance objectives
Instruction	Designing and implementing teaching-learning-assessment tasks and activities to ensure that all students achieve proficiency relative to the curriculum (Georgia School Keys, 2013, p. 19)
Language Arts	Combined subjects of reading, English, and language arts
Leadership	The governance process through which individuals and groups influence the behavior of others so that they work collaboratively to achieve common goals and promote organizational effectiveness exists (Georgia School Keys, 2013, p. 53)
Needs Improvement (NI)	Designation given to schools not making sufficient progress under Georgia's accountability formula
<i>No Child Left Behind</i> Act of 2001 (NCLB)	Federal legislation regarding education programs, includes requirement for states to adopt accountability systems including student performance requirements in language arts, mathematics, and science, at a minimum
Non-Contract Schools (NCS)	Schools not required to enter into an improvement contract with the Georgia Department of Education because of their status as a needs improvement school at a level lower than seven or school not identified in needs improvement status
Planning and	The process, procedures, structures, and products that focus

Organization	the operations of a school on ensuring attainment of standards and high levels of learning for all students (Georgia School Keys, 2013, p. 29)
Professional Learning	The means by which teachers, administrators, and other school and system employees acquire, enhance, and refine the knowledge, skills, and commitment necessary to support high levels of learning for all students (Georgia School Keys, 2013, p. 45)
Regional Education Service Agency (RESA)	Agency that provides services to schools in a particular region in the state of Georgia
Reward	Recognition provided by the state education agency for a school and/or district for making Adequate Yearly Progress
Single Statewide Accountability System (SSAS)	Georgia's process for determining the performance rating of schools and districts and interventions for schools not making Adequate Yearly Progress
School Culture	The norms, values, standards, and practices associated with the school as a learning community committed to ensuring student achievement and organizational productivity (Georgia School Keys, 2013, p. 63)
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	A student with a documented disability and individualized education plan

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress
AMO	Annual Measurable Objective(s)
CRCT	Criterion Referenced Competency Tests
CS	Contract Schools
ED	Economically Disadvantaged
FAY	Full Academic Year
GaDOE	Georgia Department of Education
GOSA	Georgia Office of Student Achievement
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NCS	Non-Contract Schools Group
NI	Needs Improvement
Non-ED	Students who are not Economically Disadvantaged
Non-SWD	Students without Disabilities
OTL	Opportunity to Learn
RESA	Regional Education Service Agency
SEA	State Education Agency
SSAS	Single Statewide Accountability System
SWD	Students with Disabilities

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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May 2014

Chair: Bernard Oliver
Major: Educational Leadership

Schools and school districts throughout the nation are required to meet academic performance indicators defined by their state to avoid entering improvement, corrective action, or restructuring status as outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. In Georgia, these performance indicators relate to student performance in language arts and mathematics on the state's criterion-referenced test. Based on student performance in these areas, schools are measured by the state accountability formula and are subject to specific designations that result in rewards or sanctions by the state education agency.

In 2007, the number of Georgia middle schools identified as needs improvement schools at needs improvement levels seven and eight was 15. Each school entered into an improvement contract with and received support and intervention from the state education agency. From 2007-2010, each school made the necessary student performance gains to be removed from needs improvement status.

This study uses a retrospective data set from 15 middle schools at needs improvement levels seven and eight in 2007 and 15 schools that were not in needs

improvement levels seven and eight in 2007 but had similar performance levels and demographics and were located in similar geographic settings (urban, suburban, and rural). These data were used to examine the overall school performance and the performance of subgroups of students in language arts and mathematics on Georgia's Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT). The purpose of the analysis was to determine if improvement in student performance was made and if levels of improvement were statistically significant over the four-year period during which interventions and support were or were not provided by the state education agency based on the school's designation.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Background

“Ensuring success for all students.” Regardless of the school, almost every mission statement developed by a faculty and education stakeholders contains language similar to this statement. Schools and school districts value and work to ensure the success of each student. While these ideals are adopted, the United States Department of Education has documented eighth grade students’ lack of proficiency in mathematics or reading at a level of 70% (United States Department of Education, 2009). Additionally, approximately one million students drop out of school each year (Aud et al., 2011) costing a total of approximately \$200 billion in lost lifetime earnings (Hall & Almy, 2012).

The federal government, states, districts, and schools have worked to develop turnaround strategies to improve low-performing schools. However, the results of these efforts are mixed, and failing schools continue to exist (Aud et al., 2011; Cuban, 2003; Murphy and Myers, 2008; United States Department of Education, 2010). While research around district and school efforts to improve low-performing schools exists, Massell, et al. (2012) found that little research has been done in the last 17 years on the state’s role and impact on improving low-performing schools. Federal legislation and informal efforts have targeted state education agencies (SEA) to work with districts and schools to increase accountability and ensure that the achievement gap among subgroups of students is closed (Brown, Hess, Lautzenheiser, & Owen, 2011; Rhim & Redding, 2011; Yatski & Bowen, 2011; Yatsko, Lake, Nelson, & Bowen, 2012). In 2001, an effort by the federal government to ensure that every child is provided with a free and

appropriate public education was revisited by reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, more commonly known as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) (2002). NCLB incorporated the strategies and principles to increase accountability for states, school districts, and schools; to provide more choice for parents and students, especially in low-performing schools; to increase flexibility for states and local education agencies regarding the use of Federal education funding; and to provide a greater emphasis on reading and literacy. Increased state accountability is a central component of the reauthorized law. NCLB outlines the state requirements regarding the implementation of an accountability structure requiring federal government approval (2002). Schools are required to assess student mastery of the curriculum in the areas of reading, mathematics, and science each year through the administration of state-mandated assessments. Based on student performance on these state-mandated assessments, students, schools, and districts are held accountable for individual student, subgroup, and overall performance as defined by each state's system of accountability.

In Georgia, the General Assembly (2000) designates the responsibility for defining the accountability system, known as the Single Statewide Accountability System (SSAS), to the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA). The SSAS rules include descriptions of performance levels for making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), interventions and consequences for schools not making AYP, and rewards for schools making AYP. In response to the increased level of accountability, rewards, and consequences, schools and school districts are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that students perform

academically at a level high enough to ensure that the school and district do not enter needs improvement status.

Statement of the Problem

As a result of increased accountability and requirements for schools to make AYP, 533 schools in Georgia were identified as needs improvement schools at the improvement (NI years 1-2), corrective action (NI years 3-4), and restructuring (NI years 5, 6, 7, and 8) levels. Of the 19 schools in restructuring status at the end of the 2006-2007 school year, 15 schools were middle schools that had reached levels seven and eight of needs improvement.

As a result of reaching levels seven and eight of needs improvement, these 15 middle schools were required to enter into an improvement contract with the state of Georgia outlining specific interventions that would be provided to assist the schools with making AYP for two consecutive years which would result in the school being removed from needs improvement status. The research problem is to examine the longitudinal data and support and intervention implemented in Georgia middle schools classified as needs improvement at levels seven and eight to compare achievement gains of schools receiving intensive support and intervention to achievement gains in similarly performing schools that did not receive the same support and intervention.

Accountability for student performance on state-mandated assessments has placed significant pressure on schools to ensure that each student performs at a level that will meet or exceed standards. As a result of individual student performance, scores for all students are combined to create aggregate scores in language arts and mathematics. Further, the data are disaggregated by race, economic status, and disability. Schools are held accountable for the performance of the all students and any

subgroup(s) with 40 or more students. All schools are not demonstrating minimum levels of performance or improvement with the aggregate group and/or disaggregate groups to keep from being identified as a needs improvement school. Table 1-1 shows the percentage of schools not making AYP and being classified as needs improvement in Georgia. From 2004 – 2011, the percentage of schools in needs improvement status ranged from 13.2 percent to 20.4 percent. The percentage of schools classified as needs improvement represents varying schools yearly. As a result of student performance, schools are required to cooperate with the state education agency to receive specific support and intervention ranging from weekly assistance from a Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) to an on-site school improvement specialist daily.

Table 1-1. Percentage of Georgia schools in needs improvement status

Year	Percentage of school in NI status
2004	20.4
2005	17.5
2006	15
2007	15.6
2008	14.5
2009	13.2
2010	13.7
2011	16.4

(Georgia Department of Education, 2011)

As schools implemented strategies to improve student and school performance, performance targets are identified. These targets increase each year until reading 100 percent of students are meeting standards. Table 1-2 outlines the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) that had to be met each year in language arts and mathematics in order for a school to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under Georgia’s accountability formula.

The increasing expectations for schools to perform at higher levels each year in order to make AYP and avoid being labeled as a needs improvement school provide schools with the incentive to ensure that strategies are being implemented to support students and ensure success.

Table 1-2. Georgia’s Annual Measureable Objectives schools must meet to make Adequate Yearly Progress

Year	Annual Measureable Objectives (AMO)	
	Language arts % meets & exceeds	Mathematics % meets & exceeds
2003	60	50
2004	60	50
2005	66.7	58.3
2006	66.7	58.3
2007	66.7	58.3
2008	73.3	66.7
2009	73.3	66.7
2010	73.3	66.7
2011	80	75
2012	86.7	88.3
2013	93.3	91.7
2014	100	100

(Georgia Department of Education, 2008)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the student achievement data and formalized interventions of 30 Georgia middle schools that were at varying levels of needs improvement from 2007-2010. Of these schools, 15 were at needs improvement levels seven and eight. These schools received intensive interventions as outlined in Appendix B and support from the Georgia Department of Education. The remaining 15 schools had similar performance levels and demographics and were located in similar geographic settings (rural, suburban, and urban) as the 15 schools designated at needs improvement levels seven and eight. The comparison schools were classified at the

corrective action or restructuring level and did not qualify to receive the formalized interventions and support from the Georgia Department of Education.

In this study, performance data of all students, black students, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities will be examined. These categories of data represent the groups in which the schools did not meet the Annual Measureable Objective in language arts and/or mathematics for the school to make Adequate Yearly Progress.

Research Questions

Question 1: Is there a difference between schools receiving intensive intervention and support from the State Education Agency and improvement in student and school achievement for all students?

Question 2: Is there a difference between schools receiving intensive intervention and support from the State Education Agency and improvement in student and school achievement for the black subgroup?

Question 3: Is there a difference between schools receiving intensive intervention and support from the State Education Agency and improvement in student and school achievement for the economically disadvantaged subgroup?

Question 4: Is there a difference between schools receiving intensive intervention and support from the State Education Agency and improvement in student and school achievement for the students with disabilities subgroup?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will guide the study:

H₁: Schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for all students at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.

H₂: Schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for black students at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.

- H₃: Schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for economically disadvantaged students at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.
- H₄: Schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for students with disabilities at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.

Limitations

Because this study is specific to one state, many of the limitations to the study are related to the state's unique opportunity to define the curriculum, assessment processes, and accountability structure.

Each state has a different accountability formula for determining school performance. The conclusions of this study may be of interest to middle school leaders and policymakers nationwide; however, because each state has a different accountability system, the specific interventions and supports and their related success must be considered in the context of the state's accountability system.

Additionally, each state's assessment system has varying levels of rigor, student response requirements, testing conditions, and a unique process for setting standards. Therefore, the success or lack of success of the schools in this study could vary under another state's assessment and accountability system. In other words, a school in needs improvement status in another state may not meet the requirements of a needs improvement designation in Georgia. Likewise, a school not in needs improvement status in another state may meet the requirements to be designated as a needs improvement school in Georgia.

The study is an examination of the performance level of schools after being designated as needs improvement schools and does not take into account previous improvement strategies that could have contributed to incremental improvement in student performance that occurred but did not result in the school meeting an absolute measure of performance.

The study was limited to the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) in language arts and mathematics for the 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010 school years.

The study compares performance of schools over a four-year period and does not account for the transient nature of students. However, student performance included in this study is reflective of only students who meet the definition of Full Academic Year (FAY) in Georgia. Student performance results are only included for students who were enrolled in the school for both the fall and spring enrollment counts for state reporting purposes.

Because the study uses criterion-referenced test data instead of norm-referenced test data, populations of students vary yearly at the schools reflected in this study.

The study reflects schools from urban, suburban, and rural Georgia settings. Of the schools, 14 are in urban settings, five are in suburban settings, and 11 are in rural settings.

Assumptions

The study makes the assumptions that criterion-referenced student achievement data are appropriate measures for student performance and that Criterion Referenced Competency Tests are valid and reliable sources of data regarding student proficiency in language arts and mathematics.

Significance of Study

Throughout the United States, individual states, school districts, and schools have struggled to design systems of support and intervention to ensure successful academic performance for all students in middle schools. As a result, researchers and practitioners have concluded that a “one size fits all approach” is not effective; however, commonalities among types of support and intervention have been identified. By understanding these commonalities, educational leaders realized they must customize support and intervention to ensure success for each student. Deficiencies in the knowledge include the specific type and intensity of support and intervention needed to support schools and school districts to ensure student success.

This study is significant to inform educators, including administrators and teachers, parents, and policymakers about the types of intervention and support that can be used in low-performing schools to ensure improvement in the educational environment for all students.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* (2002) outlines the requirements of states and schools to ensure that students in the United States have access to a free and appropriate public education that meets specified standards of quality. The purpose of NCLB is fulfilled by multiple objectives; however, the elements specific to the study of improving low-performing schools include the following:

1. Ensuring that high-quality academic assessments, accountability systems, teacher preparation and training, curriculum, and instructional materials are aligned with challenging State academic standards so that students, teachers, parents, and administrators can measure progress against common expectations for student academic achievement;
2. Meeting the educational needs of low-achieving children in our Nation's highest-poverty schools, limited English proficient children, migratory children, children with disabilities, Indian children, neglected or delinquent children, and young children in need of reading assistance;
3. Closing the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority and nonminority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers;
4. Holding schools, local educational agencies, and States accountable for improving the academic achievement of all students, and identifying and turning around low-performing schools that have failed to provide a high-quality education to their students, while providing alternatives to students in such schools to enable the students to receive a high-quality education;
5. Distributing and targeting resources sufficiently to make a difference to local educational agencies and schools where needs are greatest;
6. Improving and strengthening accountability, teaching, and learning by using State assessment systems designed to ensure that students are meeting challenging State academic achievement and content standards and increasing achievement overall, but especially for the disadvantaged;

7. Providing greater decision making authority and flexibility to schools and teachers in exchange for greater responsibility for student performance;
8. Providing children an enriched and accelerated educational program, including the use of schoolwide programs or additional services that increase the amount and quality of instructional time;
9. Promoting schoolwide reform and ensuring the access of children to effective, scientifically based instructional strategies and challenging academic content;
10. Significantly elevating the quality of instruction by providing staff in participating schools with substantial opportunities for professional development;
11. Coordinating services under all parts of this title with each other, with other educational services, and, to the extent feasible, with other agencies providing services to youth, children, and families; and
12. Affording parents substantial and meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children (2002).

As a result of NCLB, schools, school districts, and states have determined strategies to implement to improve low-performing schools. As schools respond to legislation and receive additional financing to improve and turn around schools, the core of the work that impacts leadership, teaching, and learning in school is essential to the improvement of student achievement. Turnaround is defined by Rhim, et al. (2007, p. 4) “as a documented, quick, dramatic, and sustained change in the performance of an organization.” As turnaround relates to schools, turnaround would be defined as making the necessary achievement gains to demonstrate a pattern of improvement, particularly in mathematics and literacy (Duke, 2006). In an analysis of over 35 years of research regarding the practices and characteristics of effective schools, Marzano (2003) identified eleven key practices that impact student achievement. These areas are curriculum, instruction, assessment, planning, organization, student support, family

support, community support, professional learning, leadership, and school culture. In interviews with state and district leaders in schools and districts engaged in the first two years of the school turnaround process, early indicators of positive change include the following:

1. Improved facility cleanliness and order
2. Use of curriculum pacing guides
3. Introduction of formative and benchmark assessments
4. Empowerment of principals and school leadership teams to make substantive changes and alter organizational norms
5. Development of data rooms and corresponding data meetings conducted to assess student progress and inform instructional planning and practices
6. Growth on interim and benchmark assessments
7. Increased transparency about leadership priorities (e.g., clearly articulated 90-day action plans)
8. Improved collaboration (e.g., more planning time for teachers)
9. Changes in district thinking (e.g., explicit message that particular schools receive additional support)
10. Creation of a turnaround zone comprised of a cohort of schools embarking on focused change
11. Newfound degrees of trust between state and district personnel
12. Ongoing substantive conversations between regional technical assistance providers, district, and building administrators
13. Significant improvement in annual state assessments
14. Attainment of annual performance growth goals (Center on School Turnaround (Rhim, 2013, p. 11).

When improving low-performing schools, test data are often the sole indicator in determining the failure or success of schools (Meyers & Murphy, 2007). Though probably not sufficient, test data are a “central part of information gathering” (Hassel & Steiner, 2003, p.7).

Areas of Emphasis for Turning Around Low-Performing Schools

In addition to Marzano’s (2003) identification of key practices impacting student achievement, Duke (2006) examined case studies of improving schools and found that personnel in these schools attributed increases in student performance to eight

categories of school-based change which included leadership, policies, programs, school organization, personnel, instruction, parent and community involvement, and facilities.

Curriculum

The movement to a standards-based curriculum has been attributed with improving student achievement by ensuring that the content expected to be taught and performance level of students are clearly defined (Ravitch, 1995). Characteristics of an effective curriculum include the sequencing and organization of curriculum to ensure students know, do, and understand the core content, a process for teachers to engage in collaborative planning for the implementation of curriculum while agreeing on core content and required student performance, and the use of a systematic process for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of curriculum (Marzano, 2003).

In addition to having a rigorous curriculum, educators must be prepared to set high expectations for all students. Teachers' expectations influence student performance. Some studies indicate that teachers preconceive what a student's future performance level will be based on the teacher's perception of how the student performed in the past. When a teacher preconceives low performance, the level of expectations for the student may not be as high (Covington, 1992).

A factor affecting the level of implementation and student mastery of curriculum is the opportunity to learn (OTL). When students are assessed on curriculum mastery and scores are used to impact individual and collective accountability, students must have been taught the content being assessed (Husen, 1967). This assurance is referred to as the opportunity to learn. Both the First and Second International Math Studies (FIMS and SIMS) emphasized three types of curriculum (Burstein, 1992;

Husen, 1967). The types of curriculum are intended curriculum, implemented curriculum, and attained curriculum. The intended curriculum is outlined by the state or district for teachers to teach. The implemented curriculum is what the teacher actually teaches. The attained curriculum is what the students learn. A strong relationship between student achievement and the difference in the intended and implemented curriculum exists and makes the opportunity to learn a key factor in student achievement (Brewer & Stacz, 1996; Herman, Klein, & Abedi, 2000; Robitaille, 1993). Alignment of curriculum to the assessment processes is critical to the improvement of instruction and student achievement (Duke, 2006).

