Understanding the Dynamics of No Child Left Behind:

Teacher Efficacy and Support for Beginning Teachers

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Abstract: It is imperative that educational administrators continually examine the issues that confront teachers on a day-to-day basis, keeping in mind how they can best assist their faculty in maintaining the focus on their students and the overall instructional process. The issues presented in the following discussion are provided as a sampling of concerns that are being raised in respect to the efficacy and support of teachers, their ability to teach, and the critical role they play in the educational process.

The dynamic of "change" is no stranger to the teaching profession and is constantly manifesting itself within that arena in a myriad of ways. Whether there is new legislation being enacted, new research findings coming into use, or endless other issues brought to the forefront, education as a profession is never stagnant. Because of this fluidity, it is imperative that educational administrators continually examine the issues that confront teachers on a day-to-day basis, keeping in mind how they can best assist their faculty in maintaining the focus on their students and the overall instructional process. School leaders are not

only advocates for their students, but advocates for their teachers in the important role they play each day.

A variety of recent changes in teaching directly related to the federal government's *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) (2001) legislation that have come to the forefront of our nation's educational discourse in the past five years. The issues represented in the following discussion are not intended to span the range of all matters related to the *No Child Left Behind* requirements, but are provided as a sampling of concerns that are being raised in respect to the efficacy and support of teachers, their ability to teach, and the critical role they play in the educational process. Teacher efficacy is a factor of teacher success that cannot be ignored, as it is linked to another area found to be critical: connectedness or involvement. Collaboration, a central factor of connectedness, is consistently related to general teaching efficacy and as a way to positively influence student learning and behavior (Henson, 2001). Successful schools encourage the development of a sense of agency in teachers, in that they can affect change through their involvement in curriculum design, problem solving, and decision making, while passing this sense of purposefulness to their students (Langer, 2000).

One element in a school leader's success involves advocacy for both the quality of the instructional process and for the educational team working so diligently to bring it to fruition. An effective school administrator must have good people skills and an ability to discern how to best guide others in achieving their full potential. A part of this charge relates to assisting teachers in making their greatest impact instructionally, and effectively removing any barriers that could hinder that task. It is extremely important that administrator preparation programs are aware of these factors and appropriately reconceptualizing the work they do to ensure that emerging school leaders are prepared to assume this role, possessing the human factor components and dispositions to provide a quality education for every child.

A prudent move for a school leader would be a close examination of the NCLB requirements and how they might affect teacher morale, teacher attrition, accountability, teacher support, student testing, school budgets, and resources. A wide variety of literature exists regarding each of these areas, and much of it is relevant for study as it typifies the challenges faced by our nation's teachers on a daily basis. Additionally, the overall intensity of these issues can be heightened as a result of NCLB—another reason why it merits further investigation.

Teacher Morale

The concept of teacher morale was defined by Evans (1992) as "the

extent to which an individual's needs are satisfied and the extent to which the individual perceives that satisfaction as stemming from his total job situation" (p. 34). There are a variety of issues that can adversely affect teacher morale, and while the reasons discussed here are not meant to be all inclusive, they are the matters that emerge most often in the review of the literature. Included among these factors are: (a) inadequate mentoring, (b) increasing responsibility, (c) low salaries, and (d) unrelenting change in the teaching profession. In addition to providing classroom instruction, teachers are dealing with a growing number of student emotional problems, as well as working to accommodate an increasing special needs population that is being mainstreamed (Oglesby, 2001).

Overall morale is an indicator of more than teacher feelings about their craft. According to Brock and Grady (2000), "The greatest predictor of student success is teacher attitude. Although curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher talent are important, teacher morale is key" (p. 56). If a teacher's attitude is not positive and their morale is low as a result of either personal or professional reasons, students can be affected negatively. School leaders must readily identify any faculty who are on the verge of losing that enthusiasm and then seek ways to revitalize their passion. Maintaining teacher satisfaction has been problematic throughout the profession due to "a sense of isolation, abandonment, and loneliness" experienced by many teachers, which proves challenging for maintaining a strong commitment to the profession (Green, 1994, p. 35). Feeling connected to their school and feeling that their work is important and acknowledged is crucial for teachers, as they will be "more likely to remain vital, dynamic, and contributing members of the school community" (Sargent, 2003, p. 47).

