

Assessments after Administrator Turnover and Curriculum Changes

Janna L. Kempf

West Texas A&M University

### Abstract

It is well known that public schools have limits when it comes to student achievement. Frequent changes within school districts can create substantial limitations. The efforts of this study are to investigate the effects of administrator and teacher turnover and curriculum changes on what students achieve. The following results developed: a) Schools are multi-faceted organizations that require all staff to work cohesively and productively and to create programs that maintain successful student achievement. b) Administrator turnover creates an environment in schools of lost practices, reduced resources, and reduced effectiveness of long-term programs. c) Newly hired teachers hamper instructional effectiveness due to lack of knowledge, and place burden on teachers of record. d) The turnover process leads to the effect of starting over with new programs and policies every year. e) Schools need to be consistent and institute standard practices and programs that are researched and effective in student achievement.

*Keywords: administrator turnover, curriculum changes, student achievement, teacher turnover*

## CHAPTER 1

### Assessments after Administrator Turnover and Curriculum Changes

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 increased the rigor of high stakes testing requirements and provisions of accountability for public schools. It is important to note that this program mandates that public schools achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP) with “a goal of proficiency in math and reading for all students by 2014” (Jaska, Hogan, & Wen, 2009, p.59). However, if yearly academic progress is not obtained then schools must adjust their organization, programs, and instructional practices for educational improvement and rating (Jaska, et. al., 2009), not to forget that “schools are complex organizations that require orchestrated initiatives across multiple domains to develop meaningful student improvements” (Cerni, Curtis, & Colmar, 2014, p.288).

Administrator turnover is one of the many domains in the complexity of school structure. Prior research outlines that administrators are responsible for the framework and performance of their school. Moreover, research indicates that administrators should also provide the materials needed for teachers to be effective and for students to be successful learners. According to Griffith (2004), “effective school principals, as described by teachers, had clear and well-articulated goals; delegated tasks to others; encouraged staff to participate in decision-making; incorporated others in problem-solving; treated staff fairly and equitably; and provided staff support in difficult situations” (p.333). Research on administrator turnover over the past several years has shown that new administrators may not carry-on existing practices or have the desire to and may want to institute their own instructional ideas, thus hampering the prospective sustainability of effective practices. Administrator turnover can affect sustainability of effective, research-based practices in the long term even though current research indicates that schools

should move toward continued use of such practices (Strickland-Cohen, McIntosh, & Horner, 2014).

Further research suggests that public schools are widely known for frequent, short-term changes in instructional policies and practices for the aim of student improvement. Given an increased number of administrator turnovers comes a loss of prior knowledge of these programs and the effective strategies to implement them. First of all, new teacher hires lack the knowledge and experience they need to produce adequate academic progress results. When there is frequent administrator turnover and frequent changes in instructional practices, teacher “buy-in” may be lost. Current staff members may become frustrated and reluctantly follow their school’s programs or even resist them. Additionally, teacher job-satisfaction declines, the “instructional burden” increases, (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013, p.8) and the already limited number of resources decreases because new hires use them up (Ronfeldt, et. al., 2013). Above all, the continuing academic improvement for students involved is hindered (Strickland-Cohen, et. al., 2014).

### **Rationale**

It has been observed that active administrators and teachers will stand by and wait until the beginning of the new school year to see what initiatives will continue or not and what programs new administrators will begin without research on the programs’ effectiveness on student achievement (Strickland-Cohen, et. al., 2014). Active administrators and teachers also stand by without any means to add input about those practices. It is evident in the research that through administrator and staff connections comes improved student involvement and academic success. Without that connection and likewise, a program continuity, “the result in settings with

persistent turnover then is that schools are continuously starting over rather than making progress on their programmatic agendas” (Ronfeldt, et. al., 2013, p.8).

Currently public schools face raising rigor and instructional practices to meet the requirements of the NCLB Act. Nonetheless, there are additional factors that pose a strain on staff and the school system that affect their ability to uphold and maintain AYP. Public schools must be prepared to establish effective, research-based, and specific programs. Specifically, schools must incorporate standards, goals, technology, assessment, review, and feedback in order to attend to administrator and teacher turnover, curriculum changes, and accomplishment of AYP in student achievement and the requirements of the NCLB Act (Ogawa, Sandholtz, Martinez-Flores, & Scribner, 2003).

### **Research Purpose and Questions**

The purpose of this quantitative study is to describe the effect of administrative turnover on curriculum changes, student achievement, and teacher turnover in a middle school in Seguin, Texas for a period of 6 years.

