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Barbara S. Coble Date

A Mixed Method Approach to Understanding Teacher Empowerment in Georgia Schools After Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Legislation

Barbara S. Coble
Doctor of Philosophy

Division of Educational Studies
Emory University

_____
Robert J. Jensen, Ed.D.
Chair

_____
Joseph P. Cadray, Ph.D.
Committee Member

_____
Yuk Fai Cheong, Ph.D.
Committee Member

_____
Magnia George, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Accepted:

_____
Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies

_____
Date

A Mixed Method Approach to Understanding Teacher Empowerment in Georgia Schools After Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Legislation

By

Barbara S. Coble
B.S., Clark College, 1985
M.B.A, Clark Atlanta University, 1988

Advisor:

Robert Jensen, Ed.D.

An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
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Abstract

A Mixed Method Approach to Understanding Teacher Empowerment in Georgia Schools After Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Legislation

By Barbara S. Coble

The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' current and retrospective perceptions of empowerment within the context of the No Child Left Behind Legislation. Much of the empowerment research to date was conducted prior to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act which was signed into law in January, 2002. The legislation mandates that K-12 public educators meet specific accountability measures by 2014, including Adequate Yearly Progress requirements for students in reading and mathematics.

Although most educators agree that the intent of the legislation is positive, since implementation of NCLB, anecdotal and empirical research indicate that many educators are voicing frustration (Centolanza, 2007; Honawar, 2007; Jones, Jones & Hargrove, 2003; Koppich, 2005; National Education Association (NEA), 2007). Additionally, empirical research indicates that there is a relationship between teacher empowerment and two school characteristics, AYP status of schools (Coble, 2007; Koppich, 2005) and school level (Coble, 2007). Therefore, it is important that consequences of current school policy decisions be examined to ascertain their impact on the stated beliefs of teachers with respect to their feelings of empowerment across these two factors.

Through the use of a survey, open-ended questions and interviews, the questions that my research addressed are:

- Do teachers' perceptions of empowerment differ across school level and the AYP status of schools?
- Do teachers report changes in perceptions of empowerment since implementation of NCLB, if so, what do teachers report to be the factors contributing to these changes?

The findings indicate that elementary school teachers' perceptions of Autonomy are greater for teachers in schools meeting AYP than those in schools that have not. Also, elementary school teachers have greater perceptions of Decision Making opportunities and Self Efficacy than middle school teachers.

This research contributes to the existing body of empowerment research by reconfirming previous findings regarding teacher empowerment, AYP status of schools and school level. It also contributes to our understanding of teachers' perceptions of empowerment as the 2014 NCLB accountability date draws near.

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Chapter 1

Teachers' stated beliefs about their perceptions of empowerment in their workplaces have been linked to a number of positive outcomes in schools. Research indicates positive relationships between teacher empowerment and teacher effectiveness (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000), between teacher empowerment and school climate (Martin, Crossland & Johnson, 2001), and between teacher empowerment and teacher morale (White, 1992; Centolanza, 2007). Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, Sweetland and Hoy (2000) indicate that teacher empowerment is positively related to student achievement. Because of the positive relationship between teacher empowerment and each of these important school variables, it is important that consequences of school policy decisions be examined to ascertain their impact on the stated beliefs of teachers with respect to their perceptions of empowerment.

Within the last decade, the most influential school policy issue at the national level has been the No Child Left Behind Legislation (NCLB, 2001) which was implemented in K-12 public schools in 2002. Since implementation of NCLB, anecdotal and empirical research indicate that many educators are voicing various levels of frustration (Centolanza, 2007; Honawar, 2007; Jones, Jones & Hargrove, 2003; Koppich, 2005; National Education Association (NEA), 2006). Koppich (2005) indicates that educators have expressed frustration with "the rigid, unrealistic and arbitrary benchmarks of schools' AYP [requirements]" (p.149). A preliminary review of the literature suggests that reported frustration with certain aspects of NCLB could also lead to a decrease in or perhaps have a negative impact on teachers' overall sense of empowerment and thus have an unintended negative impact on student learning.

Statement of Problem

Because the majority of the teacher empowerment research was conducted prior to implementation of the NCLB legislation, few studies assess the current state of teacher empowerment. Additionally, although the teacher empowerment research conducted since enactment of the legislation looks at the relationship between teacher empowerment and AYP status of schools, none of the research considers both the six dimensions of empowerment as defined by Short and Rinehart (1992) and empowerment differences across all school levels. Thus, the purpose of my study is two-fold:

1) to assess the current state of teacher empowerment across school levels and AYP status of schools
2) to obtain information about the factors that teachers perceive have impacted their sense of empowerment since the implementation of NCLB by surveying both their current and their retrospective beliefs prior to NCLB.

Background

Empowerment

Zimmerman (1995) suggests that empowerment is a process through which individuals develop the capacity to: (a) critically evaluate their circumstances; (b) assess the need for transformation (personally and/or organizationally); (c) recognize their ability to secure the resources needed for the transformation; and (d) act to effect positive changes in their personal lives, their community or in their professions (Fettermen, n.d.). The concept of empowerment has been used in corporations in an effort to restructure the workplace, both nationally and internationally; to increase productivity; to improve employee morale; and to reduce turnover (Spreitzer & Doneson, 2005). Empowerment

has been studied in the community related to social issues, such as political participation (Freire, 1972) and healthcare (Laverack & Wallerstein, 2001). The literature also addressed the importance of empowering members of society for self-sufficiency, particularly the mentally and physically handicapped (Van Houten & Jacobs, 2005). Some have argued that empowered individuals express a positive professional self-concept (Garcia-Ramirez, Martinez, Balcazar, Suarez-Balcazar, Albar, Dominguez & Santolaya, 2005); demonstrate greater participation in community organizations and increased perceptions of political commitment (Angelique, Reischl, & Davidson, 2002; Perkins, Brown & Taylor, 1996); and report increased perceptions of organizational commitment in the absence of conflict with superiors (Janssen, 2004). Empowerment is an important concept for individuals and organizations in many facets of society, including education.

Empowerment in Education

Beginning in the late 1980s and continuing through the early 1990s, empowerment was increasingly recognized as an important component of school reform (Lightfoot, 1986; Maeroff, 1988; Murphy, Evertson & Radnofsky, 1991; Rinehart & Short, 1994). Lightfoot (1986) defined empowerment as the opportunity to exercise "autonomy, responsibility, choice and authority" (p. 9) and emphasized the importance of the empowerment of students and administrators, as well as teachers. Maeroff (1988) refers to empowerment as professionalism, specifically emphasizing that empowered educators have status, a strong knowledge base and access to **Decision Making** as opposed to being considered "the boss." According to Short (1994), educators and researchers advocate empowerment of school staff as a means of improving the school

environment. Although a positive school environment in and of itself is a desirable outcome, the consensus in the literature is that the ultimate goal of empowerment is to develop educators with the ability to initiate innovative ideas to enhance learning opportunities for students.

Short and Rinehart (1992) define empowerment as school participants taking responsibility for their own growth in an effort to solve their own problems. Some such problems identified by Short (1994) include working in isolation from colleagues as well as a lack of involvement in decisions affecting their work-lives. Short and Rinehart (1992) measure teacher empowerment using six dimensions: (a) involvement in **Decision Making**, (b) **Autonomy** in making decisions, (c) **Impact** on school life, (d) **Self Efficacy**, (e)**Status** among peers, and (f) opportunities for **Professional Growth**.

Teacher empowerment research has shown that teachers who are empowered believe that they have autonomy and opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their students and schools (Lightfoot, 1986; Short & Rinehart, 1992). They also believe they possess the knowledge and skills or can access professional development opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills to perform their daily teaching tasks and to have a greater impact in their workplace. This supports the definition set forth by Short and Rinehart (1992) which indicates empowered teachers are responsible for their own development and take action to address issues and problems that affect their professional lives.

No Child Left Behind and Adequate Yearly Progress

In the field of education, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; U.S. Congress 2001) represents a significant effort to reform public schools. The U.S. Department of

Education enacted the NCLB legislation as a means of instituting state, district and individual school accountability in the public education system. NCLB is a standards-based accountability (SBA) system which seeks positive changes in student achievement through improvements in academic standards, standardized testing and accountability for student outcomes (Hamilton, Stecher, Marsh, McCombs, Robyn, Russell, Naftel & Barney, 2007). According to Hamilton et al., an SBA system is designed to operate through a multi-level, multi-step feedback process. Goals are established for the education system, and districts and schools are expected to use the goals to guide decisions related to curriculum, professional development for teachers and other school activities. Teachers are expected to use the goals when planning instruction. Ideally, this process allows for the coordinated efforts of policymakers, administrators and teachers to promote student mastery of the desired content and skills. Hamilton contends that "the feedback loop is intended to improve educational practices leading to improved student outcomes" (Hamilton, et al., 2007, p. 3).

One of the critical pieces of the NCLB legislation is the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) accountability mandate that requires schools to meet certain benchmarks related to student achievement. In the state of Georgia the accountability specifications are: (a) 95% of all students will take the Criterion Referenced Competency Tests, the Georgia High School Graduation Test or the Alternate Assessment Test; (b) students will meet specified proficiency levels on Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics achievement (see Appendix A for details); and (c) students will meet proficiency in a second indicator which is attendance for grades 3-8 and graduation rate for grades 9-12 (Georgia Department of Education, 2005).

These accountability measures are effective in highlighting which states, districts and individual schools are failing to meet the requirements of the NCLB legislation. In the state of Georgia, the system of accountability has identified the districts and schools that are not meeting testing standards, attendance requirements and graduation requirements. The schools and the teachers are required to prepare students to meet the AYP requirements, which necessitates some changes in current organizational practices and teacher behavior that hopefully lead to the desired effect on student success, but are the schools and teachers being held accountable in a way that is detrimental to teacher empowerment, such that the desired effect on student performance is counterproductive?

Teacher Empowerment and NCLB

Research indicates that empowerment is an important component of organizational change (Klecker & Loadman, 1998; Perkins, Brown & Taylor, 1996; Short, Greer & Melvin, 1994; Spreitzer & Doneson, 2005; Thornton & Mattocks, 1999; Wan, 2005). Sweetland and Hoy (2000) emphasize the importance of teacher empowerment in the effectiveness of schools. Assuming, as Bowen and Lawler (1995) contend, that empowerment is achieved when there is an interdependent distribution of knowledge, information, power and rewards from the top down within an organization then it is important to examine teacher empowerment as a critical component of the change process in schools.

Some educators have expressed frustration with being held accountable for implementing the requirements of NCLB, a standards-based accountability (SBA) system that is inconsistent with their educational beliefs (Koppich, 2005; Hamilton, et al., 2007). With the reported frustration of educators who are expected to implement this SBA

system, an examination of changes in perceptions of empowerment in light of NCLB is timely. It is my hope that this research will provide valuable insight into teachers' changes in beliefs about empowerment and that these insights can then inform the SBA system's implementation. Since SBA systems are designed to use data obtained during feedback loops, it is my contention that information about factors that influence changes in teacher empowerment are important to the school reform process and need to be part of the overall data considered.

Conceptual Framework

The roots of empowerment theory in the United States can be traced to social justice issues of the 1960s, such as assisting previously marginalized members of society with the "development of voice" (Gitlin & Price, 1992, p. 62). In this context, empowerment was achieved when marginalized groups developed the capacity to articulate dissatisfaction with domination and oppression by those in positions of authority and began to demand change. Other research indicates that empowerment is achieved when underrepresented societal groups, such as women and minorities achieve political parity (Spreitzer & Doneson, 2005).

Empowerment Theory

A review of the literature revealed a consensus among researchers that empowerment theory is multi-dimensional. The construct suggests that there are two critical components of empowerment, process and outcome (Swift & Levine, 1987, Fetterman (n.d.), Spreitzer & Doneson, 2005, Zimmerman, 2000). These components must be examined within specified contexts, at the individual, organizational and community level. In this context, community refers to any aggregation of organizations.

Although empowerment manifests itself differently in the lives of each individual, generally on an individual level, empowering processes are defined as those activities that allow one to obtain control, develop skills and develop an understanding of his environment so as to become an independent decision-maker or problem-solver. Empowered outcomes are so defined if the individual develops a sense of control, develops a critical awareness of his environment and participates in activities or community organizations or develops a skill (Spreitzer & Doneson, 2005).

Empowerment Process

Spreitzer and Doneson (2005) indicate that the empowerment process can be defined using a three-pronged approach incorporating a social-structural perspective, a psychological perspective and a critical perspective. This definition suggests the need to examine the organization, the individual and the outcome when considering the construct.

The social-structural perspective rests in the belief in equal participation in the democratic process in whichever organization one is participating, whether community, business or school. This view assumes that power is shared by supervisors and employees, leaders and community participants or principals and teachers. Bowen and Lawler (1995) define empowerment as the interdependent distribution of knowledge, information, power and rewards from the top down within an organization. The authors contend that if one of these four components is not properly distributed, then empowerment is not achieved.

The psychological perspective has been defined as enabling or enhancing personal efficacy (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Thomas and Velthouse (1990) defined the process using four components of intrinsic motivation: meaning, competence, self-determination

and impact. Meaning refers to the process through which one ascertains that his or her value system is consistent with the work he performs. The closer the connection between values and work the greater the meaning, thus the greater the likelihood of taking ownership of one's work. Competence refers to one's perceptions of self-efficacy related to the work that he is doing. Bandura (1994) defines self-efficacy as a person's belief in his ability to perform a task. Therefore, according to the psychological perspective, the empowerment process should assist an educator, for example, with the development of his belief in his ability to impact student learning. Self determination refers to a person's belief in his autonomy concerning critical decision making related to his work, such as methods used in completing tasks or the time table for completion (Bell & Staw, 1989). The fourth dimension of the psychological perspective, impact, is defined as "the degree to which one can influence strategic, administrative or operating outcomes at work" (Spreitzer & Doneson, 2005, p.8).

The critical perspective indicates the importance of process evaluation by emphasizing the point that if individuals, organizations or communities, in reality, do not have the opportunity to share power and participate in decision making processes, then processes designed to empower could in fact be dis-empowering. For instance, teachers could begin to participate in the decision making process by developing ideas that they believe will be taken seriously and lead to an outcome that will impact their students. However, if the ideas are not used, the empowerment process has not worked. In this case, neither the process nor the outcome reflects empowerment.

As mentioned earlier understanding the implications of empowerment is important. To provide additional insight, I present a review of literature, in the chapter that follows, related to empowerment in education and other fields.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

The concept of empowerment has been studied in various fields, including community psychology, business, the healthcare industry and education. The emergent themes in the empirical literature are that empowered individuals have positive perceptions of self-efficacy in the fields in which they work and thus have a positive impact within their workplaces. Empowered employees believe that their input is valued, they have the desire to act autonomously and to participate in the decision making process and they have opportunities to implement this empowered behavior for maximum effectiveness.

In the field of education, research has shown that empowered teachers enhance learning opportunities for students (Short, 1994), including increased reading and mathematics achievement (Sweetland and Hoy, 2000), however the majority of the empowerment research was conducted prior to implementation of the No Child Left Behind Legislation. This is notable in light of research findings in studies by the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality (2004) and the Rand Corporation (Hamilton, Stecher, Marsh, McCombs, Robyn, Russell, Naftel & Barney, 2007) and anecdotal reports (Koppich, 2005; Centolanza, 2007) of frustration and a lack of empowered practices among teachers working in the environment of NCLB. Since, the NCLB legislation was an educational reform measure intended to ultimately improve student achievement, it is important to understand the relationship between teacher empowerment and the NCLB legislation. Thus, I present a review of empowerment literature both

preceding and subsequent to implementation of NCLB which frames and informs my research.

I begin by presenting literature related to the broad concept of empowerment. Secondly, I will present literature related specifically to teacher empowerment and findings from empirical studies that were conducted prior to implementation of the NCLB legislation. I will then present empirical studies conducted subsequent to NCLB. Lastly, I will present studies using the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) developed by Short and Rinehart (1992). The SPES scale has been used in over 450 teacher empowerment studies and has strong psychometric characteristics as described in the instrument section of Chapter 3, Methods.

In addition, two other concepts intimately connected to empowerment are school climate and teachers' roles and work. Therefore, I also present a review of literature related to the concept of school climate; followed first by literature related to school climate and empirical studies conducted prior to NCLB, and second by literature related to school climate and empirical studies conducted subsequent to NCLB. Lastly, I will present the research relevant to the role of teachers and their work prior to and in the context of the NCLB era.

Empowerment

A review of the literature shows that the empowerment construct has been studied in various fields, including community psychology, business, the healthcare industry and education. The emergent theme in the empirical literature is two-fold: (a) the prevalent factors underlying the concept of empowered individuals are the opportunity to

participate in activities that both enhance self-efficacy and involve consultative decision making, and (b) the organizational structure has a mediating effect on empowerment.

Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988) define psychological empowerment as the connection between self-efficacy and the desire and willingness to become a participant in an area of the public arena. Their research, conducted with community residents and university students, shows that psychological empowerment is positively correlated to acting in a leadership role and negatively correlated to alienation. Other researchers (Speer, 2000; Zimmerman, Israel, Schultz & Checkoway, 1992) report that psychological empowerment consists of intrapersonal, interactional and behavioral components. This is consistent with accepted empowerment theory (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Lightfoot, 1986; Spreitzer & Doneson, 2005).

Teacher Empowerment Preceding NCLB

Empirical studies (Rinehart & Short, 1994; White, 1992) support the construct that teacher empowerment can be described primarily using the six dimensions mentioned earlier: (a) **Decision Making**, (b) **Autonomy**, (c) **Impact**, (d) **Self Efficacy**, (e) **Status**, and (f) **Professional Growth**. Other empirical studies suggest that there is a connection between teacher empowerment, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, school climate and school effectiveness (Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Gonzales & Short, 1996; Rinehart & Short, 1994; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000; White, 1992).

One study by Rinehart and Short (1994) revealed that predominantly white, female, teacher leaders, who were involved in a reading improvement program for elementary school students (Reading Recovery), considered participatory decision making, control over daily scheduling, teaching competency, and opportunities for growth and

development to be empowering aspects of their work life. Rinehart and Short measured empowerment using the SPES and the Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire to measure the degree to which the educators were satisfied with their jobs. The Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders reported greater perceptions of empowerment than Reading Recovery Teachers and regular classroom teachers. The study also indicates a strong correlation (.73) between empowerment and job satisfaction. The difference in empowerment was explained primarily by greater decision making opportunities, in the areas of scheduling, budgeting and curriculum development experienced by the Teacher Leaders. This study also suggests that both personal and organizational factors contribute to job satisfaction. Empowerment and school climate are examples of such personal and organizational factors.

Gonzales and Short (1996) conducted a study with 301 teachers in 6 elementary, 5 middle and 3 high schools that suggests empowered teachers view principals as experts in their fields, distributors of rewards and as leaders who engender admiration, and therefore respect their authority. This study indicates that empowered teachers are not in conflict with their principals, but view them positively. Considering the empowerment of teachers in this light, principals could benefit by supporting the empowerment of teachers, since research has shown empowered teachers are a part of positive educational environments which in turn lead to enhanced learning opportunities for students (Short, 1994).

White (1992) studied the effects of increased Decision making opportunities, resulting from decentralized management, on teachers' perceptions of their work life and their sense of efficacy. The research revealed improvement in five key areas of the work life of the teachers as a result of increased **autonomy** and **decision making** opportunities:

(a) teacher morale, (b) student motivation, (c) communication within the school and the district, (d) teacher retention, and (e) teachers' knowledge of district and school goals and priorities.

Teachers at one of the schools in this study reported opportunities to "voice opinions" (White, 1992, p. 79) as an example of how their work life improved. Other teachers commented that their input into school decision making made them feel better about themselves and positively influenced their commitment to the teaching profession. White (1992) reported low teacher turnover in the districts studied. This suggests two possibilities: (a) the increase in decision making opportunities could have contributed to increased job commitment, or (b) the climate of the schools in the districts participating in the study had a mediating effect on the teachers' perceptions of empowerment.

In an extensive review of the literature on teacher commitment, Firestone and Pennell (1993) identify three of the empowerment sub-scales mentioned above, **Decision Making**, **Autonomy** and opportunities for **Professional Growth**, along with collaborative opportunities and access to school resources as strongly related to teachers' organizational commitment. The researchers suggest that teachers who exercise autonomy related to and participate in decisions affecting their classrooms and the overall functioning of the schools or districts in which they teach are more committed to the organizations in which they work.

Billingsley and Cross (1992) conducted a study concerning job commitment and job satisfaction among special education and general education teachers in the Virginia area. The results suggest that leadership support and involvement, including feedback, encouragement, the provision of participatory decision making opportunities and clear

delineation of roles of staff members were significantly associated with job satisfaction. This suggests that one of the important aspects of teacher empowerment, participatory decision making is associated with job satisfaction.

Sweetland and Hoy (2000) studied the relationship between teacher empowerment and school effectiveness. They defined empowerment as "teachers' power to control critical decisions about teaching and learning conditions" (p.703). School effectiveness was defined in terms of student outcomes on mathematics and reading achievement instruments as well as teachers' perceptions of school climate, flexibility and adaptability. The results of the study indicated that although the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement is complex, the two are highly related. When using objective measures of student achievement in mathematics and reading, teacher empowerment was a significant predictor of student achievement. The authors theorized that there is a link between empowerment, achievement and school climate, but the theory was not tested in this study. Therefore, it is not clear if any causal relationships exist.

Blase and Blase (2001) conducted a qualitative study of the relationship between principal behaviors and teacher empowerment with 285 teachers in 5 elementary schools, 3 middle schools and 3 high schools that were in the process of implementing shared-governance structural models. The schools adopted these shared governance models based upon the League of Professional Schools (1984). The League of Professional Schools (the League) was founded upon the beliefs of Carl Glickman (1993) that attending to the contextual factors of school professionals was necessary to establish the need for and enlist the necessary support for school improvement (Allen, Glickman &

Hensley, 1999). Glickman (1993) suggests that improvement must be recognized as important by faculty and students and must be viewed as a developmental process. The shared governance model suggested by the League emphasizes democratic decision making and teacher collaboration to improve teaching and learning.