There is increasing data to support the idea that teacher morale affects students. In an article from the American School Board Journal, Black (2001) stated that:

> Where teacher morale is high, students typically show high achievement, researchers have found. But when teacher morale sinks, achievement drops and other problems come to the surface. Low teacher morale usually leads to indifference toward others; cynical attitudes toward students; little initiative when it comes to preparing lessons and other classroom activities; preoccupation with leaving teaching for a better job; increased use of sick leave; and bouts of depression. (p. 2)

Teachers have many demands placed upon their time which include lesson preparation, the assessment/grading of student work, dealing with increasing paper work, handling the behavioral and emotional needs of students, contacting parents, attending meetings and training, and handling any other issues that might come their way during the course

of a day. These demands, while no problem for some, may prove to be overwhelming for other teachers, especially those who are novices.

Site leadership is a key issue when it comes to the overall morale of teachers, according to Adams (1992). Principals are a vital component to improving morale, as they have a greater ability to influence the work environment of the site, along with promoting a positive spirit. While principals and other administrators have their own stresses and responsibilities to contend with, they do have the ability to make the school atmosphere a more pleasant working environment for both teachers and students. An administrator's ethical, moral and spiritual leadership influences school climate and university administrator preparation programs have an obligation to prepare their candidates in understanding and assuming that vital responsibility.

NCLB brings new stress to the world of education, though it is intended to ensure a quality education for every child. One way that teachers are feeling the affects of NCLB is through the new teacher accountability measures in place. These demands, which include more stringent requirements for teacher licensing, can indeed, be stressors for current teachers, as well as new teacher candidates. In fact, some who were well beyond their probationary period and considered veterans by their districts, found themselves suddenly required to return to school for further certification, testing, or the completion of alternative requirements as determined by their state's Department of Education for NCLB compliance.

If teachers' voices are not heard and their concerns not addressed, poor morale is surely apt to occur. According to research (Brock & Grady, 2000; Miller 1981; Mendel, 1987), low teacher morale can have extremely negative implications for the educational environment, especially with students. If we indeed hope to achieve the goal of all children reaching their full potential, it is imperative that we address the problems created by poor teacher morale and not negate the intent of NCLB.

Teacher Attrition

With an estimated teacher attrition rate of approximately 30 to 50 percent (Ballinger, 2000), it is important to address issues that teachers face, especially during times of significant change in the profession such as that brought about by NCLB. If teachers feel their voices are not being heard, it is quite possible that the lack of interest in their feelings, morale, and points of view could lead to their leaving the profession altogether.

Ingersoll and Smith (2003) found in their research that, "The teaching occupation suffers from a chronic and relatively high annual turnover compared with many other occupations" (p. 30). The Texas Center for

Educational Research (2000) found there is an annual teacher turnover rate in that state of 15%, with 40% of public school teachers leaving the profession in their first three years of teaching. This places a huge burden on schools to fund teacher recruitment and provide training for the new teachers. According to the same report, Texas spends about $329 million per year as a result of teacher attrition. These funds take away from the money that could otherwise be spent on other resources to improve student learning.

Darling-Hammond (2003) noted that teacher attrition rates were 50% higher in schools serving low-income students than for schools not in that category. She also mentions several major factors that influence teacher attrition, regardless of the socio-economic level of their school, such as salary, increasing demands on time, and working conditions. Darling-Hammond stated that, "only 36 percent of education spending goes to teacher salaries nationwide, compared to between 60 to 80 percent in other modern countries" (p. 29).

The average national salary for teachers as of the 2000-2001 school year was $43,250 (White, 2003). Though this salary may seem sufficient to some, the increased demand for teachers to continue their education, invest more time in training, and deal with growing student apathy or behavior problems can make teachers feel substantially underpaid. This is especially true for teachers who are paid less than the national average (Nelson, 1994). As determined by the National Center for Education Statistics (Grossman, 2003), teachers are now earning about 1 percent less than they were in the 1990-91 school year when inflation was taken into account. It should come as no surprise that the competition with other careers that are more financially rewarding is a real threat to finding quality candidates.