1. What is the relationship between administrator turnover and curriculum changes?
2. What is the relationship between administrator turnover and teacher turnover?
3. What is the relationship between administrator turnover and student achievement?

### **Operational Definitions**

*Administrator turnover* – permanent administrative employees leaving the school district within a reported time period, usually one school year.

*Curriculum Changes* – an adjustment to the means and materials with which students will interact for the purpose of achieving identified educational outcomes.

*Student Achievement*- academic performance or educational attainment of groups of students

*Teacher Turnover*- - permanent instructional employees leaving the school district within a reported time period, usually one school year.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In order to conduct the research and methods of this study, rational and institutional views of Organizational Theory were utilized. “The rational perspective falls within rational systems theory, the structural frame, and the theory of rational action” (Ogawa, et. al., 2003, p.151). This model addresses rational action based on the premise that reorganization and improvement of schools should develop through a series of set standards, goals, assessment, review, and feedback regarding performance and success as opposed to an institutional organization (Ogawa, et. al., 2003).

“The institutional perspective falls within natural systems theory, the symbolic frame, and social constructivist theory” (Ogawa, et. al., 2003, p.151). It focuses on the systems that are ineffectively organized and operating inefficiently. These institutions will be inadequate in having specific goals set, technology is not in place, and achievement feedback is inefficient and unspecified (Ogawa, et. al., 2003).

The root sources of Organizational Theory are Max Weber’s Social Organizational Theory in management study combined with the economic study of industrial bureaucracies along with Chester Barnard’s work in management social skills and incentive building via Behaviorists, Herbert A. Simon and James G. March (Fligstein, 2001). The rational and institutional perspectives have a preeminence in conducting inquiries of educational organizations, rational theory is associated with the movement to reform schools using curriculum standards, and institutional theory echoes why officials are doubtful about the effect those standards have on schools. Synthesizing these viewpoints of Organizational Theory built

and tested a theoretical model linking program development with progression (Ogawa, et. al., 2003).

### **Methodology**

A review of the literature with reference to administrator turnover, curriculum policy changes, teacher turnover, and student achievement shows the need for additional quantitative studies evaluating current high stakes testing data. A quantitative approach to research is vital to this study because through the post positivist physical premises, it will involve survey and experimental design for data collection. One premise, Determinism, suggests that in order to interpret survey and experimental design data, a link between variables is necessary. Reducing the variables to a narrower, controlled set will suggest considerations for measuring hypotheses. Creswell (2014) states that survey research can be executed through valid and reliable texts, and finally, “Validity and reliability of scores on instruments lead to meaningful interpretations of data” (p.155).

### **Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter raises some interesting questions on the effect administrative turnover, curriculum changes, and teacher turnover have on student achievement. The beginning of this chapter examines how public schools are held accountable by the NCLB Act and yearly student achievement in relation to other factors schools face and suggestions to solve the problems. Operational definitions were provided.

## **CHAPTER 2**

Public school districts and educators deal with the resignation and reconciliation of faculty and administration within their school communities on a regular basis. Not only does this issue encompass an effect on administrators and teachers, it also connects to subsequent

curriculum changes and student achievement results. District administrators generate some of these turnover changes, while some are decisions of the state or individuals. Whether these changes are mandated or not, policy, curriculum, and teaching practices often follow in an entirely new direction. Namely, the main issue with these frequent shifts is that districts rely on school administrators and faculty to make the changes happen, and furthermore is the impact they have on student learning and achievement (Strickland-Cohen, et. al., 2014).

### **Effect of Sustainability of Administrators and Teachers**

Research shows that the concern with administrator turnover and resulting curriculum and policy changes in public schools is that they have a negative impact on teachers' fulfillment and happiness in their jobs as well as student progress and achievement (Cerni, et. al., 2014). To explain, Strickland-Cohen, et. al., (2014) stresses it is imperative that school districts establish district-wide policy standards that are research-based along with strategies that reinforce and strengthen these policies. By making the knowledge and skills required for students definitive, teachers will become adept at applying specialized instructional practices to these standards (Ogawa, Sandholtz, Martinez-Flores, & Scribner, 2003). Current research stresses that districts should maintain affirmed expectations and continue to collect data based on these models to direct them toward a positive present and future education in their communities (Strickland-Cohen, et. al., 2014).