Blase and Blase (2001) chose the participating schools based upon data from annual reports, on-site visits, teacher reports and educational focus as determined by the League. Blase and Blase (2001) collected data for the teacher empowerment study using an open-ended questionnaire that asked teachers to provide detailed explanations of characteristics of their principals that contributed to their sense of empowerment and to give real-life examples to illustrate their explanations. The responses were coded using inductive research methods as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Bogdan and Biklen (2003). As the data were analyzed the characteristics were organized according to themes that emerged regarding principal behaviors' that influenced teacher empowerment. The individual characteristics and the themes were analyzed to determine how they related to teacher empowerment.

From this research Blase and Blase (2001) generated suggestions for principals interested in employing empowerment strategies in their schools. One of the suggestions was to encourage professional autonomy by listening to teachers' ideas and giving them the freedom to choose curricular materials and methods of instruction (including the amount of time spent on a topic) rather than dictating to them what and how a subject should be taught. Another suggestion was to encourage innovation by allowing teachers to experiment with new materials and methods of instruction, thus, promoting risk taking in the classroom. The researchers suggest that allowing teachers to be autonomous and

innovative will spur creativity, increase their sense of classroom efficacy, their self-esteem and their instructional confidence. Some of the teachers in the study reported feeling that the principals who empowered teachers in this way conveyed the message that they valued their teachers' opinions and trusted their professional judgment.

The preceding examples of empirical research are important in highlighting the connection between teacher empowerment, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and school climate (including relationships between teachers and administrators). Additional research in these areas is necessary to tease out the interconnectedness of these factors or to highlight other factors that might contribute to positive student outcomes.

Empowerment Literature in the Context of NCLB

A review of the literature yielded empirical studies of the relationship between teacher empowerment and the organizations (the schools) in which they teach. Bogler and Somech (2004) studied the relationship between teacher empowerment and teachers' Organizational Commitment (OC), Professional Commitment (PC) and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) in schools. The researchers suggest that teachers' OC relates to how strongly they identify with and are involved with their schools. The teachers' PC refers to the relationship between their self-esteem and their job performance. Teachers' OCB is behavior that is important to the effective functioning of their schools and is not necessarily formally rewarded (Bogler & Somech, 2004).

The research conducted by Bogler and Somech (2004) supports the contention that **Professional Growth** is a significant predictor of teachers' OC. The authors also found that **Self Efficacy** and **Status** were significant predictors of Organizational

Commitment (OC) and Professional Commitment (PC) and **Decision Making**, **Self Efficacy** and **Status** were significant predictors of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). Somech (2005) purports that "perceptions of empowerment are potent motivational forces," (p. 783) and the resulting behavior leads to more beneficial outcomes for the schools in which teachers work.

A recent study conducted by the South Carolina Department of Education's Division of Teaching and Quality and the South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement informs my study on teacher empowerment. This study investigated teachers' working conditions in six areas- teacher empowerment, professional development, time, facilities and resources, leadership and mentoring, and induction (The Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2004). In this study, teacher empowerment was defined using **Decision Making** and **Autonomy**, two of the six dimensions of empowerment identified by Short and Rinehart (1992). The findings, presented in a report by Hirsch (2005), are based on 15,200 survey responses collected from teachers in South Carolina in 2004. In addition to administering the surveys to teachers data was also gathered from the students in the schools where the teachers worked, using the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT). The primary findings of the study pertaining to this proposal are: teacher working conditions predict student achievement and affect teacher retention, teacher perceptions of working conditions accurately reflect school conditions, and teacher and principal perceptions of working conditions are in harmony. More importantly, teacher empowerment and opportunities for professional development were found to be predictors of AYP status.

A pilot teacher empowerment study indicates a difference in teachers' perceptions of empowerment based upon the AYP status of the schools in which they teach (Coble, 2007). The research also indicates teacher empowerment differences across school levels. The results specifically indicate that teachers in schools that have met the AYP requirements of the NCLB legislation have greater perceptions of empowerment than do teachers in schools that have not met AYP requirements. Additionally, this study revealed that elementary school teachers are more empowered than middle school teachers. It is important to note that the research does not imply a causal relationship. It does not suggest that either AYP status or school level has a direct effect on Empowerment. The research merely indicates that a relationship does exist between teacher empowerment and the two variables, AYP status of schools and school level. The data was gathered using the SPES (Short & Rinehart, 1992) and was disaggregated based upon AYP status of schools and school level. Although this method was effective in uncovering a relationship between the variables, it was limiting in that the methodology did not allow for the emergence of other factors that could influence teacher empowerment, such as changes in school climate.

Studies Using the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) Instrument

The SPES instrument has been used in over 450 teacher empowerment studies both nationally and internationally (P. Short, personal communication, September 27, 2005). The scale was used in research investigating the relationship between teacher empowerment and various organizational variables, such as school climate (Short & Rinehart, 1992), school restructuring (Klecker & Loadman, 1998; Short, Greer & Melvin, 1994; Thornton & Mattocks, 1999; Wan, 2005), job satisfaction and commitment

(Wu & Short, 1996), and principal use of power (Gonzales & Short, 1996). The instrument was also used in studies examining teacher empowerment and middle school climate (Cafasso & Camic, 2002), participative leadership and school effectiveness (Somech, 2005), professional development (Pritchard, 2002), and student outcomes and achievement (Martin, Crossland & Johnson, 2000; Martin, Crossland & Johnson, 2001; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). As mentioned previously, the study by Sweetland and Hoy (2000) reported that teacher empowerment was a predictor of student achievement.

Martin, Crossland and Johnson (2001) conducted a study of the relationship between teachers' perceptions of empowerment, teachers' perceptions of responsibility for student outcomes and student achievement. Data was collected from elementary school teachers using the Responsibility for Student Achievement Scale (RSA) (Guskey, 1981) and the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) (Short & Rinehart, 1992). Student achievement was measured using standardized testing. The researchers report no significant relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement, however, it is not clear how the conclusion was reached with the data presented.

The researchers claim that teacher empowerment and a sense of responsibility for student outcomes are important to school climate, but there is no indication of how school climate was measured or if it was measured at all. The authors state that logic dictates that student achievement will be affected by school climate, thus being indirectly affected by teacher empowerment. The claims made by this study bear further investigation.

Scribner, Truell, Hager and Srichai (2001) used the SPES to study teacher empowerment among career and technical education teachers. Henson (2001) examined

the effects of participation in teacher research on teacher efficacy. Klecker and Loadman (1998) and Short, Greer and Melvin (1994) indicate that the shared **Decision Making** dimension of teacher empowerment is critically important to restructuring efforts. Klecker and Loadman (1998) also indicate that teacher empowerment differs across two grade levels, elementary and high school. This study examined the empowerment **Status** of over 4,000 teachers in 180 schools in Ohio. The study was conducted in the context of school restructuring based on plans designed by individual schools and funded by the state. One of the findings related to empowerment is that elementary teachers reported higher levels of empowerment than high school teachers. The reasons for this were not discussed in the research findings, but the difference in one of the empowerment subscales, **Autonomy**, was statistically significant. Elementary teachers' mean response was 3.41 as compared to high school teachers mean response of 2.81. Because of the significance of two of the empowerment dimensions, **Decision Making** (Short, Greer & Melvin, 1994) and **Autonomy** (Klecker & Loadman, 1998), I am beginning to speculate that instead of solely analyzing overall Empowerment that it might be revelatory to examine the empowerment subscales separately.

Empowerment Subscales

It is important to make note of a theme that emerged from my review of the teacher empowerment literature. Several studies identify a relationship between specific dimensions of Empowerment and positive outcomes for students and teachers. For example, White (1992) indicates that there is a positive relationship between **Autonomy** and **Decision Making** and improvements in teachers' work life. Firestone and Pennell (1993) identify the strong relationship between **Decision Making**, **Autonomy** and

Professional Growth and teachers' organizational commitment. Finally, the Southeast Center for Teacher Quality (2005) study suggests that **Decision Making** and **Autonomy** define Empowerment. The results of these studies suggest that examining the Empowerment subscales individually could prove beneficial to understanding the concept of Empowerment overall.

Generally speaking, research supports the contention in empowerment theory literature that empowerment must be considered at the individual, organizational and community (aggregate of organizations) level. Individuals included in the studies reported being empowered when given opportunities within their organizations for collaborative, participatory decision making. **Decision Making** and **Autonomy** were reported as important aspects of empowerment and school climate was reported as having a mediating effect on empowerment. Because of the reported connection between teacher empowerment and school climate, I present literature related to this concept below.

School Climate

The environment of a school is made up of a variety of elements, some tangible and some less so, that characterize its organizational climate. A review of the literature revealed an array of meanings attributable to the concept of school climate as well as several terms that are used interchangeably to describe the concept. Some definitions of school climate include tangible measures, such as the socio-economic status of the student body (Brookover, Schweitzer, Schneider, Beady, Flood & Wisenbaker, 1978); school safety (Cohen, 2006); student-teacher ratios, the condition of the physical environment (heating, lighting, states of repair of rooms, desks and chairs), and resources available to teachers (Johnson & Stevens, 2007). In the 1970s, the importance of

attending to less tangible measures, such as, human interactions within the physical climate, began to be expressed.

Moos (1979) defines school climate as both a learning environment and a social atmosphere for student experiences, bounded by a system of rules defined by teachers and administrators. Moos (1979) indicates that there are important individual factors as well as environmental factors that must be considered when trying to understand the complexities of educational environments. The individual factors are coping skills, personality make-up, beliefs, attitudes, expectations, socio-economic status and potentials. The environmental factors are physical setting, organizational factors (the structure of the organization), the human aggregate (the characteristics of the members of the environment), and the social climate (nature of interactions between teachers, students and administrators). Moos emphasizes that to understand the school climate, one should focus on relationships between and among teachers, students and administrators, personal development of teachers, students and administrators and system maintenance and system change.

The consensus in the literature is that attending to the psychological and social environment within which teachers teach, students learn and administrators manage is a matter of importance. With that in mind, in this dissertation, I view school climate through the lens suggested by Moos' (1979)—a social atmosphere for student experiences bounded by a system of rules determined by teachers and administrators. As Moos suggests, I consider school climate in the context of three components: (a) relationships among and between teachers, students and administrators; (b) personal growth of all members of the school; and (c) the maintenance and change of the system.

In their work on the relationship between school climate and leadership, Kelley, Thornton and Daugherty (2005) note the necessity of leaders' understanding of the procedures and processes necessary to create organizational change. It stands to reason, then, that in the environment of No Child Left Behind and the changes required within many schools as a result of the NCLB legislation, a better understanding of the climate of the schools is important and necessary.

School Climate Preceding NCLB

Over the past 25 years, several studies have been conducted investigating the individual and environmental factors of school climate as defined by Moos (1979) (Butler, Kenney & Chandler, 1994; Cassinerio & Lane-Garon, 2006; Egley & Jones, 2005; Goodlad, 2004; Jobe & Parrish, 1995; Murphy, Evertson & Radnofsky, 1991; Short & Rinehart, 1993). I selected two studies conducted preceding NCLB because of the focus on teacher empowerment and issues of school climate related to school reform. These studies, that are pertinent to gaining an understanding of school climate as it relates to the current study, are described as follows. Short and Rinehart (1993) investigated the relationship between school climate and teacher empowerment, a personal growth component of school climate (Moos, 1979). Murphy, Evertson and Radnofsky (1991) examined teachers' perspectives of school restructuring, including relationships among and between teachers, students and administrators, the third component of school climate as described by Moos (1979).

In a qualitative study on school reform and school climate, Murphy, Evertson and Radnofsky (1991) gave teachers an opportunity to voice their perceptions of the ideal school climate if given the opportunity to participate in restructuring a school. The study

was conducted using in-depth interviews of fourteen elementary, middle and high school teachers. The teachers were asked about their general perceptions of restructuring and the changes that they would make in the classroom and in the schools, including changes in curriculum, climate, teacher work, interpersonal dynamics and student outcomes. The majority of the teachers advocated an interdisciplinary curriculum and suggested that the state and district have a diminished role in selecting the curriculum. The teachers wanted an environment that promoted cohesiveness, openness, honesty, increased self-esteem, consideration for others and enhanced responsibility. The teachers advocated an increase in the quality of interactions among teachers, students and administrators. Overall, the teachers believed that such an environment would promote a more meaningful transfer of knowledge. A few of the teachers believed that a cohesive staff would not be possible because there would always be dissenters. One teacher believed that principal leadership was important for intervention when necessary.

The teachers wanted more professional development opportunities and more opportunities for decision making regarding curriculum, scheduling and resource allocation. The majority of the teachers promoted improving critical thinking skills, enhancing creativity, and enhancing the inquisitiveness of the students. These teachers believe that the ideal school climate would rely less on testing students to assess their knowledge or refocus the testing to improve critical thinking skills. The teachers wanted more time with their students because they believed this would allow them to have a greater impact in the lives of the students. The teachers also expressed the importance of respect among the staff.

Two of the salient points gleaned from the Murphy et al. study are: (a) the teachers suggested reducing student testing or testing to promote critical thinking, and (b) the teachers advocated improvement in most of the dimensions of empowerment as defined by Short and Rinehart (1992). The appeal for empowerment is evident in their expressed desire for increased **Decision Making** opportunities, more professional development, more opportunities to **Impact** the lives of the students, changes in **Status** (respect) among the staff and greater **Autonomy** in choosing curriculum. This study points to the importance of examining teacher empowerment in the current reform environment of NCLB as well as giving them an opportunity to express their opinions about requirements of NCLB, such as standardized testing as a means of assessing student knowledge.

The second study that bears review is the research by Short and Rinehart (1993) on teacher empowerment and school climate. In this study, the researchers surveyed over 250 teachers from six states. The empowerment of teachers was measured using the SPES (Short & Rinehart, 1992) and school climate was measured using the School Climate Questionnaire. The empowerment dimensions of the SPES were outlined previously. The School Climate Questionnaire is a 94-item instrument designed to assess the leadership skills and dedication of the staff, high expectations and monitoring of students, identification of students learning characteristics, positive learning climate and multicultural and gender equity (Short & Rinehart, 1993).

The study revealed a relationship between perceptions of empowerment and school climate with mediating effects of age and years of experience. As noted by the researchers, an interesting finding of the study was that empowerment was negatively

correlated to school climate. The researchers suggest that as teachers' perceptions of empowerment increase they perceive a less positive climate in the school. They contend that greater decision making and more autonomy exercised by the teacher could lead to greater conflict among the staff. This finding is important because it could be construed as a negative outcome of empowering teachers. It could be that the schools in the study had issues related to school climate that necessitated change. If teachers have more opportunities to participate in decision making, they may have greater opportunities to indicate components of the current educational policies and or practices that should be examined and possibly changed. If they trust that their voices will be heard, they could have a more profound impact on the restructuring. Little (1993) suggests that the professional development of teachers allows for informed dissent. Thus, empowering teachers as a part of their development may invite conflict. If teachers are allowed to voice their opinions and conflict arises as a result, Blase and Blase (2001) suggest the following strategy: (a) do not suppress conflict, but embrace it; (b) highlight the productive aspects of conflict and refocus non-productive conflict; (c) emphasize mutual respect; and (d) educate teachers about conflict. These researchers suggest that conflict can be an opportunity for growth and mutual support. More research is necessary to determine the relationship between school climate and teacher empowerment.

School Climate in the Context of NCLB

The findings of one study conducted since the enactment of the NCLB legislation regarding the relationship between current accountability measures and school climate bear noting. Egley and Jones (2005) examined school climates where administrators engaged in professionally inviting behaviors, such as promoting collaboration and

respect, one dimension of empowerment. The study involved elementary school principals in 32 districts in Florida. The principals responded to questionnaires that measured both professional inviting behaviors and personal inviting behaviors. The results of the survey indicated that the principals professionally inviting behaviors were predictive of state test scores.

The Egley and Jones study is important in showing a relationship between one of the dimensions of empowerment and the aspect of school climate related to relationships between teachers and administrators. Results of the study highlight the relationship between student outcomes and aspects of school climate related to elementary school principals' behaviors, but more research is necessary to determine how school climate relates to middle and high school principals' behaviors. Another interesting finding of this study was that teachers who were asked to rate their principals' professionally inviting behaviors, rated the principals lower (4.26 on a 5 point scale) than did the principals (4.70 out of 5). I believe that principals who are interested in developing as reflective practitioners would recognize the benefits of using teacher feedback as they evaluate their own performance. Perhaps the input that teachers provide could be a catalyst for changes in the behaviors of some administrators that could lead to a more positive school climate.

Since the enactment of NCLB, Tonso, Jung and Colombo (2006) examined the school climate at an urban middle school that was in the process of restructuring. The longitudinal study was conducted using qualitative methods to compare the school climate of the pre-dominantly African American middle school prior to the restructuring process to the climate subsequent to the changes in the environment of the school.

Prior to restructuring the middle school was organized based upon a model which employed the philosophy of team teaching. The emphasis of the model included small learning communities, a core curriculum, needs' based educational programs and teacher and administrator empowerment, specifically to make decisions for middle grade students. During one phase of the study, the teachers in the school were observed during team meetings. Vignettes of discussions during the meetings revealed a focus on students' needs. For example, one student who was in regular education classes was having difficulty remaining still during one teachers' class. His behavior was disruptive and the teacher was seeking input from the team as to how to appropriately intervene to best serve the student and the entire class. The teacher received suggestions to modify the behavior and was ensured that the other teachers could be called upon for additional support if needed. Another teacher reported that a student who had recently experienced a family loss seemed remote and disconnected in class. The other teachers commented that the school should have a procedure for helping students who had recently experienced losses. A social worker was also present in the meeting and indicated how the county could provide services to these students. The descriptions provided in the research centered around teacher involvement and teacher support as well as how teacher behavior might improve student outcomes.

Once the school was restructured, the vignettes provided in the research indicated a focus on administrative responsibilities. The teachers were reminded to turn in their lesson plans in a timely manner and to complete progress reports for the students. When an issue was raised regarding which students would be able to participate in a tutorial program, the teachers began to make suggestions. As the students' names were discussed,

the organizer began to question the staff as to whether the students were behavior problems. As the discussion continued, it became apparent that the district would not provide tutoring for students who misbehaved or were absent frequently. Instead of focusing on the needs of the students who were having difficulty, the students were selected for the program based on the number of slots available and the number of homerooms. Each homeroom teacher was allowed to send four students as long as they had no behavior or attendance problems. In essence, the students who needed the most help were not being served. In addition, one teacher reported feeling "dis-empowered" (Tonso, Jung & Colombo, 2006, p. 17) because teachers' voices were no longer being heard.

Although the results of this research cannot be generalized to suggest that all restructuring efforts will change school climate in this manner, it does highlight the importance of attending to components of school climate related to the personal growth of both teachers and students. The research also suggests a relationship between school climate and teacher empowerment.

Teachers' Roles and Work

Over the past 30 years, the critical focus of research regarding teachers' practice has varied. As Cohen, McLaughlin and Talbert (1993) indicated, school reform literature emphasizing improving teaching practices includes research pertaining to the following: effective schools (Edmonds, 1979); structural and organizational aspects of the workplace (Johnson, 1990); teachers incentives and motivation (Bacharach, Bauer & Shedd, 1986); teachers qualifications (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1988); and the

"technology" of teaching (Clune, 1989 Clune, White and Patterson, 1989, Firestone, Fuhrman & Kirst, 1989, Smith & O'Day, 1990).

According to research by Edmonds (1979), the following factors are important workplace dimensions related to student achievement: strong instructional leadership, clear sense of school purpose, emphasis on basic skills, close monitoring of academic accomplishment and an orderly school environment. Even though these aspects were not defined in terms of teacher empowerment, there is clear overlap between these factors indicated in effective school research and those indicated in teacher empowerment research (Gonzales & Short, 1996; Glickman, 1993) cited earlier in this document. Johnson (1990) suggests that governance, class size, work load, leadership, safety, authority relations and supervisory arrangements are issues that should be addressed in policy attempts to address problems in education. There is also clear overlap between these issues and school climate research (Billingsley & Cross, 1992) cited earlier in this document. I draw the parallels between the effective schools research and school climate and teacher empowerment research to emphasize the importance of bringing teacher empowerment which has been linked in research to school climate (Martin, Crossland & Johnson, 2001) into the conversation in the context of NCLB.

The research related to the "technology" of teaching highlights the importance of introducing more rigor into the curriculum and implementing tougher standards for students (Clune, 1989; Clune, White & Patterson, 1989; Firestone, Fuhrmer & Kirst, 1989; Smith & O'Day, 1990). In the context of NCLB, some teachers contend that instead of promoting rigor as suggested by the effective schools research that teachers'

practice in the context of NCLB is simply teaching students' to be proficient at taking standardized tests (Jalongo, 2007).

McLaughlin (1992) indicates that according to teachers the most important aspect of their work lives is their students' characteristics and the resulting relationship between the teachers and their students. The teachers reflect on their classroom practices and evaluate their own effectiveness in relationship to their students' needs, academic abilities, interests, attitudes and backgrounds (McLaughlin, Talbert and Phelan, 1990). In other words, the teachers and the students have an interdependent, deeply interconnected relationship. In other research related to teachers' work, McLaughlin and others (1990) administered a survey to high school teachers asking them to rank their educational goals in order of importance for their teaching. The goals were basic academic skills, good work habits, academic excellence, personal growth (self-esteem, self-discipline), human relation skills, citizenship (knowledge of institutions), specific occupational skills and moral or religious values.

Teachers also indicated that students' needs are the most important factor in their evaluation of their work lives. In fact, teachers often evaluate their own performance based upon their students' performance. Considering the suggested link in empowerment literature between teacher empowerment, school effectiveness, teacher working conditions and student achievement, it is important to delve more deeply into teachers' work both prior to and subsequent to the implementation of NCLB.