Assessment

Once the curriculum is defined, educators must determine how student learning or mastery of the curriculum will be assessed. Assessment is an on-going process that occurs during learning based on the instruction provided (Assessment Reform Group, 1999; Crooks, 2001; Shepard, 2000). In the turnaround of a Boston school, the use of curriculum-based interim assessments ensured the implementation of the curriculum with fidelity and assisted teachers in supporting students in their areas of need (Schmoker, 2011). Further, Fullan (2005) found that the use of formative assessments to systematically monitor and track student progress and assess the impact of strategies led to improvements in student achievement.

With assessment, the involvement of students in the process helps students identify their own learning and emphasizes progress over failure (Stiggins, 1999, 2001). Then, assessment becomes a tool for learning rather than a means to an end (Davies, 2000). Characteristics of an effective assessment program include a comprehensive and cohesive system requiring the use of assessment data to design and adjust

instruction to maximize student achievement, a variety of assessment techniques that are routinely implemented, analyzing data to plans for improvement for individual students, subgroups, and the school as a whole (Marzano, 2003).

Instruction

Once the curriculum is defined and assessment strategies have been determined, educators are responsible for planning instruction that includes tasks to help student demonstrate mastery of the curriculum. One of “the most crucial elements of a quality education” is a coherent curriculum (Schmoker, 2011, p.70). These tasks and activities are referred to as instruction. The most important factor impacting a student’s achievement is the teacher. Students who spent an entire year with an effective teacher demonstrated a gain of 53 percentage points over students who spent a year with an ineffective teacher gaining 14 percentage points (Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997; Sanders, & Horn, 1994). Further, an analysis of the impact of teacher and school effectiveness on student achievement is outlined in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1. Effects on student achievement of school and teacher effectiveness with a student entering school at the 50th percentile

School & teacher effectiveness	Achievement percentile after two years
Average school & average teacher	50th
Least effective school & least effective teacher	3rd
Most effective school & least effective teacher	37th
Least effective school & most effective teacher	63rd
Most effective school & most effective teacher	96th
Most effective school & average teacher	78th

(Marzano, 2003, p. 74)

As schools work to improve, the relationship of continuously verifying that the instruction delivered is aligned to the curriculum is critical to school improvement (Duke, 2006). Components of effective instruction included designing and implementing tasks

and activities that are aligned to the curriculum, implementation of research-based teaching strategies, and evidence of high expectations for all students that includes students setting and monitoring their own progress based on clear evaluation criteria (Marzano, 2003).

Planning and Organization

In addition to having effective curriculum, assessment, and instruction processes, schools that have consistently realized improvements in student achievement have focused on improving organizational processes. In the improvement process, organizational processes important to improving student achievement and staff performance include collaborative planning and intervention, data review processes, alignment of curriculum, strategies for monitoring effectiveness and quality, and professional learning that is targeted (Duke, 2006). Through collaborative planning, student performance data are no longer the responsibility of the individual teacher. Instead, processes are in place for multiple educators to examine the data and determine strategies to assist the learning (Duke, 2006).

By including all staff in the process of planning and organizing through distributed leadership, the principal increases the opportunity for all leadership actions to be delivered in a systematic process (Elmore, 2004). Developing distributed leadership allows the establishment of capacity within teachers to ensure that the aligned curriculum is taught and student progress is monitored (Duke, 2006). Distributed leadership is an organizational strategy that influences the improvement of student achievement more than individual leadership (Louis, et al., 2010).

Schools with effective planning and organization have a vision and mission that serve as the basis for all aspects of continuous improvement and reflect the values and

beliefs of all stakeholders. Additionally, a continuous improvement planning process including a dynamic continuous improvement plan, planning between the school and district regarding the allocation and use of fiscal resources and collaboration among all staff to ensure that rules, policies, and procedures are articulated, supported, and successfully implemented to maintain a safe, productive, and inviting learning environment (Marzano, 2003).

Family and Community Engagement

Engaging parents in the improvement process of low-performing schools requires supporting parents who were often unsuccessful in schools themselves (Day, 2007).

Three areas that support the improvement of a school and related to family and community engagement include improved communication, parent involvement, and community partnerships (Fullan, 2006). In schools where there is an increase in quality parent and community relationships, parents and the community become part of the solution to the school's low performance instead of a barrier to improvement (Fullan, 2006). In schools where there is a high level of involvement and support, continuous improvement is active and sustained through involvement of stakeholders.

Organizational structures and processes exist to ensure that stakeholders take an active part in school governance, decision-making, and problem solving. Stakeholder needs are addressed through services and cross-functional partnerships among community organizations (Marzano, 2003).

Professional Learning

In order to support faculty and staff, a professional learning plan exists in high-performing schools to support the school's improvement plan. Schools realizing improvement in student achievement results often have formalized structures through

which teachers analyze student performance data, plan appropriate strategies to address weaknesses, and meet collaboratively to review plans and the success of plans (Maxwell, Huggins, & Scheuruch, 2010; Murphy & Lick, 2005; DuFour, 2006).

Classroom practices must receive attention in order to improve teacher and school performance. In order to transform teaching, leaders must improve teachers' knowledge and skills (Elmore, Peterson, & McCarthey, 1996). When developing plans for professional learning, a needs-based assessment of administrators, teachers, and staff should determine the components of the plan (Day, 2007). Professional learning should focus on student learning and performance outcomes and become central to the culture of the school. Targeted professional development lasting a minimum of 14 hours and often lasting between 30 and 100 hours had the most significant effects on student achievement in a study by Yoon, et al. (2007). Principals can ensure effective implementation of plans by leading teachers in and modeling professional learning (Psencik, 2011). As a result, a cycle where principals and teachers engage in identifying student and individual weaknesses, develop professional learning plans based on these areas, implement and monitor the plans, and have an on-going coaching and feedback cycle increase the teacher's knowledge and skills while impacting student learning in the classroom (Psencik, 2011). Effective professional learning includes customized planning based on the context of the school ensuring that resources have been allocated to support adult learning and collaboration, an aligned process containing articulated goals and purposes that is data-driven, research-based, evaluated, and collaborative in design and implementation, and reinforces the educators' understanding and use of strategies to ensure high levels of expectations

and success for all students resulting in the use of specific, research-based strategies in the classroom to promote student learning (Marzano, 2003). Many schools making significant improvement participate in weekly professional learning rather than just the dates established by the district (Salmonowicz, 2009).

Leadership

Research links effective principals to significantly improving student achievement and learning (Steiner, Hassel, & Hassel, 2008; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). In over 70% of successful turnarounds, a change in the leadership occurs to begin the process of significant improvement (Kowal, & Hassel, 2011). Principals in improving schools view their function as instructional leaders, disciplinarians, and monitors of student progress (Duke & Landahl, 2011). Turnaround leaders consistently demonstrate the four key competencies of having a strong persistence to achieve high levels of results and the desire to implement the strategies needed for success, motivating and influencing others to get high levels of performance, analyzing data and developing data-based plans that are actionable and monitoring the implementation of these plans, and maintaining a focus on improvement through commitment and self-assuredness regardless of the political climate that exists during the turnaround process (Steiner, Hassel, & Hassel, 2008). Steiner and Hassel (2011) have found that a school will not be improved without the guidance of an effective leader who can lead the school through sustainable improvement efforts. Effective principals guide faculty and staff in determining areas of strength and weakness, developing plans with actionable goals that are based on strengths and weaknesses, identification of roles and responsibilities of individuals in the implementation of the plan (Steiner, et al., 2008). Once plans are developed and implemented, monitoring the implementation through meaningful

classroom visits, not just visibility, with feedback regarding instruction resulted in higher levels of performance for students and teachers (Louis, et al., 2010). In the development and implementation of plans to improve student achievement, distributing leadership and building the capacity of teacher leadership ensures high levels of implementation of the plan and sustainability of the plan over time (Day, 2007).

Strong leadership includes the principal and other school administrators providing leadership to promote high expectations for student achievement while promoting the school as a learning community, facilitating the development, implementation, and maintenance of a supportive learning environment for teachers and students through strong organizational and management skills, recognizing the need to distribute governance and leadership which are the collective responsibility of all stakeholders, and utilizing a leadership team to share in the governance and decision-making of the school (Marzano, 2003).

School Culture

In effective schools, the culture of the school is positive and supports student growth and school improvement. Teachers in improving schools were more likely to believe that all students could achieve objectives outlined in the curriculum (Duke & Landahl, 2011). Culture has an influence on all aspects of the school program, including instructional practice, organizational behavior, student discipline, and student and faculty learning (Deal & Peterson, 1994; Firestone & Wilson, 1985). Positive school cultures share a commitment to learning and caring and concern for all students and staff in the building (Peterson & Deal, 1998). Schools developing tradition establish norms for student success and behavior (Hopfenberg, 1995). Leaders have a direct impact on the establishment of a positive or toxic school culture (Deal & Peterson,

1994). In order to be effective, school culture must reflect the norms, values, standards, and practices that reinforce academic, social, emotional, and relational growth of each student and a commitment to professional growth and focus rules, practices, procedures in an effort to foster a sense of belonging among stakeholders (Marzano, 2003).

Improving Schools in Georgia

NCLB requires each state to develop accountability systems to ensure that students' performance is measured at certain levels on yearly mandated assessments. As a result of student performance on these assessments, schools in each state are held accountable for student performance under each state's unique, federally approved accountability plan (2002). The SSAS outlines performance levels for making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), interventions and consequences for schools not making AYP, and rewards for schools making AYP (Georgia Board of Education, 2005).

Georgia's Single Statewide Accountability System (SSAS)

Under Georgia's accountability plan, the AYP status of schools and districts is determined based on the multiple factors. Schools must demonstrate that 95 percent of students participated in the assessment, meet the state Annual Measureable Objective (AMO) or one of three second-look statistical formulas regarding performance (confidence interval, multi-year averaging, or safe harbor) for all students and specific subgroups of students, meet proficiency standards related to a second indicator which has been graduation rate in high schools and student attendance in most elementary and middle schools during 2007-2010.

The AYP decision-making process is outlined in a flowchart in Appendix A. When determining the AYP status of a school, the first step is to compile all student

achievement data in language arts and mathematics to determine the subgroups for which the school will be held accountable. Each subgroup must have a minimum of 40 students in order to be a subgroup for which the school is accountable. For each subgroup that is a part of the AYP determination, a determination regarding whether or not the subgroup had 95% participation in the assessment must be made. If the subgroup does not meet the participation requirement, the school does not make AYP because of that subgroup's lack of participation.

If all subgroups for which the school will be held accountable have 95% participation, a determination of whether or not each subgroup's performance meets or exceeds the Annual Measureable Objective (AMO) threshold for that year is made. If each group meets the AMO thresholds in language arts and mathematics, the school makes AYP. If one or more subgroups do not meet the AMO(s), the data for the group must be further analyzed. If a subgroup(s) does not meet the absolute threshold for the AMO, three statistical processes are followed to determine if the school will make AYP. These processes include multi-year averaging, confidence interval, and safe harbor.

Once the AYP status of the school is determined, schools not making adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years are designated as needs improvement (NI) schools. Needs improvement schools are labeled as improvement (NI 1 & NI 2), corrective action (NI 3 & NI 4), or restructuring (NI 5 & higher), and are subject to consequences designed to assist the school in improving student achievement (2002). Once a school is in NI status, the school must make AYP for two consecutive years to be removed from NI status. Consequences for schools in NI status range in severity

based on the NI level of the school as outlined in Table 2-2 below (Georgia Board of Education, 2005).

Table 2-2. Needs improvement levels and consequences/interventions

Needs improvement level	Consequences/interventions
Did not make AYP year 1	No consequences
NI 1 (Improvement Status)	School choice, develop school improvement plan
NI 2 (Improvement Status)	School choice, supplemental services, implement school improvement plan
NI 3 (Corrective Action)	School choice, supplemental services, continue school improvement plan, develop/Implement school corrective action plan
NI 4 (Corrective Action)	School choice, supplemental services, Implement school corrective action plan, develop school restructuring plan
NI 5 (Restructuring)	School choice, supplemental services, continue school corrective action plan, implement school restructuring plan
NI 6 (Restructuring)	School choice, supplemental services, implement school restructuring plan, participate in GaDOE led school performance review and needs assessment, develop improvement contract
NI 7 (Restructuring)	School choice, supplemental services, Implement improvement contract, state contract-monitored school
NI 8 (Restructuring)	Participate in GaDOE led school performance review and needs assessment, state contract-monitored school develop state management contract
NI 9 (Restructuring)	School choice, supplemental services, implement state management contract, state contract managed
NI 10 (Restructuring)	School choice, supplemental services, implement state management contract, state contract managed

(Georgia Department of Education, 2008)

Interventions of Supplemental Education Services and School Choice

As schools classified as needs improvement levels two and higher, Georgia Law (2000) authorizes the Georgia Board of Education to adopt rules requiring schools to

provide supplemental education services and school choice as required under the *No Child Left Behind Act* (Georgia Board of Education, 2008). All schools in NI level two or higher are required to offer supplemental educational services and schools choice in Georgia.

Interventions and Support for Improvement Schools (Needs Improvement Levels 1 and 2)

Once a Georgia school reaches NI status, the state's level of on-site support and additional federal funding provided for the school to make improvements varies based on the school's level of needs improvement. Appendix B outlines these interventions and supports. On-site support personnel from the state are responsible for providing a combination of pressure and support. Brown, et al. (2011) found that improvement in Georgia's lowest performing schools was in part a result of Georgia State School Superintendent Kathy Cox's shift in the role of on-site support. In an interview, Cox indicated that she "changed the role of state agents in schools from compliance to assistance. Instead of sending agency employees into schools to simply help complete paperwork, those people were sent to help assess and diagnose problems in low-performing schools" (Brown, et al., 2011, p. 26).

Schools in their first two years of needs improvement status are assigned a school improvement specialist who assists the school in processes such as data analysis, school improvement planning based on deficiencies identified in the data, professional learning, monitoring of the implementation of the school improvement plan, and analysis of data from feeder schools and development of a plan to address weaknesses in the feeder school through vertical teaming. Schools in improvement status receive support through Regional Education Service Associations (RESA)

located throughout the state. Each RESA receives funding to employ school improvement specialists for the sole purpose of serving schools in improvement status.

Interventions and Support for Corrective Action Schools (Needs Improvement Levels 3 and 4)

In addition to receiving all of the services and interventions that improvement schools receive, schools in corrective action receive more intensive support from a SEA school improvement specialist who, with the leadership team of the school, analyzes the effectiveness of the improvement plan and develops further action steps, timelines for implementation of action steps, and steps for monitoring the corrective action plan. Additionally, the school improvement specialist supports the school through classroom observations with feedback, monitoring of professional learning and implementation of professional learning, support with the coordination of human and fiscal resources, and facilitation of leadership teams. The school improvement specialist supports the school and district in determining corrective actions that may include replacement of staff, appointment of an outside expert to monitor the school, decreasing the authority of the school administration, reorganizing the school, and extending the school day and/or year.

Interventions and Support for Restructuring Schools (Needs Improvement Levels 5 and higher)

Schools in restructuring status receive all services outlined for improvement and corrective action schools. Additionally, schools in restructuring receive intensive support and resources to have an SEA school improvement specialist, referred to as a state director, at the school to oversee the school's operation and implementation of the school improvement plan. The state director has a role in supporting the district office in the hiring and termination of staff and hiring of an instructional coach(es) for the area(s)

of deficiency. The state director ensures that curriculum frameworks are followed and instruction is delivered based on the model provided in required, intensive professional learning. Additionally, benchmark assessments are administered on an on-going basis to determine student acquisition of content and skills. The purpose of these formative assessments is to determine if content and skills need to be taught again and/or if students need additional instruction after or before school. During these processes, the school receives an on-site visit to assess the school's performance in the areas of curriculum, assessment, instruction, professional learning, leadership, school culture, community engagement, and planning and organization. Based on this review, target areas for improvement are identified and plans with actionable steps are developed and monitored to improve performance. The frequency of the monitoring of these plans is at least every 45 days. Once a school reaches needs improvement level seven, an improvement contract outlining the aforementioned strategies is developed and agreed upon by the various stakeholders including the Georgia Board of Education and the local board of education.

At both the corrective action and restructuring level, schools receive support through school improvement specialists hired by the GaDOE utilizing federal funds. Regardless of the role or level of school receiving services, the support provided includes emphasis on the aforementioned areas and specific actions that include the following:

1. Assisting and supporting school leaders in developing and sustaining a leadership team that is focused on continuous improvement in order to increase student achievement,
2. Assisting and supporting leaders in sustaining the school improvement process through all strands of the Georgia Standards for School Performance,
3. Assisting and supporting the leadership team, collaborative learning

teams, and individual teachers in best practices that will directly lead to increased academic achievement for individual students and subgroups in relation to AYP targets,

4. Assisting and supporting school leaders, the leadership team, and collaborative learning teams with the development of structures and processes that support standards-based, job-embedded, results-driven professional learning,
5. Assisting and supporting school leaders in creating and sustaining a culture of data-driven, decision-making that guides action plans for school improvement,
6. Assisting and supporting the school leadership team and collaborative learning teams in creating action plans with measurable goals,
7. Assisting and supporting the leadership team and collaborative learning teams in implementing the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) in standards-based classrooms and monitoring the implementation of the GPS within standards-based classrooms through teacher observations and feedback,
8. Assisting and supporting the leadership team and collaborative learning teams with the use of instructional frameworks and the implementation of benchmark assessments,
9. Assisting and supporting teachers in the implementation of formative assessments in the classroom and with using the results of formative assessments as timely data in making instructional decisions and informing the overall school improvement process,
10. Assisting and supporting the leadership team and collaborative learning teams in the development, implementation, and continuous monitoring of formalized systems of data-driven interventions (Response to Intervention), and
11. Assisting and supporting the leadership team in continuously assessing progress toward fully operational high impact practices (Georgia Department of Education, 2008).