On the other hand, schools given the directive of curriculum change without basis or justification and much-needed resources, causes teachers to feel incompetent and inadequate. Furthermore, this has created disgruntled experiences and skepticism in the implemented policies and programs in addition to doubt and distrust in authority (Dilkes, Cunningham, & Gray, 2014).



Dilkes, et.al. (2014), recommends change in the way that new policies are disseminated for a positive result in employee satiety, effectiveness, and sustainability.

It is important to keep in mind that teacher turnover results from administrator turnover or curriculum changes brought on by the district. Let's suppose that teachers with the most successful skills, characteristics, and achievement will leave. This may cause larger differences in the dissemination of high-quality teachers. Even so, lower-quality teachers may move on which is seen as a gain in the potential quality of the staff (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005).

While researchers have commented that teacher turnover may be of disservice to student learning because association with that district's policies and procedures dissolves, it benefits the district because it can improve cohesion between an employee and his or her new job and employers along with ringing in new perceptions and instructional ideas (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). If excellence in teaching and sustainability are not related, then districts with a higher turnover rate will not necessarily have a disadvantage in achievement growth compared to districts with sustenance. If the difference in student success is not a direct result of higher or lower teacher sustainability, the research discerns that successful district-adopted educational programs and methods prove critical for increasing student achievement. In addition, sustaining high-quality teachers makes a clear distinction in "closing existing achievement gaps" (Rivkin, et. al., 2005, p.449).

According to Ronfeldt, et. al. (2013) and other research evidence, a negative association occurs between the relationship of staff sustainability within schools and the percentage of standards met by students on the reading and math state assessments; the higher the turnover rate in a school, the lower the performance. This effect could also include factors of socioeconomic

status of the school area, stress, and situation of the school academically and socially, and ineffective school management (Ronfeldt, et. al., 2013).

Overall, the main issue with the conditions discussed above is that cohesively they may be the source of low performance and high turnover. “Teachers leaving may cause low achievement, but low achievement may also cause teachers to leave” (Ronfeldt, et. al., 2013, p.5).

### **Results of Student Achievement**

Jaska, et. al., (2009) state that it is imperative that schools determine the specific processes and procedures that have the greatest impact on student achievement in their communities. Schools should view the variables that create solid significance including but not limited to readiness, adaptability, faculty, development of assessment, and teaching approaches and processes (Jaska, et. al., 2009). Cerni (2014) promotes a similar form of combined methods with an “integrated” (p.288) style that includes administrative instructional guidance along with reframing guidance. In order to increase the capacity of both the professional staff and student achievement, this particular methods style needs to direct a firm focus on pedagogical progress. Cerni (2014) also states, “It appears that the ultimate accountability for student improvement resides in the habits of mind and heart of local school professionals in the way that they interact with their particular community” (p.288).

Student achievement is not solely affected by professional staff and instruction practices. According to Taylor (2015), curriculum materials influence student and school success more than any other factor. Every day, and on a consistent basis, the teacher, the content, and how teachers teach are greatly affected by the resources with which they have to work. The teachers are the major promoters of content and knowledge, and they need materials that support the

curriculum, are powerful, and engaging for students to learn and succeed. Of course, the teacher cannot facilitate alone. Students attend school with preconceived notions about learning when success requires rooted background knowledge and the ability to make connections to the school learning foundation and content. Taylor, et. al., (2015) states, most importantly, that it is then that students will be able to guide and review their own learning as well as become a disciplined authority in their own education.

### **Critique of Empirical Studies**

Several studies that I researched utilized questionnaire and survey formats to collect information on transformational leadership from principals and satisfaction of teachers, including one study with “built-in lie scales that reduced the potential limitation of socially desirable responding” (Cerni, 2014, p.304). An additional study involved an intervention of a three-year program of professional development using “researched-based multidisciplinary curriculum materials” (Taylor, et. al, 2015, p.984) for teacher training and use in their high school science classes (Taylor, et. al., 2015).

Of the data I reviewed, the number of studies employing data collection from websites, school districts, or schools were predominated. One study included input on variables affecting academic success on high-stakes testing, such as financial resources, teacher training and experience, teacher turnover, attendance rate, teacher to student classroom ratio, and students’ socioeconomic status (Jaska, et. al., 2009). Another study identified teacher excellence as based on student performance with regards to class size and number of years’ experience (Rivkin, et. al., 2005). Most qualitative and quantitative studies involving staff turnover, policy changes, and subsequent academic achievement are based on past state assessments, meaning quantitative applications need to be considered to analyze more current data.