McLaughlin suggests that attention to the details of each of the aforementioned research strands (effective schools, structural/organizational issues, teacher incentives, motivation and qualifications and the "technology" (Little, Wallin & McLaughlin, 1993,

p. 80) of teaching is indeed important in developing a complete understanding of teachers' practices. However, the salient aspect of McLaughlin's research is its attentiveness to the investigation and illumination of the teacher's perspective as it relates to the factors affecting teachers' work lives and consequently student outcomes. I echo McLaughlin's contention that each of these strands of research is important to a complete understanding of factors important to teachers' work. I also agree with McLaughlin that the teachers' perspective is critically important in understanding their work lives. In fact, I contend that one strand of research that is noticeably absent from the literature regarding teachers' practice within the school reform context of NCLB is the teachers' perspective through the lens of teacher empowerment.

Finally, and certainly notably, a critically important theme that emerged from a review of the literature on teachers' work is the importance of attending to the affective as well as the cognitive aspects of teaching and learning. Teaching that promotes depth of knowledge and critical thinking certainly requires a deep understanding of subject matter and pedagogy and a commitment to professional development (Cohen, McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993). However, another important aspect of teachers' practice is a commitment to understanding students' educational and emotional needs and how they are to be prepared to engage as citizens in society (Jalongo, 2007; Nieto, 2003; Hargreaves, 2003).

Cohen, McLaughlin and Talbert (1993) contend that students will develop a deeper understanding of subject matter through active engagement in learning rather than having knowledge transmitted strictly through a lecture mode of instruction. The authors suggest that authentic learning occurs in educational environments where students participate in inquiry based learning and have opportunities for lively intellectual

exchanges with their teacher and their peers. If students are allowed to challenge "facts" they are likely to develop stronger critical thinking skills. Empirical research supporting this contention indicates that in classrooms where innovative and stimulating work is taking place, students are highly engaged in learning (Cohen, McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993).

From 1987 to 1989, Cohen, McLaughlin and Talbert (1993) were involved in a research study conducted in sixteen high schools across the nation. Findings from the research indicate that teachers who sought to deepen the level of their students' knowledge (teaching for understanding) made adjustments to their classroom practices. The students frequently worked in collaborative groups and assisted each other in completing tasks. The teacher was not at the center of the instruction. Teachers used manipulatives to enhance their students' learning and allowed their students to work through problems and discuss issues as they observed the students' work. Even though these concepts are more widely understood to be effective classroom practices than they were in the 1980s and early 1990s, current research indicates that teachers need to be encouraged to continue these practices (Jalongo, 2007). Furthermore, the current society, what Hargreaves (2003) calls the knowledge society, necessitates such practices. The knowledge society is defined as a society in which learning is constant. Creativity and ingenuity are highly valued and encouraged. Citizens in the knowledge society will be required to learn skills needed to understand rapidly changing technology and will be consistently engaged in skill development. The knowledge society will require collaboration and teamwork. The concept of the knowledge society also emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence because people will be engaged in teamwork and

collaborative processes as collective knowledge will be a part of the workplace (Hargreaves, 2003). Emotional intelligence refers to being aware of one's personal disposition, needs and one's abilities to get along with others. Emotional intelligence also requires being aware of the dispositions and needs of others. Hargreaves (2003) and McLaughlin and Talbert (2006) suggest that schools that educate in the context of learning communities are best designed to accomplish the tasks of teaching for understanding and preparing students to meet the demands of the knowledge society of today.

Hargreaves (2003) provides empirical evidence of the unintended consequences of a standards based accountability system. He conducted a study in a school that at its inception was engaging in the practice of educating students to think critically and to be collaborative decision-makers and problem solvers, skills that are essential for the knowledge society. In his research, the author describes a high school in Ontario Canada that opened in 1994 with a population of 600 students, 10 administrators and 4 guidance counselors and by 2000 had grown to 1200 students with 5 administrators and 2 guidance counselors.

The mission of the school is to be student centered. The faculty and staff work in collaborative groups and include students, parents and other community members in the decision making processes of the school. Caring for students, faculty, staff and the local and global community is an integral part of the philosophy. If students have difficulties, the staff is supportive in helping them solve their problems. The staff is supportive of each other as well-covering classes on an as needed basis. Class coverage allowed

teachers to have additional professional time, teachers engaged in professional learning, mentoring of new teachers, mentoring of students.

The teachers engaged in collaborative planning and team teaching to meet the needs of the students. The teachers felt free to experiment with their lessons and were not embarrassed if they tried a lesson and it was not successful. The faculty engaged in professional learning in order to learn new pedagogical concepts and to increase their knowledge of their subject matter and encouraged lifelong learning amongst the students.

Teachers in the school said that they had opportunities for problem-solving and decision making and enjoyed the increased responsibility. The staff members mentored new teachers and met to discuss innovative teaching techniques. They said that this was different than in traditional high school settings which were managed in a "top down" (Hargreaves, p.150) manner. The teachers assessed students using portfolios and exhibitions rather than strictly pencil and paper testing methods.

After being open for two years, the school began to experience pressure from the school system in the Province where it was located. The system lost funding while at the same time, it implemented a centralized curriculum, province-wide testing and a 10^{th} grade literacy test. This system reform led to changes within all of the schools in the system including the innovative school that Hargreaves (2003) described in his research. The teachers were mandated to teach 125 more minutes per week. They were also legislated to spend 30 hours per week mentoring students, which was not included in the additional 125 hours of teaching time. The teachers at this innovative school resented being told to change a practice that was working for them to a policy that required them to take time away from other helpful practices, such as mentoring new teachers and

collaborating with other staff members. The teachers are no longer able to be as creative in planning their lessons due to the new mandated curriculum. The teachers have less time to collaborate due to increased time spent on meeting the demands of the mandated reform. The administration has been forced to be more "top down" in its governance approach rather than shared responsibility in decision making.

One teacher noted that the atmosphere of caring was being replaced by one of resentment. This teacher reported that the emotional reserves that are needed to care for others are being eroded by the individual teacher's needs as they seek to meet reform demands. They now feel overwhelmed and feel that the standardized reform efforts have undermined their efforts of forming collegial, caring relationships with teachers and students.

Considering the stories, comments and frustrations of today's educators, it is clear that many educators believe that schools focused on testing are not producing students who are fully engaged in a stimulating process (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli & Pickeral, 2007). Yet teachers are working within these high stakes testing conditions trying to educate students to be successful, fully engaged citizens. This flies in the face of the concepts of empowerment theory, which suggest that empowered teachers are able to identify the need for change and secure the resources needed to effect change when they realize that a process is not effective (Zimmerman, 1995). Because of the connection between teacher empowerment, teacher behavior and student outcomes it is important to investigate teachers' work through the lens of empowerment in the context of NCLB (Bogler & Somech, 2004; Marks & Louis, 1997; Short, 1994; Short & Rinehart, 1992).

Teachers' Roles and Work in the Context of NCLB

A study by the Rand Corporation examined the experiences of teachers and administrators engaged in the process of implementing NCLB in their schools. The teachers in the Rand study reported several factors, such as students' lack of basic skills, a lack of parental support and student absenteeism and tardiness as barriers to success in meeting the NCLB requirements. In addition, the majority of teachers in the study indicated that using the state test scores required by the NCLB mandate is an inadequate measure of student achievement. This study emphasized the importance of listening to the concerns of the classroom teachers, who are most attuned to the needs of individual students, when considering revisions to NCLB policies (Hamilton, Stecher, Marsh, McCombs, Robyn, Russell, Naftel & Barney, 2007).

Anecdotal reports (Koppich, 2005; NEA, 2006) also indicate that teachers feel as if their professional practices and opinions are discounted through reliance on high-stakes testing to measure student achievement and on policy-makers to determine which accountability measures are appropriate. According to Pringle, chair of NEA's Advisory Committee, collaboration with local educators is key, and has not been a part of the prescriptive nature of the NCLB, standards-based accountability system (NEA, 2006).

A study regarding high-stakes testing was conducted by Jones, Jones, Chapman, Yarbrough and Davis (1999) with over 200 elementary school teachers in 16 North Carolina schools. The results of the survey indicate a narrowing of the curriculum and frustration among the teachers. Of the teachers in this study, 67% reported increasing instruction time on reading and writing and 56% reported spending more time on mathematics. In one school, teachers reported suspending the teaching of social studies

and health due to test preparation. Of the teachers in the study, 77% reported a decrease in morale and 76% believed that the accountability program would not improve the quality of education in their school (Jones et al., 1999). Based upon the results of this study, Jones, Jones and Hargrove (2003) compiled the views of teachers and others regarding high-stakes testing since implementation of NCLB, stating their surprise that "few were listening to teachers' voices in this reform debate" (p. 2). The authors believe that teachers' concerns regarding accountability by high stakes testing are important and should be included in discussions of reform. I echo the sentiment of surprise suggested by the authors and therefore chose to include the voice of educators by examining the current state of teacher empowerment.

Research has investigated the relationship between teacher empowerment and student outcomes, but little research has been done to illuminate the effects of the NCLB legislation, specifically the AYP requirements, on teacher empowerment. In this context, I present the purpose of my research below.

School Level and AYP Status of Schools

As Goodlad (2004) suggests, there are fundamental differences in the structure of the workplace for teachers in elementary middle and high schools. Generally, elementary school teachers spend more time with a smaller group of students (20-30) than their colleagues in secondary schools. An exception to this would be those in elementary who teach in specialty areas, such as art, music, physical education or foreign language. The majority of middle and high school teachers spend less time, approximately 50 minutes, with more students. With class sizes of 20-30 students and six teaching periods per day, most secondary teachers have 120-180 students per day. Generally, the school day for

elementary students is approximately six hours. Elementary teachers usually do not have a planning period spent away from students during the day. Their planning is done before or after school or on the weekend. Secondary students, middle and high, usually have a 7-71/2 hour school day. Middle and high school teachers usually have at least one hour of planning away from students during the school day. Curricular issues are generally managed by grade level in elementary schools and by department on the secondary level. Although there are obvious organizational differences in school levels, the definition of empowerment, taking responsibility for your own growth to solve your own problems (Short & Rinehart, 1992), is applicable at each level. Elementary and secondary teachers who are empowered will have professional opportunities allowing them to participate in the empowerment process and have empowered outcomes as suggested by Spreitzer and Doneson (2005). For example, elementary, middle and high school teachers would have opportunities to participate in **Decision Making** regarding curriculum choices and exercise **Autonomy** regarding choosing teaching methods that are more effective for their students. Additionally, the educators would have **Professional Growth** opportunities to increase their content and pedagogical knowledge and would be encouraged to apply this knowledge in the classroom thereby influencing their **Self Efficacy.**

In the environment of NCLB, all students are required to meet Adequate Yearly Progress proficiency requirements annually (see Exhibit A). Elementary and middle level teachers are expected to prepare students to achieve proficiency in Mathematics and Reading and Language Arts and secondary teachers are expected to prepare students to achieve proficiency in Mathematics, English and Language Arts, Science and Social

Studies. Although the teachers' responsibilities are different, they are all required to meet the guidelines of AYP. These expectations are causing some teachers frustration because many do not agree with using standardized testing alone to measure student knowledge and because their creativity and classroom efficacy are being stifled (Hamilton et al., 2007). Considering this in light of empowerment theory, the social structural, psychological and critical perspectives of the construct are being compromised. In other words, teachers did not have adequate opportunity to participate democratically in choosing the AYP requirements nor are they being given opportunities to consistently provide feedback concerning how AYP is affecting their students. Additionally, teachers are having difficulty determining if their work is meaningful, if they are competent and if they are making an impact in their students' lives. Because research and theory indicate that empowerment is important to effective teaching practices and due to empirical and anecdotal reports of teacher frustration, it is important to examine how to effectively empower teachers regardless of their school level or the AYP status of the school within which they work.

Purpose of the Study

Research conducted since implementation of NCLB suggests that teachers in schools that have met AYP report greater perceptions of empowerment than those in schools that have not met AYP. Additionally extant research suggests that a relationship exists between two aspects of teacher empowerment (**Decision Making** and **Autonomy**) and AYP status of schools and, as well as between teacher empowerment and two grade levels (elementary and middle) (Coble, 2007; Hirsch, 2005). Because specific empowerment dimensions have emerged as salient to understanding the construct, I chose

to examine the empowerment dimensions independently. Considering these implications, the two-fold purpose of this research was to:

1) collect a new data set, from over 200 teachers in a large metropolitan southern school system, to enhance our understanding of these relationships between the six dimensions of empowerment individually and the three grade ranges of elementary, middle and high school as well as AYP status of schools

2) compare and analyze these findings with respect to retrospective empowerment data reported by these same teachers and to examine the factors that might contribute to changes in teachers' perceptions of empowerment since implementation of NCLB.

Research Questions

To investigate teacher empowerment across school levels and the AYP status of schools the following research question was addressed:

Question 1: *Do teachers' perceptions of empowerment differ across school levels and AYP status of schools?*

To investigate changes in teachers' perceptions of empowerment subsequent to implementation of the NCLB legislation the following question was addressed:

Question 2: *Do teachers report changes in perceptions of empowerment since implementation of NCLB, if so, what do teachers report to be the factors contributing to these changes?*

Research Hypotheses

Based on previous research (Coble, 2007; Hirsch, 2005), I expected my research data to indicate that teachers in schools that have met the AYP requirements of the NCLB legislation report greater opportunities for **Decision Making** and higher perceived levels of **Autonomy**, than teachers in schools that have not met the AYP requirements. Also, I expected the study to reveal differences in perceptions of empowerment across school levels. In fact, I expected elementary school teachers to report greater perceptions of empowerment than high school teachers (Klecker & Loadman, 1998). I also expected elementary school teacher to report greater perceptions of empowerment than middle school teachers (Coble, 2007). Previous research also suggests middle school teachers are more empowered than high school teachers (Hirsch, 2005).

Significance of the Study

Previous research indicates teachers' perceptions of empowerment are positively correlated to 1) opportunities for participatory Decision Making (SECTQ, 2004) and 2) increases in students' reading and mathematics achievement (Sweetland and Hoy, 2000). Considering this in light of the psychological perspective of empowerment theory, it is reasonable to believe that teachers with greater empowerment perceptions have greater perceptions of Self Efficacy (Conger and Kanungo, 1988) as well as greater perceptions of meaningful contributions in the workplace, greater perceptions of professional competence and a greater degree of self determination than those teachers whose empowerment perceptions are lower (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Therefore a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions of empowerment could be beneficial in improving student outcomes.

Significance for Schools

Other research indicates 1) teachers with greater perceptions of empowerment are more likely to be in schools meeting AYP and 2) elementary school teachers report greater perceptions of empowerment than middle or high school teachers. Again, it is important to consider this research with respect to empowerment theory, specifically the social structural perspective of the empowerment construct. The social structural perspective suggests that teachers who are actively participating in democratic processes, including Decision Making would be more empowered than their colleagues working within less empowering conditions. The social structural perspective also suggests that power and information are shared and properly distributed within schools (Spreitzer and Doneson, 2005).

As research suggests, teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions. Because teacher empowerment has been recognized as one of the components of positive teaching conditions, it is important to examine the construct with respect to differing work conditions. One of the differences in the structure of schools is based on school level, elementary, middle or high school. Another difference in the way that schools are categorized and possibly managed is based on AYP status. This designation has come about since implementation of NCLB. My study seeks to compare teacher empowerment under these differing working conditions, across school levels and AYP status of schools in order to highlight how existing conditions within the schools could be negatively affecting teacher empowerment and thus negatively impacting student achievement.

Chapter 3

Methodology

I employed quantitative and qualitative methods when collecting and analyzing my data. I initially gathered data from 235 teachers using a survey instrument that contained open-ended questions and then conducted follow-up interviews with 12 of the participants. The process that I used is best described as a mixed methodology as both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2004). I chose to use a mixed methods approach because a purpose of my research was to determine factors that contributed to changes in teachers' perceptions of empowerment since the NCLB legislation was implemented. As mentioned previously in the Conceptual Framework section of this manuscript, the empowerment of teachers cannot be considered independently of the organization within which the teachers work (Spreitzer & Doneson, 2005). I believe that teacher empowerment is a phenomenon best studied using a mixed methods approach because it will provide a means of probing more deeply to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that teachers believe contribute to their perceptions of changes in perceptions of empowerment as their environment is affected by NCLB. Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003) describe this method as a way to "get more out of the data" (p. 353) and thus enhance the meaning and quality of the findings.

Participants

The participants in my dissertation study were 235 high school, middle school and elementary school teachers across all subject areas from a large metropolitan public school system in Georgia. The demographic data of interest for the teachers completing the survey is summarized in Table 1.

I performed a Chi Square test and a Binomial test (see Tables 2 and 3) to determine how the sample of teachers responding to the empowerment survey compares to the county from which the sample was drawn and found no significant difference in the two populations with respect to grade level. Although statistically significant differences between the population completing the survey and the teacher population as a whole for gender, race and years of experience were found, this was of less importance because my research focused on grade level and AYP. Table 4 summarizes the subjects taught by the survey respondents partitioned across school levels.

Instrument

I administered a 38-item teacher empowerment survey, adapted from the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) instrument, developed by Short and Rinehart (see Appendices B and C). The researchers developed the SPES scale by initially asking teachers to record "ways that they felt empowered in the schools in which they taught" (Short & Rinehart, 1992, p. 248). Of the 110 items generated by the teachers, a panel of judges agreed that 75 reflected empowerment components as indicated by research. Sixty-eight of the items were agreed upon as being representative of teacher empowerment. A factor analysis on the 68-item instrument yielded 38 items retained on six teacher empowerment factors: (a) **Decision Making**, (b) **Impact**, (c) **Autonomy**, (d) **Self Efficacy**, (e) **Professional Growth**, and (f) **Status**. There are 10 items which address the **Decision Making** construct, 6 address **Impact**, 4 address **Autonomy**, 6 address **Self Efficacy**, 6 address **Professional Growth** and 6 address the **Status** construct (the items are identified in Appendix D).

The reliability of the 38-item instrument is reflected in an overall Cronbach's alpha of .94. The alphas of each of the subscales are: **Decision Making** (.89), **Impact** (.82), **Autonomy** (.81), **Self Efficacy** (.84), **Professional Growth** (.83) and **Status** (.86) (Short & Rinehart, 1992).

I modified the SPES (Short & Rinehart, 1992) instrument by asking the participants to rate their responses to the empowerment items based upon two time reference points. One time reference point is the present, and the other is prior to implementation of the NCLB legislation. The adapted instrument also contains a section for teachers to provide explanatory comments whenever their current and pre-NCLB rating for a particular item differs by two or more points on the four-point scale.

Procedures

To obtain my teacher sample I wrote each principal, in the public school system selected, a letter inquiring about the possibility of asking their teachers to complete an on-line survey on perceptions of teacher empowerment. Twenty-seven principals gave their permission (17 of 85 elementary schools, 4 of 20 middle schools and 6 of 21 high schools). I also asked teachers to inquire among their colleagues to determine if there was interest in participating in the study. Once I received permission from principals or directly from individual teachers, I sent each teacher an email with a URL link to an on-line survey administered through the survey tool, Survey Monkey (2007).

Interviews. To include a thick and rich description (Patton, 1990) of teachers' perceptions of empowerment in my research, I conducted follow-up interviews with 12 of the 64 teachers who completed the open-ended questions on the survey. I used a systematic approach to identify these interview candidates. First, I examined the

demographic composition of my survey population and determined the percentage of teachers needed across school level, according to AYP status, gender, ethnicity and years of experience. I also included as diverse a sample as possible regarding subject area. As a result, my interview candidates comprised a subset demographically similar to my survey sample.

Each of the interviews lasted approximately one hour and 30 minutes and each was tape recorded. Each of the teachers received $50 in compensatory pay for volunteering their time to be interviewed. The Interview Guide is included in Appendix E. The grade level demographics for the full teacher sample, the 64 who responded to the open-ended survey and the subset of these teachers who participated in the follow-up interviews are in presented in Table 5.

Data Analysis. I used analysis of variance (ANOVA) and paired samples t-tests to analyze the results of the survey data. I used the qualitative methodologies of inductive and interpretive analyses to explore teachers' survey comments regarding the factors contributing to changes in their perceptions of empowerment since implementation of the NCLB legislation.

I began with a two-way ANOVA analysis to compare the total Empowerment means between teachers in schools that met AYP requirements and those in schools that did not meet AYP. I also analyzed the total Empowerment means across School Levels. I used two-way ANOVAs to compare the means for the six dimensions of empowerment separately for teachers in schools that met AYP requirements with the corresponding means for teachers in schools that did not and to investigate whether or not the teacher empowerment dimensions depend on school levels taught.

I used a paired samples t-test to compare the empowerment means reported both prior to and subsequent to implementation of the NCLB legislation. I used inductive and interpretive analyses in this study to provide a depth of understanding to the quantitative data. Hatch (2002) defines inductive analysis as "a search for patterns of meaning in data so that general statements about phenomena under investigation can be made" (p. 161). Thomas (2003) suggests that interpretive analysis provides meaning that exceeds simply describing the data. Merriam (1998) suggests that qualitative analysis, by nature, is inductive in that it uses particular instances to draw conclusions. The analytic processes used in this study are described in the Analysis of Open-Ended Survey Items and Analysis of Interview Data sections of this dissertation.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is that the comparison between teachers' perceptions of empowerment prior to NCLB and subsequent to its implementation is influenced by the accuracy of teachers' recall. A longitudinal study of empowerment perceptions of Georgia teachers with baseline data gathered prior to 2001 compared with data gathered after implementation of NCLB would have been ideal. Because the baseline data was not available, the method used to gather data from Georgia teachers was the best way to make the comparison of teachers' perceptions of changes in empowerment.

Secondly, I used an electronic survey to gather data and could not guarantee that the teachers themselves completed the instruments. I could only trust that the educators saw the value in the opportunity to provide their input into their perceptions about their empowerment and their perceptions of how their perceptions of empowerment have changed since NCLB was implemented.