Schools reaching restructuring status at levels seven and higher are expected to enter into a contract with the state department of education that outlines services provided by a state director and expectations for implementation of specific requirements in the school (Georgia Department of Education, 2009). The improvement

contract under which identified schools were required to operate beginning during the 2007-2008 school year is found in Appendix C and outlines the following specific requirements of schools in restructuring:

1.1 System Short-Term Action Plan. This Plan identifies short-term action steps of 45 to 60 days duration to research, develop, and establish the structures needed to implement the Interventions recommended in the System Performance Review. The System Short-Term Action Plan is created by the Local Educational Agency in collaboration with GaDOE's Division of State-Directed Schools. This Plan is founded upon the School Keys (Georgia School Standards) and identifies specific action steps related to the Interventions from the System Performance Review, and other identified system improvement goals. It also identifies the person(s) responsible for each action step and sets deadlines for achieving each action step. The Division of State-Directed Schools shall have final decision-making authority in the interventions included in the System Short-Term Action Plan. Failure of the Local Educational Agency on behalf of the School to implement, complete, or otherwise accomplish these action steps within the time frame identified in the System Short-Term Action Plan may result in a referral to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) for an investigation and/or audit, resulting in a report with recommendations to the State Board of Education. These recommendations may include, but are not limited to a decrease of management authority for the superintendent and local board of education; assignment of a management team to operate all or part of the Local Educational Agency and restructuring of the Local Educational Agency's governance arrangement.

1.2 School Short-Term Action Plan. This Plan identifies short-term action steps of 45 to 60 days duration for improving the School's performance. The School Short-Term Action Plan is created by the Local Educational Agency and the School in collaboration with GaDOE's Division of State-Directed Schools represented by the GaDOE monitor of the contract. This Plan is founded upon the School Keys (Georgia School Standards) and identifies specific action steps related to the Interventions from the GAPSS Analysis, achievement of the Annual Measurable Objectives for all identified subgroups, Participation Rate, Second Indicators, attendance (if attendance is not the second indicator), and other identified school improvement goals. It also identifies the person(s) responsible for each action step and sets deadlines for achieving each action step. The Division of State-Directed Schools shall have final decision-making authority in the interventions included in the School Short-Term Action Plan. Failure of the Local Educational Agency on behalf of the School to implement, complete, or otherwise accomplish these action steps within the time frame identified in the School Short-Term Action Plan may result in a referral to the Governor's

Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) for an investigation and/or audit, resulting in a report with recommendations to the State Board of Education. These recommendations may include a recommendation to withhold selected or all State and/or Federal funds from such Local Educational Agency.

1.3 System Interventions. The GaDOE will conduct a System Performance Review. The report generated as a result of the System Performance Review will include recommended system interventions.

1.4 School Interventions. The School shall be subject to a new School Performance Review (GAPSS Analysis) conducted by GaDOE. The GAPSS Analysis report will include recommended interventions. The GAPSS Analysis report will be delivered to the School and/or LEA and shall then automatically be incorporated by reference as Attachment 5 to this Contract.

1.5 School Improvement Plan. Pursuant to the requirements of No Child Left Behind, 20 U.S.C. §6316(b)(3), the School has developed, and the Local Educational Agency has approved, a School Improvement Plan ("School Improvement Plan") to serve as a blueprint for guiding the School's continuous improvement and progress toward identified student achievement objectives and targets. The School Improvement Plan identifies the School's Annual Measurable Objectives for (1) Language arts, (2) Mathematics, and (3) Second Indicators. The School Improvement Plan details strategies/action steps, the strands of the School Keys (Georgia School Standards) with which the strategy/action correlates, individuals responsible, evidence/artifacts, and benchmark measures. The Annual Measurable Objectives outlined in the School Improvement Plan are School- identified goals that shall be monitored under this contract. Failure of a Local Educational Agency or School to implement the detailed strategies/actions in order to achieve these Annual Measurable Objectives may result in a referral to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) for an investigation and/or audit, resulting in a report with recommendations to the State Board of Education. These recommendations may include a recommendation to withhold selected or all State and/or Federal funds from such Local Educational Agency and/or any interventions permissible by rule or law (Georgia Department of Education, 2009).

Appendices D and E contain the contract and negotiated contract elements under which schools were required to operate during the 2009-2010 school year or the final year during which data for this study were collected. The biggest difference in the contracts and negotiated terms in Appendices C, D, and E is the format and

organization, not content. Table 2-2 examines the alignment of the areas of emphasis for low-performing schools as outlined in the research with the specific support and intervention provided by the Georgia Department of Education in schools at the restructuring level of needs improvement status based on the improvement contract.

Table 2-3. Alignment of areas of emphasis for low-performing schools from research with support and intervention from Georgia Department of Education

Areas of Emphasis from Research	Georgia Support and Intervention
Curriculum	Ensure that instructional frameworks are used appropriately in each classroom
Assessment	Ensure that benchmark assessments are given and results are analyzed to guide instruction
Instruction	<p>Conduct classroom observations and provide feedback and model classroom instruction in targeted content areas</p> <p>Conduct awareness walks with administrators focused on specific areas of need at the school to collect data on classroom practices</p>
Planning and Organization	<p>Analyze AYP data and identify areas of deficiency</p> <p>Develop and implement a school improvement plan aligned to areas of deficiency and assess school improvement plan on a quarterly basis and modify school improvement plan to address inadequate performance</p> <p>Analyze feeder school student achievement data and develop a vertical plan to address feeder patterns</p> <p>Assess resource allocation</p> <p>Participate in decisions related to replacement of staff</p> <p>Implement short-term action plans</p> <p>Ensure that leadership team addresses targeted areas from performance review</p> <p>Hire and instructional coach based on area(s) of need</p>
Professional Learning	<p>Coordinate and provide professional learning in support of school improvement plan</p> <p>Participate in intensive professional learning addressing the implementation and assessment of Georgia Performance Standards through standards-based classrooms</p>
Leadership	Facilitate full implementation of leadership teams and ensure that leadership team analyzes teacher and student attendance and develops an action plan if needed

Funding for School Improvement

Under *No Child Left Behind*, funding is provided by the federal government to support the implementation of interventions and strategies to support schools in needs improvement status through Title I, Section 1003(a). Title I, Section 1003(a) requires “that State Education Agencies allocate funds to local education agencies to support Title I schools identified for improvement to meet the progress goals in their school improvement, corrective action and/or restructuring plans and thereby improve student performance” (2002). These funds are in addition to the allocations that all Title I schools receive based on each school district’s decision to designate schools as Title I schools. Additional funding for school improvement varies by state. Georgia disbursed Title I, 1003(a) funds in the amount of \$11,593,100 to schools in needs improvement status during the 2006-2007 school year and \$13,960,990 in the 2009-2010 school year. These disbursements reflect an increase in the amount of Title I, 1003(a) funds awarded from 2007-2010 of \$2,367,890. The total amount of Title I, 1003(a) funds distributed from 2006-2010 was \$50,285,285. Table 2-4 outlines the amount of Title I, 1003(a) funds allocated to Georgia schools in needs improvement status each year.

Table 2-4. Federal funding to schools in needs improvement status in Georgia

Year	Total funding for needs improvement schools
2009 – 2010	\$13,960,990.00
2008 – 2009	\$12,490,745.00
2007 – 2008	\$12,240,450.00
2006 – 2007	\$11,593,100.00

(Georgia Department of Education, 2009)

Funds were disbursed to schools based on their level of needs improvement as outlined in Table 2-5. In addition to receiving the base amount, schools received an enrollment supplement if the enrollment of the school exceeded 600 students. Schools

with 601 – 1000 students received an additional \$5,000.00. Schools with 1,000 or more students received an additional \$10,000.00 (Georgia Department of Education, 2009).

Table 2-5. Formula for distribution of federal grant money for needs improvement schools in Georgia

Level of NI	Base grant allocation
1-3	\$32,000.00
3	\$52,000.00
4-6	\$82,000.00
7-9	\$127,000.00 + \$27,000.00 for professional learning academy

(Georgia Department of Education, 2009)

Schools receiving these additional school improvement funds were required to align funding and expenditures with action steps in their school improvement plan before receiving approval to spend funds. Schools in this study that entered into improvement contracts with the state received \$154,000. Schools in the study that did not enter into improvement contracts with the state received \$82,000.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Nine scholarly works discussing state education agencies and their support of low-performing schools. Of these, only one was published since 2000 (Massell et al., 2012). Little research exists reflecting the impact of the State Education Agency on its role in improving low-performing schools. Research regarding the State Education Agency's support and intervention for improving the performance of low-performing schools reveals that states use varying strategies and methods of allocating financial resources to schools and districts.

Research Questions

For this study, four research questions will guide the study.

Question 1: Is there a difference between schools receiving intensive intervention and support from the State Education Agency and improvement in student and school achievement for all students?

Question 2: Is there a difference between schools receiving intensive intervention and support from the State Education Agency and improvement in student and school achievement for the black subgroup?

Question 3: Is there a difference between schools receiving intensive intervention and support from the State Education Agency and improvement in student and school achievement for the economically disadvantaged subgroup?

Question 4: Is there a difference between schools receiving intensive intervention and support from the State Education Agency and improvement in student and school achievement for the students with disabilities subgroup?

Hypotheses

For this study, four hypotheses have been determined:

H₁: Schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for all students at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.

- H₂: Schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for black students at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.
- H₃: Schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for economically disadvantaged students at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.
- H₄: Schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for students with disabilities at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.

Limitations

Because this study is specific to one state, many of the limitations to the study relate to the state's unique opportunity to define the curriculum, assessment processes, and accountability structure.

Each state has a different accountability formula for determining school performance. Therefore, the conclusions of this study may be of interest to school leaders, particularly at the middle school level, and policymakers nationwide; however, because each state has a different accountability system, the specific interventions and supports and their related success must be considered in the context of the state's accountability system. Regardless, the focus on research-based practices for improving student achievement should be emphasized.

Additionally, each state's assessment system has varying levels of rigor, student response requirements, testing conditions, and a unique standard setting process. Therefore, the success or lack of success of the schools in this study could be very different under another state's assessment and accountability system. In other words, a

school in needs improvement status in another state may not meet the requirements of a needs improvement designation in Georgia. Likewise, a school not in needs improvement status in another state may meet the requirements to be designated as a needs improvement school in Georgia.

The study is an examination of the performance level of schools after being designated as needs improvement schools and does not take into account previous improvement strategies that could have contributed to incremental improvement in student performance that occurred but did not result in the school meeting an absolute measure of performance.

The study was limited to the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Tests in language arts and mathematics for the 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010 school years.

The study compares performance of schools over a four-year period and does not account for the transient nature of students. However, student performance included in this study is reflective of only students who meet the definition of Full Academic Year (FAY) in Georgia. Student performance results are only included for students who were enrolled in the school for the fall and spring student enrollment count for state reporting.

Because the study uses criterion-referenced test data instead of norm-referenced test data, populations of students vary yearly at the schools reflected in this study.

The study reflects schools from urban, suburban, and rural Georgia settings. Of the schools, 14 are in urban settings, five are in suburban settings, and 11 are in rural settings.

Assumptions

The study makes the assumptions that criterion-referenced student achievement data are appropriate measures for student performance and that Criterion Referenced Competency Tests are valid and reliable sources of data regarding student proficiency in language arts and mathematics.

Data Sources

Population and Sample

This research focuses on the academic achievement of 30 middle schools with a grade 6-8 configuration in Georgia. These schools were identified at the end of the 2006-2007 school year as needs improvement schools. Fifteen of the schools were in restructuring at needs improvement levels seven and eight. Schools at this level were required to enter into an improvement contract with the state of Georgia to receive intensive support and intervention from the state education agency. Fifteen of the schools were in corrective action or lower levels of restructuring which means these schools did not have to enter into an improvement contract with the state of Georgia. Schools in corrective action or restructuring at levels five and six did not receive the same level of support and intervention from the State Education Agency.

Of the schools included in this study, 14 schools were in urban settings, five schools were in suburban settings, and 11 schools were in rural settings. The schools in the study represent 20 Georgia school districts. Appendix E identifies the geographic location of all schools in restructuring which includes the 15 middle schools on which this study is based.

All schools had populations that fell into various subgroups by ethnicity, economic status, and disability. In addition to the all students category, the subgroups

reflected in the schools included black students, white students, economically disadvantaged students, non-economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and students without disabilities. In this study, performance data of all students, black students, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities will be examined since these groups were the groups in which the schools did not have enough students meeting or exceeding standards in language arts and/or mathematics for the school to make Adequate Yearly Progress.

For the purpose of this study, the population of the Contract Schools group in 2007 included a total of 10,628 students in 15 middle schools. Of these students, 7,311 or 69% were black, 3,096 or 29% were white, 8,647 or 81% were economically disadvantaged, 1,981 or 19% were not economically disadvantaged, 1,798 or 17% were students with disabilities, and 8,830 or 83% were students without disabilities.

The population of the Non-Contract Schools group in 2010 included a total of 10,783 students in 15 middle schools. Of these students, 7,268 or 67% were black, 3,263 or 30% were white, 8,557 or 79% were economically disadvantaged, 2,226 or 21% were not economically disadvantaged, 1,798 or 17% were students with disabilities, and 8,985 or 83% were students without disabilities.

Data regarding schools in the Contract Schools group were used to determine which schools to include in the Non-Contract Schools group. When determining the Non-Contract Schools group, the following factors were considered in priority order:

1. Needs improvement status
2. Overall student performance
3. Student demographics
4. Geographic location

In order to ensure that the schools in the Non-Contract Schools group were all receiving the same level of support from the state education agency, schools in the Non-Contract Schools group had to be in corrective action or restructuring at levels five or six. This criteria narrowed the population of schools from which the Non-Contract Schools could be chosen. School performance data in language arts and mathematics from the Adequate Yearly Progress reports were examined to match similar schools with the schools in the Contract Schools group. Language arts data included combines performance school on the reading and English components of the state-mandated assessment.

The population of the Non-Contract Schools group in 2007 included a total of 11,592 students in 15 middle schools throughout Georgia. Of these students, 7,383 or 64% were black, 3,915 or 34% were white, 9,538 or 82% were economically disadvantaged, 2,054 or 18% were not economically disadvantaged, 1,635 or 14% were students with disabilities, and 9,957 or 86% were students without disabilities.

The population of the Non-Contract Schools group in 2010 included a total of 11,860 students in 15 middle schools throughout Georgia. Of these students, 8,037 or 68% were black, 3,464 or 29% were white, 9,538 or 80% were economically disadvantaged, 2,322 or 20% were not economically disadvantaged, 1,677 or 14% were students with disabilities, and 10,183 or 86% were students without disabilities.

Table 3-1 summarizes the population of the Contract Schools and Non-Contract Schools included in the study. Only data for subgroups for which the schools were held accountable were included because these were the data on which the Adequate Yearly Progress determinations for the schools were made.

Table 3-1. Summary of population of Contract Schools and Non-Contract Schools group in 2007 and 2010

Students	Contract Schools Group				Non-Contract Schools Group			
	2007		2010		2007		2010	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
All	10,628	100	10,783	100	11,592	100	11,860	100
Black	7,311	69	7,268	67	7,383	64	8,037	68
White	3,096	29	3,263	30	3,915	34	3,464	29
Economically disadvantaged	8,647	81	8,557	79	9,538	82	9,538	80
Not economically disadvantaged	1,981	19	2,226	21	2,054	18	2,322	20
Students with disabilities	1,798	17	1,798	17	1,635	14	1,677	14
Students without disabilities	8,830	83	8,985	83	9,957	86	10,183	86

(Georgia Department of Education, 2007 & 2010)

Data Collection and Instrumentation

The Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) were used to measure student academic achievement in language arts and mathematics for this study. The CRCT is a criterion-referenced test that is administered in the spring of each school year to all students in grades three through eight. Additionally, students who fail one or more portions of the test are allowed to attend a required summer remediation program and retest at the end of the program. All retest data are included in the final data reflected in the Adequate Yearly Progress reports.

Because the language arts and mathematics tests are used to determine Adequate Yearly Progress and school designation as needs improvement or not, the language arts data were used for the study. All data for this study were collected

through the Georgia Department of Education's public site for Adequate Yearly Progress results.

The CRCT data used in this study were accessed through the Georgia Department of Education's web site. No data were accessed directly from the school districts. All data, including subgroup data, were available through the public site.

Permission to conduct research was requested and obtained through the University of Florida Institutional Review Board. Because all data were accessible through the public web site, no informed consent forms were required. The approval letter from the University of Florida Institutional Review Board is located in Appendix F.

Data Analysis

The following statistical tools will be used to answer the research questions.

H₁: *t* test and mean. Schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for all students at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.

This hypothesis determines the growth of a Non-Contract Schools group and Contract Schools group from the school years ending in 2007 and 2010. A *t* test was used to determine if the differences in performance from 2007 to 2010 within and between each group were statistically significant. Additionally, the mean percentages of students meeting and exceeding standards were compared to show growth.

H₂: *t* test and mean. Schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for the black subgroup at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.

This hypothesis determines the growth of a Non-Contract Schools group and Contract Schools group from the school years ending in 2007 and 2010. A *t* test was used to determine if the differences in performance from 2007 to 2010 within and between each group were statistically significant. Additionally, the mean percentages of students meeting and exceeding standards were compared to show growth.

H₃: *t* test and mean. Schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for the economically disadvantaged subgroup at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.

This hypothesis determines the growth of a Non-Contract Schools group and Contact Schools group from the school years ending in 2007 and 2010. A *t* test was used to determine if the differences in performance from 2007 to 2010 within and between each group were statistically significant. Additionally, the mean percentage of students meeting and exceeding standards were compared to show growth.

H₄: *t* test and mean. Schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for the students with disabilities subgroup at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.

This hypothesis determines the growth of a Non-Contract Schools group and Contact Schools group from the school years ending in 2007 and 2010. A *t* test was used to determine if the differences in performance from 2007 to 2010 within and between each group were statistically significant. Additionally, the mean percentages of students meeting and exceeding standards were compared to show growth.

CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to examine the data and formalized interventions and support of 30 Georgia middle schools that were at varying levels of needs improvement over the 2007-2010 school years. Of these schools, 15 were at needs improvement levels seven and eight. These schools received intensive interventions and support from the Georgia Department of Education. The remaining 15 schools had similar performance levels and demographics and were located in similar geographic settings (rural, suburban, and urban) as the 15 schools at needs improvement levels seven and eight. The comparison schools were classified at the corrective action or restructuring level and did not qualify to receive the formalized interventions and support from the Georgia Department of Education. Appendix B outlines the specific interventions for schools.