### **Gaps in the Literature**

Even though much research has been carried out to investigate student assessments after administrator turnover and curriculum changes, most of the studies reviewed were limited by a small sample size. However, within those studies were many points of new understanding and knowledge about how principal leadership affects school achievement, the relationships of principals and teachers, how teacher satisfaction affects turnover and effectiveness, and how these changes and other factors affect student success (Rowan & Denk, 1984).

Additional research could benefit from larger sample sizes, different varieties of participants within those samples, and other forms of data analysis. The Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA), a tool that measures “productive efficiency of school districts to compare districts based upon input/output criteria” (Jaska, et. al., 2009, p.64) and cognitive-experiential self-theory could be applied (CEST) (Cerni, 2014). Further studies could benefit also from extended research time periods and research based on the current state assessment, State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR).

According to Jaska, et. al., (2009), “further research in this area is important because of the competitive nature of the global economy. In order for the US to compete internationally, it must improve its educational system” (p.64). I suggest that a new generation of research in this area needs to address the extended question: What is the relationship between administrator turnover, teacher turnover, curriculum changes, and college readiness?

### **Summary of the Chapter**

After reviewing the literature, it has come to view that recent research reveals many factors affecting administrator and teacher turnover, successive curriculum changes, and student achievement. Most notably, these factors work together in the influence of school districts,

schools, and students. According to the literature reviewed, there is minimal evidence separating and researching the various factors individually. The following chapter will include the design and the methods used to collect data in this study.

### **CHAPTER 3**

Student achievement in public schools, in regard to administrator turnover and teacher turnover, was examined in the previous chapters. This topic of study raises current interest due to the regulations of the NCLB Act and high stakes testing requirements.

The purpose of this quantitative study is to describe the effect of administrative turnover on curriculum changes, student achievement, and teacher turnover in a middle school in Seguin, Texas for a period of 6 years. Guiding questions for this research study are listed below.

Research questions:

1. What is the relationship between administrator turnover and curriculum changes?
2. What is the relationship between administrator turnover and teacher turnover?
3. What is the relationship between administrator turnover and student achievement?

### **Methodology**

A quantitative research approach will be used in this study to consider the relationship between administrative turnover, curriculum changes, and teacher turnover while also examining the effect each of these factors has on student achievement. According to post-positivist premises, a quantitative approach to research will greatly benefit this study because it will include survey and experimental design to collect data. The premise Determinism includes that there must be a link between variables in order to interpret survey and experimental design data. Reducing the variables to a narrower, controlled set will suggest considerations for measuring hypotheses.

This chapter includes detail of how the quantitative research approach corresponds to the purpose of this study. An explanation of Participant Selection, Research Site, Data Collection Methods, and Summary complete the chapter.

## **Research Design**

### **Participant Selection**

The population of the study uses a single-stage sampling design consisting of 60 middle school beginning and novice teachers to provide a large sample and variety of teachers who are at different levels in their careers. An equal and random sample is chosen that includes fifteen 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, fifteen 7<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, and fifteen 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers that will be categorized into Group A, Group B, and Group C by grade level and a subcategory of subject and by school site respectively. Each group sample includes teachers ranging in age from 23 to 55 with a mean age of 32. The participant group includes twenty-four male teachers, and thirty-six female teachers; there is one Ukrainian and fifty-nine American born participants (Creswell, 2014).

### **Research Site**

Quantitative research in this study will consist of survey design in order to gain “description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (Creswell, 2014, p.155). Participant choice may affect completion of the surveys and location in or out of the natural setting. Interviews, however, will occur in the natural setting, at the participant’s site and during the current school year so participants will feel comfortable, confident, and focused on the content of the survey without distractions from other settings (Creswell, 2014).

**Data Collection Methods**

The data collection will take place in Seguin, Texas over a period of 6 years. Participants will be completing 3 online surveys each year which will be previously designed for this research to include statistical testing data and participant experiences and attitudes along with interviews twice a year that will measure content validity, current validity, and construct validity. Statistical analysis will use multiple dependent measures, (MANOVA). Internal consistency, test-retest correlations, and consistency in test administration will be examined. Pilot test sessions will be discussed, and sample data collection instruments will be distributed along with a variables table (Creswell, 2014).

**Summary of the Chapter**

Chapter three included a description of Research Site, Participant Selection, and Data Collection Methods. The single-stage, random sampling design, natural setting for participation, and specific instruments used to collect data collaboratively reinforce the reliability and validity of this research.

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