A third limitation is the sample size that I have chosen to interview. I obtained responses from a limited sample of educators. Although this method allowed me to provide a thick, rich description of how some educators view their perceptions of empowerment currently and prior to implementation of NCLB, I cannot infer that the entire national population of educators has identical views.

A fourth limitation is that the sample of teachers completing the survey may not accurately represent the population as a whole. The teachers who take time from their daily tasks to provide survey information may by atypical.

Chapter 4

Findings

In this section, I provide descriptive statistics as well as results of data analyses pertinent to each research question. I begin the data analysis section by identifying the independent and dependent variables of interest in my study. This is followed by descriptive statistics on the dependent variable of overall teacher empowerment and its six subscales are presented in tables that display the differences in these statistics across the comparison groups of interest in my study. One such table, related to my first research question, displays the means of the measures of empowerment for teachers in schools meeting AYP goals versus those of teachers in schools not meeting AYP goals. A second table, related to my first research question, is used to present a comparison of the means of the measures of empowerment for teachers in elementary school, middle school and high school. After providing these descriptive statistics to set the stage for my inferential statistics, I report the results of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) related to Research Question 1 which examines perceptions of the six dimensions of empowerment across AYP status of school and School Level. Next, the results of a paired t-test and qualitative data summaries related to Research Question 2 are provided to examine changes in perceptions of empowerment since implementation of the NCLB legislation. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings pertinent to Research Question 1 and Research Question 2.

Description of Independent and Dependent Variables

The unit of analysis for my study is individual teachers. The independent variables of interest are: (1) whether or not a teacher is currently working in a school that has successfully reached its goals of AYP and (2) the school level setting that a teacher is working in (either elementary, middle or high school). Although they were not used in my analysis, I also collected data for the following variables: (1) teacher gender; (2) teacher ethnicity; (3) the teacher's experience as measured by number of years teaching, and (4) the teacher's subject area. The dependent variable of interest for my research is teacher empowerment. The instrument used to measure the construct of empowerment (The School Participant Empowerment Scale) is comprised of an overall empowerment score and accompanying scores across six subscales: **Decision Making**, **Professional Growth, Status**, **Self-Efficacy**, **Autonomy**, and **Impact**. Table 6 provides a listing of all of these variables and the operationalized domain of each.

Descriptive Statistics

In the section that follows, descriptive statistics on the dependent variable of teacher empowerment overall and its six subscales will be presented in tables that display the differences in these statistics across the comparison groups of interest for my study.

As indicated in Table 7, Descriptive Statistics for Current Empowerment and Subscales, the teachers responding to the survey indicate, on a scale ranging from 1.00 to 4.00, an overall empowerment mean of M=2.91. This rating provides an overall sense of the reported perception of teacher empowerment across school levels and AYP status of schools. The teachers' reported subscale means ranged from M=2.34 to M=3.39. The two

lowest reported subscale means were **Decision Making** and **Autonomy**. The two highest reported subscale means were **Status** and **Impact**.

Table 8, Descriptive Statistics for Current Empowerment and Subscales by AYP Status of Schools, indicates that, as hypothesized based on both theory and previous research, the overall empowerment mean was higher, albeit only slightly, in schools meeting the AYP requirements. Also as hypothesized, the trend was the same for the **Decision Making** and **Autonomy** subscales.

As indicated in Table 9, Descriptive Statistics for Current Empowerment and Subscales by School Level Teaching, As hypothesized, elementary teachers reported higher levels of Empowerment overall than middle and high school teachers. The **Decision Making** and **Autonomy** subscales were the lowest for elementary, middle and high school teachers. The **Status** subscale was highest.

As indicated in Table 10, Descriptive Statistics for Current Empowerment and Subscales by School Level Teaching and AYP Status, the overall Empowerment for Elementary teachers in schools meeting AYP is greater than for those in schools not meeting AYP. For middle school teachers the trend is reversed. For high school teachers the overall Empowerment ratings were flat. Elementary teachers subscale ratings are consistently higher in schools that have met AYP as compared to those in schools that have not, for example, **Decision Making** and **Self Efficacy** both reflect higher ratings.

Middle School teachers subscale ratings are consistently lower in schools meeting AYP with the exception of **Professional Growth** which was flat. The high school teachers' subscale ratings were inconsistent. For example, for teachers in schools meeting

AYP compared to those for teachers in schools not meeting AYP the subscale means are as follows: **Decision Making** is lower, **Self Efficacy** is the same and **Status** is higher.

As indicated in Table 11, Comparison of Descriptive Statistics for Empowerment and Subscales Pre and Post NCLB, the overall Empowerment ratings are lower since implementation of NCLB. The same holds true for each of the subscales, **Decision Making**, **Professional Growth**, **Status**, **Self Efficacy**, **Autonomy** and **Impact** are lower.

As indicated in Table 12, Descriptive Statistics for Empowerment and Subscales for Elementary School Teachers Pre and Post NCLB, Elementary school teachers reported lower overall Empowerment means since implementation of the NCLB legislation. The teachers reported lower ratings on each of the subscales as well.

As indicated in Table 13, Descriptive Statistics for Empowerment and Subscales for Middle School Teachers Pre and Post NCLB, the middle school teachers also report a decrease in overall empowerment. This is lower than either elementary or high school teachers. The middle school teachers reported lower ratings on each of the subscales since implementation of NCLB as well.

As indicated in Table 14, Descriptive Statistics for Empowerment and Subscales for High School Teachers Pre and Post NCLB, high school teachers report a decrease in overall empowerment since implementation of NCLB. Each of the subscale ratings is lower as well.

As indicated in Table 15, Correlation Matrix for Current Empowerment Dimensions, the six empowerment dimensions are positively correlated with each other and each correlation is statistically significant. The lowest correlations are between **Autonomy** and **Status** (r=.42), **Autonomy** and **Self Efficacy** (r=.47) and **Autonomy** and

Impact (r=.46). The highest correlations are between **Impact** and **Status** (r=.78), **Self Efficacy** and **Status** (r=.73) and **Impact** and **Self Efficacy** (r=.71).

Results

The results of my research are presented in relationship to each research question investigated. The findings for my analyses are reported using Tables 16–30 and Figures 1-4. I used analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine the effects of the independent variables of interest in my study, AYP Status of School and School Level, on the dependent variables, **Decision Making**, **Professional Growth**, **Status**, **Self Efficacy**, **Autonomy** and **Impact**. I used a paired t-test analysis to compare Empowerment ratings prior to and subsequent to implementation of NCLB. The figures reflect the results of the qualitative analyses.

Results for Research Question 1

Question 1: *Do teachers' perceptions of empowerment differ across school levels and AYP status of schools?*

Analyses of Variance. Results of the analyses of variance are found in Tables 16-22. As indicated in Table 16, Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Association Between Empowerment, AYP Status, School Level and AYP X School Level, there is no significant main effect for AYP Status or School Level but there is a significant interaction effect for AYP X School Level, $F(2,169)= 3.77$, $p=.02$, partial $h^2=.005$.

Because the main effects were not significant and the interaction term was, I examined the simple main effects, that is, the differences across AYP status and School Level, separately. To control for Type I error across the two simple main effects, I set alpha for each at .05/2=.025. There was a significant difference for School Level for teachers in schools meeting AYP, $F(2,169)=7.56$, $p=.0007$ but not for teachers in schools not meeting AYP. Additionally, there were no significant differences across the two AYP levels among the three school levels.

Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate the pairwise differences among means for teachers in schools meeting AYP. I set alpha at .025/3=.008. There were no significant pairwise differences between elementary, middle and high school teachers. The results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences in perceptions of overall Empowerment across grade levels for teachers in schools meeting AYP. These results do not support my research hypotheses. In light of this as well as based upon previous research highlighting the saliency of specific Empowerment dimensions, I will analyze the six subscales independently. The analyses follow below.

As indicated in Table 17, Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Association Between Decision Making, AYP Status, School Level and AYP X School Level, there is a significant main effect for School Level, $F(2,180)=3.69$, $p=.03$, partial $h^2=.04$ but no significant main effect for AYP Status and no significant interaction between School Level and AYP status of school. This indicates that there is no statistically significant variation in the means for the **Decision Making** empowerment dimension whether teachers are in schools that have met the AYP requirements or in those schools that have not met the AYP requirements. This finding is somewhat surprising in light of previous

research (Hirsch 2005, Coble 2007) reporting a statistically significant relationship between AYP status and this empowerment dimension and bears further discussion.

The follow-up analyses to the significant main effect for School Level examined the pairwise differences in the means for the **Decision Making** component of teacher empowerment across the three school levels, elementary, middle and high. The Tukey procedure was used to control for Type 1 error across the pairwise comparisons. The results indicate that there are statistically significant differences in perceptions of **Decision Making** opportunities between elementary and middle school teachers. Specifically, elementary school teachers report greater perceptions of opportunities for **Decision Making** than do middle school teachers.

As indicated in Table 18, Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Association Between Professional Growth, AYP Status, School Level and AYP X School Level, elementary, middle and high school teachers do not report statistically significant differences in the **Professional Growth** dimension of teacher empowerment and teachers do not report statistically significant differences in this dimension based upon the AYP status of the schools.

Similarly Table 19, Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Association Between Status, AYP Status, School Level and AYP X School Level, indicates there is no statistically significant difference in the reported **Status** dimension based upon the AYP status of schools and that elementary, middle and high school teachers do not report perceptions of the **Status** dimension that are significantly different across school levels.

As indicated in Table 20, Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Association Between Self Efficacy, AYP Status, School Level and AYP X School Level, there is a

statistically significant difference in one main effect, School Level, F(2,184)=3.05, p=.05, partial h^2=.03. However, the other main effect, AYP Status is not statistically significant, nor is the interaction effect, AYP X School Level. This indicates that the difference in teachers' perceptions of the **Self Efficacy** dimension of empowerment is statistically significant across the three school levels, elementary, middle and high, but not according to AYP Status of Schools. In addition, there is no interaction between the AYP Status of schools and School Level with respect to this dimension.

The follow-up analyses to the significant main effect for School Level examined the pairwise differences in the **Self Efficacy** component of teacher empowerment across the three school levels, elementary, middle and high. The Tukey procedure was used to control for Type 1 error across the pairwise comparisons. The results of the Tukey procedure indicate that there are statistically significant differences in perceptions of **Self Efficacy** between elementary and middle school teachers. Elementary school teachers report greater perceptions of **Self Efficacy** than do middle school teachers.

As shown in Table 21, Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Association Between Autonomy, AYP Status, School Level and AYP X School Level, one main effect AYP Status is not statistically significant, but the other main effect, School Level is statistically significant, F(2,187)=4.12, p=.02, partial h^2=.04. Additionally, there is an interaction effect between AYP and School Level, F(2,187)=3.51, p=.03, partial h^2=.04. Because of the significant interaction between AYP status and School Level, I chose to ignore the School Level main effect and instead I examined the School Level simple main effects. In other words, I examined the differences in School Levels for teachers in

schools that met AYP and for teachers in schools that did not meet AYP separately. I also examined the differences in AYP status for elementary, middle and high school teachers.

To control for Type I error across the two simple main effects, I set alpha for each at .025. There were no significant differences for school levels for teachers in schools that did not meet AYP, but there were differences for school levels for teachers in schools that met AYP, $F(2,187)=5.09$, $p=.01$. Additionally, there were no significant differences for AYP status for middle or high school teachers, but there were differences for elementary school teachers, $F(1,187)=5.53$, $p=.02$.

Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate the three pairwise school level differences in the means for teachers in schools that met AYP. To control for Type I error over the three pairwise comparisons, alpha was set at .008 (.025/3). There was no significant difference in perceived levels of **Autonomy** across school levels. This indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in perceived levels of **Autonomy** across School Levels. However, there are statistically significant differences across AYP status of schools. In fact, elementary school teachers in schools that met AYP report greater perceptions of **Autonomy** than elementary school teachers in schools that did not. There was no need to do follow-up tests for AYP since there are only two levels of this independent variable.

As shown in Table 22, Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Association Between Impact, AYP Status, School Level and AYP X School Level, the main effects are not significant for the Impact dimension of empowerment. Additionally, there is no significant interaction effect between AYP and School Level. This indicates that teachers' perceptions of the Impact dimension of Empowerment are not statistically

significantly different according to AYP status of schools or across the three school levels.

Summary of Results for Research Question 1

According to my analysis, teachers do report differing perceptions of empowerment across school levels and across AYP status of schools based upon differences in specific dimensions. Elementary school teachers have greater perceptions of **Decision Making** opportunities and **Self Efficacy** than middle school teachers. Also, elementary teachers in schools that met AYP have greater perceived levels of **Autonomy** than teachers in schools that have not met AYP.

My analysis of teacher empowerment continues with an examination of Research Question 2. Using this question I sought to compare teachers' current perceptions of empowerment to their perceptions of empowerment prior to implementation of NCLB. In light of this, a paired-samples t-test was conducted and qualitative data, collected related to the comparison, was examined. The analysis follows in the section below.

Results for Research Question 2

Question 2: *Do teachers report changes in perceptions of empowerment since implementation of NCLB, if so, what do teachers report to be the factors contributing to these changes?*

Paired-Samples t-Test. The paired t-test analyses are found in Tables 23-26. The analysis begins with a comparison of teachers' perceptions of empowerment as reported

currently versus their reported perceptions of empowerment prior to implementation of the NCLB legislation. The analysis also examines the reported comparison of teachers' perceptions of empowerment across school level. Because AYP status of schools did not exist prior to NCLB, the analysis does not consider this independent variable.

The paired t-test analysis indicates a statistically significant difference in overall empowerment when comparing teachers' current perceptions, since implementation of NCLB, to their perceptions of empowerment prior to the legislation. The variance in teacher empowerment before and after NCLB is consistently different across school levels (Tables 23-26 indicate statistically significant differences in overall empowerment for all of the teachers, $p<.0001$, for elementary, $p<.001$, for middle, $p<.05$ and high, $p<.01$).

As indicated in Table 23, Paired Sample t-Test for Empowerment and Subscales: Comparing Ratings Pre and Post NCLB, there are statistically significant differences in each of the subscales with the exception of **Status**, (**Decision Making**, $t(129)=-3.29$, $p<.0001$, **Professional Growth**, $t(135)=-3.13$, $p<.001$, **Self Efficacy**, $t(135)=-5.43$, $p<.001$, **Autonomy**, $t(137)=-6.52$, $p<.001$ and **Impact**, $t(132)=-2.14$, $p=.03$).

As indicated in Table 24, Paired Sample t-Test for Empowerment and Subscales: Comparing Ratings Pre and Post NCLB for Elementary Schools, the **Self Efficacy** and **Autonomy** subscales are significant, $t(69)=-3.81$ and $p<.001$ and $t(69)=-5.49$ and $p<.001$, respectively, but no statistically significant differences were found in the remaining subscales.

As indicated in Table 25, Paired Sample t-Test for Empowerment and Subscales: Comparing Ratings Pre and Post NCLB for Middle Schools, the **Decision Making** and

Professional Growth subscales are statistically significant at the p<.05 level, t(28)=-2.11, and t(28)=-2.38, respectively. **Self Efficacy** and **Autonomy** are each significant at the p<.01 level, t(29)=-3.38 and t(29)=-3.25, respectively. There are no statistically significant differences in the **Status** and **Impact** subscales for the middle school teachers in the study.

As indicated in Table 26, Paired Sample t-Test for Empowerment and Subscales: Comparing Ratings Pre and Post NCLB for High Schools, the only statistically significant differences in the subscales are for **Self Efficacy**, t(33)=-2.21,p=.03 and **Autonomy**, t(35)=-2.21, p=.03. There are no statistically significant differences in the remaining empowerment subscales.

Next, I examine the qualitative data provided by the teachers related to Research Question 2. I begin by analyzing the survey comments followed by the interview data.

Analysis of Open-Ended Survey Items. Following the content analysis and analytic induction qualitative methodology suggested by Merriam (1998), I first compiled teachers' responses to the open-ended survey items. Secondly, I developed a coding system defined by the survey items which served as a priori codes. Using the a priori coding system, I categorized teacher responses by item. Then, I analyzed the teachers' responses and developed first level codes using the factors identified by the teachers. For example, if in response to Item I, "I am given the responsibility to monitor programs," a teacher responded "The NCLB controls what I teach as well as how I teach. The NCLB does not allow a teacher to help a student learn to think or experience the joy of learning." I categorized that comment as "Shift in Student Learning/Teaching Focus due

to NCLB." I followed this procedure for each item response. I examined the responses to identify recurring and similarly defined topics. I tabulated the frequency of common topics and based on emergent themes from the data developed nine categories reflecting factors contributing to decreases in empowerment and four categories contributing to increases. I provided a respected qualitative researcher with my data and documentation explaining my procedure to gain feedback regarding whether the 13 categories (see Figures 1 and 2) were developed appropriately and according to sound methodology. The feedback suggested that she was in agreement with the suggested categories.

It is important to note here that, as indicated in Table 27, 80% (188 of 235) of the teachers who responded to the survey reported a *decrease* in empowerment. Although the quantitative data provides explanatory evidence for the *decrease* through the statistically significant results of the ANOVA analyses (see Tables 16-22) there is no statistical explanation for the 10% (23 of 235) of the population who reported an *increase* in perceptions of empowerment since implementation of NCLB. These reported differences will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

When examining the survey comments, I observed that teachers were not only reporting factors that contributed to changes in their perceptions of empowerment, but indicated specific directions of the changes. The predominant trend in teacher comments indicated factors that contributed to *decreases* in empowerment, but there were some teachers who mentioned factors that contributed to *increases* in empowerment. The directional aspects of these changes in empowerment are indicated in the two paragraphs which follow below.

Teacher reported factors contributing to *decreases* in empowerment are as follows: 84% (54 of 64) of the teachers indicated "time constraints due to requirements of NCLB;" 47% mentioned "style of the school building administration;" 36% identified issues related to school "programs;" 34% indicated "prescribed or 'watered-down' curriculum;" 23% mentioned a "shift in the student learning/teaching focus due to NCLB;" 22% responded that students' "independent/critical thinking is de-emphasized due to NCLB;" 17% mentioned "excessive paperwork due to NCLB;" and 9% indicated "subject area requirements related to NCLB." The remaining responses, 13%, varied by topic and could not be grouped into a single category, thus they were classified as "other."

Teacher reported factors contributing to *increases* in empowerment are as follows: 16% mentioned "style of building administration," 11% indicated "job change," 9% referred to "years of experience" and 8% mentioned "increased content knowledge."

To further clarify teachers' comments, I will provide definitions of "style of school building administration" and "programs" as suggested by the teachers who participated in my research. The "style of school building administration" is defined as the principals' management techniques and behaviors which could include, for example, the method by which the principal seeks input from teachers and actively involves them in **Decision Making**, promotes collegiality among the staff, provides **Professional Growth** opportunities and works to put programs in place that will improve and enrich student learning. "Programs" is defined as the curricular and extra-curricular materials and activities that teachers employ and monitor or assess to accomplish their daily teaching responsibilities. Examples of teachers' responses and the corresponding

emergent categories are outlined in Figures 1 and 2, in decreasing order of frequency with the exception of the last category, "other," in Figure 1.

As indicated earlier, time constraints due to NCLB were reported most frequently as reasons for *decreases* in perceptions of empowerment. The two comments given as examples in the first category in Figure 1 are indicative of the majority of the teachers' responses in this classification. The comments suggest that the volume of work related to the legislation, such as preparing students for testing, places constraints on time used previously to complete teaching tasks. Another common theme for teachers in schools that did not make AYP was that their teaching time is affected by prescribed activities that directly resulted from failure to comply with that requirement of the legislation. The other examples listed in Figure 1 reflect teachers' comments related to the remaining eight categories. In Figure 2, "style of school building administration" was the factor reported most frequently as contributing to *increases* in perceptions of empowerment. This is an interesting finding, which I will elaborate on in the Discussion section of this document. Again, the comments under this category are indicative of the majority of the teachers' comments concerning this factor. The other examples listed in Figure 2 reflect comments related to the remaining categories.

My data analysis continued with a review of my initial a priori and first level codes and the themes that emerged from the data. Through this process, I concluded that the salient teacher reported factors affecting *decreases* in empowerment were time constraints related to NCLB, the style of building administration, curriculum and program changes and a greater emphasis on testing. Teachers reported frustration due to compromised creativity in their instruction as a result of having to complete

documentation related to NCLB and having to prepare their students for excessive standardized testing. The teachers also reported a narrowing of the curriculum as the focus for student instruction changed from emphasizing independent and critical thinking skills to a focus on the curriculum that would be tested. The remaining factors contributing to changes in perceptions of empowerment were based upon subject area and individually cited responses as indicated in the "other" category as shown in the figure.

Interestingly, teachers also reported that the style of the building administration contributed to increases in perceptions of empowerment. The comments suggested that increased teacher empowerment results when the administration fosters a professional school climate, where teacher input is valued, sought and implemented. Other salient factors reported by teachers were the importance of professional development opportunities, years of experience and increased content knowledge. These findings were critical in determining the scope and focus of the interview questions. The development of the questions and analysis of the interviewee responses are described in detail below.

Development of Interview Questions. To test the conclusions formed in this phase of my research, I developed a set of interview questions based on the 13 themes (see Figures 1 and 2) that emerged from the survey data. I examined each of the teacher reported factors contributing to empowerment differences (both decreases and increases) and designed the interview questions to encourage conversation regarding the factors by asking teachers to describe the topics identified in my coding scheme. For example, I asked teachers to describe the programs that they were responsible for monitoring as well as their relationships with their building administration, their colleagues and their

students. I also asked them to discuss the adequacy of their teaching time and the time allotted to accomplish their daily responsibilities. Because teachers' comments tended towards a negative view associated with NCLB, I chose not to start the interviews with that topic. Instead, I sought to begin the interviews by generating conversation about teachers' daily activities. Therefore, my initial interview question referred to "programs" (factor 3 in Fig. 1). The initial question was followed by three questions related to the administrative style within the school building (factor 2 in Fig.1 and factor 1 in Fig.2) and encompassed topics related to participatory **Decision Making**, collegial relationships, and overall relationships with the administration. The fifth question was generated based on teachers' comments regarding the "prescribed/watered-down curriculum" (factor 4 in Fig. 1). I used this same methodology to generate each of the remaining interview questions. (See Figure 3 and Appendix E). Again, I consulted a qualitative researcher and a peer reviewer regarding the validity of the interview questions.