In this study, performance data of all students, black students, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities will be examined since these groups were the groups in which the schools did not have enough students meeting or exceeding standards in language arts and/or mathematics for the school to make Adequate Yearly Progress.

Research questions guiding the study were:

Question 1: Is there a difference between schools receiving intensive intervention and support from the State Education Agency and improvement in student and school achievement for all students?

Question 2: Is there a difference between schools receiving intensive intervention and support from the State Education Agency and improvement in student and school achievement for the black subgroup?

Question 3: Is there a difference between schools receiving intensive intervention and support from the State Education Agency and improvement in student and school achievement for the economically disadvantaged subgroup?

Question 4: Is there a difference between schools receiving intensive intervention and support from the State Education Agency and improvement in student and school achievement for the students with disabilities subgroup?

Presentation of the Data

Descriptive Data

The population of this study included 30 Georgia middle schools reflecting academic performance of 22,643 students in 2007 and 22,220 students in 2010. All students for whom data were used attended the school for which the data were used for the full academic year.

All students were attending schools in needs improvement status as defined by Georgia's Single Statewide Accountability System. Fifteen of the middle schools comprised the Non-Contract Schools group and were in corrective action or restructuring levels five or six, and 15 schools comprised the Contact Schools group and were in restructuring levels seven or eight. Schools in the Contact Schools group were engaged in improvement contracts with the Georgia Department of Education resulting in intensive intervention and support. Schools in the Non-Contract Schools did not receive the same intensive intervention and support although the schools were similar demographically and in the area of student performance.

Demographic data for the students included in the study are found in Table 4-1. Data are only included for the subgroups of students for which the schools were held accountable.

Table 4-1. Demographic data for students included in study

Students	Contract Schools Group				Non-Contract Schools Group			
	2007		2010		2007		2010	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
All	10,628	100	10,783	100	11,592	100	11,860	100
Black	7,311	69	7,268	67	7,383	64	8,037	68
White	3,096	29	3,263	30	3,915	34	3,464	29
Economically disadvantaged	8,647	81	8,557	79	9,538	82	9,538	80
Not economically disadvantaged	1,981	19	2,226	21	2,054	18	2,322	20
Students with disabilities	1,798	17	1,798	17	1,635	14	1,677	14
Students without disabilities	8,830	83	8,985	83	9,957	86	10,183	86

(Georgia Department of Education, 2007 & 2010)

Statistical Compilation

Student data were accessed through the Georgia Department of Education web site. Data extracted included elements for all students and subgroups of students by ethnicity, economic status, and disability. Additionally, data were available for students of other ethnicities; however, these data were not used in this study because enough students representing these subgroups did not attend any of the 30 schools included in the study.

Descriptive statistics for students included in the study were compiled for all students and subgroups of students. The focus of analyzing the data was on the number and percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standards for the total population and each subgroup in language arts and mathematics since these data

determine the Adequate Yearly Progress designation of each school. The following tables contain data regarding the performance of each subgroup and content area for which the 30 schools in the study were held accountable. Data are represented in separate tables because each category impacts the school's Adequate Yearly Progress designation. Table 4-2 contains data regarding the number and percentage of all students meeting or exceeding standards in language arts in each school during the 2007 and 2010 school years. Table 4-3 contains data regarding the number and percentage of all students meeting or exceeding standards in mathematics in each school during the 2007 and 2010 school years. Table 4-4 contains data regarding the number and percentage of black and white students meeting or exceeding standards in language arts in each school during the 2007 and 2010 school years. Table 4-5 contains data regarding the number and percentage of black and white students meeting or exceeding standards in mathematics in each school during the 2007 and 2010 school years. Table 4-6 contains data regarding the number and percentage of economically disadvantaged and not economically disadvantaged students meeting or exceeding standards in language arts in each school during the 2007 and 2010 school years. Table 4-7 contains data regarding the number and percentage of economically disadvantaged and not economically disadvantaged students meeting or exceeding standards in mathematics in each school during the 2007 and 2010 school years. Table 4-8 contains data regarding the number and percentage of students with disabilities and students without disabilities meeting or exceeding standards in language arts in each school during the 2007 and 2010 school years. Table 4-9 contains data regarding the number and percentage of students with disabilities and students without disabilities

meeting or exceeding standards in mathematics in each school during the 2007 and 2010 school years.

Table 4-2. Number and percent of all students meeting or exceeding standards in language arts

School	2007		2010	
	n	%	n	%
NCS A	554	74	569	76
NCS B	714	64	713	62
NCS C	272	58	282	61
NCS D	745	82	751	81
NCS E	807	76	842	78
NCS F	573	74	632	74
NCS G	341	73	363	76
NCS H	1089	79	1068	77
NCS I	418	81	408	79
NCS J	417	73	437	75
NCS K	655	69	675	71
NCS L	551	67	579	69
NCS M	602	75	684	78
NCS N	305	76	293	74
NCS O	389	64	415	68
CS A	305	75	353	86
CS B	414	64	514	79
CS C	491	57	749	81
CS D	473	81	565	92
CS E	687	75	793	87
CS F	323	75	434	97
CS G	431	72	519	86
CS H	757	81	789	93
CS I	624	80	725	91
CS J	327	74	413	87
CS K	491	71	548	78
CS L	839	65	1123	87
CS M	254	73	337	89
CS N	385	75	473	91
CS O	759	64	1148	95

(Georgia Department of Education, 2007 & 2010)

Table 4-3. Number and percent of all students meeting or exceeding standards in mathematics

School	2007		2010	
	Students meeting & exceeding standards		Students meeting & exceeding standards	
	n	%	n	%
NCS A	471	63	479	64
NCS B	624	56	598	52
NCS C	253	54	259	56
NCS D	754	83	788	85
NCS E	786	74	810	75
NCS F	550	71	606	71
NCS G	262	56	277	58
NCS H	993	72	985	71
NCS I	382	74	367	71
NCS J	383	67	396	68
NCS K	588	62	590	62
NCS L	518	63	537	64
NCS M	593	74	640	73
NCS N	285	71	281	71
NCS O	274	45	281	46
CS A	207	51	296	72
CS B	421	65	527	81
CS C	362	42	564	61
CS D	432	74	559	91
CS E	513	56	620	68
CS F	228	53	407	91
CS G	341	57	470	78
CS H	636	68	687	81
CS I	538	69	654	82
CS J	283	64	390	82
CS K	387	56	541	77
CS L	736	57	1020	79
CS M	264	76	322	85
CS N	344	67	432	83
CS O	676	57	1099	91

(Georgia Department of Education, 2007 & 2010)

Table 4-4. Number and percent of black and white students meeting or exceeding standards in language arts

School	2007				2010			
	Students meeting & exceeding standards				Students meeting & exceeding standards			
	Black		White		Black		White	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
NCS A	386	69	164	91	444	74	121	93
NCS B	410	80	304	50	426	75	287	49
NCS C	115	49	157	67	130	50	152	74
NCS D	204	61	541	94	295	65	456	97
NCS E	435	69	261	86	545	74	186	91
NCS F	565	74	8	78	615	72	0	0
NCS G	215	71	126	76	230	73	133	81
NCS H	428	75	587	82	458	76	536	81
NCS I	324	79	94	89	354	78	54	89
NCS J	234	72	183	75	234	68	203	84
NCS K	535	67	71	86	620	72	6	62
NCS L	531	67	20	68	550	69	29	69
NCS M	402	69	200	89	402	68	282	98
NCS N	245	75	60	82	255	73	38	78
NCS O	138	59	251	67	150	59	265	75
CS A	267	75	38	75	317	86	36	83
CS B	405	64	0	0	497	80	8	94
CS C	140	60	306	62	206	87	498	91
CS D	351	80	122	83	410	92	155	93
CS E	672	75	15	75	775	87	18	84
CS F	316	75	0	0	415	97	10	96
CS G	165	70	266	73	207	84	312	88
CS H	748	81	0	0	756	94	24	91
CS I	400	77	224	86	479	91	246	91
CS J	270	74	57	74	322	87	91	89
CS K	431	70	60	76	477	78	71	81
CS L	334	59	473	69	477	83	614	92
CS M	76	63	178	78	109	83	228	92
CS N	385	75	0	0	457	88	0	0
CS O	274	58	477	68	461	94	679	96

(Georgia Department of Education, 2007 & 2010)

Table 4-5. Number and percent of black and white students meeting or exceeding standards in mathematics

School	2007				2010			
	Students meeting & exceeding standards				Students meeting & exceeding standards			
	Black		White		Black		White	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
NCS A	342	61	127	71	380	63	92	71
NCS B	274	54	350	58	284	50	314	54
NCS C	102	43	151	65	115	45	144	70
NCS D	265	79	489	85	370	81	418	89
NCS E	435	69	265	87	537	73	178	87
NCS F	337	44	6	60	389	46	0	0
NCS G	164	54	98	59	175	56	102	62
NCS H	402	71	539	75	425	70	485	73
NCS I	314	76	68	65	332	73	35	57
NCS J	194	59	189	77	203	59	193	80
NCS K	533	62	29	36	549	64	10	100
NCS L	498	63	20	68	508	64	29	69
NCS M	402	69	191	86	402	68	238	83
NCS N	225	69	60	82	241	69	40	82
NCS O	99	42	175	47	114	45	167	47
CS A	197	55	10	20	267	73	29	66
CS B	412	65	2	0	512	82	8	94
CS C	98	42	226	46	147	62	379	69
CS D	356	81	76	52	411	92	148	89
CS E	500	56	13	65	601	68	19	87
CS F	225	53	0	0	394	92	10	98
CS G	124	53	217	60	186	75	284	80
CS H	631	69	0	0	661	83	21	80
CS I	345	66	193	75	435	83	219	81
CS J	230	63	53	69	302	81	88	85
CS K	321	52	66	85	465	76	76	87
CS L	313	55	402	58	453	78	546	81
CS M	89	74	175	77	107	81	215	87
CS N	344	67	0	0	432	83	0	0
CS O	239	50	431	62	439	90	654	93

(Georgia Department of Education, 2007 & 2010)

Table 4-6. Number and percent of economically disadvantaged (ED) and not economically disadvantaged (Non-ED) students meeting or exceeding standards in language arts

School	2007				2010			
	Students meeting & exceeding standards				Students meeting & exceeding standards			
	ED		Non-ED		ED		Non-ED	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
NCS A	536	73	18	95	551	76	18	90
NCS B	393	51	321	92	381	50	332	86
NCS C	198	51	74	90	221	57	61	80
NCS D	570	78	175	96	576	79	175	87
NCS E	629	74	178	86	652	76	190	84
NCS F	573	74	0	0	632	82	0	0
NCS G	284	70	57	89	306	76	57	77
NCS H	613	73	476	89	592	70	476	87
NCS I	331	79	87	92	321	76	87	91
NCS J	386	72	31	94	406	75	31	70
NCS K	614	68	41	87	634	70	41	84
NCS L	372	58	179	99	400	62	179	91
NCS M	466	72	136	88	493	76	191	83
NCS N	288	75	17	89	281	74	12	86
NCS O	308	59	81	98	334	64	81	94
CS A	237	72	68	86	275	84	78	93
CS B	414	64	0	0	511	79	3	100
CS C	293	45	198	93	482	74	267	97
CS D	403	79	70	99	465	91	100	99
CS E	609	74	78	88	712	86	81	95
CS F	323	75	0	0	418	97	16	94
CS G	226	61	205	89	292	79	227	96
CS H	716	80	41	95	745	93	44	96
CS I	499	77	125	95	581	90	144	97
CS J	251	71	76	88	302	85	111	93
CS K	491	71	0	0	537	78	11	92
CS L	463	53	376	91	720	82	403	97
CS M	156	66	98	87	206	88	131	91
CS N	385	75	0	0	467	91	6	86
CS O	272	40	487	95	645	95	503	94

(Georgia Department of Education, 2007 & 2010)

Table 4-7. Number and percent of economically disadvantaged (ED) and not economically disadvantaged (Non-ED) students meeting or exceeding standards in mathematics

School	2007				2010			
	Students meeting & exceeding standards				Students meeting & exceeding standards			
	ED		Non-ED		ED		Non-ED	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
NCS A	456	63	15	79	464	64	15	75
NCS B	379	50	245	70	352	46	246	64
NCS C	186	48	67	82	196	51	63	83
NCS D	578	80	176	97	612	84	176	88
NCS E	621	73	165	79	635	74	175	77
NCS F	550	71	0	0	606	78	0	0
NCS G	207	51	55	86	213	53	64	86
NCS H	532	63	461	86	524	62	461	85
NCS I	306	73	76	80	291	69	76	79
NCS J	355	66	28	85	362	67	34	77
NCS K	550	61	38	81	552	61	38	78
NCS L	360	56	158	88	367	57	170	87
NCS M	469	73	124	80	453	70	187	81
NCS N	270	71	15	79	271	71	10	71
NCS O	209	40	65	78	216	41	65	76
CS A	146	45	61	77	218	67	78	93
CS B	421	65	0	0	524	81	3	100
CS C	194	30	168	79	315	49	249	90
CS D	367	72	65	92	494	96	65	64
CS E	448	54	65	73	548	66	72	85
CS F	228	53	0	0	407	95	0	0
CS G	156	42	185	80	255	70	215	91
CS H	604	68	32	74	662	81	25	93
CS I	434	67	104	79	525	81	129	87
CS J	218	61	65	76	282	79	108	91
CS K	387	56	0	0	529	77	12	100
CS L	436	50	300	72	644	74	376	91
CS M	175	75	89	79	195	83	127	88
CS N	344	67	0	0	425	83	7	100
CS O	284	42	392	77	603	89	496	93

(Georgia Department of Education, 2007 & 2010)

Table 4-8. Number and percent of students with disabilities (SWD) and students without disabilities (Non-SWD) meeting or exceeding standards in language arts

School	2007				2010			
	Students meeting & exceeding standards				Students meeting & exceeding standards			
	SWD		Non-SWD		SWD		Non-SWD	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
NCS A	21	28	533	79	23	29	546	82
NCS B	6	55	708	64	5	36	708	62
NCS C	13	28	259	61	15	29	267	65
NCS D	32	35	713	87	32	33	719	87
NCS E	15	14	792	83	21	16	821	87
NCS F	14	18	559	80	15	19	617	80
NCS G	21	23	320	85	20	22	343	89
NCS H	56	21	1033	93	64	24	1004	89
NCS I	21	21	397	95	21	21	387	93
NCS J	28	25	389	85	28	25	409	87
NCS K	92	49	563	74	94	50	581	76
NCS L	56	34	495	75	56	34	523	77
NCS M	43	27	559	87	47	29	637	89
NCS N	32	40	273	85	32	40	261	83
NCS O	23	38	366	67	23	38	392	71
CS A	8	20	297	81	14	35	339	91
CS B	47	49	367	67	67	70	447	81
CS C	46	53	445	57	71	83	678	81
CS D	20	26	453	90	52	67	513	96
CS E	76	42	611	83	108	60	685	94
CS F	32	37	291	84	75	87	359	99
CS G	67	57	364	76	85	72	434	89
CS H	54	33	703	91	139	84	650	95
CS I	67	48	557	87	121	86	604	92
CS J	43	57	284	78	61	80	352	88
CS K	56	45	435	77	99	80	449	78
CS L	108	53	731	67	156	77	967	89
CS M	43	67	211	74	57	89	280	89
CS N	57	56	328	80	69	68	404	97
CS O	76	32	683	72	201	84	947	98

(Georgia Department of Education, 2007 & 2010)

Table 4-9. Number and percent of students with disabilities (SWD) and students without disabilities (Non-SWD) meeting or exceeding standards in mathematics

School	2007				2010			
	Students meeting & exceeding standards				Students meeting & exceeding standards			
	SWD		Non-SWD		SWD		Non-SWD	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
NCS A	14	19	457	68	17	22	465	69
NCS B	3	27	621	56	3	21	595	52
NCS C	7	15	246	58	11	21	251	61
NCS D	28	31	726	89	29	30	760	92
NCS E	8	7	778	82	7	5	802	85
NCS F	9	12	541	78	11	13	597	77
NCS G	13	14	249	66	16	17	264	68
NCS H	32	12	961	86	34	14	953	85
NCS I	14	14	368	88	17	15	353	85
NCS J	12	11	371	81	14	14	384	82
NCS K	56	30	532	70	53	30	534	70
NCS L	41	25	477	72	41	24	496	73
NCS M	23	14	570	89	27	17	617	86
NCS N	13	16	272	85	16	20	268	85
NCS O	14	23	260	47	12	18	267	48
CS A	2	5	205	56	31	72	265	71
CS B	21	22	400	73	56	61	471	85
CS C	27	31	335	43	41	45	523	62
CS D	13	17	419	83	62	75	497	93
CS E	64	36	449	61	91	57	529	72
CS F	27	31	201	58	62	74	345	96
CS G	46	39	295	61	57	51	413	85
CS H	34	21	602	78	75	44	579	85
CS I	45	32	493	77	93	57	561	85
CS J	33	43	250	68	51	66	339	85
CS K	42	34	345	61	67	54	474	82
CS L	65	32	671	62	138	64	882	81
CS M	22	34	242	85	41	61	281	89
CS N	34	33	310	75	76	67	356	85
CS O	35	15	641	68	172	73	927	96

(Georgia Department of Education, 2007 & 2010)

Analysis of the Research Questions

Data analysis in this section focuses on the research questions and hypotheses. Each question examined a group or subgroup of students and the difference that was made in student achievement over a four-year period. Groups examined included all, black, and economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities because these were the groups for which the schools in the study had to make improvement in order to make progress to remove the needs improvement designation. Specific analysis for each group and subgroup is reflected for each research question and hypothesis as follows:

A research question and directional hypothesis were developed to determine the difference made between schools on improvement contracts and schools not on improvement contracts with all students. The hypothesis was that schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for all students at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.

Multiple comparisons of data were completed to determine if a significant difference in performance existed in language arts and mathematics for all students. These comparisons included a comparison of performance of all students in the Non-Contract Schools group (NCS) in 2007 to performance of all students in the Non-Contract Schools group in 2010, a comparison of performance of all students in the Contract Schools group (CS) in 2007 to the performance of all students in the Contract Schools group in 2010, a comparison of all students in the Non-Contract Schools group in 2007 to the performance of all students in the Contract Schools group in 2007, and a

comparison of all students in the Non-Contract Schools group in 2010 to the performance of all students in the Contract Schools group in 2010.