Generally, schools in high or middle-income areas tend to have better working conditions for teachers, as they typically have greater financial resources, which often translate to better facilities and well-equipped classrooms. Teachers working at lower income schools sometimes report negative working conditions (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2003). Grossman (2003) shared that retention of new teachers is directly related to working conditions. Grossman, citing Ingersoll (2001), expresses that a concern about working conditions is also related to such issues as teacher input. Teachers want to be heard and have their input considered regarding decisions affecting their schools and, more importantly, their classrooms. The overall feeling was that if teachers are not supported and do not feel successful, they may leave the profession. A major concern is for the new teachers who have to deal with assimilating simultaneously to the classroom as well as to the expectations of NCLB. In a study by the Civil

Rights Project at Harvard University (Sunderman, Tracey, Kim, & Orfield, 2004), teachers expressed that NCLB and its policies are "pushing good teachers to leave the schools that need them the most" (p. 43).[1]

Teacher Support

Teacher support is a key issue in regard to teacher morale and attrition (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Researchers often give this topic its own heading due to the fact that in the process of conducting research it has been discovered that support is listed more often as a factor in teacher attrition and lower morale than are any other factors (Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium, n.d.; Tye & O'Brien, 2002). Beginning teachers are in the most need of support, but not all schools and site leaders are equipped to provide that necessary assistance. According to Ingersoll (2001), schools that are the least equipped to provide this help have higher turnover rates than schools that are prepared to aid new teachers.

Fledgling teachers who have access to and participate in new teacher programs are twice as likely to remain in the teaching profession (Brown, 2003). New teacher programs include induction programs, such as California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA), and mentoring. Teachers new to the profession often feel isolated and need to have support from veteran teachers and school administrators that have so much insight and expertise to offer. According to Brown, not all support programs have the proper focus. Some programs place their focus upon student assessment rather than the support of teachers and their professional growth. Sweeny (2003), the cofounder and executive board member of The Mentoring Leadership and Resource Network, mentions that President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act directs its money toward assessment efforts rather than professional growth. This push toward assessment causes some districts and schools to put a considerable amount of their resources into assessments and the preparation for those assessments, at the cost of taking away much needed teacher develop-ment and other valuable resources. What is not always taken into consideration is that for teachers to be able to push students to achieve at higher levels, teachers need to continue their learning regarding the best practices to accomplish this.

Administrative support is an important factor for teachers. Brock and Grady (2000) expressed that teachers who feel supported by their administration are less likely to suffer from teacher burnout. In a report by Certo and Fox (2001) for the Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium, administrative support is cited as the largest single factor in retaining teachers next to salary and benefits. Administrators create the

working environment and conditions under which teachers work. They have the ability to create a positive environment or one that is unpleasant. The difference in these environments can make the difference between losing and retaining quality teachers. Administrator preparation programs must ensure that enough is being done to assist their candidates in understanding these factors and the dispositions at work.

Researchers suggest there are some steps administrators can take to build a constructive school culture (Brock & Grady, 2000). These recommendations are as follows: (1) develop strong communication, including speaking to teachers to praise their accomplishments as well as discussing problems, (2) team building that deals with morale boosting as well as getting the staff to form cohesive groups to provide support for one another, (3) problem resolution dealing with not only solving problems, but also doing so quickly and fairly, and (4) role modeling for teachers. Brock and Grady described role modeling as not just providing leadership. The leadership needs to be of high quality as well as showing a sincere interest in the activity of the classrooms, which includes being informed and interested in the curriculum and instruction being practiced. Ethical and moral leadership are a crucial factor due to their potential influence on ensuring a quality education for every child. Blase and Kirby (1992) supported Brock and Grady's findings and added that administrators can support teachers by standing behind them when it comes to students. This means that they are supportive of teachers in regard to matters of discipline as well as enforcing teachers' decisions. These findings were also consistent with those of the Sunderman (2004) study. If teachers do not feel administrative support is strong and if a positive working environment is not created for teachers, then a work setting denoted by apathy and overall negativity will survive (Shipka, 1993).

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (2002) found that support from administration is not the only type of support teachers need and appreciate. Support from parents is also valuable as administrative, colleague, and community support is not always available. The National Center for Education Statistics (1997) reports that teachers who receive support from parents are more satisfied than those that do not receive it. When parents are interested in and supportive of their child's education, teachers will often feel valued and supported in their efforts. This confirmation may help to make the job of teaching easier and more bearable when difficulties arise.

Teacher support from administrators and parents was very important to the respondents in the Sunderman study (2004), as the teachers from both the Fresno and Richmond school districts "believed that good administrators played a large role in school improvement" (p. 43).

Teachers from that study also indicated that parent support was lacking in their schools, and that NCLB should implement programs that help develop parent support.