As indicated in Figure 3, I used each of the categories that emerged from the survey data to develop the interview questions. "Programs" was addressed in the first interview question, the style of the administration was addressed in questions 2, 3 and 4 and the pattern continued throughout the development of the interview guide. Time constraints was addressed in the last question because I wanted to determine if the teachers would identify the topic as they described other aspects of their work lives, such as the programs they monitored and their relationships with their administration without being specifically prompted. After developing the questions, I conducted 12 interviews. The interview analysis is presented below.

Analysis of Interview Data. I analyzed the interview data through a process similar to the one used to analyze the open-ended survey data. First, I compiled the teachers' interview responses. Secondly, I developed a set of codes defined by the interview questions–these served as a priori codes. Using the a priori coding system, I categorized the interview responses by question. Then I analyzed the responses and developed first and second level codes. The coding system is described in the example that follows in the paragraph below.

I began the coding process by examining teachers' responses to the interview questions. For example, the first question, which served as an a priori code, asked the teachers to describe the programs that they monitor at their school. One teacher described activities related to "CRCT preparation" and "CRCT tutorials." Another teacher identified "CRCT lesson plans," and one other identified "benchmark tests" in response to the first question. These responses represented four first level codes. I followed a similar procedure for each of the interview questions (a priori codes). Next, I examined the first level codes for recurring patterns which led to the development of second level codes. For example, the responses identified above were merged into three categories, "Assessment Preparation," "Assessment Planning" and "Assessments." I followed this procedure for each topic identified in my first level coding. I reviewed my second level codes and noted emergent themes. For example, the common theme in the teachers' responses noted above was "Standardized Assessments." I repeated this process for each data unit from each interview question.

My data analysis continued with a review of my coding scheme and the emergent themes and I noted connections which led to further refined categories through which I

drew generalized conclusions and identified four specific themes that have affected changes in teachers' perceptions of empowerment since implementation of the NCLB legislation. The themes that emerged were: (a) school climate, (b) standards requirements, (c) issues related to daily teaching responsibilities and (d) affective experiences (see Figure 4). Each of the broad categories in Figure 4 is explained in the sections which follow below. The categories contain examples of teachers comments from the 12 interviews conducted.

School Climate

In this section, I will provide examples of teachers' comments categorized according to descriptions of the work environment, specifically: opportunities for development, teacher dispositions and participatory behavior models among the staff. This data will be followed by teachers' comments categorized according to relationships with colleagues, the administration and students.

Almost all (62 of 64) of the survey respondents who provided comments and 100% (12 of 12) of those teachers interviewed made direct references to the negative effects of NCLB on changes in their work environment. However, when asked specifically about opportunities for professional development at their schools, the teachers' comments were mixed. Each of the 12 teachers interviewed mentioned that they complete 20 mandatory staff development units (SDUs) annually. Some teachers responded that there were more opportunities for development, but the variety was lacking. Two of the teachers (one teaching elementary school and one middle) said that the choices that are available to them now are not as helpful as they were prior to implementation of NCLB. One teacher said that the funding previously available to take

courses outside of the county is no longer available and that more principals are focusing on making sure that the teachers are learning about how to help their students pass the standardized tests. One teacher said that although she was able to attend a staff development class that taught some creative ideas, she was not always able to apply what she learned because there was no money to purchase the supplies that were used in the class.

Other important comments related to **Professional Growth** indicated increased perceptions of empowerment. Four teachers (two in high schools and two in elementary) mentioned that they were able to change job functions which gave them opportunities to participate more fully in the decision making process and gave them increased autonomy. These comments support my quantitative findings that teachers perceptions of **Decision Making** and **Autonomy** are statistically significant contributors to changes in empowerment (see Tables 17 and 21).

When asked to describe their work environment many of the teachers interviewed responded with comments that suggest their teacher dispositions. All twelve of the teachers said that they are collaborative as they interact with their colleagues. Three of the teachers suggested that this collaborative spirit contributes to their effectiveness. Two of the teachers commented that they evaluate their teaching practices, one mentioned that she does a self-evaluation and that she will ask colleagues and sometimes the students. Two of the teachers described themselves as "reflective."

When asked to describe opportunities for **Decision Making** available to them four of the twelve teachers interviewed said that they have "little input into the curriculum." Two teachers said that they have "no input into student activities or scheduling." One

teacher commented that she "did not have enough input into text selections." All of the teachers commented that they are required to adhere to the Georgia Performance Standards which determine what they are to teach, but three of them commented that they make decisions regarding the pacing guide. Three teachers described extra-curricular activities that they organized. One referred excitedly to an "MLKing themed club day activity" that he designed along with a colleague. One teacher described a cultural arts day activity that she designed which allowed students to present ethnic dances. One teacher described her irritation with having the dance team responsibilities "taken from her." Several of the teachers expressed dissatisfaction with having to adhere to the prescribed curriculum related to the CRCT and one commented that she could make decisions regarding "resources and 'manipulatives' to use with the prescribed curriculum."

When asked about the nature of their relationships at their schools, the teachers' comments were informative. Eight of the 12 teachers interviewed described their relationships with their fellow staff members as "professional," "collegial" or "cordial." Of the eight, two teach in high school, two in middle and four in elementary. Eight of teachers said that they participated in informal mentoring/training of colleagues and three participated in formal mentoring/training. Two teachers described their relationships with fellow staff members as "competitive" and two teachers said that their colleagues were "unsupportive" of new teachers. One teacher commented that "she had to force her way in … as the new kid on the block."

Four teachers (two elementary, 1 middle and 1 high school teacher) commented that changes in the administration at the school created a negative change in the

environment. One of the four teachers felt that the creed of the new principal at the school was “my way or the highway” and that there was little opportunity for participatory **Decision Making** or **Autonomy** and that consequently, teacher morale was low. One of the other teachers commented that the new principal at the school was trying to become acclimated to the role and thus was not as effective as he/she could be.

Four of the twelve teachers interviewed (one high school teacher, one elementary and two middle) commented that the administration at their schools was so concerned with testing and making AYP that the emphasis was not on student learning. This was disconcerting to the teachers because the majority reported that student learning was most important to them. Three of the teachers, one in elementary grades, one in middle and one in high school, expressed that their principals seemed apprehensive and concerned with the security of their jobs. Not all of the news was bad concerning teachers’ relationships with their administrators, despite the frustration that many expressed with the increased focus on testing, some of the teachers commented that their principals sought their input and supported them. These teachers said that they felt that the principals were also feeling pressured from the county/state to meet the AYP mandates and seemed fearful. One teacher commented that the administration discourages innovation because of the concern for meeting AYP requirements. She said that “the county would react if the [test] scores are not good.”

When asked to describe their relationship with students, 9 of the twelve teachers commented that they were “mutually respectful.” Two teachers said that they were empowering students and three said that they were not empowering students. One teacher commented that “students have too much power today and too many choices.” This same

teacher commented that our society has created kids who are too "demanding" and that "the law covers them too much without appropriate consequences for their actions." Ten of the twelve teachers commented that they are effective because they "encourage students to achieve," two said that they "encourage participatory learning" and one commented that she "pushes students to excel." One teacher commented that "students are not allowed to fail and then succeed or recover." She suggested that the American society is doing a disservice to our students because of this.

Standards Requirements

In this section, I will provide data representative of teachers' comments categorized according to requirements related to standards. The standards referred to in this section are the Georgia Performance Standards and AYP requirements, specifically CRCT and benchmark assessments.

When asked to describe programs (the curricular and extra-curricular materials and activities employed to accomplish daily teaching responsibilities) they are responsible for monitoring, many of the teachers' comments centered around requirements related to state and national standards. Of the 12 teachers interviewed, two of the elementary teachers and two of the middle school teachers commented that since their schools' AYP status is based upon students' performance on the CRCT, this test is driving instruction. The teachers said that their students' progress is based on standardized test results and one remarked that she has "no time to do personal assessments to determine the individual needs of her students." Another teacher commented that she is "teaching students to become good test takers." One teacher

remarked that her instruction has to "stay within the Georgia Performance Standards" but she can choose her method of "lesson implementation, such as inquiry based [instruction], labs or board work." One of the teachers remarked that her students are "so tired of testing." When I asked her to tell me about the benchmark tests her reply was:

> The teachers, we discuss it. The kids and teachers discuss it. The kids want to know, 'Why am I taking all these tests?' and we tell them, 'The State mandates,' and what have you. The kids don't take it seriously, in our opinion. You can ask them questions on a daily basis about what we're learning and what we're doing, and they can answer. It comes time for a benchmark test, the post test, and you'll see when it's time to go over the answers, 'Oh, yeah. I knew that!' It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. You try to tell them it's going to be a part of their grade and the County is going to see your name and your grade, and they still don't care.

This same teacher commented further that the students take the benchmark tests every six weeks in all subject areas, pre-testing and post-testing, and that "they're just tired of it."

All six of the elementary school teachers interviewed report frustration that much of their time is spent preparing students for standardized testing. All three of the middle school teachers report frustration that much of their time is spent preparing students for standardized testing and that the county determines what they should be doing with their students without input from them. One of the high school the teachers expressed her belief that "the pressure is on E/LA and Math teachers more than on teachers of other subjects." She suggested that because these areas are the main focus of accountability now that the other subject areas are not receiving the same kind of attention. Another

teacher commented that Math and Language Arts "are scrutinized more than other subject areas, like "Science and Social Studies and World Languages." One other teacher remarked that Math and Language Arts teachers "had a better idea about what was expected of them regarding the benchmark tests."

The remarks of the interview participants are similar to comments provided by the survey respondents (see Figure 1). One survey comment was "we are [so] locked into 'standards' … that enrichment activities are sidelined." Another teacher wrote "the switch to standards-based instruction and use of a single testing measurement statistic to determine 'AYP' has influenced teachers to 'teach to the test.' Best practices imposed from the state level script the progress and content expected for teachers and limit teacher creativity or depth of student inquiry."

The overall consensus from the teachers, whether elementary, middle or high, is that the focus on meeting the requirements of the standards limits their creativity in planning lessons and restricts students' creativity because they are being taught to be test takers and not creative thinkers. Even the 24 teachers (of the 235 research participants) who reported increased perceptions of empowerment expressed dissatisfaction with standards requirements. Two commented that standards requirements are "interfering with their instruction." The general consensus is that teachers feel that the time spent in preparing students for tests affects their daily teaching tasks, which is discussed in greater detail below.

Issues Related to Daily Teaching Responsibilities

In this section, I will provide data representative of teachers' comments categorized according to relevance to their daily teaching responsibilities. When asked if

there was adequate time to accomplish the tasks required during the work day, the majority of the responses were "no." Eight (four elementary, three middle and one high school teacher) of the 12 surveyed commented that they in no way had enough time to complete the tasks required during the work day and cited the following reasons:

- More and more tasks are required every day
- NCLB paperwork: Level 1 plans for lower level students must be documented-bogs down
- teachers are accountable for failures, not students
- grading papers and calling parents during planning periods
- too much paperwork
- meetings and conferences

One elementary school teacher commented that if she could restructure the school day she would make it at least one hour longer. She and other teachers expressed not having enough time to teach the students' in-depth lessons. One teacher remarked "our hands are tied in terms of teaching because so much is CRCT based, [there is] not much room for creativity, an instructional board has to be done. I let my students do mine."

The responses to the interview questions "Are you confident in your subject matter?" and "Are you good at what you do?" elicited responses that suggest that the teachers are unable to accomplish their daily teaching tasks unencumbered and that this causes frustration. Even though 11 of the 12 teachers interviewed indicated that they are confident in their subject matter and 10 of the 12 indicated that they are indeed good at what they do, 8 of the 12 mentioned not having the time to be as creative in planning their lessons therefore not being able to consistently challenge their students to think more critically and independently. One teacher indicated that she does not have the time to devise methods of positively redirecting those students who misbehave to reengage them with the lesson.

When asked if they were making a difference in the lives of their students, two teachers' comments were interesting. These two teachers (both middle grades educators) suggested that more and more responsibility for student learning and accountability is being taken from the students and parents and given to the teacher. One teacher remarked "if a child fails your class, it's not the child's fault, it's not the parents' fault, it's your fault. So in order to make it not your fault and in order to prove that it's not your fault, you have to do a ton of paperwork … deficiency notices, counseling referrals, tutorial logs, stuff like that." The other teacher remarked "teachers have to tutor kids to help them pass the CRCT on their own time, early or late, not mandatory-unspoken." One teacher said "… our society has given kids too much power and they are not being appropriately held accountable for negative behavior. The consequences are not in place when the young people should be corrected."

An analysis of the remarks of teachers based upon years of experience yielded interesting results as well. As seen in Table 1, Comparison of County Teacher Demographics to Sample Teacher Demographics, the experience level of the teachers who responded to the survey instrument varies. Twenty-five of the 64 teachers who provided comments on the survey indicated that teaching experience is a factor that contributes to changes in empowerment. Four of them remarked that because they have taught so many years and have seen so many "programs" come and go that they are frustrated with how current curriculum changes limit teacher creativity and limit or discourage independent and critical thinking among the students. Two remarked that the students are less responsible for their own learning. Nine of the 64 teachers remarked that they feel more confidence in their content knowledge and teaching techniques because of

their years of experience and these teachers' survey responses indicate increased perceptions of empowerment.

All three of the middle school teachers interviewed and several more who provided comments on the survey reported being dissatisfied with a middle school curriculum program, Springboard. The program is designed to promote critical thinking, but the teachers feel that some students are ready for it and some are not. The remarks are reflected in the perceptions of one teacher who commented:

> Because of [the] Springboard requirements teachers are not able to teach as much literature as they could/would. The lowest of the low are helped. The higher level students are sometimes neglected and "bump up against the ceiling" sometimes they are not challenged as much. The skills needed by the middle level students may sometimes be ignored. All of this is going on in the interest of trying to improve test scores.

As the teachers indicated, some students need to have basic skills emphasized before enriching them with this particular curriculum. One teacher mentioned that she will sometimes deviate from the Springboard curriculum and focus on basic grammar when it is evident that her students need additional skill development.

The teachers also made several direct references to NCLB when discussing how their daily teaching tasks affected changes in their perceptions of empowerment. One teacher commented:

> It is difficult to determine if the programs that are being used to monitor student achievement are successful or not because the measurements are not appropriate. Student learning is not being measured, but students' performance on tests is

being measure. She gave an example of the testing being used to determine for instance if the students understood order of operations and if the concepts should be re-taught. She said that the timing of the testing and the results being returned the following year makes it impossible for the classroom teacher to re-teach that concept.

All of the teachers expressed great concern and care for the students whom they teach. One teacher expressed her feeling that "NCLB is a means of sabotaging the public school system." This teacher described a scenario of what can happen when schools do not make AYP for two years in a row, or become "failing" schools. She said that students who attend the "failing" schools are given the choice of attending a school that is in compliance with the AYP requirements, thus possibly leading to overcrowding in the receiving school. The classes in the receiving schools can become too large to appropriately teach the children and the children are being taught to be test takers and not abstract thinkers or critical thinkers. This same teacher suggested that students writing scores would go down with overcrowded classes because teachers would make fewer writing assignments because they would not have the time or resources to grade all of the papers. Her remark suggests that smaller class sizes would prevent that from happening.

The following remark from a teacher encapsulates the general consensus of the teachers' comments regarding how they feel regarding standardized testing and their daily teaching responsibilities: "[there] is so much more to student success, we are squelching the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge that don't show up on a standardized test." The teachers identified affective aspects of teaching/learning (such as

stifling creativity and gaining confidence in subject matter) that are important to the educational process. This concept is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

Affective Experiences

In this section, I will present data that can be categorized as Affective Experiences of the teachers whom I interviewed. When responding to Question 7: "Describe ways in which you are an effective educator." (see Appendix E), several of the teachers referred to affective aspects of their teaching. Three (one elementary, one middle and high school teacher) of the 12 interviewed commented "I care." Three (two elementary and one high school teacher) of the 12 said they "love the students," and three (two middle and one high school teacher) said they "love" the subject matter they teach.

One of the teachers explained that he felt he was average, but wants to "be good." Another teacher expressed that she has a high energy [level]. Others responded that they put more time in planning lessons, and 4 of the 12 teachers interviewed expressed comments, such as "I encourage them [students] to achieve" and "I encourage them [students] to work hard, but I will make learning accessible" that reflect a generally supportive demeanor when relating to their students. One high school teacher remarked "I believe that I am creating a student … I want them to come to know their own learning styles." She said she wants her students to use this knowledge to prepare themselves adequately for tests and assignments. One teacher remarked "I encourage students to write well and I encourage creativity." This teacher also mentioned that she wants her students to accept personal responsibility for learning and remarked "I push them to excel."

When asked to respond to the question "How have NCLB requirements/paperwork affected your work day?" one teacher expressed that her creativity is being stifled. She said that she has less time to plan creative lessons which seemed frustrating for her.

One teacher commented that she has "difficulty coaxing students who are not motivated to work" and does not want to promote extrinsic motivational practices, such as giving students homework passes. She remarked "I do not believe that I teach lower level students well." She commented that her school has experienced an influx of students who have left schools that did not make AYP and that the teachers are now accommodating some students who are not motivated to do their best. She and other teachers expressed that those schools that have made AYP are suffering as they seek to educate students coming in from other schools.

Another teacher expressed a basic philosophical difference with one of the NCLB policies by indicating that because highly qualified teachers must teach in each subject area, one area of student learning is suffering. She described one effect of NCLB in her school:

> Prior to implementation of NCLB, middle school teachers were teaching reading across the curriculum in an effort to enforce this necessary skill among all students regardless of reading levels. She said that since only certified reading teachers are considered "highly qualified" to teach reading, some students are not being appropriately helped. She commented that "the lowest of the low" are being helped with reading remediation, but that middle level students are not having their reading skills reinforced and that the upper level students are not being

appropriately enriched. One teacher expressed that "social and emotional learning is [the] missing piece." She feels that she cannot attend to these affective aspects of her students' education anymore due to the increased focus on testing.

The data presented in the paragraphs above suggests that the majority of the teachers care about their students and have a desire to practice their craft well, but some feel frustrated because their hands are tied when it comes to trying to adhere to the NCLB guidelines, especially when they do not agree with them.

Summary of Results

The results of my study indicate that teachers' perceptions of empowerment differ across grade level and according to AYP status of schools. The analysis revealed specifically, that elementary school teachers do report greater perceptions of opportunities for **Decision Making** and **Self Efficacy** than middle school teachers. Also, elementary school teachers in schools that met the AYP requirements have greater perceptions of **Autonomy** than teachers in schools that did not meet AYP.

The analysis also indicates that not only do teachers report statistically significant differences in their perceptions of empowerment since implementation of the NCLB legislation, but more specifically, universally they report a decrease. This trend is supported by the qualitative data as the majority (80%) of the survey respondents reported factors contributing to decreased perceptions of empowerment. A small percentage (10%) did report increased perceptions of empowerment and 10% reported no change since implementation of NCLB. Whether the reported changes in empowerment were decreasing or increasing, the factors contributing to these changes center around four themes: (a) school climate, (b) standards requirements, (c) issues related to daily

teaching responsibilities, and (d) affective experiences. Each of these findings will be discussed in the section that follows.

Chapter 5

Discussion

In this chapter, I begin with a discussion of the results of the ANOVAs used to analyze my first research question through which I sought to determine the specific nature of the teachers' reported perceptions of empowerment first of all, in light of AYP status of schools and secondly across school levels. I will also discuss the results of the paired t-test analysis through which I sought to determine whether teachers reported changes in empowerment since NCLB. Throughout the chapter, I will discuss the findings of the inductive and interpretive qualitative analysis used to explore the relationship between teachers' perceptions of empowerment prior to and subsequent to the NCLB legislation.

Question 1: *Do teachers' perceptions of empowerment differ across school levels and AYP status of schools?*

As reported in the Results section, the two-way ANOVAs do indicate a significant difference in empowerment across school levels and the two levels of AYP status of schools, however the differences were found in specific dimensions (see Tables 14-20).

As related to school level, the findings indicate that, as hypothesized from theory and previous research, elementary school teachers report greater perceptions of **Decision Making** opportunities than middle school teachers. Also, elementary school teachers report greater perceptions of **Self Efficacy** than middle school teachers. As related to AYP status of schools, elementary teachers in schools that met AYP report greater

perceived levels of **Autonomy** than elementary teachers in schools that did not meet AYP. A more detailed examination of the subscales helps to explain the empowerment differences indicated in my research findings.

AYP Status

As indicated previously in Table 21, the interaction term, AYP Status X School Level, is a statistically significant contributor to the variance in the **Autonomy** dimension of teachers' perceptions of empowerment. Further analysis indicates that elementary teachers in schools meeting AYP have greater perceptions of **Autonomy** than elementary teachers in schools not meeting AYP.

The findings are somewhat surprising in light of previous research indicating statistically significant relationships between the two empowerment dimensions **Decision Making** and **Autonomy** and AYP status of schools (Coble, 2007; Hirsch, 2005). Although I was initially surprised by this finding, further contemplation led me to consider pertinent differences in my current study and the two studies mentioned above. In reference to the empowerment dimensions mentioned previously, the study conducted by the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality (SECTQ) as reported by Hirsch (2005) defines teacher empowerment using **Decision Making** and **Autonomy** and examined the linear combination of the two. My study examined the dimensions independently. Perhaps the SECTQ study results might have been different had the dimensions been examined separately. Additionally, the SECTQ study did not consider teachers perceptions of **Self Efficacy** which might also contribute to the variance in empowerment.