Tables 4-10 and 4-11 outline these comparisons in performance for language arts and mathematics for all students and whether or not a significant difference in the performance of groups existed.

Table 4-10. Comparisons of performance of all students in language arts

Comparison	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value	Significant or not significant based on $p \leq 0.05$
CG 2007 to CG 2010	1.653199	0.12053	Not significant
EG 2007 to EG 2010	9.654818	< 0.00001	Significant
CG 2007 to EG 2007	-0.586739	0.566721	Not significant
CG 2010 to EG 2010	10.026671	< 0.00001	Significant
Difference in mean growth from 2007 to 2010 of CG to EG	9.856676	< 0.00001	Significant

Table 4-11. Comparisons of performance of all students in mathematics

Comparison	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value	Significant or not significant based on $p \leq 0.05$
CG 2007 to CG 2010	0.292174	0.774438	Not significant
EG 2007 to EG 2010	9.613406	< 0.00001	Significant
CG 2007 to EG 2007	-2.197753	0.045291	Significant
CG 2010 to EG 2010	4.748556	0.045291	Significant
Difference in mean growth from 2007 to 2010 of CG to EG	9.972624	< 0.00001	Significant

A research question and directional hypothesis were developed to determine the difference made between schools on improvement contracts and schools not on improvement contracts with black students. The hypothesis was that schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for the black subgroup at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.

Multiple comparisons of data were completed to determine if a significant difference in performance existed in language arts and mathematics for black students.

These comparisons included the following: a comparison of performance of black students in the Non-Contract Schools group in 2007 to performance of black students in the Non-Contract Schools group in 2010, a comparison of performance of black students in the Contract Schools group in 2007 to the performance of black students in the Contract Schools group in 2010, a comparison of black students in the Non-Contract Schools group in 2007 to the performance of black students in the Contract Schools group in 2007, and a comparison of black students in the Non-Contract Schools group in 2010 to the performance of black students in the Contract Schools group in 2010.

Tables 4-12 and 4-13 outline these comparisons in performance for language arts and mathematics for black students and whether or not a significant difference in the performance of groups existed.

Table 4-12. Comparisons of performance of black students in language arts

Comparison	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value	Significant or not significant based on $p \leq 0.05$
CG 2007 to CG 2010	0.801375	0.436305	Not significant
EG 2007 to EG 2010	8.832197	< 0.00001	Significant
CG 2007 to EG 2007	0.630432	0.538567	Not significant
CG 2010 to EG 2010	7.208573	< 0.00001	Significant
Difference in mean growth from 2007 to 2010 of CG to EG	6.698148	0.00005	Significant

Table 4-13. Comparisons of performance of black students in mathematics

Comparison	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value	Significant or not significant based on $p \leq 0.05$
CG 2007 to CG 2010	1.279960	0.221363	Not significant
EG 2007 to EG 2010	8.374809	< 0.00001	Significant
CG 2007 to EG 2007	-0.485238	0.635013	Not significant
CG 2010 to EG 2010	5.222481	0.000129	Significant
Difference in mean growth from 2007 to 2010 of CG to EG	8.323212	< 0.00001	Significant

A research question and directional hypothesis was developed to determine the difference made between schools on improvement contracts and schools not on

improvement contracts with economically disadvantaged students. The hypothesis was that schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for economically disadvantaged students at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.

Multiple comparisons of data were completed to determine if a significant difference in performance existed in language arts and mathematics for economically disadvantaged students. These comparisons included the following: a comparison of performance of economically disadvantaged students in the Non-Contract Schools group in 2007 to performance of economically disadvantaged students in the Non-Contract Schools group in 2010, a comparison of performance of economically disadvantaged students in the Contract Schools group in 2007 to the performance of economically disadvantaged students in the Contract Schools group in 2010, a comparison of economically disadvantaged students in the Non-Contract Schools group in 2007 to the performance of economically disadvantaged students in the Contract Schools group in 2007, and a comparison of economically disadvantaged students in the Non-Contract Schools group in 2010 to the performance of economically disadvantaged students in the Contract Schools group in 2010.

Tables 4-14 and 4-15 outline these comparisons in performance for language arts and mathematics for economically disadvantaged students and whether or not a significant difference in the performance of groups existed.

Table 4-14. Comparisons of performance of economically disadvantaged students in language arts

Comparison	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value	Significant or not significant based on $p \leq 0.05$
CG 2007 to CG 2010	2.806243	0.014007	Significant
EG 2007 to EG 2010	6.360377	0.00018	Significant
CG 2007 to EG 2007	-0.854887	0.407006	Not significant
CG 2010 to EG 2010	7.548734	< 0.00001	Significant
Difference in mean growth from 2007 to 2010 of CG to EG	6.239019	0.00022	Significant

Table 4-15. Comparisons of performance of economically disadvantaged students in mathematics

Comparison	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value	Significant or not significant based on $p \leq 0.05$
CG 2007 to CG 2010	0.795052	0.439855	Not significant
EG 2007 to EG 2010	7.811685	< 0.00001	Significant
CG 2007 to EG 2007	-2.455923	0.027726	Significant
CG 2010 to EG 2010	4.291864	0.000745	Significant
Difference in mean growth from 2007 to 2010 of CG to EG	8.774114	< 0.00001	Significant

A research question and directional hypothesis was developed to determine the difference made between schools on improvement contracts and schools not on improvement contracts with students with disabilities. The hypothesis was that schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for students with disabilities at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.

Multiple comparisons of data were completed to determine if a significant difference in performance existed in language arts and mathematics for students with disabilities. These comparisons included the following: a comparison of performance of students with disabilities in the Non-Contract Schools group in 2007 to performance of

students with disabilities in the Non-Contract Schools group in 2010, a comparison of performance of students with disabilities in the Contract Schools group in 2007 to the performance of students with disabilities in the Contract Schools group in 2010, a comparison of students with disabilities in the Non-Contract Schools group in 2007 to the performance of students with disabilities in the Contract Schools group in 2007, and a comparison of students with disabilities in the Non-Contract Schools group in 2010 to the performance of students with disabilities in the Contract Schools group in 2010.

Tables 4-16 and 4-17 outline these comparisons in performance for language arts and mathematics for students with disabilities and whether or not a significant difference in the performance of groups existed.

Table 4-16. Comparisons of performance of students with disabilities in language arts

Comparison	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value	Significant or not significant based on $p \leq 0.05$
CG 2007 to CG 2010	-0.545921	0.593713	Not significant
EG 2007 to EG 2010	8.338043	< 0.00001	Significant
CG 2007 to EG 2007	3.314109	0.005117	Significant
CG 2010 to EG 2010	10.516683	< 0.00001	Significant
Difference in mean growth from 2007 to 2010 of CG to EG	8.515760	< 0.00001	Significant

Table 4-17. Comparisons of performance of students with disabilities in mathematics

Comparison	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value	Significant or not significant based on $p \leq 0.05$
CG 2007 to CG 2010	0.859330	0.404633	Not significant
EG 2007 to EG 2010	7.615720	< 0.00001	Significant
CG 2007 to EG 2007	2.670034	0.018299	Significant
CG 2010 to EG 2010	15.043216	< 0.00001	Significant
Difference in mean growth from 2007 to 2010 of CG to EG	6.825293	< 0.00001	Significant

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

Research has offered results regarding the factors that influence the improvement of schools. Most research focuses on the principal's role in improving low-performing schools. Limited research exists to demonstrate the relationship of federal policy on state decision-making regarding efforts of states to improve low-performing schools.

The purpose of this study was to examine the data and formalized interventions of 30 Georgia middle schools that were at varying levels of needs improvement over the 2007 through 2010 school years. Of these schools, 15 were in the Non-Contract Schools group and were at needs improvement levels seven and eight. These schools received intensive interventions and support from the Georgia Department of Education. The remaining 15 schools had similar performance levels and demographics and were located in similar geographic settings (rural, suburban, and urban) as the 15 schools at needs improvement levels seven and eight. The comparison schools were classified at the corrective action or restructuring level and did not qualify to receive the formalized interventions and support from the Georgia Department of Education.

In this study, performance data of all students, black students, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities were examined since these groups were the groups in which the schools did not have enough students meeting or exceeding standards in language arts and/or mathematics for the school to make Adequate Yearly Progress.

Summary of Results

The population of this study included 30 Georgia middle schools reflecting academic performance of 22,643 students in 2007 and 22,220 students in 2010 in the areas of language arts and mathematics.

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

Question 1: Is there a difference between schools receiving intensive intervention and support from the State Education Agency and improvement in student and school achievement for all students?

Based on the academic performance of the Non-Contract Schools and Contract Schools, a *t* test was completed to determine if there was a significant difference between the groups in the percentage of all students meeting and exceeding the standards on the Georgia Criterion Competency Tests in language arts and mathematics.

In the area of language arts, all students in the Non-Contract Schools group did not show a significant difference in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the CRCT from 2007 to 2010 while the Contract Schools group did show a significant difference in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the CRCT over the same period of time.

Additionally, in language arts the difference in the mean growth of all students meeting or exceeding standards in the Non-Contract Schools group from 2007 to 2010 and the mean growth of all students meeting or exceeding standards in the Contract Schools group from 2007 to 2010 of the Contract Schools group was significant.

In the area of mathematics, all students in the Non-Contract Schools group did not show a significant difference in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding

standards on the CRCT from 2007 to 2010 while the Contract Schools group did show a significant difference in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the CRCT over the same period of time.

Additionally, in mathematics the difference in the mean growth of all students meeting or exceeding standards in the Non-Contract Schools group from 2007 to 2010 and the mean growth of all students meeting or exceeding standards in the Contract Schools group from 2007 to 2010 of the Contract Schools group was significant.

The directional hypothesis related to this research question was that schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for all students at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.

As a result of the performance of all students and an analysis of data regarding all students in language arts and mathematics, a significant difference exists; therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

Question 2: Is there a difference between schools receiving intensive intervention and support from the State Education Agency and improvement in student and school achievement for the black subgroup?

Based on the academic performance of the Non-Contract Schools and Contract Schools, a *t* test was completed to determine if there was a significant difference between the groups in the percentage of black students meeting and exceeding the standards on the Georgia Criterion Competency Tests in language arts and mathematics.

In the area of language arts, black students in the Non-Contract Schools group did not show a significant difference in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the CRCT from 2007 to 2010 while the Contract Schools group did show a significant difference in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the CRCT over the same period of time.

Additionally, in language arts the difference in the mean growth of black students meeting or exceeding standards in the Non-Contract Schools group from 2007 to 2010 and the mean growth of black students meeting or exceeding standards in the Contract Schools group from 2007 to 2010 of the Contract Schools group was significant.

In the area of mathematics, black students in the Non-Contract Schools group did not show a significant difference in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the CRCT from 2007 to 2010 while the Contract Schools group did show a significant difference in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the CRCT over the same period of time.

Additionally, in mathematics the difference in the mean growth of black students meeting or exceeding standards in the Non-Contract Schools group from 2007 to 2010 and the mean growth of black students meeting or exceeding standards in the Contract Schools group from 2007 to 2010 of the Contract Schools group was significant.

The directional hypothesis related to this research question was that schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for black students at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.

As a result of the performance of all students and an analysis of data regarding black students in language arts and mathematics, a significant difference exists; therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

Question 3: Is there a difference between schools receiving intensive intervention and support from the State Education Agency and improvement in student and school achievement for the economically disadvantaged subgroup?

Based on the academic performance of the Non-Contract Schools and Contract Schools, a *t* test was completed to determine if there was a significant difference between the groups in the percentage of economically disadvantaged students meeting and exceeding the standards on the Georgia Criterion Competency Tests in language arts and mathematics.

In the area of language arts, economically disadvantaged students in the Non-Contract Schools group did show a significant difference in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the CRCT from 2007 to 2010. Also, the Contract Schools group did show a significant difference in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the CRCT over the same period of time.

In language arts the difference in the mean growth of economically disadvantaged students meeting or exceeding standards in the Non-Contract Schools group from 2007 to 2010 and the mean growth of economically disadvantaged students meeting or exceeding standards in the Contract Schools group from 2007 to 2010 of the Contract Schools group was significant.

In the area of mathematics, economically disadvantaged students in the Non-Contract Schools group did not show a significant difference in the percentage of

students meeting or exceeding standards on the CRCT from 2007 to 2010 while the Contract Schools group did show a significant difference in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the CRCT over the same period of time.

Additionally, in mathematics the difference in the mean growth of economically disadvantaged students meeting or exceeding standards in the Non-Contract Schools group from 2007 to 2010 and the mean growth of economically disadvantaged students meeting or exceeding standards in the Contract Schools group from 2007 to 2010 of the Contract Schools group was significant.

The directional hypothesis related to this research question was that schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for economically disadvantaged students at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.

As a result of the performance of economically disadvantaged students and an analysis of data regarding economically disadvantaged students in language arts and mathematics, a significant difference exists; therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

Question 4: Is there a difference between schools receiving intensive intervention and support from the State Education Agency and improvement in student and school achievement for the students with disabilities subgroup?

Based on the academic performance of the Non-Contract Schools and Contract Schools, a *t* test was completed to determine if there was a significant difference between the groups in the percentage of students with disabilities meeting and

exceeding the standards on the Georgia Criterion Competency Tests in language arts and mathematics.

In the area of language arts, students with disabilities in the Non-Contract Schools group did not show a significant difference in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the CRCT from 2007 to 2010 while the Contract Schools group did show a significant difference in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the CRCT over the same period of time.

Additionally, in language arts the difference in the mean growth of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding standards in the Non-Contract Schools group from 2007 to 2010 and the mean growth of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding standards in the Contract Schools group from 2007 to 2010 of the Contract Schools group was significant.

In the area of mathematics, students with disabilities in the Non-Contract Schools group did not show a significant difference in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the CRCT from 2007 to 2010 while the Contract Schools group did show a significant difference in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the CRCT over the same period of time.

Additionally, in mathematics the difference in the mean growth of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding standards in the Non-Contract Schools group from 2007 to 2010 and the mean growth of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding standards in the Contract Schools group from 2007 to 2010 of the Contract Schools group was significant.

The directional hypothesis related to this research question was that schools receiving intensive support and intervention from the state education agency will improve student achievement for students with disabilities at a rate that is significantly higher than similarly performing schools that do not receive the additional support and intervention.

As a result of the performance of students with disabilities and an analysis of data regarding students with disabilities in language arts and mathematics, a significant difference exists; therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the data and formalized interventions of 30 Georgia middle schools that were at varying levels of needs improvement over the 2007-2010 school years to determine if the state education agency's system of interventions and support that were provided to 15 of the schools assisted the schools in making the achievement gains necessary to be removed from needs improvement status under the Georgia Single Statewide Accountability System.

In this study, performance data of all students, black students, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities were examined and tested since these groups were the groups in which the schools did not have enough students meeting or exceeding standards in language arts and/or mathematics for the school to make Adequate Yearly Progress.

Based on the results of the analysis, the system of interventions and support for the schools in needs improvement levels seven and eight helped the schools make achievement gains that were significantly different from the achievement gains in similarly performing schools that did not receive the intervention and support.

As a result of the study, Georgia's state-level support to schools at the highest level of needs improvement status made a difference in the performance of students and the school as a whole. Achievement gains were realized by all subgroups of students.

Limitations of the Research

Because this study is specific to one state, many of the limitations to the study are related to the state's unique opportunity to define the curriculum, assessment processes, and accountability structure.

Each state has a different accountability formula for determining school performance. Therefore, the conclusions of this study may be of interest to middle school leaders and policymakers nationwide; however, because each state has a different accountability system, the specific interventions and supports and their related success must be considered in the context of the state's accountability system.

Additionally, each state's assessment system has varying levels of rigor, student response requirements, testing conditions, and a unique process for setting standards. Therefore, the success or lack of success of the schools in this study could be the inverse under another state's assessment and accountability system. In other words, a school in needs improvement status in another state may not meet the requirements of a needs improvement designation in Georgia. Likewise, a school not in needs improvement status in another state may meet the requirements to be designated as a needs improvement school in Georgia.

The study is an examination of the performance level of schools after being designated as needs improvement schools and does not take into account previous improvement strategies that could have contributed to incremental improvement in

student performance that occurred but did not result in the school meeting an absolute measure of performance.

The study was limited to the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) in language arts and mathematics for the 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010 school years.

The study compares performance of schools over a four-year period and does not account for the transient nature of students. However, student performance included in this study is reflective of only students who met the definition of Full Academic Year (FAY) in Georgia. Student performance results are only included for students who were enrolled in the school on both the fall and spring student enrollment counts for state reporting purposes.

Because the study uses criterion-referenced test data instead of norm-referenced test data, populations of students vary yearly at the schools reflected in this study.

The study reflects schools from urban, suburban, and rural Georgia settings. Of the schools, 14 are in urban settings, five are in suburban settings, and 11 are in rural settings.

Implications

The study utilized student performance data from the school level and provides interesting implications for parents, local educators, state education agencies, and state and national policymakers.

Implications for Parents

As schools, school districts, and states continue to examine systems of schools and parental choice, parents need complete information to make decisions that are in the best interest of their children. Initially, parents may not want their child(ren)

attending school based on state or federal designations; however, depending on the support and intervention being provided to the school and the leadership and instructional program of the school, a parent could choose to move his/her child to a lower performing school based on surface-level data and public perception.

Implications for Schools

As research related to high performing schools and practices within a school are examined, school and district leadership must continue to examine practice in the context of what research indicates works effectively in schools. Closing the gap between what educators know works based on the research and what educators actually do will result in higher levels of student performance on statewide assessments and daily student performance (DuFour, 2006). Additionally, school districts should put into place strategies to ensure that practices align with research to improve schools at an accelerated rate.

Implications for State Education Agencies

As state education agencies continue to be charged with allocating resources, both human and fiscal, to schools based on school performance, a close examination of the level and intensity of support should be examined. Additionally, services should be examined to determine if the intervention and support are focused on compliance or quality implementation of school improvement strategies. When determining the point at which to intervene in schools and districts that are low-performing, state education agencies must consider how long the agency is willing to allow a school to under-perform before providing some type of support and intervention for the school. As a result of the success with needs improvement schools and implications of research,

states should intervene and require the implementation of effective practices for improving schools at an earlier level.