Teacher Accountability

In the wake of *No Child Left Behind*, there have been major changes in the accountability systems of schools across the nation. One major accountability effort is the highly qualified teacher requirement. In its provisions on teacher quality, NCLB has set subject competence requirements that teachers must meet in order to be considered "highly qualified." The term highly qualified means different things to different states, as it is one of the points within NCLB that offers flexibility for states. NCLB requires that in order for teachers to be labeled as highly qualified, they must have a bachelor's degree, hold a valid teaching credential, and show competence in the subject matter they are teaching (U.S. Department of Education, 2003a). However, individual states have the ability to develop their own definition of highly qualified as long as it is aligned with the NCLB highly qualified teacher requirements (U.S. Department of Education, 2003a).

Jack O'Connell, the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, in a letter to district and county superintendents and charter school administrators, explains that there are different requirements based on whether a teacher is "new" to the profession or one who is "not new" in regards to being highly qualified (2003, p. 2). A new teacher is one who received his or her credential or started an intern program after July 1st of 2002. Those not new to the profession are teachers who, prior to July 1, 2002, had a full credential or were enrolled in an intern program. This distinction is important to note as it determines how teachers are expected to demonstrate competency in California as required by NCLB. Teachers that are new to the profession are expected to pass a rigorous exam or complete state approved content area coursework to show competency (O'Connell, 2003). The exam, which teachers are to pass in order to be highly qualified, is determined by each state (U.S. Department of Education, 2003a). California has chosen to implement the California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET), which has been approved by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC), as the exams it uses to determine if teachers are competent to teach any or all of the core subjects (Ponsnick-Goodwin, 2004). The coursework option provided to California's single subject credential candidates is regulated and approved by the CCTC in their monitoring of university preparation programs.

In California, another option for showing competency for multiple

subject credential candidates is through the High, Objective, Uniform State Standard of Evaluation, also known as HOUSSE (CCTC, 2003). The HOUSSE option is only available for teachers who are not new to the profession. Through the HOUSSE process, teachers can earn credit for things they have already done which will apply towards their competency. For example, they will receive points towards competency for the years they have been teaching, coursework taken beyond the original credential, leadership positions held, creation and assessment of a professional portfolio, evaluation of teaching, as well as professional development completed (Posnick-Goodwin, 2004). Emerging school administrators play a key role in mentoring and evaluating their faculty to assist them in achieving their full potential.

The requirements for teachers to prove that they are highly qualified as a result of NCLB have caused a tremendous impact on California schools. Many teachers who were working in classrooms in the past, were not eligible to do so last year as the requirements were tougher for teachers providing instruction at Title I schools. In these schools, teachers were required to be fully credentialed by the beginning of the 2003-2004 school year (U.S. Department of Education, 2003a). In addition, the teachers in Title I schools had to prove they were highly qualified by June 30, 2004 at the latest. All other teachers have to become highly qualified, but have until the end of the 2005-2006 school year to do so (O'Connell, 2003). School administrators are working diligently to meet the challenge of making sure their teachers are all "highly qualified" by the deadline.

Student Testing

Accountability for schools and student performance through NCLB is also measured through high-stakes testing, except for the state of Nebraska. As discussed earlier, the states are responsible for creating and implementing their own high-stakes tests. While the tests are a way to determine levels of student achievement, they are also, in the views of some, a measure of teacher performance and ability. In light of this accountability, there is a tremendous pressure for districts, schools, administrators, teachers, and students alike to raise test scores.

According to Bond of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2004), many people feel that the present high-stakes atmosphere in education "distort[s] instruction and force[s] teachers to 'teach to the test'" (p. 1). Teaching to the test evokes a broad range of feelings in educators. Some educators believe that teaching to the test is a necessity in order to attain high achievement standards, while others feel that it is unnecessary and completely fraudulent.

Although many view teaching to the test an all or none issue, in practice it is actually a continuum. At one extreme, some teachers examine the achievement objectives as described in their state's curriculum and then design instructional activities around those objectives. At the other extreme is the unsavory and simply dishonest practice of drilling students on the actual items that will appear on the tests (Bond, 2004, p. 1).

As mentioned by Bond (2004), "teaching to the test" can also lead to a practice known as "teaching the test." Teaching the test differs from teaching to the test in that teaching the test implies that the actual test items are being taught to the students. The controversy is deepened with this practice as it brings up issues of ethics. Popham (2001), a leading researcher and commentator on teaching to the test, stated that item-teaching, teaching the actual items on the test, "eviscerates the validity of score-based inferences…item teaching is reprehensible" (p.17). Again, modeling ethical and moral leadership by the school administrator is crucial in guiding teachers in the appropriate approach to assessment.