Another possibility, as illuminated by the qualitative data analysis, could be that as the mandated year of accountability, 2014, draws closer, educators may be experiencing greater anxiety and reduced perceptions of empowerment overall, whether working in a school that has met the AYP requirements or not. This could especially be true if the school system is not in compliance with the NCLB requirements.

The quantitative data is supported by the survey and interview data provided by the elementary level teachers. One elementary school teacher commented that she does not agree with using the CRCT as a measurement of student learning, but that part of her responsibility is to teach students to pass the test. Another teacher who teaches ESOL commented that since the implementation of NCLB, she does not have the freedom to make decisions about what is taught and that she and her students are frustrated. One other teacher described an incentive program that she established for her students that allowed them to earn money for good behavior as well as academic accomplishments. She said that she had to stop the program because her principal informed her that she needed to spend more time preparing her students for testing. One of the teachers commented that since her school did not meet the AYP requirements she had to restructure her after school tutorial to prepare students for the CRCT.

In light of this data, it is not surprising that perceptions of teacher empowerment could be unpredictable in all schools whether they have met AYP or not. A future study focused solely on differences in the climate of schools that have made AYP as compared to those that have not could prove interesting.

School Level

Decision Making Subscale

As indicated in Table 17, Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Association Between Decision Making, AYP Status, School Level and AYP X School Level, there is a statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions of **Decision Making** across School Level, The follow up analysis indicates that the difference is specifically between elementary and middle school teachers. As suggested in the research by Blase and Blase (2001), giving teachers the freedom to choose curricular materials and methods of instruction is key in empowering them, thus if teachers are not given these opportunities they might report lower empowerment perceptions with regard to this subscale. Perhaps the elementary teachers in my study are being given greater opportunities for the selection and implementation of curricular materials than the middle level teachers.

Also, as mentioned in the Review of Literature Section of this document, research by Murphy, Evertson and Radnofsky (1991) suggests that teachers' descriptions of a positive school climate include being empowered which was defined in part by being closely involved in decisions related to the allocation of resources, such as school budgeting, having input into scheduling and having interdependent relationships with staff members. The qualitative data provided by the teachers in my study is informative regarding the effects of school climate and **Decision Making** opportunities on empowerment.

As mentioned previously, one of the four overarching themes that emerged from teachers' reports of factors affecting changes in empowerment is *School Climate*, which encompasses relationships with administrators and the participatory model of the work

environment among other relevant issues (see Figure 4). The teachers in my sample made reference to how aspects of school climate affect empowerment over 150 times during the interviews conducted and over 100 times in response to the open-ended survey questions. A particularly notable comment was made by a middle school teacher who described her principal's philosophy as "my way or the highway." She also commented that there was little opportunity for participatory **Decision Making** or **Autonomy.** She suggested that as a result of these issues, teacher morale was low at her school. This data supports the claim by Murphy, Evertson and Radnofsky (1991) that, in part, interdependent relationships among staff members affect empowerment. When describing her input into curriculum choices, another middle school teacher commented that she has little input and she "does not like it when [a] choice is made that does not make sense for students." These middle school teachers' comments stand in contrast to three of the elementary school teachers interviewed. One of the teachers described an extra-curricular activity that he designed with a colleague related to Martin Luther King and non-violent civil resistance. Another teacher described her work environment as "competitive" but professional. She said that teacher input was "encouraged." Yet another elementary teacher said that "feedback is encouraged" by her principal. The qualitative data also supports the claim of Blase and Blase (2001) that giving teachers the freedom to make choices and provide curricular input is important to empowering them. The comments by the elementary school teachers suggest more empowering experiences related to **Decision Making** and **Autonomy** than those indicated by the middle school teachers.

It is important to note that there were no significant differences in the **Decision Making** subscale between elementary and high school teachers. These findings are interesting in light of previous research that did indicate a statistically significant difference in empowerment across these two school levels, elementary school teachers reported greater perceptions of empowerment than high school teachers (Klecker & Loadman, 1998). However, the conflicting results might be explained by the fact that the aforementioned research was conducted prior to implementation of the NCLB legislation. Perhaps, the top-down nature of NCLB and the accompanying mandated testing requirements, changes opportunities for **Decision Making** and **Autonomy** previously afforded teachers.

As a matter of fact, a closer examination of the qualitative data provides some insight into how decreased **Decision Making** may affect teachers' perceptions of empowerment. Although the following teacher remark references AYP, this comment is representative of the opinions of many teachers in the sample whether their schools made AYP or not: "We did not make AYP last year and I feel that we are treated as incompetent. The ideas and concerns of teachers are not heard. We are always TOLD what to do and never asked what we think is best for children." (see Figure 1). Similarly expressed frustration can be inferred from a remark by one of the high school teachers interviewed: "When I taught gifted I had more opportunities for **Decision Making** regarding pacing-now I have to stay with the group and I'm bored." These two teachers are on two different grade levels, but express the same frustration regarding a lack of decision making opportunities and an inability to exercise autonomy.

Since research has shown that **Decision Making** is one of the key areas in the empowerment of teachers (Blase & Blase, 2001; Hirsch, 2005; Short & Rinehart, 1992) it stands to reason that changes in this area in the lives of teachers may have affected the perceptions of empowerment across these two school levels. Further research that focuses on the exact nature of the differences between expectations of teachers across elementary and high schools might shed more light on why no statistically measurable differences in teacher empowerment were found.

Self Efficacy Subscale

As indicated in Table 20, Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Association Between Self Efficacy, AYP Status, School Level and AYP X School Level, there is a statistically significant difference in the **Self Efficacy** subscale across the two school levels, elementary and middle. A closer examination of the **Self Efficacy** subscale (see Table 9) reveals that elementary teachers report greater perceptions of self-efficacy as compared to middle school teachers. As mentioned previously, Bandura (1994) defines self-efficacy as a person's belief in his ability to perform a task. Short (1994) suggests that teacher self-efficacy is defined by effectiveness in performing teaching tasks, thus these subscale items, for example Item 4, "I believe that I am helping kids become independent learners," and Item 32, "I perceive that I am making a difference," are indicators of teachers' perceptions of their teaching self-efficacy. My research findings suggest that elementary teachers report beliefs that they are more effective in performing teaching tasks than do middle school teachers. The reasons why the elementary and middle school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy differ may vary, but considering the

differences in subscale Items 4 and 32 in the context of the qualitative data may be informative.

The qualitative interview data supports the reported difference in self-efficacy ratings between elementary and middle school teachers. Elementary teachers do believe that they are effective in performing teaching tasks. One elementary teacher expressed his belief that he is making a difference because he "gives the students freedom to explore." This teacher works in a magnet school and commented that although the NCLB testing associated documentation must be completed, he has more flexibility with his students. He commented confidently "our students do well on the tests" and noted that the teachers at his school won't have to spend much time with remediation and test preparation, but will be able to creatively engage the students.

One other elementary teacher's remarks suggest that NCLB requirements affect his classroom even though his kindergarten students will not take CRCT tests. This teacher commented "everything is driven around the CRCT. The only problem I have with it is that you are not teaching children, you're teaching the tests." He said that although he is responsible for preparing his students for eventual CRCT testing, he does not have the same kind of pressure for student test performance as the teachers in the upper grades. This elementary teacher believes that he is an effective teacher and makes a difference in his students' lives.

A third elementary school teacher suggested that even though she teaches special education and believes that her students are subjected to some unrealistic testing expectations related to NCLB, she feels that she is making a difference with her students.

She noted that she monitors her students' success by the progress that they make with the development of their reading and math skills.

The qualitative data described in the three preceding paragraphs informs and supports the quantitative data. The self-efficacy scale ratings and the teacher comments suggest that other elementary teachers in my sample could have similar perceptions about their teaching self-efficacy.

Cafasso and Camic (2002) refer to research that suggests that middle school students are positively motivated to learn when they believe that they are cared for and that they can exercise some independence in their educational experience (Roeser & Eccles, 1998). Other research suggests that middle school students are less motivated to succeed academically in school climates that promote self-consciousness and feelingss of incompetence through overly controlled environments (Connell & Wellborn, 1991, Roeser, 2000). If the practices of the middle school teachers in this sample are not positively motivating for students, the student outcomes could be less than desired.

Upon examination of the qualitative data reported by middle school teachers, I am inclined to question whether the students are being positively motivated to learn. The reported data, categorized according to the theme, Affective Experiences, suggests that the teachers in my sample care about their students. Remarks, such as "I love my students," (made by three of the teachers interviewed) and one teacher's comment "let them know you care" support this claim. Thus, I am not implying that the teachers do not express caring behaviors or are not positive in their pedagogical approaches, but that the standardized testing requirements might promote self-consciousness and perceptions of incompetence in the students and could in fact be de-motivating.

Further insight might be gained by examining Standards Requirements, another of the four themes that emerged as a teacher reported factor contributing to changes in empowerment. Teacher comments in this category best summarize how students and teachers feel regarding the current testing requirements related to NCLB. One of the teachers' remarks suggests that students are being made to feel that their performance on the standardized tests alone determines their level of competence. A portion of a passage of data previously presented that most illuminates the perceptions of teachers and students is:

> The teachers, we discuss it. The kids and teachers discuss it. The kids want to know, 'Why am I taking all these tests?' and we tell them, 'The State mandates,' and what have you. The kids don't take it seriously, in our opinion.

These remarks suggest that standardized testing could have a definite impact on students motivation to learn and thus on teachers' perceptions of effectiveness in their teaching.

My findings indicate no statistically significant differences in **Decision Making, Self Efficacy** and **Autonomy** across the two school levels, middle and high (see Tables 17, 20 and 21). It is important to note that the statistical significance for the difference in the **Self Efficacy** subscale for middle and high school students is determined at a conservative level of alpha (.025) to minimize Type I error, therefore even though there are practical differences in teachers' perceived levels of Self Efficacy, statistically, the differences are not significant. This could explain why my results were different than previous findings.

Although previous research suggests middle school teachers have higher perceptions of **Decision Making** and **Autonomy** than high school teachers (SECTQ,

2004), a pertinent difference in my research might account for the conflicting results. The differences in my findings as compared to the SECTQ study could be related to the fact that in my study I examine the empowerment dimensions independently. As mentioned previously, the SECTQ study defines empowerment using **Decision Making** and **Autonomy** only. Additionally, as suggested by the quantitative and qualitative data in my study, **Decision Making** and **Autonomy** have an effect on teacher empowerment, but **Self Efficacy** influences perceptions as well. This could explain why the results as reported by Hirsch (2005) are different than the results of my study. Perhaps research into the specific similarities and differences in the middle school and high school climates could provide additional insight into why there are no statistically significant differences in teacher empowerment across these two school levels.

Question 2: *Do teachers report changes in perceptions of empowerment since implementation of NCLB, if so, what do teachers report to be the factors contributing to these changes?*

As indicated by the paired sample t-test, the teachers in this study do report changes in perceptions of empowerment since implementation of the NCLB legislation. In fact, overall each school level, elementary, middle and high school teachers reported lower perceptions of empowerment since implementation of NCLB. As shown in Table 11, Comparison of Descriptive Statistics for Empowerment and Subscales Pre and Post NCLB, a closer examination of the data for all of the participants indicate decreased ratings in **Decision Making**, **Professional Growth**, **Self-Efficacy**, **Autonomy** and **Impact**. The mean score for the **Status** subscale was also lower, but the difference was

not statistically significant. The teachers' open-ended survey responses and interview comments inform and extend understanding of the survey data.

Inferring from interview participant reports and survey comments, the factors contributing to the reported change (whether *decreasing* or *increasing*) in empowerment can be categorized using four overarching themes: (a) school climate, (b) standards requirements (local, state or national), (c) issues related to daily teaching responsibilities, and (d) affective experiences. My discussion for Research Question 2 will explain how each of these themes informs and extends the quantitative data.

School Climate

As indicated by the quantitative data, two of the sub-scales that have an effect on teacher empowerment are participatory **Decision Making** and **Autonomy**. As the paired t-test indicates, teachers reported decreases in each of these sub-scales sub-sequent to implementation of NCLB. The qualitative data related to school climate provides further insight into how these factors influence perceptions of empowerment.

The teachers who provided survey comments and the teachers interviewed indicated how aspects of school climate affected changes in their perceptions of empowerment. I will begin with a discussion of the survey comments.

As mentioned previously, although 80% (188 of 235) of the survey respondents reported decreased perceptions of empowerment, 20% (13 of 64) of those teachers who provided comments reported an increase in their perceptions of empowerment (see Table 27). These increased perceptions of empowerment could indicate several things. Perhaps the teachers reporting increased empowerment are encouraged because of the climate at their schools. If principals encourage input, as suggested by one teacher whose survey

response was “The school [where I teach] values [a] professional environment. Administrators value teachers’ input and treat them as professionals,” then teachers believe that their opinions are being sought because they are valued and will be used. This is in contrast to the opinion of one teacher who commented that even though feedback was sought, it felt like the principal was “paying lip service” to the concept of participatory **Decision Making** and that the input was not used.

To understand how these contrasting comments related to school climate could affect teacher empowerment they must be considered in light of the critical perspective of Empowerment Theory (Spreitzer and Doneson, 2005) and research by Egley and Jones (2005). The critical perspective indicates that if individuals are told that they have the opportunity to participate in **Decision Making** processes, but in actuality they do not, the processes, in this case the request that the principal made for teacher input, could in fact be dis-empowering. Further, Egley and Jones (2005) and Spreitzer and Doneson (2005) suggest that “inviting environments,” such as professionally collaborative school climates where the administration fosters professional growth opportunities are empowering whereas “uninviting” climates can have the opposite effect.

The research cited above is further supported by the interview data collected during my research. Two of the aspects of school climate that teachers identified as affecting empowerment were relationships with school administration and opportunities for participatory **Decision Making**. Based upon the findings of the qualitative data, of the teachers interviewed, four reported having “little input into the curriculum,” two reported “no input into student activities or scheduling” and one reported “not enough input into text selection.” Three teachers indicated that they can determine the pacing of instruction,

but each mentioned that they had to keep within the time frame allotted for the topics being taught. One teacher reported, with satisfaction, an opportunity for creating a club day activity based upon the non-violent teachings of Martin Luther King that he created with a colleague. The tone and demeanor of the teachers who had opportunities for input indicated a degree of satisfaction if not excitement.

These findings from the interview data and the survey data support the quantitative findings from the paired t-test analysis that **Decision Making** and **Autonomy** affect empowerment. Further, it is interesting to note that whether teachers reported *decreased* or *increased* perceptions of empowerment the comments made concerning school climate support the quantitative findings of my research and the contention that empowerment and school climate are interconnected as suggested in previous research (Egley and Jones, 2005).

Standards Requirements

As mentioned previously, the **Autonomy** and **Decision Making** sub-scales have affected decreased teacher empowerment ratings since implementation of NCLB. Additionally, the **Self Efficacy** subscale has as well. As the paired t-test indicates, teachers reported decreases in these important empowerment dimensions. The qualitative data can provide further illumination as to how teachers **Autonomy**, **Decision Making** and **Self Efficacy** have been affected by standardized testing.

As seen in Figure 1, Survey Results: Nine Factors Mentioned As Contributing to *Decreases* in Empowerment, 84% (54 of 64) of the teachers who provided survey comments identified “time constraints due to NCLB requirements” as a key contributor to

reduced empowerment levels. One teacher remarked "Prior to 2002 there seemed to be more time to devote to character education and developing well rounded citizens. There is much more focus on testing now." The following teacher response to a survey item related to the **Decision Making** subscale is representative of the majority of teacher comments regarding how time constraints affect the impact they are making in their students' lives: "We are so testing driven that every step of the instructional day is filled with meeting conditions of NCLB. Children are being tested so much-even to see if they're ready for real testing- that we don't get to see if anything is working." Another comment represents a similar sentiment, "Since NCLB I feel that I have not been treated professionally. There is much more paperwork shoved our way. We are expected to "perform" but not given adequate time or resources to do so. It's about paperwork, not about kids!" The following teacher comment regarding the **Autonomy** subscale reflects many of the teachers' views regarding how the focus of educating the students has shifted to standardized testing regardless of the students' true needs: "We are [so] locked into 'standards' and getting through them that enrichment activities are sidelined. Activities that might be of student interest are second guessed now because we MUST stick to the standards. One teacher response to an item on the **Self Efficacy** subscale reflects how students' focus on testing affects their learning in subjects that are not being tested, "Even though I do not teach a tested subject, students place so much emphasis on acquiring facts and not on learning and complex thinking." Another **Self Efficacy** subscale response is an indication of many teachers' views regarding maintaining their teaching integrity in spite of the standardized testing requirements of NCLB: "I try to continue to teach children to become independent learners, knowing that I am not in

compliance with the NCLB. I know that at any other school if I did this I would be putting my job at risk, a risk I would be willing to take." The comments cited above reveal frustrations that teachers are experiencing since the implementation of NCLB."

The interview data also suggests that teachers are frustrated with curricular and extra-curricular activities related to testing and instruction that focuses inordinately on testing standards. Four of the teachers interviewed commented that the CRCT drives instruction because their schools' AYP status is based upon student performance on that test. This is disconcerting in light of another teacher comment that the CRCT is geared toward the "mediocre middle." This teacher said that the gifted students are "left behind" when the focus is on passing the CRCT. Another teacher remarked that "the lowest of the low" are being helped because they must pass the standardized tests.

To gain a deeper understanding of why testing centered instruction frustrates teachers it is helpful to consider the psychological perspective of empowerment. Spreitzer and Doneson (2005) purport that "meaning" and "competence" are psychologically significant to the concept of empowerment. Meaning is the process through which a person "ascertains that his or her value system is consistent with the work he or she performs." Competence refers to one's perceptions of **Self Efficacy** related to the work that he is doing. Therefore, according to the psychological perspective, the empowerment process should assist an educator with the development of his belief in his ability to positively influence student learning. The teachers' survey and interview data suggest they are unable to consistently influence student learning due to time constraints and activities related to the requirements of standardized testing. If that is the case, it could affect their perceptions of empowerment. Again, the qualitative data supports the

decreased empowerment rating as reported using the **Decision Making**, **Autonomy** and **Self Efficacy** sub-scales.

Issues Related to Daily Teaching Responsibilities

As indicated by the paired sample t-test, teachers reported decreased empowerment ratings on all of the six subscales with the exception of status. The qualitative data extends and informs these quantitative results.

According to the survey data, time constraints affect their ability to accomplish daily teaching tasks. The following survey comment expresses frustration related to this issue: "There is no time to do anything except fill out papers, prove something on paper, collect papers, submit papers. Fellow teachers have not time to do anything but check off that some task was done." As mentioned in the School Climate section of this chapter, other comments reflect frustration with a lack of opportunities for participatory **Decision Making** and **Autonomy**. Another teacher remarked "Now teachers are given tasks that do not directly relate to the achievement of their students while at the same time they themselves are more accountable."

According to the interview data, conferences and the phone calls as well as the amount of paperwork required for documenting student failures detract from their own lesson planning and thorough evaluation of their students' work. One teacher remarked "I can't analyze student progress, because I don't have time to really analyze the mistakes they make." Another one remarked "I have to type up the test questions students miss. The district requires paperwork to compile statistics for AYP."

The comments from the survey respondents and those teachers who were interviewed suggest that the teachers understand that their students' knowledge could be assessed in more ways than using standardized tests. They are frustrated with the daily teaching tasks that are largely related to testing. It can be inferred from teachers' comments that if their teaching and student learning could be assessed on the basis of observations, not the standardized test scores of their students, their teaching and the health of their school could be more adequately monitored and measured. These comments support the decreased empowerment ratings on each of the sub-scales, with the exception of status, since implementation of NCLB. Teachers frustration with having to implement and monitor procedures related to testing when they realize that this is not the only means of evaluating their students can affect their perceptions of empowerment. According to empowerment theory, empowered teachers are able to identify the need for change and secure the resources needed to effect change when they realize that a process is not effective (Zimmerman, 1995). The quantitative and qualitative data from this study suggest that teachers recognize a need for change and are frustrated because they cannot change the process currently in place.

The quantitative and qualitative data related to *Research Question 2* lead me to believe that the teachers recognize that there is more to teaching and learning than the technical aspects of measuring success based on the students' performance on tests and the teachers' ability to teach to the test. One such factor is the affective aspect of education.

Affective Experiences

According to the quantitative data, teachers reported decreased perceptions of empowerment on the self-efficacy empowerment sub-scale. This sub-scale represents one way of measuring teachers' perceptions of empowerment related to the very important affective aspects of their job. As mentioned previously, just as the cognitive aspects of education are important, the affective aspects of teaching as well as learning cannot be ignored (Nieto, 2003).

One item teachers were asked to respond to related to this sub-scale is "I perceive I am making a difference." As the quantitative data indicates, the majority of the teachers do not feel this way. This sub-scale affected decreased perceptions of teacher empowerment since implementation of NCLB and these reports are supported by the qualitative data.

One teacher made the following insightful comment related to the self-efficacy subscale, she remarked: "I think I am making a slight difference and am disappointed I'm not allowed to teach and reach more students if I just was allowed to teach like I know is needed. Social and emotional learning is 'missing piece' especially in middle schools today. Parents seldom parent and students bring extra problems to school. Learning can't come when you're hungry for physical, mental or social food."

When evaluating the interview comments it became apparent that the majority of the teachers who participated in the empowerment interviews identified the importance of the affective experiences of their vocation even if they did not label it as such. As mentioned previously, 5 of the 12 teachers mentioned that they either care for or love their students. Based upon the conversations that followed these comments, it became

apparent to me that these teachers' perceptions lead to positive outcomes for student learning. The teachers expressed that these affective experiences translate to desires to improve their practice, explain lessons well, and correct assignments thoroughly. Empowerment literature suggests that an important part of teachers' practice is a commitment to understanding students' educational and emotional needs and how they are to be prepared to engage as citizens in society (Jalongo, 2007; Nieto, 2003; Hargreaves, 2003). The majority of the teachers interviewed express comments that indicate that not only do they recognize the necessity of attending to their students' needs in this way, but that they practice their profession in this manner. There were some teachers however, who expressed that they are experiencing frustration related to affective experiences, some related to NCLB and some unrelated to the legislation.