Implications for State and National Policymakers

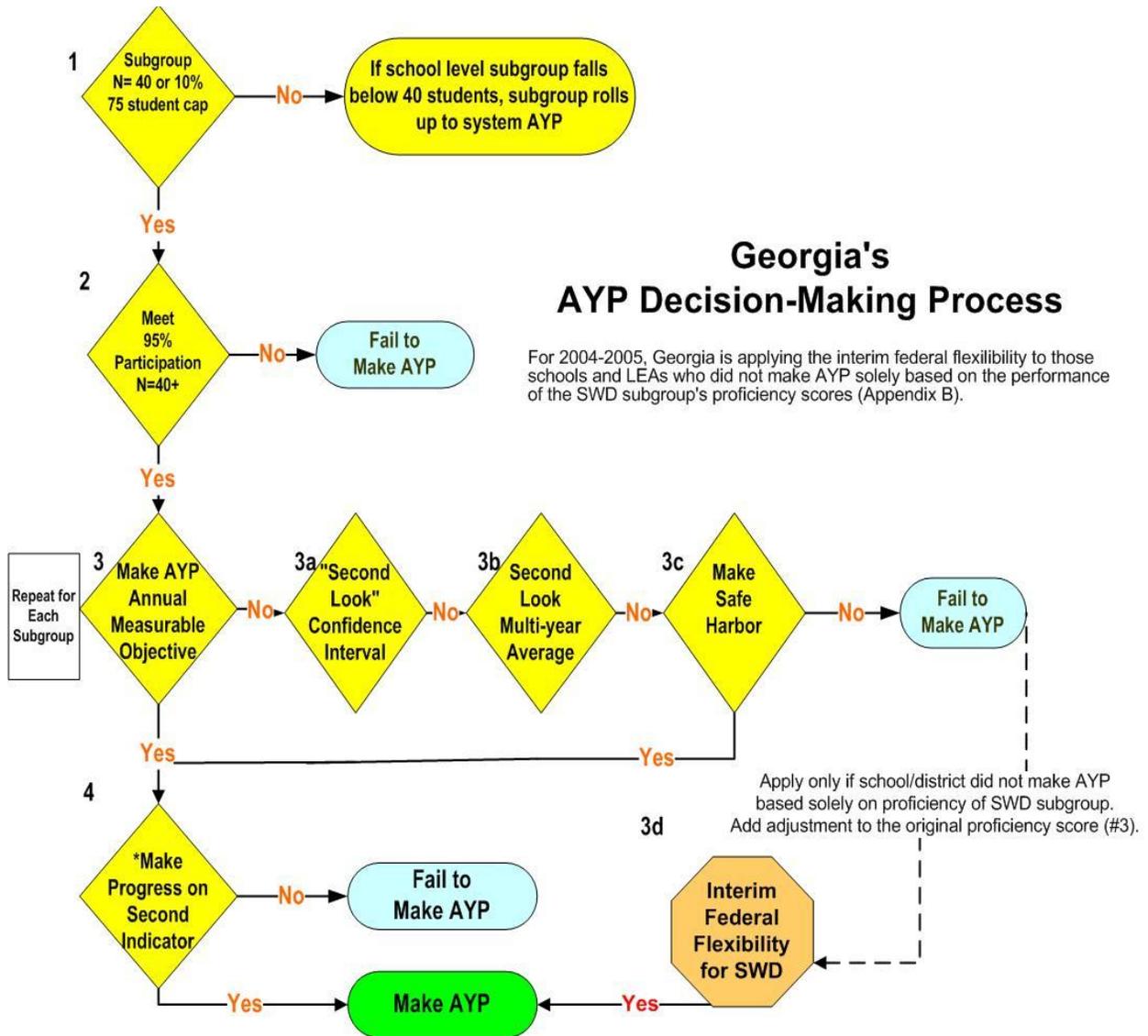
As legislation is drafted and introduced, examining effective practices and policy in the context of these effective practices can lead to better legislation and support to all schools. When designing laws regarding the improvement of schools, consideration must be given to the amount of time the state or federal government is going to allow a school or school district to perform at a low level before some type of intervention or support is provided to the school or school district. State and national policymakers should implement research-based strategies for improving schools at an accelerated rate to ensure that cohorts of students do not matriculate through low-performing schools missing their opportunity at a quality education.

Summary

Schools throughout the nation are being improved each year through the leadership of local, district, and state initiatives. As the focus on each child's success continues for schools, examining and improving professional practice in the classroom will result in improvements in student achievement. As a result, schools and districts can avoid inclusion on state and federal lists for intervention and support. However, when schools do not make the necessary achievement gains to ensure a quality education for each child, district, state, and federal support can make a difference in student achievement. States and school districts must be charged with the determining the length of time a school will be allowed to perform at a low level before receiving some type of intervention and support. Additionally, the level and intensity of support must be determined.

If our goal is “Ensuring Success for All Students,” bold decisions must be made to improve low-performing schools. States, districts, and schools should not be afforded the opportunity to fail for multiple years before receiving some type of research-based intervention. Students have one opportunity to receive a quality education, and schools should not be given multiple years to improve while possibly failing entire groups of students.

APPENDIX A
THE AYP DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FOR GEORGIA'S SCHOOLS



*The Second Indicator is applicable to the All Students subgroup and all subgroups when using Safe Harbor to meet AMO.

(Georgia Department of Education, 2008)

APPENDIX B
**INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS FOR SCHOOLS IN IMPROVEMENT,
CORRECTIVE ACTION, AND RESTRUCTURING STATUS**

Interventions	Improvement	Corrective Action	State-Directed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign GaDOE school improvement specialist to LEA to facilitate the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze AYP data • Identify areas of deficiency • Develop and implement school improvement plan aligned to areas of deficiency on AYP report • Coordinate and provide professional learning to support school improvement plan • Assess implementation of school improvement plan on a quarterly basis • Modify school improvement plan to address inadequate performance • Analyze feeder school student achievement data • Develop vertical plan to address feeder pattern issues 	X	X	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign additional GaDOE school improvement specialist to coordinate resources that address the specific deficiencies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate previous school improvement efforts and update school improvement plan • Determine corrective action option with school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Replace the school staff who are relevant to the failure to make adequate yearly progress. – Significantly decrease management authority at the school level. – Appoint an outside expert to advise the school on its progress toward making adequate yearly progress, based on its improvement plan. – Extend the school year or school day for the school. – Restructure the internal organizational structure of the school. 		X	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address resource allocation (i.e. time, personnel, funds) • Conduct classroom observations and provide feedback • Model classroom instruction in targeted content areas • Conduct awareness walks with administrators focused on specific areas of need at the school to collect data on classroom practices • Facilitate full implementation of leadership teams 		X	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign GaDOE state director to school. The state director will be at the school full time and will provide direct supervision in the implementation of all school improvement actions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly involved in decisions regarding replacement of staff (e.g., principal); • Ensures that instructional frameworks are used appropriately in each classroom • Ensures benchmark assessments are given and results are analyzed to guide instruction • Oversees implementation of short-term action plans • Ensures that the leadership team analyzes teacher attendance and develops action plan if needed • Ensures that the leadership team analyzes student attendance and develops action plan if needed • Ensures that the leadership team analyzes discipline records and develops action plan if needed • Ensures that the leadership team addresses targeted areas from GAPSS Review through the short term action plans 			X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in GAPSS review at level 5 and 7 • Participate in intensive professional learning addressing the implementation and assessment of Georgia Performance Standards through standards-based classrooms (Raising Standards). • Hires instructional coach for specific content area of need based on AYP results 			X

(Georgia Department of Education, 2008).

APPENDIX C
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION 2007-2008 IMPROVEMENT CONTRACT

NI 8 IMPROVEMENT CONTRACT
BY AND BETWEEN
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND
BOARD OF EDUCATION
RELATING TO
[REDACTED] SCHOOL

STATE OF GEORGIA

COUNTY OF FULTON

This contract ("Improvement Contract" or "Contract") is made and entered into this [REDACTED] day of [REDACTED] in the year 2007 by and between the State Board of Education, on behalf of the Georgia Department of Education, hereinafter referred to as the "Department" or "GaDOE" and [REDACTED] Board of Education, hereinafter referred to as the Local Educational Agency or "LEA".

WHEREAS, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04(2)(h), [REDACTED] School, part of the Local Educational Agency (hereinafter referred to as the "School") has been classified as a Contract-Monitored School; and

WHEREAS, in order to be removed from Contract-Monitored status, the School must make Adequate Yearly Progress (hereinafter referred to as "AYP") for two consecutive years; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04(2)(h), the Local Educational Agency must enter into an Improvement Contract with GaDOE regarding the School; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04 (2)(h), GaDOE has conducted and will conduct again a School Performance Review and analysis of the factors affecting student performance to determine School and Local Educational Agency improvement interventions (hereinafter referred to as the "Georgia Assessment of Performance on School Standards Analysis or GAPSS Analysis"); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04 (2)(i), GaDOE must conduct a System Performance Review and needs assessment to determine additional School and Local Educational Agency improvement interventions; and

Draft 8-3-07

WHEREAS, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04, the GaDOE School Performance Review and System Performance Review teams are making recommendations to the State Board of Education (SBOE) regarding school-level and system-level interventions (hereinafter collectively referred to as the “Interventions”); as stated in the Reports from the School Performance Review (GAPSS Analysis) and System Performance Review; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04 (2)(g), (h), and (i), during the term of this Contract the Interventions for the school may include, but are not limited to, removal of personnel at the school level relevant to the School not making AYP; appointment of a High Performance Principal and/or Instructional Coach; management of the School budget; utilization of Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) Learning Frameworks and progress monitoring; school closure; mandated charter school; complete reconstitution of the school; site-based expenditure controls and/or specified maximum class sizes; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04 (2)(g), (h), and (i), during the term of this Contract the Interventions for the Local Educational Agency may include, but are not limited to removal of personnel at the Local Educational Agency level relevant to the School not making AYP; appointment of a Local Educational Agency Support Specialist to manage and approve the financial, personnel, and program resources of the School; redirection of resources (local, state, and federal) to support improvements; a plan for a local conversion charter; a comparative analysis of the district teaching and administrative force to ascertain equitable student access to highly qualified, highly effective teachers and administrators in the School; implementation of a redistribution plan to ensure equitable student access to highly qualified, highly effective teachers in the School; a decrease of management authority for the superintendent and local board of education; assignment of a management team to operate all or part of the Local Educational Agency and restructuring of the Local Educational Agency’s governance arrangement; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04 (2)(i) and (j), the parties understand that if the School is identified as a Needs Improvement Year 9 school, a Management Contract must be executed prior to the beginning of the upcoming school year or face referral to the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement for non-compliance; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), failure of the Local Educational Agency to enter into and comply with the terms of an Improvement or Management Contract, as applicable, will result in a referral to the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) for an investigation and/or audit, resulting in a report with recommendations to the State Board of Education. These recommendations may include, but are not limited to, withholding selected or all State and/or Federal funds from such Local Educational Agency and/or any intervention permissible by law or rule; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04, GaDOE and the Local Educational Agency now desire to enter into this Improvement Contract in order to affirm the Local Educational Agency's and School's commitment to implement the Interventions and GaDOE's commitment to assist the Local Educational Agency with the implementation of the Interventions;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the benefits and duties contained herein, and with the expectation that School will make AYP for two consecutive years and thereby be removed from Contract-Monitored status, the parties hereby agree as follows:

1. Incorporation and Priority of Documents. The following documents are hereby incorporated into and made a part of this Contract. In case of conflict, order of priority for the documents shall be as follows: (1) the Contract; (2) the System Short-Term Action Plans; (3) the School Short-Term Action Plans; (4) the Interventions adopted as a result of the System Performance Review; (5) the Interventions adopted as a result of the School Performance Review (GAAPS Analysis); and (6) the School Improvement Plan. It is expressly understood by the parties that the School Improvement Plan and the Short-Term Action Plans (hereinafter the "Plans") may be amended based upon AYP or other considerations. The most recent version of the Plans, as they become adopted, shall be incorporated into this contract automatically. In addition, the reports of the School and System Performance Reviews shall be incorporated into this contract automatically.

1.1 System Short-Term Action Plan. This Plan identifies short-term action steps of 45 to 60 days duration to research, develop, and establish the structures needed to implement the interventions recommended in the System Performance Review. The System Short-Term Action Plan is created by the Local Educational Agency in collaboration with GaDOE's Division of School and Leader Quality. This Plan is founded upon the School Keys (Georgia School Standards) and identifies specific action steps related to the Interventions from the System Performance Review, and other identified system improvement goals. It also identifies the person(s) responsible for each action step and sets deadlines for achieving each action step. The Division of School and Leader Quality shall have final decision making authority in the interventions included in the System Short-Term Action Plan. Failure of the Local Educational Agency on behalf of the School to implement, complete, or otherwise accomplish these action steps within the timeframe identified in the System Short-Term Action Plan may result in a referral to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) for an investigation and/or audit, resulting in a report with recommendations to the State Board of Education. These recommendations may include, but are not limited to a decrease of management authority for the superintendent and local board of education; assignment of a management team to operate all or part of the Local Educational Agency and restructuring of the Local Educational Agency's governance arrangement. The System's Short-Term Action Plan is provided as Attachment 1 to this Contract and is hereby incorporated by reference.

1.2 School Short-Term Action Plan. This Plan identifies short-term action steps of 45 to 60 days duration for improving the School's performance. The School Short-Term Action Plan is created by the Local

Educational Agency and the School in collaboration with GaDOE's Division of School and Leader Quality represented by the GaDOE Monitor of the contract. This Plan is founded upon the School Keys (Georgia School Standards) and identifies specific action steps related to the Interventions from the GAPSS Analysis, achievement of the School's Annual Measurable Objectives for all identified subgroups, Participation Rate, and Second Indicators, attendance (if attendance is not the second indicator), and other identified school improvement goals. It also identifies the person(s) responsible for each action step and sets deadlines for achieving each action step. The Division of School and Leader Quality shall have final decision making authority in the interventions included in the School Short-Term Action Plan. Failure of the Local Educational Agency on behalf of the School to implement, complete, or otherwise accomplish these action steps within the timeframe identified in the School Short-Term Action Plan may result in a referral to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) for an investigation and/or audit, resulting in a report with recommendations to the State Board of Education. These recommendations may include a recommendation to withhold selected or all State and/or Federal funds from such Local Educational Agency, replace selected personnel, replace the principal, appoint a High Performance Principal to work alongside the principal, and/or replace all personnel. The School's Short-Term Action Plan is provided as Attachment 2 to this Contract and is hereby incorporated by reference.

- 1.3 System Interventions. The GaDOE will conduct a system performance review and then make a report of recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding school-level and/or LEA-level interventions needed to address the findings from the system performance review. The report generated as a result of the system performance review will include recommended system interventions. This report will be delivered to the LEA and shall then automatically be incorporated by reference as Attachment 3 to this Contract.

- 1.4 School Interventions. The School shall be subject to a new School Performance Review (GAPSS Analysis) conducted by GaDOE. The GaDOE GAPSS team will make recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding school-level and LEA-level interventions needed to address the findings from the School's GAPSS Analysis. The GAPSS Analysis report will include recommended Interventions. The GAPSS Analysis report will be delivered to the School and/or LEA and shall then automatically be incorporated by reference as Attachment 4 to this Contract.

- 1.5 School Improvement Plan. Pursuant to the requirements of No Child Left Behind, 20 U.S.C. §6316(b)(3), the School has developed, and the Local Educational Agency has approved, a School Improvement Plan ("School Improvement Plan") to serve as a blueprint for guiding the School's continuous improvement and progress toward identified student achievement objectives and targets. The School Improvement Plan identifies the School's Annual Measurable Objectives for (1) Reading and English Language Arts, (2) Mathematics, (3) Science, and (4) Second Indicators. The School Improvement Plan details strategies/action steps, the standards and strands of the School Keys (Georgia School Standards) that the strategy/action correlates with, individuals responsible, evidence/artifacts, and benchmark measures. The Annual Measurable Objectives outlined in the

School Improvement Plan are School-identified goals that shall be monitored under this contract. Failure of a Local Educational Agency or School to implement the detailed strategies/actions in order to achieve these Annual Measurable Objectives may result in a referral to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) for an investigation and/or audit, resulting in a report with recommendations to the State Board of Education. These recommendations may include a recommendation to withhold selected or all State and/or Federal funds from such Local Educational Agency and/or any interventions permissible by rule or law. The School Improvement Plan is provided as Attachment 5 to this Contract and is hereby incorporated by reference.

2. Responsibilities and Commitments. The parties expressly recognize that teamwork and partnership are critical elements for successful improvement of student achievement at the School. The parties further recognize that to succeed this partnership must extend beyond the parties themselves to include students, parents, School Councils, Leadership Teams, as well as, business and community leaders. In accordance with these objectives of partnership and school improvement, the parties agree to the following responsibilities and commitments:

2.1 Responsibilities and Commitments of the [redacted] Board of Education.

The [redacted] Board of Education agrees:

- 2.1.1 To provide leadership and support to the School to enable the School to make AYP including assigning a system level administrator to the School's leadership team.
- 2.1.2 To allocate and otherwise provide the financial and other resources to enable the School to make AYP. Title I School Improvement funds awarded to the Local Educational Agency on behalf of the School shall be made available for exclusive use by the School.
- 2.1.3 To select, hire, place, and empower appropriate system and School personnel to enable the School to make AYP.
 - a. To conduct a comparative analysis of the district teaching and administrative force to ascertain equitable student access to highly qualified, highly effective teachers and administrators in the School and implement a redistribution plan to ensure equitable student access to highly qualified, highly effective teachers and administrators in the School. This analysis and redistribution plan shall be submitted to the GaDOE Division of School and Leader Quality no later than November 15, 2007 and shall be submitted to the State Board of Education no later than December 2007 or as otherwise stated in the School's or System's Short-Term Action Plans.
 - b. To conduct an analysis resulting in implementation of a plan to improve teacher attendance in the School.
 - c. To designate social worker support to the School to address attendance issues according to Georgia state law (HB 1190).
 - d. To provide personnel dedicated to support at-risk students in danger of not graduating on time (Graduation Coach/Counselor).