Others view teaching to the test as curriculum alignment, which is seen simply as aligning teaching with the knowledge, skills, and academic standards that will be assessed on the state designed high-stakes tests (Bushweller, 1997). While curriculum alignment does not necessarily mean teaching the actual items that will appear on the tests or "clone items," the extreme pressure put upon teachers to raise scores and consequences for not doing so could lead to this practice. Bushweller, in the *American School Board Journal*, states that in one Florida county, part of the teachers' evaluations are based upon student performance on standardized tests. Consequences in other states can include schools being taken over by state education agencies, superintendents being fired, schools losing much needed funds, as well as entire school districts being disbanded for the lack of increased student performance (Bushweller). These severe consequences have led some educators to participate in the controversial practice of teaching to the test.

Another issue related to teaching to the test is the idea that student creativity is being stifled and, therefore, students are not able to develop well-rounded abilities (Utah Education Association, 2001). The UEA also brought up the topic of student abilities not necessarily being reflected accurately in a single test score, the score upon which the consequences are based. According to the UEA, "Many children respond and learn and grow through creative processes and programs such as band, orchestra, music, arts, speech, and debate" (p. 1). High-stakes testing does not measure these creative abilities. The tests are limited to core subjects, such as reading, language arts, and math, which do not give an assessment of students' overall abilities. Teachers in the Sunderman et al.

(2004) study reported that as a result of the high-stakes testing, subjects that are tested are focused on "excessively" while those that are not tested are "neglected." Deemphasizing or neglecting such subjects is not giving students an opportunity to learn through the creative processes involved with the arts.

Gilman and Gilman (2003) share that ineffective remediation is also a side effect of high-stakes testing. When high-stakes tests are emphasized, there is a need to drive students to perform. There is a concern that those students who have fallen behind somewhere along the way may continue to do so. Therefore, effective remediation must take place. A problem with this is that with such performance pressure placed upon students, teachers and administrators, there is not always adequate time to engage in remediation. Many educators find difficulty in teaching all of the required standards of their grade level in time for the state-mandated tests, much less going back and reteaching standards that students were expected to learn in previous years. Some teachers feel that one way of overcoming this obstacle is by teaching to the test or teaching the test.

These perspectives and practices of teaching to the test are highly debated, and will likely continue to be in the future. Educators and the public have varying ideas about whether or not teaching to the test, or actually teaching the test, is an appropriate and honest practice. However, as long as high-stakes testing is a reality in education, so will be the arguments of right and wrong when it comes to test preparation. Teachers from the Sunderman study (2004) believed that NCLB is creating an environment that destabilizes a school's curriculum by narrowing the curriculum (p. 22 & 35).

Budget Cuts and Limited Resources

Budget cuts in education are a reality. According to an article by Jennings in *T.H.E. Journal* (2003), the fifty states are facing budget deficits that are collectively near $50 billion. The article also states that California and New York are dealing with a major portion of this deficit. California went from having a budget surplus of $13 billion in the 1999-2000 fiscal year to having a budget deficit of $36.4 billion in the 2003-2004 fiscal year (McFadden, 2004). These budget deficits may find their way into many of the nation's classrooms in one way or another.

Presumably, budget cuts in education will pose a problem to some schools in light of NCLB and its increased performance standards for students. While the standards for student achievement are rising, the financial support districts, and in turn the schools, are receiving is

lessened, a challenge that can be daunting for a site administrator as they must prioritize and maximize their available funds. A report from EdSource Online (2003) reported that in the 2002-2003 school year there was a $103 million reduction in materials funding. The total funding allocated for instructional materials was $400 million, with $250 million to be used on an ongoing basis and $150 million set aside as one-time funding. The $103 million cut affected only the one-time portion of this money, however, considering this money was to be spent towards purchasing standards-based instructional materials to support student learning, the loss of these funds was a tremendous setback.