I contend that the teachers who expressed frustration in the affective areas of their teaching do not perceive that they are as empowered in these areas of their vocation. It is important to note that the teachers' perceptions about what they are being asked to do can affect the way they teach and the way that they relate to their students. In fact, Sweetland and Hoy (2000) indicate that teacher empowerment is positively related to student achievement.

Summary of Study

As theory indicates, the empowerment of teachers is a complex issue that can be described using six dimensions: **Decision Making**, **Autonomy**, **Self Efficacy**, **Status**, **Impact** and **Professional Growth**. Through my research, I have explored teachers' perceptions of their own empowerment status based on these dimensions. According to my analysis, elementary school teachers report statistically significant differences in

perceived levels of **Autonomy** based on AYP status of school. Additionally, there is a statistically significant difference in the **Decision Making** and **Self Efficacy** empowerment subscales between elementary and middle school teachers. These results are supported by data from responses to open-ended survey questions. The teachers' comments suggest that top down mandates as opposed to interdependent communication regarding student progress and educational solutions compromise participatory **Decision Making** opportunities. The teachers report that county and state decisions regarding their students are made using national data instead of internally generated assessments and recommendations by them, the professional educators who work with the students closely on a daily basis. Teachers also commented that there is less collegial collaboration and more competitive, mistrustful behavior within their profession. Additionally, teachers report that creative lesson planning is discouraged because the administration is trying to meet expectations of compliance with standards related to AYP requirements instead of trusting the teachers as professional educators to develop engaging activities to promote student learning.

The teachers also report that teaching students to pass standardized tests limits their autonomy, that they have less freedom to make curricular decisions and that depth of student inquiry is limited. Teachers report decreased self-efficacy due to their effectiveness as educators being related to student learning being measured by standardized test results rather than teachers' assessments. They also report that their schools are judged on CRCT scores, which drives instruction rather than the teachers' knowledge of what their students need to know to successfully master the curriculum.

The above mentioned perceptions of empowerment as reported through the open-ended survey responses provide insight into what is behind the teacher reported survey ratings.

To better understand the relationship between the survey ratings and the open-ended questions, it is helpful to recall the overall concept of empowerment. According to the definition of empowerment as the interdependent distribution of knowledge, information, power and rewards from the top down within an organization (Bowen and Lawler 1995), the prevailing conditions within which the participants work are not conducive to the empowerment of teachers. The teachers in my sample report a lack of interdependent distribution of the four components of this empowerment definition. The teachers also report a lack of participatory **Decision Making** opportunities and **Autonomy** which limit access to knowledge and stifle their "voices" as educators. According to Gitlin and Price (1992) such conditions are actually dis-empowering.

Finally, the interview data was instrumental in revealing the factors that have contributed to changes in teachers' perceptions of empowerment since implementation of NCLB and in supporting the findings from the survey data. An examination of the teachers' responses indicates frustration with a lack of **Decision making** and **Autonomy** related to curricular issues. Seven (one high, two middle and four elementary school teachers) of the 12 interviewed report insufficient input regarding programs that affect student learning, seven (two high, two middle and three elementary teachers) of 12 report poor relationships with the building administration.

Conclusion

I conclude this discussion of my findings, with the following observation: The teachers who participated in my study are teaching under dichotomous conditions. On the one hand they are being asked to prepare students for the knowledge society, preparing democratic, deep thinking students who are creative, innovate and collaborative (Hargreaves, 2003). On the other hand they are being told to teach students to pass basic skills tests and thus asked to spend time preparing students for benchmark tests that prepare students for standardized tests which they will take individually. I believe that the mixed messages that these educators are receiving is contributing to their frustration and to decreased perceptions of empowerment. The majority of the teachers in my sample are aware of the challenging position in which they find themselves, but are determined to persevere. But as the literature suggests, some of the teachers are not aware of the need to examine their empowerment and to voice their opinions regarding their dichotomous position and thus possibly relieve some of their frustration. The amount of time that the teachers in my study spend either preparing students to take standardized tests or in monitoring standardized tests or in monitoring after school activities related to standardized tests in staggering. When I began this research my intent was to study the empowerment of teachers within the environment of NCLB. After examining my data it is clear to me that teachers are confused and I believe that this confusion is contributing to decreased perceptions of empowerment as indicated by the results of my research.

As Goleman (1995) points out, in order to prepare students to compete in the knowledge economy (where knowledge is exchanged instead of goods) paying attention to the emotional intelligence of learners is important. In order to prepare teachers to teach

for the knowledge society, the same attention must be paid to teachers. My work highlights the need to measure the empowerment of teachers and compare and contrast these measurements as well as the need to examine how qualitative data informs the conversation. My work focuses on the quantity of testing that is occurring in the current high stakes environment and considers the remaining time frame in which teachers are expected to accomplish their goals and the goals of the performance standards to teach for understanding.

Implications for Further Research

My interest in how the work lives of teachers are being affected as they seek to educate children while being held accountable for goals related to the Adequate Yearly Progress requirements of the No Child Left Behind legislation (Galen, 2004 and Million 2005) prompted me to focus on measuring the empowerment of educators. Because the accountability requirements of NCLB were mandated instead of mutually agreed upon, the process did not take into consideration what is known about teacher empowerment. Because the empowerment of teachers is associated with them being able to act as educational experts and take responsibility for their own growth in order to solve their own problems (Short & Rinehart, 1992), the perceptions of empowerment of educators must be considered as an important part of achieving the accountability goals of the NCLB legislation. More importantly, as a result of this research, I believe that teacher empowerment is important in informing how the accountability goals of the national education agenda might be restructured so that our educators are able to use their knowledge and skills to best serve our students.

The strength of this investigation is that it illuminated the differences in the level of empowerment in the differing school levels in which the teachers work. Because my research design included a qualitative component it allowed for probing more deeply into other factors that might affect teacher empowerment, such as school climate.

Other important considerations for future researchers are: Does the positive aspect of increased accountability inherent in NCLB outweigh the negative consequences to teacher empowerment? and What is the relationship between teacher empowerment and teacher attrition in the current environment of NCLB?

Implications for Teachers

The data reported in my study is similar to the reports in one qualitative study on school reform and school climate conducted prior to implementation of NCLB (Murphy, Evertson and Radnofsky, 1991). Even though the studies were conducted almost 20 years apart, the teachers in both studies believe that opportunities to provide input in decisions and to promote positive interactions among teachers, students and administrators are important to a positive school climate, to perceptions of empowerment and more meaningful student learning.

Because of the way in which interviews allowed for teachers "voices" to inform my research, I believe that teachers should seek to participate in or initiate their own research that provides opportunities for detailed qualitative input. Because the teachers have expertise regarding their daily professional practices, teacher perspectives are invaluable and would be beneficial in providing insight into the challenges they face.

My research implies that the majority of the teachers are experiencing frustration related largely to the unintended consequences of NCLB. If this research methodology is practiced more frequently, it might provide a vehicle for empowerment of teachers that could reduce their frustration and possibly lead to more effective teaching practices. As the results of my research and other empowerment studies suggest, allowing teachers to participate in **Decision Making** processes is a method of empowering them which has beneficial outcomes for the teachers, the students and the schools. Bringing this to the attention of current educators might help reduce the frustration of teachers.

Implications for Schools

Empowerment research has important implications for school effectiveness, including school governance issues, student learning and teacher retention. According to empowerment literature related to school governance (Blase & Blase, 2001), teachers who are given opportunities for participatory **Decision Making**, such as helping to select teachers for the school, and allowed to express autonomy, such as making curriculum decisions, are empowered and empowered teachers positively affect student learning (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). Since my research indicates low levels of empowerment in the areas of **Decision Making** and **Autonomy**, it would be beneficial to determine if this holds true for other elementary, middle and high schools. If so, further investigations into how to approach school governance from a more empowered perspective might prove beneficial to schools for governance issues as well as issues related to student learning.

Teacher attrition is disruptive to the effectiveness of schools since new teachers have to be recruited and prepared. A recent report has shown that in 2001, 15% of

teachers either left the profession or changed schools (NCES, 2004). Because of these factors, further research related to how improvements in teacher empowerment can reduce teacher attrition could prove beneficial.

Implications for Educational Policy

Empowerment research has important implications for current and future educational policy. According to NCLB, by 2014 all schools are expected to reach the AYP goals of student proficiency in several key areas (see Appendix A). While the need for accountability is inherently positive, reflection on the measures by which educators are being held accountable could prove beneficial. My research highlights the frustration that teachers experience when they perceive that their professional input is ignored. Teachers in my study indicate a need to improve the accountability measures related to how best to educate students. Who better to ask than the experts? My research indicates the importance of including teachers in decisions that are made regarding how their students are educated. Because teachers in my sample provided their professional input, my research could assist policy-makers in making well-informed and sound judgments regarding how to best measure student achievement and how to improve accountability.

Additionally, school reform is not a new phenomenon. Change in education is constant, so new policies will continue to be implemented as the administration of the federal government changes. Because of this, empowerment research would always be helpful in providing useful information related to teachers' practices and student achievement.

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Table 1

Comparison of County Teacher Demographics to Sample Teacher Demographics

	Sample		County	
	n	%	n	%
Teachers:				
School Level				
Elementary	116	50	3367	51
Middle	54	23	1432	22
High	61	27	1760	27
Gender				
Female	204	89	5639	79
Male	24	11	1512	21
Race/Ethnicity				
American Indian	1	<1	13	<1
Asian	3	1	83	1
Black/African American	103	45	4641	65
Spanish/Hispanic/Latino	5	2	83	1
White	113	50	2244	31
Other	3	1	87	1
Years of Experience				
<=1	17	7	607	8
2-10	92	39	3471	49
11-20	64	27	1799	25
21-30	37	16	982	14
30+	25	11	292	4

Note: The total number of study participants is 235. Due to self-report omissions the sum of the values of n are less than 235.

Table 2

Chi Square Test Comparing Sample to County Proportions

Source	Chi-Square Value	DF	p
Grade Level	.2569	2	.8795
Race/Ethnicity	5476	5	<.0001
Experience	688	4	<.0001

Table 3

Binomial Test Comparing Sample to County Proportions

Source	Z	p
Gender	-25.53	<.0001

Table 4

Demographic Characteristics of Participants: Subject Taught

	Elementary		Middle		High	
Subject Taught	n	%	n	%	n	%
Business Education	0	<1	1	2	0	<1
ESOL	2	2	0	<1	1	2
Gifted	6	5	0	<1	0	<1
Language Arts	2	2	7	14	14	29
Mathematics	5	4	7	14	15	31
Media Specialist	5	4	1	2	1	2
Multiple Subjects	76	67	9	18	3	6
Music	3	3	3	6	2	4
Physical Education	0	<1	1	2	1	2
ROTC	0	<1	0	<1	1	2
Reading	3	3	1	2	0	<1
Social Studies	3	3	8	16	7	14
Science	3	3	9	18	4	8
Special Education	5	4	2	4	5	10
Technology	0	<1	1	2	1	2
World Languages	1	1	1	2	4	8

Note: The total number of study participants is 235. Due to self-report omissions related to Subject taught, values of n do not sum to 235.

Table 5

Grade Level Demographics of Study Participants

Description of Teachers	n	%
Responded to Survey	235	100
Elementary	116	49
Middle	54	23
High	61	26
Provided Survey Comments	64	100
Elementary	30	47
Middle	12	19
High	22	34
Interview Participants	12	100
Elementary	6	50
Middle	3	25
High	3	25

Note: 235 teachers responded to survey (n=235). Due to self-report omissions not all values of n equal 235. 64 teachers completed comment section of survey (n=64). Due to self-report omissions not all values of n= 64.

Table 6
Variables

Variable	Domain
Independent variables:	
AYP Status of teacher's school	Met AYP Requirements Did not meet AYP Requirements
School Level Currently Teaching	Elementary, Middle or High School
Gender	Male or Female
Ethnicity	American Indian, Asian, Black/African American, Spanish/Hispanic/Latino,White, None Indicated*
Experience	Years Taught
Subject Taught	Business Education, English as Second Language (ESOL), Gifted, Language Arts, Math, Media, Multiple Subjects, Music, Physical Education (PE), Reserve Officers Training Core (ROTC), Reading, Social Studies, Science, Technology, World Languages
Dependent variable:	
Empowerment	Overall Level of Teacher Empowerment as measured by the School Participant Empowerment Scale (1-4)
Empowerment Dimensional Subscales:	
Decision Making	Perceptions of Participatory Decision Making Opportunities
Professional Growth	Perceptions of Opportunities for Professional Development
Status	Perceptions of Professional Status among colleagues
Self-Efficacy	Beliefs about Professional Abilities
Autonomy	Perceptions of Independence in Making Decisions
Impact	Perceptions of Effects on Students and School Life

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for Current Empowerment and Subscales

Variable	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Empowerment	177	2.91	.35	1.84	3.84
Decision Making	188	2.34	.48	1.20	3.70
Professional Growth	193	3.11	.50	1.83	4.00
Status	191	3.39	.39	2.33	4.00
Self-Efficacy	192	3.18	.44	2.00	4.00
Autonomy	195	2.44	.56	1.25	4.00
Impact	188	3.28	.39	2.17	4.00

Note: The scale range is from 1.00-4.00.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for Current Empowerment and Subscales by AYP Status of Schools

	Met AYP					Did not meet AYP				
Variable	N	M	SD	Min	Max	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Empowerment	111	2.92	.37	1.84	3.74	65	2.88	.33	2.26	3.84
Decision Making	118	2.36	.48	1.20	3.60	69	2.30	.48	1.30	3.70
Professional Growth	119	3.16	.49	1.83	4.00	73	3.03	.50	1.83	4.00
Status	117	3.39	.39	2.33	4.00	73	3.38	.38	2.83	4.00
Self-Efficacy	118	3.19	.45	2.00	4.00	73	3.18	.41	2.33	4.00
Autonomy	121	2.46	.54	1.25	4.00	73	2.38	.59	1.25	4.00
Impact	116	3.28	.42	2.17	4.00	71	3.28	.35	2.50	4.00

Note: The scale range is from 1.00-4.00

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for Current Empowerment and Subscales by School Level Teaching

	Elementary					Middle					High				
Variable	N	M	SD	Min	Max	N	M	SD	Min	Max	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Empowerment	86	2.98	.37	1.84	3.74	44	2.80	.31	2.07	3.32	47	2.88	.34	2.34	3.84
Decision Making	92	2.45	.45	1.20	3.60	46	2.18	.47	1.40	3.10	50	2.28	.49	1.40	3.70
Professional Growth	96	3.19	.50	2.00	4.00	47	3.04	.48	1.83	3.83	50	3.03	.49	1.83	4.00
Status	92	3.41	.42	2.33	4.00	48	3.35	.37	2.33	4.00	51	3.39	.35	2.83	4.00
Self-Efficacy	96	3.24	.43	2.16	4.00	47	3.04	.48	2.00	3.83	49	3.20	.39	2.33	4.00
Autonomy	97	2.48	.54	1.25	3.50	47	2.25	.52	1.50	3.50	51	2.52	.59	1.50	4.00
Impact	93	3.33	.42	2.17	4.00	47	3.20	.38	2.17	4.00	48	3.24	.35	2.50	4.00

Note: The scale range is from 1.00-4.00

Table 10
Descriptive Statistics for Current Empowerment and Subscales by School Level Teaching and AYP Status

	Elementary					Middle					High				
Variable	N	M	SD	Min	Max	N	M	SD	Min	Max	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Met AYP															
Empowerment	60	3.03	.38	1.84	3.74	23	2.71	.34	2.08	3.21	28	2.87	.28	2.34	3.42
Decision Making	64	2.51	.46	1.20	3.60	24	2.10	.46	1.40	3.00	30	2.24	.42	1.40	3.00
Professional Growth	65	3.28	.46	2.17	4.00	24	3.04	.56	1.83	3.83	30	2.99	.44	2.17	3.83
Status	62	3.42	.42	2.33	4.00	24	3.29	.41	2.33	4.00	31	3.41	.31	3.00	4.00
Self-Efficacy	65	3.27	.45	2.17	4.00	24	2.93	.49	2.00	3.68	29	3.20	.34	2.33	3.83
Autonomy	66	2.57	.52	1.25	3.50	24	2.16	.49	1.50	3.50	31	2.48	.54	1.75	4.00
Impact	64	3.37	.42	2.17	4.00	23	3.10	.44	2.17	3.83	29	3.21	.35	2.50	3.83
Did Not Meet AYP															
Empowerment	26	2.85	.33	2.26	3.37	20	2.89	.25	2.45	3.32	19	2.89	.42	2.39	3.84
Decision Making	28	2.31	.42	1.30	3.10	21	2.26	.47	1.50	3.10	20	2.32	.60	1.50	3.70
Professional Growth	31	3.00	.54	2.00	4.00	22	3.02	.40	2.33	3.83	20	3.08	.55	1.83	4.00
Status	30	3.37	.41	2.83	4.00	23	3.41	.32	2.83	4.00	20	3.34	.41	2.83	4.00
Self-Efficacy	31	3.19	.37	2.33	3.83	22	3.15	.45	2.33	3.83	20	3.20	.46	2.50	4.00
Autonomy	31	2.29	.55	1.25	3.25	22	2.32	.53	1.50	3.25	20	2.59	.68	1.50	4.00
Impact	29	3.24	.39	2.50	4.00	23	3.30	.29	2.83	4.00	19	3.29	.36	2.83	4.00

Note: The scale range is from 1.00-4.00.

Table 11

Comparison of Descriptive Statistics for Empowerment and Subscales Pre and Post NCLB

	Pre NCLB					Post NCLB				
Variable	N	M	SD	Min	Max	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Empowerment	119	3.05	.32	2.24	3.79	177	2.91	.35	1.84	3.84
Decision Making	130	2.48	.45	1.20	3.60	188	2.33	.48	1.20	3.70
Professional Growth	136	3.25	.42	1.83	4.00	193	3.11	.50	1.83	4.00
Status	132	3.45	.37	2.67	4.00	191	3.39	.39	2.33	4.00
Self-Efficacy	136	3.38	.37	2.33	4.00	192	3.18	.44	2.00	4.00
Autonomy	138	2.71	.54	1.25	4.00	195	2.43	.56	1.25	4.00
Impact	134	3.34	.35	2.50	4.00	188	3.28	.39	2.17	4.00

Note: The scale range is from 1.00-4.00.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for Empowerment and Subscales for Elementary School Teachers Pre and Post NCLB

	Pre NCLB					Post NCLB				
Variable	N	M	SD	Min	Max	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Empowerment	57	3.09	.34	2.47	3.79	86	2.98	.37	1.84	3.74
Decision Making	64	2.54	.43	1.30	3.60	92	2.45	.45	1.20	3.60
Professional Growth	70	3.29	.43	1.83	4.00	96	3.19	.50	2.00	4.00
Status	65	3.48	.40	2.83	4.00	92	3.41	.42	2.33	4.00
Self-Efficacy	70	3.40	.38	2.33	4.00	96	3.24	.43	2.16	4.00
Autonomy	70	2.75	.52	1.50	4.00	97	2.48	.54	1.25	3.50
Impact	67	3.38	.35	2.50	4.00	93	3.33	.42	2.17	4.00

Note: The scale range is from 1.00-4.00.

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics for Empowerment and Subscales for Middle School Teachers Pre and Post NCLB

	Pre NCLB					Post NCLB				
Variable	N	M	SD	Min	Max	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Empowerment	30	2.97	.30	2.24	3.63	44	2.80	.31	2.08	3.32
Decision Making	31	2.34	.50	1.20	3.40	46	2.18	.47	1.40	3.10
Professional Growth	31	3.22	.39	2.50	4.00	47	3.04	.48	1.83	3.83
Status	32	3.39	.31	2.83	4.00	48	3.35	.37	2.33	4.00
Self-Efficacy	32	3.32	.37	2.67	4.00	47	3.04	.48	2.00	3.83
Autonomy	32	2.52	.55	1.25	3.75	47	2.25	.52	1.50	3.50
Impact	33	3.26	.36	2.67	4.00	47	3.20	.38	2.17	4.00

Note: The scale range is from 1.00-4.00.

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics for Empowerment and Subscales for High School Teachers Pre and Post NCLB

	Pre NCLB					Post NCLB				
Variable	N	M	SD	Min	Max	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Empowerment	32	3.05	.30	2.60	3.74	47	2.88	.34	2.34	3.84
Decision Making	35	2.50	.40	1.50	3.40	50	2.28	.49	1.40	3.70
Professional Growth	35	3.19	.44	1.83	4.00	50	3.03	.49	1.83	4.00
Status	35	3.44	.36	2.67	4.00	51	3.39	.35	2.83	4.00
Self-Efficacy	34	3.41	.34	2.83	4.00	49	3.20	.39	2.33	4.00
Autonomy	36	2.80	.53	2.00	4.00	51	2.52	.59	1.50	4.00
Impact	34	3.34	.34	2.67	3.83	48	3.24	.35	2.50	4.00

Note: The scale range is from 1.00-4.00.