- 2.1.4 To utilize the tools and resources provided by the GaDOE.
- 2.1.5 To communicate effectively to parents and the community the academic progress of the School and its students.
- 2.1.6 To involve parents and the community to promote collaboration and participation in the improvement of the School.
- 2.1.7 To participate in and cooperate with a system performance review.
- 2.1.8 To communicate effectively to parents and the community the interventions recommended as a result of the system performance review.
- 2.1.9 To research, develop, and establish the structures needed to implement the interventions recommended in the system performance review.
- 2.1.10 To participate in the development of a Management Contract.
- 2.1.11 To execute the Management Contract, if applicable, prior to the start of the next school year.
- 2.1.12 To participate in and cooperate with any GOSA audit or review, if applicable.
- 2.1.13 To ensure the system superintendent, School principal, and the local board chair attend a meeting(s) with the State Superintendent or designee to discuss expectations and requirements of the Improvement Contract.

2.2 Responsibilities and Commitments of the School managed by the Local Educational Agency.

On behalf of the School, the Local Educational Agency agrees that the School shall act on the following:

- 2.2.1 To provide leadership and support to enable the School to make AYP.
- a. A leadership team shall be established.
 - b. The leadership team shall include at a minimum the School principal, a representative group of the School's teachers, a GaDOE assigned Contract Support member, and a system level administrator.
 - c. The role of the School leadership team is to meet a minimum of twice per month, to focus on instructional goals and issues, working collaboratively and consistently to contribute to the development, revision, and implementation of the School Improvement Plan. The leadership team will monitor the implementation of the plan, including GaDOE, system, and school professional learning, and analyze its impact upon student achievement.
 - d. The leadership team will provide minutes of its regularly scheduled meetings to the GaDOE Monitor of the contract at each short-term action planning session.
- 2.2.2 To budget and appropriately utilize financial resources to enable the School to make AYP. Title I School Improvement funds, or other federal, state, local, or school funds, as applicable, will be utilized to:
- a. Hire instructional coach(es) to support progress in meeting identified areas of need according to the School's AYP report.
 - b. Participate in the Academic Coaching professional learning academies (e.g. travel expenses and substitutes).
 - c. Participate (principals, coaches, and selected teachers) in the Raising Standards professional learning academies (e.g. travel expenses and substitutes).
 - d. Purchase and target classroom resources to enable the School to make AYP.
- 2.2.3 To select, recommend, place, and empower appropriate School personnel to enable the School to make AYP.
- a. The school will designate a counselor or graduation coach to work with the attendance clerk daily to produce an attendance report to track student absences. The counselor and/or graduation coach will work with individual students, parents/guardians, and teachers and will make appropriate referrals to the social worker. The principal will work with the attendance clerk to ensure all data submissions into the Student Information System are accurate and coded properly.
- 2.2.4 To provide the process and structures necessary to utilize the tools and resources provided by the GaDOE.

- a. The School must utilize the Georgia Performance Standards frameworks and curriculum maps designed for Contract-Monitored schools.
- b. The School shall implement classroom formative assessments to gain continuous information on individual student progress toward achieving standards.
- c. The School's principal will meet with a GaDOE Monitor of the contract throughout the year to review implementation of the school improvement plan, including, the professional learning plan, to review formative assessment data, and to monitor student progress towards mastery of the curriculum.
- d. The School, whether elementary and/or middle school, must participate in a common Contract-Monitored online benchmark assessment system and schedule. The School's assessment schedule shall be aligned to the Contract-Monitored curriculum maps. High schools shall use End of Course Tests for assessment.
- e. Within two weeks of receiving the assessment results, the School shall report individual students' benchmark results or End of Course Test results to his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) in a manner to be determined by the School Council. The School shall report the School's benchmark results or End of Course Test results to parent(s)/guardian(s) in a timely manner as recommended by the School Council.
- f. The School's instructional coach(es) shall participate in the GaDOE Academic Coach professional learning academies.
- g. The School's designated teachers, principals and other selected school leaders, and instructional coaches shall participate in the GaDOE Raising Standards professional learning academies.
- h. The School's leadership will provide the structure to support collaborative, content area professional learning sessions.
- i. The School's content area teachers (regular and special education) will participate in targeted professional learning to support the GaDOE Curriculum Frameworks. Teachers will preview the Georgia Performance Standards to be taught and learn/review appropriate strategies to support the Curriculum Framework units prior to classroom instruction through conference calls, web-based or face-to-face delivery.
- j. The School shall utilize the School Keys (Georgia School Standards) and the accompanying Implementation Resource (IR) as a framework to guide the process for continuous school improvement.

- 2.2.5 To communicate and involve parents and the community.
 - a. The School Council shall assume the responsibilities stated in Georgia law, O.C.G.A. §20-2-86 and shall advise and make recommendations to the School principal and, where appropriate, the local board of education and local school superintendent on any matter related to student achievement and school improvement.
 - b. The School Principal shall provide regular and timely reports to the School Council including but not limited to the GAPSS Analysis Report, the System Performance Report, the School Improvement Plan, and the Short-Term Action Plans.
 - c. The School shall provide for and document the School Council's role in developing, implementing, and/or recommending:
 - i. School Improvement Plans
 - ii. School-community communication strategies including distribution of results required by paragraph 2.2.4 d
 - iii. Parent/guardian and community involvement including distribution of results required by paragraph 2.2.4 d
- 2.2.6 To participate in and cooperate with the GAPSS Analysis and system performance review.
- 2.2.7 To communicate effectively to parents and the community the interventions recommended as a result of the GAPSS Analysis and system performance review.
- 2.2.8 To research, develop, and establish the structures needed to implement the interventions recommended in the system performance review.
- 2.2.9 To design and implement actions for the 45-60 Day Short-Term Action Plans that address Interventions from the GAPSS Analysis, achievement of the School's Annual Measurable Objectives for all identified subgroups, Participation Rate, and Second Indicators, attendance (if attendance is not the second indicator), and other identified school improvement goals.
- 2.2.10 To participate in the development of a Management Contract, if applicable.
- 2.2.11 To participate in and cooperate with any GOSA audit or review, if applicable.

2.3 Responsibilities and Commitments of the Georgia Department of Education.

The Georgia Department of Education agrees:

- 2.3.1 To provide support to create 45-60 Day Short-Term Action Plans for the school and system.
- 2.3.2 To provide 45-60 day progress monitoring (Short-Term Action Planning sessions) and support by a GaDOE Monitor of the contract.
- 2.3.3 To provide School progress reports to the Division of School and Leader Quality by a GaDOE Monitor of the contract.
- 2.3.4 To provide Contract Support personnel to the School as outlined in the Division of School and Leader Quality Assurance Form provided at the beginning of the school year. The Contract Support member will provide daily progress monitoring of the Short-Term Action Plan to the GaDOE Monitor of the contract.
- 2.3.5 To provide Raising Standards professional learning academies.
- 2.3.6 To provide Academic Coaches professional learning academies.
- 2.3.7 To provide training on School and Leader Quality tools and resources.
- 2.3.8 To provide the common Contract-Monitored online benchmark assessment system to be utilized as post diagnostic assessments to modify instruction based on individual student progress toward standards.
- 2.3.9 To provide progress reports by the Division of School and Leader Quality to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA).
- 2.3.10 To work with the LEA and School to conduct an analysis of the teaching and administrative force and develop and implement a redistribution plan for highly qualified, highly effective teachers and administrators to be submitted for State Board of Education approval.
- 2.3.11 To organize and conduct a GAPSS Analysis.
- 2.3.12 To organize and conduct a system performance review of the LEA of the NI 8 school(s).
- 2.3.13 To develop an instrument for evaluating progress on recommended system level

interventions, including but not limited to system short-term action plans.

2.3.14 To draft and execute the Management Contract.

2.3.15 To develop, implement, and monitor a 100 day plan for the GaDOE Contract Monitoring Team to include all contractual elements.

3. Contract Performance Standards and Contract Benchmarks.

3.1 On behalf of the School, the Local Educational Agency agrees that the School shall achieve by the end of the 2007-2008 school year the Annual Measurable Objectives identified in the School's Improvement Plan in (1) Reading and English Language Arts, (2) Mathematics (3) Science, and (4) Second Indicators.

3.2 On behalf of the School, the Local Educational Agency agrees that the School shall achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) by the end of the 2007-2008 school year.

3.3 On behalf of the School, the Local Educational Agency agrees that the School shall complete or otherwise accomplish the steps identified in the School's Short-Term Action Plan within the time period specified by the Plan.

3.4 Failure of the Local Educational Agency or School to achieve these contract performance standards identified in subparagraphs 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 above may result in a referral to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) for an investigation and/or audit, resulting in a report with recommendations to the State Board of Education. These recommendations may include a recommendation to withhold selected or all State and/or Federal funds from such Local Educational Agency, replace selected personnel, replace the principal, appoint a High Performance Principal to work alongside the principal, and/or replace all personnel.

4. Commencement Date and Term. The Local Educational Agency on behalf of the School expressly recognizes that under State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04, the School shall remain in Contract-Monitored status for a two year period. This Contract shall commence on [REDACTED], (hereinafter "Commencement Date") and shall expire on September 30, 2008, unless sooner terminated (hereinafter "Term"). At its sole discretion, GaDOE may renew this Contract for up to four additional 1-year terms (hereinafter "Renewal Term"). The Local Educational Agency shall be notified of the renewal of the contract by the Georgia Department of Education. Further the LEA and the GaDOE through ongoing monitoring and evaluation, will determine appropriate amendments and revisions to the Improvement Contract during the first year of implementation to be approved by the State Board of Education.

5. Termination. GaDOE may terminate this Contract upon ninety (90) days written notice to the other for whatever reason.

6. Authority. Each party represents and warrants that it has the authority to enter into this Contract and that its governing body has authorized, by proper action, the execution and delivery of this Contract. Each party represents that there is no litigation or proceeding pending, or to its knowledge, threatened against it having a material adverse effect on the right of the party to execute this Contract or the ability of the party to comply with any of its obligations under this Contract.

7. Venue and Governing Law. Any action brought by one party to this Contract against the other party shall be brought in the Superior Court of Fulton County and this Agreement will be governed by and construed in accordance with Georgia law.

8. Headings. The headings in this Contract have been inserted for convenience of reference and shall not affect, expand, or restrict the terms or conditions hereof.

9. Waiver. No party will be deemed to have waived any provisions of this Contract unless such waiver is made explicit in writing and signed by the party waiving such provision. No waiver shall be deemed to be a continuing waiver unless so stated in writing.

10. Assignment. This Contract shall not be assigned or transferred unless consented to in writing by the Georgia Department of Education.

11. Amendments. No amendment, change, or modification to this Agreement will be binding upon the parties unless such amendment, change, or modification is made in writing as an amendment to this Contract and duly executed by all parties.

12. Severability. If any provision of this Contract is held to be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable for any reason, the validity, legality, and enforceability of the remaining provisions of this Contract will not be adversely affected.

13. Notices. Any notice to be made by either party to the other shall be sufficiently made if delivered in hand, or three (3) calendar days after posting, if sent by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to a party hereto at the address set forth below or such other address as a party may designate by notice hereto.

FOR DEPARTMENT:

Attention: Project Manager

_____ (Project Manager)

Atlanta, GA 30334

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

With a copy to: Legal Services

General Counsel

205 Jesse Hill Drive Jr. Drive,

Suite 1605 Twin Towers East

Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Phone: (404) 463-2741

Fax: (404) 656-2136

FOR the LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY:

Chairman of the Board of Education for _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Superintendent for _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

DRAFT

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IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties state and affirm that they are duly authorized to bind the respected entities designated below as of the day and year indicated.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Wanda Barrs, Chairperson, State Board of Education

Kathy Cox, State Superintendent of Schools

PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

_____, Chairperson, Board of Education

_____, Superintendent, School System

APPENDIX D
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION 2009-2010 IMPROVEMENT CONTRACT

IMPROVEMENT CONTRACT
BY AND BETWEEN
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND
_____ **BOARD OF EDUCATION**
RELATING TO
_____ **SCHOOL**

STATE OF GEORGIA

COUNTY OF FULTON

This contract ("Improvement Contract" or "Contract") is made and entered into this 1st day of September in the year 2009 by and between the State Board of Education, on behalf of the Georgia Department of Education, hereinafter referred to as the "Department" or "GaDOE" and _____ Board of Education, hereinafter referred to as the Local Educational Agency or "LEA".

WHEREAS, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04(2) and Georgia's federally approved Differentiated Accountability Plan, hereby incorporated and made a part of this Contract as Attachment 1, ("hereinafter referred to as the "Differentiated Accountability Plan") _____ School, part of the Local Educational Agency (hereinafter referred to as the "School") has been classified as a State-Directed School; and

WHEREAS, in order to be removed from State-Directed status, the School must make Adequate Yearly Progress (hereinafter referred to as "AYP") for two consecutive years; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04(2)(h) and the Differentiated Accountability Plan, the Local Educational Agency must enter into an Improvement Contract with GaDOE regarding the School; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04 (2)(i) and the Differentiated Accountability Plan, GaDOE will conduct a School Performance Review (hereinafter referred to as the "Georgia Assessment of Performance on School Standards Analysis or GAPSS Analysis") of the factors affecting student performance to determine School and Local Educational Agency improvement interventions; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04 (2)(i), GaDOE must conduct a System Performance Review and needs assessment to determine additional School and Local Educational Agency improvement interventions; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04, the GaDOE School Performance Review and System Performance Review teams are making recommendations to the State Board of Education (SBOE) regarding school-level and system-level interventions (hereinafter collectively referred to as the “Interventions”); as stated in the Reports from the School Performance Review (GAPSS Analysis) and System Performance Review; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04 (2)(g), (h), and (i), during the term of this Contract the Interventions for the school may include, but are not limited to, removal of personnel at the school level relevant to the School not making AYP; appointment of an Instructional Coach; management of the School budget; utilization of Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) Learning Frameworks and progress monitoring; school closure; mandated charter school; complete reconstitution of the school; site-based expenditure controls and/or specified maximum class sizes; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04 (2)(g), (h), and (i), during the term of this Contract the Interventions for the Local Educational Agency may include, but are not limited to removal of personnel at the Local Educational Agency level relevant to the School not making AYP; appointment of a Local Educational Agency Support Specialist to manage and approve the financial, personnel, and program resources of the School; redirection of resources (local, state, and federal) to support improvements; a plan for a local conversion charter; a comparative analysis of the district teaching and administrative force to ascertain equitable student access to highly qualified, highly effective teachers and administrators in the School; implementation of a redistribution and recruitment plan to ensure equitable student access to highly qualified, highly effective teachers in the School; a decrease of management authority for the superintendent and local board of education; assignment of a management team to operate all or part of the Local Educational Agency and restructuring of the Local Educational Agency’s governance arrangement; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04 and the Differentiated Accountability Plan, failure of the Local Educational Agency to enter into and comply with the terms of an Improvement Contract, as applicable, will result in a referral to the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) for an investigation and/or audit, resulting in a report with recommendations to the State Board of Education. These recommendations may include, but are not limited to, withholding selected or all State and/or Federal funds from such Local Educational Agency and/or any intervention permissible by law or rule; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04 and the Differentiated Accountability Plan, GaDOE and the Local Educational Agency now desire to enter into this Improvement Contract in order to affirm the Local Educational Agency’s and School’s commitment to implement the Interventions and GaDOE’s commitment to assist the Local Educational Agency with the implementation of the Interventions;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the benefits and duties contained herein, and with the expectation that School will make AYP for two consecutive years and thereby be removed from State-Directed status, the parties hereby agree as follows:

1. Incorporation and Priority of Documents. The following documents are hereby incorporated into and made a part of this Contract. In case of conflict, order of priority for the documents shall be as follows: (1) the Contract; (2) the System Short-Term Action Plans; (3) the School Short-Term Action Plans; (4) the Interventions adopted as a result of the System Performance Review; (5) the Interventions adopted as a result of the School Performance Review (GAPSS Analysis); and (6) the School Improvement Plan. It is expressly understood by the parties that the School Improvement Plan and the Short-Term Action Plans (hereinafter the "Plans") may be amended based upon AYP or other considerations. The most recent version of the Plans, as they become adopted, shall be incorporated into this contract automatically. In addition, the reports of the School and System Performance Reviews shall be incorporated into this contract automatically.

1.1 System Short-Term Action Plan. This Plan identifies short-term action steps of 45 to 60 days duration to research, develop, and establish the structures needed to implement the Interventions recommended in the System Performance Review. The System Short-Term Action Plan is created by the Local Educational Agency in collaboration with GaDOE's Division of State-Directed Schools. This Plan is founded upon the School Keys (Georgia School Standards) and identifies specific action steps related to the Interventions from the System Performance Review, and other identified system improvement goals. It also identifies the person(s) responsible for each action step and sets deadlines for achieving each action step. The Division of State-Directed Schools shall have final decision-making authority in the interventions included in the System Short-Term Action Plan. Failure of the Local Educational Agency on behalf of the School to implement, complete, or otherwise accomplish these action steps within the time frame identified in the System Short-Term Action Plan may result in a referral to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) for an investigation and/or audit, resulting in a report with recommendations to the State Board of Education. These recommendations may include, but are not limited to a decrease of management authority for the superintendent and local board of education; assignment of a management team to operate all or part of the Local Educational Agency and restructuring of the Local Educational Agency's governance arrangement. The System's Short-Term Action Plan is provided as Attachment 2 to this Contract and is hereby incorporated by reference.