Teachers and administrators have been expected to keep up with the demands of NCLB, especially that all students are proficient in the core academic subjects of reading, language arts, and math by the year 2014. However, the increased demands and expectations have not been met with the same proportion of increased funding. While NCLB does allocate more financial resources to schools, i.e., grants under Title I, (U.S. Department of Education, 2003a), not all educators are seeing the benefits of these funds in their classrooms. It is up to the administrators to make sure that the Title 1 funds are spent appropriately. Many administrators are aware of their student demographics and are careful to spend the funds in accordance to the students' needs. Unfortunately, if not attuned to their faculty, students, and community sufficiently, some administrators may not appropriately address the needs of the students nor use the money to the students' best advantage. And even more unfortunate, even with the Title I and other available educational funds, no one can ensure that all students' needs will be met and that progress toward proficiency will be made. Recent news reports have indicated that much of the NCLB funding intended for the tutoring of targeted student populations in improving their academic progress is largely underutilized.

The concern is that teachers and administrators are expected to get all students performing at proficient or above levels in academic performance with fewer budgetary resources. Many teachers mention that, while they will have to deal with budgetary cuts and limited resources, they believe their site administrators have done a good job effectively utilizing the funds allocated to their school sites.

Summary

Many teachers actually agree with the principles of NCLB, but even those who support the law believe it has flaws. The biggest complaint is the timeframe NCLB sets for getting all students to the proficient level and whether it is enough time to accomplish this enormous task. Given

the challenges, many educators generally believe it will take longer than the year 2014 to accomplish these goals.

Understanding how teachers view NCLB can be helpful to administrators, district leadership, and legislators at both the federal and state levels as it can provide important insight regarding teacher efficacy and the support needed relative to effectively meeting the expectations of NCLB. Though NCLB holds all public schools accountable, it is also evolving over time. With the information garnered from the Sunderman study and others like it, teacher preparation entities and others will have data which can assist them in refining, creating and implementing future policy.

Meanwhile, there is much that administrators can do to support new teachers and improve teacher efficacy regardless of the demands of NCLB: (a) make teacher support a priority and take the lead in developing a formal program, (b) make a commitment to funding programs for new teachers and their development by finding innovative ways to raise money, (c) avoid assigning the most challenging classes to new teachers, (d) make an effort to assign new teachers to the same grade level and subject area in which they student taught, (e) provide orientations for new teachers at the beginning of each school year, (f) give teachers as much information as possible about their students prior to the first day of school, (g) provide new teachers with the materials they need to get started, (h) make your expectations for beginning teachers clear, (i) tell new teachers that you are invested in their success and show them in what ways, (j) set aside time to drop in or meet with new teachers on a weekly basis, (k) find ways to draw new teachers out of their classrooms and into the larger school community, and (l) support new teachers' participation in professional development activities.

Administrative preparation programs must begin investing more time in making their candidates aware of the importance of teacher efficacy and the need to adequately nurture our new teachers in the profession. To not do so, exacerbates an already growing concern with teacher burnout, poor retention rates, and the impending baby boomer teacher retirements. One of the tenants of the No Child Left Behind legislation is to provide highly qualified teachers for every child. If we can't keep them in the profession and in America's classrooms to train our future generations, much debate, effort, and resources will have been wasted.

Note

[1] The research for the Sunderman, et. al., (2004) study was conducted in two school districts at opposite ends of the country: Fresno Unified School District in Fresno, California and the Richmond Public School District in Richmond, Vir-

ginia. Each of the two districts serve a large population of minority and low performing students. The minority population in Fresno Unified at the time of the study was 82.5%, while this same population totaled 92.5% in the Richmond Public Schools (p. 13). Over one-half of the Virginia schools identified as "*in need of improvement*" were located in the Richmond Public School District. Similarly, it was stated that while Fresno schools make up only 1.1% of California's public schools, those schools made up 4.8% of California's "*in need of improvement schools.*"

The primary focus of the Sunderman research (2004) was to identify teacher perceptions as they related to NCLB. Concerns about resources were similar in both of the districts studied. Teachers wanted more instructional resources to assist them with the demands of NCLB (p. 38). In addition, the teachers from Fresno and Richmond schools stated that smaller class sizes were also a desired resource.

This particular study concludes that teachers need to be supported and their concerns heard by administrators. Teachers expressed that they would like administrators to support them in ways such as providing relevant training and staff development as well as providing resources that will help them meet the requirements of NCLB. Teachers also hoped parents would be more supportive in terms of getting involved in their children's schooling. Overall, these teachers were dissatisfied with aspects of NCLB. However, they realized the need to work hard to meet the NCLB goals.

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