Table 15

Correlation Matrix for Current Empowerment Dimensions

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Decision Making	1.00					
2.Professional Growth	0.67***	1.00				
3.Status	0.50***	0.64***	1.00			
4.Self-Efficacy	0.51***	0.67***	0.73***	1.00		
5.Autonomy	0.64***	0.52***	0.42***	0.47***	1.00	
6.Impact	0.54***	0.59***	0.78***	0.71***	0.46***	1.00

***p<.0001

Table 16

Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Association Between Empowerment, AYP Status, School Level and AYP X School Level

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p	η^2	Estimate	SE	t	p
AYP	1	.01	.01	.10	.75	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
School Level	2	.54	.27	2.31	.10	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
AYP X School Level	2	.88	.44	3.77	.02*	.005	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
School Level-Met AYP†	2	1.77	.88	7.56	.0007***	.01	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
School Level Did Not Meet†	2	.04	.02	.17	.85	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
AYP Status-Elementary†	1	.53	.53	4.56	.03	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
AYP Status-Middle†	1	.33	.33	2.86	.09	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
AYP Status-High†	1	.03	.03	.21	.64	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Pairwise Diff (E-M)††	169	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-.0325	.1017	-.32	.75
Pairwise Diff (M-H)††	169	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-.0273	.1111	-.25	.81
Pairwise Diff (E-H)††	169	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-.0598	.1048	-.57	.57

*p<.05, ***p<.001, †Follow-up Tests, α=.025, ††Follow-up comparisons, α=.008

Table 17

Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Association Between Decision Making, AYP Status, School Level and AYP X School Level

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p	η^2	Estimate	SE	t	p
AYP	1	.03	.03	.13	.72	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
School Level	2	1.58	.79	3.69	.03*	.04	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
AYP X School Level	2	1.15	.58	2.69	.07	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Pairwise Diff (E-M)†	180	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	.2346	.0868	2.70	.008**
Pairwise Diff (M-H)†	180	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-.1258	.0969	-1.30	.20
Pairwise Diff (E-H)†	180	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	.1088	.0858	1.27	.21

*p<.05, **p<.01, †Follow-up tests, α=.025

Table 18

Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Association Between Professional Growth, AYP Status, School Level and AYP X School Level

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p	η^2
AYP	1	.13	.13	.56	.46	n/a
School Level	2	.41	.20	.86	.42	n/a
AYP X School Level	2	1.36	.68	2.88	.06	n/a

Table 19

Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Association Between Status, AYP Status, School Level and AYP X School Level

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p	η^2
AYP	1	.00	.00	.00	.99	n/a
School Level	2	.06	.03	.20	.82	n/a
AYP X School Level	2	.28	.14	.92	.40	n/a

Table 20

Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Association Between Self Efficacy, AYP Status, School Level and AYP X School Level

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p	η^2	Estimate	SE	t	p
AYP	1	.15	.15	.80	.37	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
School Level	2	1.11	.56	3.05	.05*	.03	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
AYP X School Level	2	.72	.36	1.98	.14	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Pairwise Diff (E-M)†	184	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	.1852	.0785	2.36	.02**
Pairwise Diff (M-H)†	184	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-.1742	.0893	-1.95	.05
Pairwise Diff (E-H)†	184	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	.0110	.0785	.14	.89

*p<=.05,**p<.025, †Follow-up Tests, α=.025

Table 21

Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Association Between Autonomy, AYP Status, School Level and AYP X School Level

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p	η^2	Estimate	SE	t	p
AYP	1	.005	.005	.02	.90	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
School Level	2	2.42	1.21	4.12	.02*	.04	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
AYP X School Level	2	2.07	1.04	3.51	.03*	.04	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
School Level-Met AYP†	2	3.00	1.50	5.09	.01**	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
School Level Did Not Meet†	2	1.53	.76	2.60	.08	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
AYP Status-Elementary†	1	1.63	1.62	5.53	.02*	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
AYP Status-Middle†	1	.30	.30	1.02	.31	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
AYP Status-High†	1	.26	.26	.87	.35	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Pairwise Diff (E-M)††	187	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-.0278	.1513	-.18	.85
Pairwise Diff (M-H)††	187	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-.3134	.1700	-1.84	.07
Pairwise Diff (E-H)††	187	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-.3412	.1582	-2.16	.03

*p<=.05, †Follow-up Tests, α=.025, ††Follow-up comparisons, α=.008

Table 22

Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Association Between Impact, AYP Status, School Level and AYP X School Level

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p	η^2
AYP	1	.11	.11	.73	.39	n/a
School Level	2	.31	.16	1.04	.36	n/a
AYP X School Level	2	.87	.43	2.87	.06	n/a

Table 23

Paired Sample t-Test for Empowerment and Subscales: Comparing Ratings Pre and Post NCLB

Variable Pairs	DF	M	SD	SE	t	p
Empowerment Difference	117	-.125	.2554	.0235	-5.33	<.0001***
Decision Making Difference	129	-.108	.3762	.0330	-3.29	.0013***
Professional Growth Difference	135	-.114	.4244	.0364	-3.13	.0021**
Status Difference	131	-.033	.2930	.0255	-1.29	.2003
Self-Efficacy Difference	135	-.168	.3603	.0309	-5.43	<.0001***
Autonomy Difference	137	-.266	.4797	.0408	-6.52	<.0001***
Impact Difference	132	-.048	.2567	.0223	-2.14	.0343*

Note: The Difference in Empowerment and Subscales is Post NCLB-Pre NCLB
*Significant: p<.05
**Significant: p<.01
***Significant: p<.001

Table 24

Paired Sample t-Test for Empowerment and Subscales: Comparing Ratings Pre and Post NCLB for Elementary Schools

Variable Pairs	DF	M	SD	SE	t	p
Empowerment	56	-.108	.2816	.0304	-3.54	.0008***
Decision Making	63	-.083	.3795	.0474	-1.75	.0857
Professional Growth	69	-.086	.4582	.0548	-1.57	.1221
Status	64	-.036	.2660	.0330	-1.09	.2806
Self-Efficacy	69	-.138	.3029	.0362	-3.81	.0003***
Autonomy	69	-.293	.4463	.0533	-5.49	.0001***
Impact	66	-.035	.2437	.0298	-1.17	.2463

Note: The Difference in Empowerment and Subscales is Post NCLB-Pre NCLB
***Significant: p<.001

Table 25

Paired Sample t-Test for Empowerment and Subscales: Comparing Ratings Pre and Post NCLB for Middle Schools

Variable Pairs	DF	M	SD	SE	t	p
Empowerment	27	-.187	.3635	.0687	-2.72	.0112**
Decision Making	28	-.155	.3960	.0735	-2.11	.0439*
Professional Growth	28	-.207	.4686	.0870	-2.38	.0245*
Status	29	-.044	.3324	.0762	-0.58	.5642
Self-Efficacy	29	-.317	.5130	.0937	-3.38	.0021**
Autonomy	29	-.516	.5331	.0973	-3.25	.0029**
Impact	30	-.081	.3217	.0578	-1.40	.1730

Note: The Difference in Empowerment and Subscales is Post NCLB-Pre NCLB
*Significant: p<.05
**Significant: p<.01
***Significant: p<.001

Table 26

Paired Sample t-Test for Empowerment and Subscales: Comparing Ratings Pre and Post NCLB for High Schools

Variable Pairs	DF	M	SD	SE	t	p
Empowerment	30	-.110	.1779	.0319	-3.45	.0017**
Decision Making	34	-.250	.3703	.0626	-1.96	.0579
Professional Growth	34	-.100	.3136	.0530	-1.89	.0678
Status	34	-.019	.2206	.0373	-0.51	.6127
Self-Efficacy	33	-.108	.2839	.0487	-2.21	.0338*
Autonomy	35	-.360	.5084	.0847	-2.21	.0335*
Impact	32	-.045	.2254	.0392	-1.16	.2553

Note: The Difference in Empowerment and Subscales is Post NCLB-Pre NCLB
*Significant: p<.05
**Significant: p<.01

Table 27

Comparison of Empowerment Ratings of Teachers who Responded to Survey vs. Teachers who Provided Qualitative Data

Description of Teachers	n	%
Responded to Survey	235	100
Reported Increased Perceptions of Empowerment	23	10
Reported Decreased Perceptions of Empowerment	188	80
No Reported Change	24	10
Provided Comments on Survey	64	100
Reported Increased Perceptions of Empowerment	13	20
Reported Decreased Perceptions of Empowerment	41	64
No Reported Change	10	16
Interview Participants	12	100
Reported Increased Perceptions of Empowerment	0	0
Reported Decreased Perceptions of Empowerment	7	58
No Reported Change	5	42

Figure 1

Survey Results: Nine Factors Mentioned As Contributing to *Decreases* in Empowerment

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1.Time constraints due to NCLB requirements [84% (54 of 64) made related comments]

> "I could accomplish tasks even if it took a couple of late evenings at work prior to 2002 [Implementation of NCLB]. Now, my colleagues and I feel hopeless in ever completing tasks, tests, benchmarks, new IEPs …with no comp/substitute time given to accomplish these tasks."
>
> "Since we did not make AYP we have more detailed requirements in our daily routines."
>
> "Time to be creative in your approach has been taken away."

2.Style of School Building Administration [47% (30 of 64) made related comments]

> "We did not make AYP last year and I feel that we are treated as incompetent. The ideas and concerns of . teachers are not heard. We are always TOLD what to do and never asked what we think is best for children."
>
> "I did not have the same opportunities for professional growth at my previous school. We did not have regular opportunities for staff development."

3.Programs [36% (23 of 64) made related comments]

> "Too much paperwork to focus on the effectiveness of programs at the local sites."

4.Prescribed/Watered-down Curriculum [34% (22 of 64) made related comments]

> "Taught gifted and magnet was able to design curriculum to have the students to excel in the content area, now I have to stay with the prescribed standards that are watered down for these type students this is because I'm in a school now that has only met AYP once in the 7 years of its existence."

5.Shift in Student Learning/Teaching Focus due to NCLB [23% (15 of 64) made related comments]

> "We MUST incorporate test prep on a regular basis. Focus has drifted from understanding concepts and acquiring information to 'can they pass the test?'"
>
> "Prior to 2002 there seemed to be more time to devote to character education and developing well rounded citizens. There is much more focus on testing now."

6.Independent/Critical Thinking de-emphasized due to standardized testing [22% (14 of 64) made related comments]

> "We are [so] locked into 'standards' …that enrichment activities are sidelined."
>
> "The switch to standards-based instruction and use of a single testing measurement statistic to determine 'AYP' has influenced teachers to 'teach to the test'. Best practices imposed from the state level script the progress and content expected for teachers and limit teacher creativity or depth of student inquiry."

7.Excessive Paperwork due to NCLB documentation [17% (11of 64) made related comments]

> "Too much paperwork and testing mandated by NCLB!"

8.Subject Area Requirements related to NCLB [9% (6 of 64) made related comments]

> "I wish this was true. The "No child left behind" has left our gifted children, our non-English and special needs students behind. We are teaching to the average child and not looking at each child as individuals. We teach to pass the test!!!!!"

9.Other [13% (8 of 64) made related comments]

> "I think I'm making a slight difference and am disappointed I'm not allowed to teach and reach more students… if I just was allowed to teach like I know is needed. Social and Emotional Learning is "the missing piece" especially in middle schools today. Parents seldom parent and students bring extra problems to school. Learning can't come when you're hungry for physical, mental or social food."

Figure 2

Survey Results: Four Factors Mentioned As Contributing to *Increases* in Empowerment

1.Style of School Building Administration [16% (10 of 64) made related comments]

> "As an economics teacher, I have a major network of support through the Georgia Council on Economics and the Federal Reserve Bank of Georgia. All three principals under which I've work have treated me as a valued member of the team and given me lots of opportunity to grow."
>
> "It really depends on the current administration if you are treated as a professional or not. This has nothing to do with NCLB."

2. Job Change [11% (7 of 64) made related comments]

> "I am currently in a leadership role…and part of my duties are to participate in the selection process [of new teachers]."
>
> "I am personally in a different role in the school than I was in 2002. This gives me a little more input in some decisions that are being made."
>
> "I have been a team leader for two years and this has been helpful with [allowing me to] making more decisions."

3. Years of Experience [9% (6 of 64) made related comments]

> "Again, as each year passes, I gain more experience in how to teach students."
>
> "Having been in this game now for 20 [plus] years, I do have a good bit of experience that is sometimes useful to others."
>
> "I have gained experience."

4.Increased Content Knowledge [8% (5 of 64) made related comments]

> "I am on a math team of teacher leaders…I participate in more staff development than most teachers."
>
> "I started teaching in 2001, so I was struggling to develop a style and deeper content knowledge. Now I believe I am a reasonably strong teacher and have been recognized for my efforts."

Note: Some teachers indicated multiple factors.

Figure 3

Development of Interview Questions from Survey Categories

Survey Categories	Interview Questions
Time constraints due to NCLB requirements	11(a, b, c)
Style of School Building Administration	2, 3, 4, 10
Programs	1
Prescribed/Watered-down Curriculum	5
Shift in Student Learning/Teaching Focus due to NCLB	6, 7
Independent/Critical Thinking de-emphasized due to Standardized testing	8
Excessive Paperwork due to NCLB documentation	11 (a, b, c)
Subject Area Requirements related to NCLB	9
Other	7, 9
Job Change	4, 5, 9
Years of Experience	5, 7, 9
Increased Content Knowledge	9

Figure 4

Interview Results:Four Themes Contributing to Changes in Teachers' Perceptions of Empowerment and Examples of Teachers' Comments

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1.School Climate

Work Environment

Opportunities for Development-"more opportunities for development, but lack of variety"

Teaching Dispositions-"evaluative", "encourage students to achieve"

Participatory Model-"little input into curriculum", "designed… activities" "does not like when choice is made that makes no sense for students"

Relationships with Colleagues-"cordial", "professional", "competitive"

Relationships with Administration-"feedback encouraged", "focused on testing" "hostile and intimidating"

Relationships with Students-"empowering", "enabling/rescuing", "encourage students to achieve"

2. Standards Requirements

State-GPS-"choice of lesson implementation, such as inquiry based, labs or board work, but I [have to] stay within the Georgia Performance Standards"

National-AYP-"use the CRCT tests to determine if schools make AYP…use benchmark tests to see if students are ready for the CRCT"

Assessments: CRCT-"CRCT [related] curriculum is mandatory"

Benchmark-"benchmark tests are used to determine if students are ready for the CRCT, but some… tests are misaligned with curriculum"

3. Issues Related to Daily Teaching Responsibilities

Teaching Experience-"my input is sought more because I have been teaching longer" "more confident and more knowledgeable of my subject matter"

Curriculum-"teaching to the test"

Extra-Curricular-"more extra-curricular activities are devoted to test preparation "

4. Affective Experiences

Compromised creativity-"reduced flexibility, less creativity, lessons are scripted", "administration seems to discourage innovation because county will react if scores are not good", " Innovative ideas are discouraged when data driven decisions [are being made]."

Caring disposition-"I care", "I love my students", "let them know you care"

Perceptions of Efficacy related to Content Knowledge-"I know my subject", "I am confident in my knowledge of math...it is a real strength"

Appendix A

AYP Expectations for Student Performance

Reading/Language Arts	% of Students	Math	% of Students
CRCT Grades 3-8	Proficient or Advanced	CRCT Grades 3-8	Proficient or Advanced
2002-2003 Target	60.0	2002-2003 Target	50.0
2003-2004 Target	60.0	2003-2004 Target	50.0
2004-2005 Target	66.7	2004-2005 Target	58.3
2005-2006 Target	66.7	2005-2006 Target	58.3
2006-2007 Target	66.7	2006-2007 Target	58.3
2007-2008 Target	73.3	2007-2008 Target	66.7
2008-2009 Target	73.3	2008-2009 Target	66.7
2009-2010 Target	73.3	2009-2010 Target	66.7
2010-2011 Target	80.0	2010-2011 Target	75.0
2011-2012 Target	86.7	2011-2012 Target	83.3
2012-2013 Target	93.3	2012-2013 Target	91.7
2013-2014 Target	100.0	2013-2014 Target	100.0
English/Language Arts	% of Students	Math	% of Students
GHSGT*- Grade 11	Proficient or Advanced	GHSGT*- Grade 11	Proficient or Advanced
2002-2003 Target	88.0	2002-2003 Target	81.0
2003-2004 Target	81.6*	2003-2004 Target	62.3*
2004-2005 Target	81.6	2004-2005 Target	62.3
2005-2006 Target	84.7	2005-2006 Target	68.6
2006-2007 Target	84.7	2006-2007 Target	68.6
2007-2008 Target	87.7	2007-2008 Target	74.9
2008-2009 Target	87.7	2008-2009 Target	74.9
2009-2010 Target	87.7	2009-2010 Target	74.9
2010-2011 Target	90.8	2010-2011 Target	81.2
2011-2012 Target	93.9	2011-2012 Target	87.4
2012-2013 Target	96.9	2012-2013 Target	93.7
2013-2014 Target	100.0	2013-2014 Target	100.0

Appendix B

Survey

Please provide the following information by filling in the blank or by indicating the appropriate response.

Years of Teaching Experience (not including the current year) _____

Currently Teaching:

Subjects_____

School Level(s): Elementary Middle High

AYP Status of School at the end of 2006-2007 School Year: Met Did Not Meet

Gender: Male Female

Race/Ethnicity: Alaska Native American Indian Asian Black /African American

Spanish/Hispanic/Latino White Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Other_____

Please provide the following information if you agree to be interviewed if selected:

Name_____

Name of School in which you currently teach _____

Email address_____

Appendix C

School Participant Empowerment Scale

(Adapted from the SPES Copyright 1992 Paula M. Short and James S. Rinehart)

Please rate the following statements in terms of how well they describe how you feel. There are two columns for responses. Please respond to the items in the first column based on your current perceptions. If you were teaching before NCLB was implemented, please respond to the items in the second column based on how your perceptions differed before implementation of NCLB. Rate each statement on the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

	Perceptions Currently	**Perceptions prior to August, 2002 or prior to NCLB's implementation in your school**	**Each time your rating in columns one and two differ by two points or more please provide some explanatory comments as to specific factors contributing to these changes.**
1) I am given the responsibility to monitor programs.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
2) I function in a professional environment.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
3) I believe that I have earned respect as a professional educator.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
4) I believe that I am helping kids become independent learners.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
5) I have control over daily schedules.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
6) I believe that I have the ability to get things done.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
7) I make decisions about the implementation of new programs in the school.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
8) I am treated as a professional.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
9) I believe that I am an effective educator.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
10) I believe that I am empowering students.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
11) I am able to teach as I choose.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
12) I participate in staff development.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	

Please rate the following statements in terms of how well they describe how you feel. There are two columns for responses. Please respond to the items in the first column based on your current perceptions. If you were teaching before NCLB was implemented, please respond to the items in the second column based on how your perceptions differed before implementation of NCLB. Rate each statement on the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

	Perceptions <u>Currently</u>	**Perceptions prior to August, 2002 or Prior to NCLB's implementation <u>in your school</u>**	**Each time your rating in columns one and two differ by two points or more please provide some explanatory comments as to specific factors <u>contributing to these changes.</u>**
13) I make decisions about the selection of other teachers for my school.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
14) I have the opportunity for professional growth.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
15) I have the respect of my colleagues.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
16) I feel that I am involved in an important program for children.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
17) I have the freedom to make decisions on what is taught.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
18) I believe that I am having an impact on my students' lives.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
19) I am involved in school budget decisions.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
20) I work at a school where kids come first.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
21) I have the support of my colleagues.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
22) I see evidence that my students are learning.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
23) I make decisions about the curriculum.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
24) I am a decision maker.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	

Please rate the following statements in terms of how well they describe how you feel. There are two columns for responses. Please respond to the items in the first column based on your current perceptions. If you were teaching before NCLB was implemented, please respond to the items in the second column based on how your perceptions differed before implementation of NCLB. Rate each statement on the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

	Perceptions Currently	**Perceptions prior to August 2002 or Prior to NCLB's implementation in your school**	**Each time your rating in columns one and two differ by two points or more please provide some explanatory comments as to specific factors contributing to these changes.**
25) I am given the opportunity to teach other teachers.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
26) I am given the opportunity to continue learning.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
27) I have a strong knowledge base in the areas in which I teach.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
28) I believe that I have the opportunity to grow by working daily with students.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
29) I perceive that I have the opportunity to influence others.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
30) I can determine my own schedule.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
31) I have the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers in my school.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
32) I perceive that I am making a difference.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
33) Principals, other teachers, and school personnel solicit my advice.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
34) I believe that I am good at what I do.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
35) I can plan my own schedule.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
36) I perceive that I have an impact on other teachers and students.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
37) My advice is solicited by others.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	
38) I have the opportunity to teach other teachers about innovative ideas.	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix D

School Participant Empowerment Scale

Subscales & Corresponding Items

Subscale	Items
Decision Making	1, 7, 13, 19, 25, 30, 33, 35, 37, 38
Professional Growth	2, 8, 14, 20, 26, 31
Status	3, 9, 15, 21, 27, 34
Self-efficacy	4, 10, 16, 22, 28, 32
Autonomy	5, 11, 17, 23
Impact	6, 12, 18, 24, 29, 36

Appendix E

Interview Guide

1. Describe the programs that you monitor. How are you involved in choosing and implementing these programs?

2. Describe any opportunities for Decision Making available to you in your school.

3. Describe your relationship with other teachers at your school.
   a. Are you involved in the selection process?
   b. Mentoring/Training?
   c. Is there mutual respect and support?
   d. Collaboration?

4. Describe your relationship with the administration:
   a. At your school.
      - Is there mutual respect and support?
   b. At the county level?
      - Is there mutual respect and support?

5. Describe the opportunities that you have for providing input into scheduling? Curriculum? Teaching methods? Would you like more?

6. Describe your relationship with your students.

   a. Do you believe that you are empowering them?
   b. Challenging them to think critically and independently?
   c. Making a difference in their lives?
   d. Is there mutual respect?

7. Describe ways in which you are an effective educator.
a. Are you confident in your subject area?
b. Are you good at what you do?

8. Describe ways in which you are not an effective educator?

9. Describe the professional development in which you have engaged within the past six years. Prior to 2002?

10. Describe your school's environment.
    a. Is it a professional place in which to work?
    b. What would you like to change about it?

11 a. Do you have adequate time to accomplish the tasks required during your work day? Why or Why not?
   b. How have NCLB requirements impacted your teaching time, preparation time and other professional time?
   c. How has the paperwork related to NCLB impacted your work day?