- 1.2 School Short-Term Action Plan. This Plan identifies short-term action steps of 45 to 60 days duration for improving the School's performance. The School Short-Term Action Plan is created by the Local Educational Agency and the School in collaboration with GaDOE's Division of State-Directed Schools represented by the GaDOE monitor of the contract. This Plan is founded upon the School Keys (Georgia School Standards) and identifies specific action steps related to the Interventions from the GAPSS Analysis, achievement of the Annual Measurable Objectives for all identified subgroups, Participation Rate, Second Indicators, attendance (if attendance is not the second indicator), and other identified school improvement goals. It also identifies the person(s) responsible for each action step and sets deadlines for achieving each action step. The Division of State-Directed Schools shall have final decision making authority in the interventions included in the School Short-Term Action Plan. Failure of the Local Educational Agency on behalf of the School to implement, complete, or otherwise accomplish these action steps within the time frame identified in the School Short-Term Action Plan may result in a referral to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) for an investigation and/or audit, resulting in a report with recommendations to the State Board of Education. These recommendations may include a recommendation to withhold selected or all State and/or Federal funds from such Local Educational Agency. The School's Short-Term Action Plan is provided as Attachment 3 to this Contract and is hereby incorporated by reference.
- 1.3 System Interventions. The GaDOE will conduct a System Performance Review. The report generated as a result of the System Performance Review will include recommended system interventions. This report will be delivered to the LEA and shall then automatically be incorporated by reference as Attachment 4 to this Contract.
- 1.4 School Interventions. The School shall be subject to a new School Performance Review (GAPSS Analysis) conducted by GaDOE. The GAPSS Analysis report will include recommended interventions. The GAPSS Analysis report will be delivered to the School and/or LEA and shall then automatically be incorporated by reference as Attachment 5 to this Contract.
- 1.5 School Improvement Plan. Pursuant to the requirements of No Child Left Behind, 20 U.S.C. §6316(b)(3), the School has developed, and the Local Educational Agency has approved, a School Improvement Plan ("School Improvement Plan") to serve as a blueprint for guiding the School's continuous improvement and progress toward identified student achievement objectives and targets. The School Improvement Plan identifies the School's Annual Measurable Objectives for (1) Reading and English Language Arts, (2) Mathematics, and (3) Second Indicators. The School Improvement Plan details strategies/action steps, the strands of the School Keys (Georgia School Standards) with which the strategy/action correlates, individuals responsible, evidence/artifacts, and benchmark measures. The Annual Measurable Objectives outlined in the School Improvement Plan are School-identified goals that shall be monitored under this contract. Failure of a Local Educational Agency or School to implement the detailed strategies/actions in order to achieve these Annual Measurable Objectives may result in a referral to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) for an investigation and/or audit, resulting in a report with recommendations to the State Board of

Education. These recommendations may include a recommendation to withhold selected or all State and/or Federal funds from such Local Educational Agency and/or any interventions permissible by rule or law. The School Improvement Plan is provided as Attachment 6 to this Contract and is hereby incorporated by reference.

2. Responsibilities and Commitments. The parties expressly recognize that teamwork and partnership are critical elements for successful improvement of student achievement at the School. The parties further recognize that to succeed this partnership must extend beyond the parties themselves to include students, parents, school councils, leadership teams, as well as business and community leaders. In accordance with these objectives of partnership and school improvement, the parties agree to the non-negotiable Contract elements and Customized Contract Expectations provided in Attachment 7, which is hereby incorporated and made a part of this Contract.

3. Contract Performance Standards and Contract Benchmarks.

3.1 On behalf of the School, the Local Educational Agency agrees that the School shall achieve by the end of the 2009-2010 school year the Annual Measurable Objectives identified in the School's Improvement Plan in (1) Reading and English Language Arts, (2) Mathematics, and (3) Second Indicators.

3.2 On behalf of the School, the Local Educational Agency agrees that the School shall be expected to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) by the end of the 2009-2010 school year.

3.3 On behalf of the School, the Local Educational Agency agrees that the School shall complete or otherwise accomplish the steps identified in the School's Short-Term Action Plan within the time frame specified by the Plan.

3.4 Failure of the Local Educational Agency or School to achieve these contract performance standards identified in subparagraphs 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 above may result in a referral to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) for an investigation and/or audit, resulting in a report with recommendations to the State Board of Education. These recommendations may include a recommendation to withhold selected or all State and/or Federal funds from such Local Educational Agency.

4. Commencement Date and Term. The Local Educational Agency on behalf of the School expressly recognizes that under State Board of Education Rule 160-7-1-.04 and the Differentiated Accountability Plan, the School shall remain in State-Directed status for a two year period. This Contract shall commence on _____, (hereinafter "Commencement Date") and shall expire on September 30, 2011, unless sooner terminated (hereinafter "Term"). LEA and the GaDOE through ongoing monitoring and evaluation, will determine appropriate amendments and revisions to the Improvement Contract during the first year of implementation to be approved by the State Board of Education.

5. Termination. GaDOE may terminate this Contract upon ninety (90) days written notice to the other for whatever reason. This contract shall terminate automatically upon execution by all parties of a new contract under Georgia's Single Statewide Accountability System.

6. Authority. Each party represents and warrants that it has the authority to enter into this Contract and that its governing body has authorized, by proper action, the execution and delivery of this Contract. Each party represents that there is no litigation or proceeding pending, or to its knowledge, threatened against it having a material adverse effect on the right of the party to execute this Contract or the ability of the party to comply with any of its obligations under this Contract.

7. Venue and Governing Law. Any action brought by one party to this Contract against the other party shall be brought in the Superior Court of Fulton County and this Agreement will be governed by and construed in accordance with Georgia law.

8. Headings. The headings in this Contract have been inserted for convenience of reference and shall not affect, expand, or restrict the terms or conditions hereof.

9. Waiver. No party will be deemed to have waived any provisions of this Contract unless such waiver is made explicit in writing and signed by the party waiving such provision. No waiver shall be deemed to be a continuing waiver unless so stated in writing.

10. Assignment. This Contract shall not be assigned or transferred unless consented to in writing by the Georgia Department of Education.

11. Amendments. No amendment, change, or modification to this Agreement will be binding upon the parties unless such amendment, change, or modification is made in writing as an amendment to this Contract and duly executed by all parties.

12. Severability. If any provision of this Contract is held to be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable for any reason, the validity, legality, and enforceability of the remaining provisions of this Contract will not be adversely affected.

13. Notices. Any notice to be made by either party to the other shall be sufficiently made if delivered in hand, or three (3) calendar days after posting, if sent by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to a party hereto at the address set forth below or such other address as a party may designate by notice hereto.

FOR DEPARTMENT:

Attention: Project Manager

Lynda Martin, Associate Superintendent

Division of School Improvement

205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive,

1870 Twin Towers East

Atlanta, GA 30334

Phone: (404) 657-7633

Fax: (404) 651-5264

With a copy to: Legal Services

General Counsel

205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive,

Suite 1605 Twin Towers East

Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Phone: (404) 463-2741

Fax: (404) 656-2136

FOR the LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY:

Chairman of the Board of Education for _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Superintendent for _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties state and affirm that they are duly authorized to bind the respected entities designated below as of the day and year indicated.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Wanda Barrs, Chairperson, State Board of Education

Kathy Cox, State Superintendent of Schools

PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

_____, Chairperson, Board of Education

_____, Superintendent, School System

APPENDIX E

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION 2009-2010 NEGOTIATED CONTRACT TERMS

Georgia Department of Education Improvement Contract Roles and Responsibilities 2008-2009 NI 5, NI 6, NI 7, NI 8, and NI 9 Schools

LEA must enter into an annual state-directed improvement contract with terms and conditions directed by the GaDOE. Title I schools will receive funding to support implementation of elements of the contract.

Non-Negotiable Contract Elements:

1. Assignment of a GaDOE state director to the school. The state director will be assigned to the school full time (NI 7-9) and will provide direct supervision in the implementation of all school improvement actions;
2. GaDOE personnel assigned to the school will be directly involved in decisions regarding the replacement of staff (e.g., principal);
3. Implement the instructional frameworks in each classroom;
4. Administer benchmark assessments and analyze results to guide instruction;
5. Implement short-term action plans;
6. Analyze teacher attendance and develop action plans if needed;
7. Analyze student attendance and develop action plans if needed;
8. Analyze discipline records and develop action plans if needed;
9. Address targeted areas from the Georgia Analysis of Performance on School Standards (GAPSS) through short-term action plans;
10. Participate in the Georgia Analysis of Performance on School Standards at levels 5 and 7;
11. Participate in GaDOE professional learning for state-directed schools;
12. Hire instructional coaches for specific content area needs, based on AYP results.
13. Participate in the CLASS Keys teacher evaluation system.

Customized Contract Expectations:

In addition to the set of non-negotiable actions, a set of customized expectations will be developed annually by the state with each school and system to address the unique issues that the school may face in the coming school year. These expectations will be based on the most recent school data analysis available.

The Local Education Agency (LEA) will

1. Provide leadership and support to the school, including the assignment of a system level administrator to the school's leadership team.
2. Allocate and otherwise provide financial and other resources to enable the school to make AYP. Title I School Improvement funds awarded to the LEA on behalf of the school shall be made available for exclusive use by the school in a timely manner.
3. Ensure system level administrators work closely with GaDOE to expedite any and all Title I issues, e.g. Title I Grant Assurances.
4. Select, hire, place, and empower appropriate system and school personnel to enable the school to make AYP.
5. Conduct a comparative analysis of the district teaching and administrative force to ascertain equitable student access to highly qualified, highly effective teachers and administrators supported by assigned human resource professional staff and implement a redistribution plan and/or recruitment plan, if applicable.
6. Conduct an analysis of teacher attendance, and if applicable, implement a plan to improve teacher attendance in the school.
7. Provide personnel dedicated to support at-risk students in danger of not graduating on time (graduation coach/counselor).
8. Participate in and cooperate with any Governor's Office of Student Achievement audit or review, if applicable.
9. Ensure GaDOE personnel assigned to the school are directly involved in decisions regarding the replacement of staff.
10. Participate in a System Performance Review and communicate the recommended interventions to staff, parents, and the community. (Systems with NI 8 schools only.)
11. Research, develop, and establish the structures needed to implement the interventions recommended in the System Performance Review and implement interventions.
12. Support the school's implementation of expectations from GaDOE professional learning for administrators, teachers, and instructional coaches.
13. Support the school's participation and implementation of the GaDOE common online assessment system.

Responsibilities and Commitments of the Local Education Agency (LEA)
Customization(s)

The school will

1. Establish a leadership team that meets a minimum of twice per month to focus on instructional goals and issues. The leadership team will include the school principal, a representative group of the school’s teachers, a GaDOE assigned state director, and a system administrator. Leadership team minutes will be provided to the GaDOE monitor of the contract at each short-term action meeting.
2. Budget and appropriately utilize financial resources to hire an instructional coach(es) to support progress in meeting identified areas of need according to the school’s AYP report, purchase and allocate classroom resources, and support participation in GaDOE professional learning for state-directed schools.
3. Analyze student attendance and implement an action plan to address attendance concerns, if applicable.
4. Monitor the work of the student information clerk to ensure that all data submissions into the Student Information System are accurate and coded properly.
5. Monitor student progress towards graduating on time.
6. Utilize the Georgia Performance Standards Frameworks and curriculum maps.
7. Implement classroom formative assessments.
8. Meet with assigned GaDOE personnel throughout the year to review implementation of the school improvement plan, review data, and monitor student progress towards mastery of the curriculum.
9. Participate in the GaDOE common online assessment system. (Elementary and middle schools only.)
10. Designate content and special education teachers, instructional coaches, the principal and/or other selected school leaders to participate in and implement expectations from the GaDOE targeted professional learning for state-directed schools.
11. Provide the structure to support collaborative, content focused professional learning sessions.
12. Designate content area teachers (general and special education) to participate in targeted, professional learning to support the Georgia Performance Standards Frameworks.
13. Utilize the School Keys and the accompanying Implementation Resource.
14. Utilize the school council as outlined in Georgia law, O.C.G.A. §20-2-86.
15. Design and implement 45-60 Day Short-Term Action Plans.
16. Participate in and cooperate with any Governor’s Office of Student Achievement audit or review, if applicable.
17. Participate in the Georgia Analysis of Performance on School Standards and incorporate recommendations in the school improvement plan. (NI 5 and NI 7 schools only.)
18. Participate in and implement expectations from the leadership training.

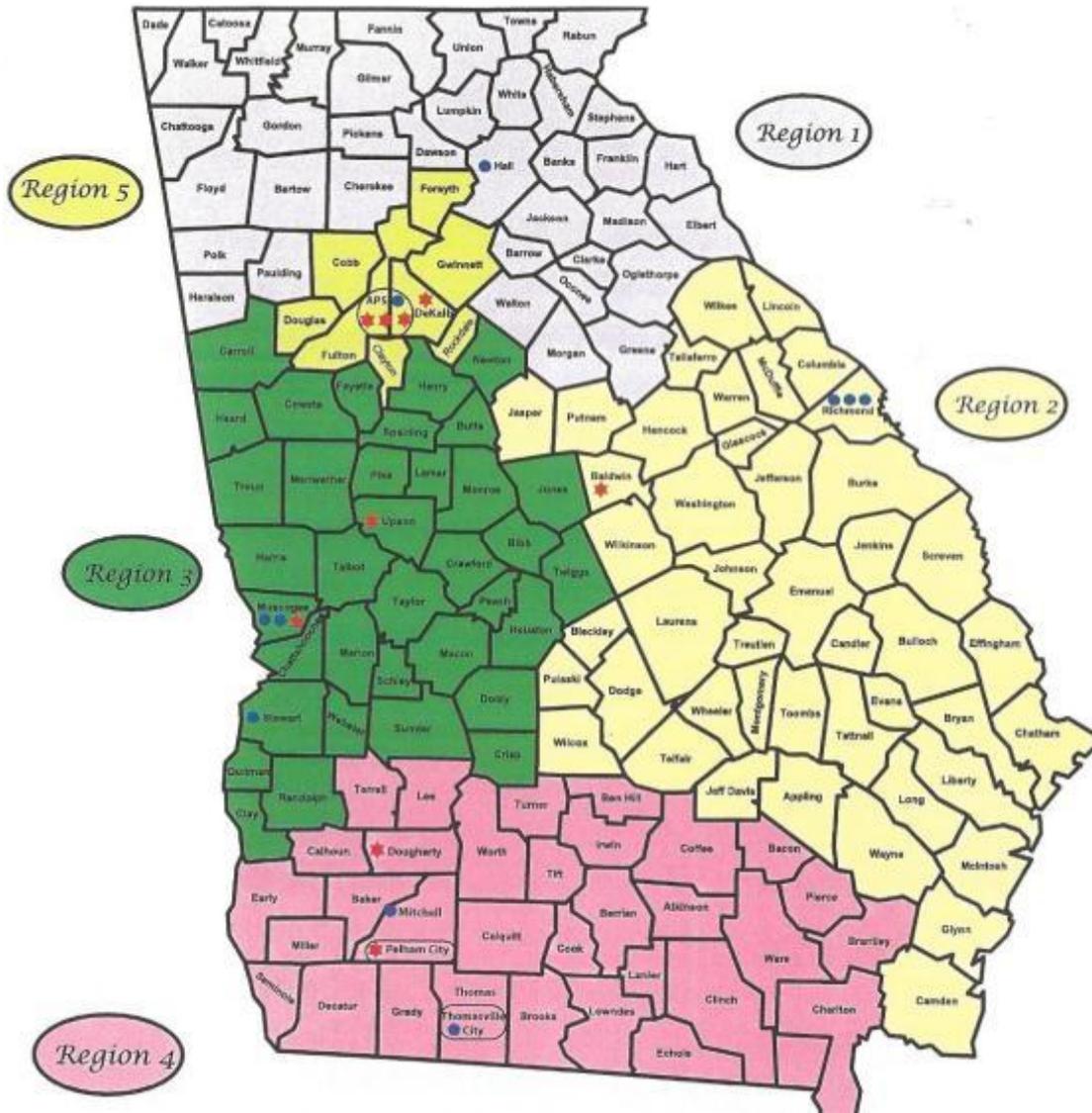
Responsibilities and Commitments of the School Managed by the LEA
Customization(s)

The Georgia Department of Education will

1. Provide a state director and other support personnel to the school.
2. Provide support and monitor the development and implementation of the school's 45-60 Day Short-Term Action Plans.
3. Conduct the System Performance Review (NI 8) and provide support to develop and implement the LEA's 45-60 Day Short-Term Action Plans.
4. Provide professional learning for teachers, instructional coaches, and leaders in state-directed schools.
5. Provide training on School and Leader Quality tools and resources.
6. Provide the common online assessment system.
7. Provide school progress reports to the State School Superintendent's office and the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, when applicable.
8. Provide assistance to the LEA regarding the comparative analysis and redistribution/recruitment plan, if applicable.
9. Conduct a Georgia Analysis of Performance on School Standards (GAPSS) Analysis in NI 5 and NI 7 schools.
10. Participate directly in decisions regarding the replacement of staff at the school.

Responsibilities and Commitments of the Georgia Department of Education
Customization(s)

APPENDIX F
 MAP OF GEORGIA WITH SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT REGIONS AND CONTRACT
 SCHOOLS IDENTIFIED



(Georgia Department of Education, 2007)

APPENDIX G
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IRB CONSENT



PO Box 112250
Gainesville, FL 32611-2250
352-392-0433 (Phone)
352-392-9234 (Fax)
irb2@ufl.edu

April 2, 2013

TO: Joseph Ray Parlier
127 Holmes Street
Barnesville, GA 30204

FROM: Ira S. Fischler, PhD; Chair *ISF*
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board 02

SUBJECT: **Exemption of Protocol #2013-U-0396**
Improving Middle School Performance

SPONSOR: None

Your protocol submission has been reviewed by the Board. The Board has determined that your protocol is exempt based on the category listed below:

45 CFR 46.101(b)(4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Should the nature of your study change or if you need to revise this protocol in any manner, please contact this office before implementing the changes.

IF:dl

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Joseph (Joe) Ray Parlier has served public education in a variety of capacities since beginning his career. Upon graduation from Mercer University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Middle Grades Education with an emphasis on teaching mathematics and science in 1995, Joe served as an elementary and middle school teacher. Joe has allowed his classroom teaching experience guide him as an educational leader at the local, state, and national level.

While teaching, Joe attended the University of Georgia to earn a Master of Education degree with an emphasis on literacy and science. During this time, Joe had the opportunity to study literacy instruction under several national leaders in literacy instruction. Following completion of his M.Ed., Joe added on certification in Educational Leadership and began coursework for a Doctor of Education degree at the University of Georgia before transferring to the University of Florida. He received his Ed.D. from the University of Florida in 2014.

After teaching, Joe served in a variety of leadership roles including middle school assistant principal, elementary principal, high school principal, director of elementary education, assistant superintendent for teaching and learning, and associate state superintendent for school improvement. Joe's experience spans rural, suburban, and urban educational settings.

Joe has served a variety of professional organizations as a district representative, presenter, and board member. Joe has been invited to present at the state and national level on topics such as effective leadership at the school and district level, turning around low-performing schools, and strategies for effective instruction.

Joe continues to serve in the private sector working with schools and aspires to teach and mentor undergraduate and graduate students at a research university one day.