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The Impact of Title I Program Funding Through a Comparison of Schoolwide Assistance and Targeted Assistance on Fifth Grade Reading Achievement Scores in Illinois: Implications for Leadership in Public Education

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

THE IMPACT OF TITLE I PROGRAM FUNDING THROUGH A COMPARISON OF
SCHOOLWIDE ASSISTANCE AND TARGETED ASSISTANCE ON FIFTH GRADE
READING ACHIEVEMENT SCORES IN ILLINOIS: IMPLICATIONS FOR
LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

PROGRAM IN ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

BY

MICHAEL E. ROBEY

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

MAY 2011

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St. Augustine said, “You know your true self only when tested”. The process of completing a dissertation certainly does test you. I have been fortunate to receive the expertise, guidance, insight, and inspiration from many individuals who have been a constant source of encouragement to me during the many years involved in completing the dissertation process. They helped me endure this test in life and learn more about my true self.

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because you were worthy. I won't leave you because you are not" (Direction of our Times, 2004). The loyalty and devotion of my family was necessary. I could not have completed this without their understanding. Many times it was not clear if the end would ever be in sight. An anonymous quote, "If God brings you to it, he will bring you through it". The continued faith my family had in me and God is the enduring memory that I will hold. There was certainly a bigger hand guiding me through completion of this project. My faith has sustained and deepened through this process. Their love and understanding are appreciated more than they know.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my father, Elmer Robey, who passed away before having the opportunity to see it completed. It was a firm dedication to education from both him and my mother, Mary Robey, which kept me in college in my early days. Without their constant encouragement and high expectations, this day would never have come.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/GLOSSARY

Categorical funding: Funding targeted to an area based upon specific purpose or concern to be addressed. Title I funding is considered categorical funding for low income, disadvantaged students.

ESEA: Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Federal law intended to work with public education to serve the academic needs of students. A major focus in this law was the “War on Poverty” with Title I as the primary federal financial component (ESEA, 1965).

IIRC: Interactive Illinois Report Card, <http://iirc.niu.edu>. Web site designated by Northern Illinois University to house Illinois state data on student achievement and testing accountability. This site contains ISAT data from 1997 to the present year (NIU, 2008).

Incidental Inclusion: When students are not identified specifically as Title I students in a targeted assistance school, yet still benefit indirectly from a service provided by Title I funds (TPG, 2007). Students may receive services simply by being present when an identified student is benefiting from the instruction, resources, or small group activity. For the purpose of this study, these scores were not excluded from the final results.

ISAT: Illinois Scholastic Achievement Test. Accountability measure used by Illinois to measure the yearly progress of students in reading and math from third through eighth grade.

LEA: Local Education Agency. The governing body for a school or district that has the authority to make educational and financial decisions for the school or district.

Low Income: Measured by a student's eligibility for a free or reduced lunch program as determined by federal government criteria.

NCLB: No Child Left Behind. Federal law signed into effect January 8, 2002 as a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The law serves to increase achievement for all students originally starting with reading and math.

PSAE: Prairie State Achievement Examination. The achievement test for Illinois high school students that is administered at 11th grade only. The Illinois State Board of Education has acknowledged little correlation exists between the PSAE and ISAT (ISBE, 2007).

Reading achievement: Identified for the purpose of this study as students meeting or exceeding standards on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test.

Schoolwide assistance: Use of Title I funds to upgrade the entire educational program of the school. Funds can be used to service all children in the school (TPG, 2007).

School leader: Any administrator responsible for making decisions about the educational programs of an individual school or for the district. For the purpose of this study, a school leader can be anyone from a principal to a reading director to a superintendent.

SEA: State Educational Association. Governing body for the state that makes educational and financial decisions for that individual state.

Targeted assistance: Use of Title I funds to “target” a specific group of students and support programs for eligible children, i.e., children who are failing or at risk of failing to meet state standards (TPG, 2007).

Title I: A section of Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Federal assistance grants aimed at improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged. Funding that is distributed to schools/districts based upon the number of low income students in attendance. Title I is one of the first federal categorical funding initiatives.

ABSTRACT

The ability to read with proficiency and comprehension is one of the basic goals of our educational system. Adequacy of funding these goals, particularly for lower income students, continues to be a challenge. Despite the efforts of a variety of educational reforms many students, particularly the economically disadvantaged, continue to struggle with basic reading skills.

The intent of this study is to help school leaders in identifying whether schoolwide or targeted assistance programs funded through Title I schools are associated with higher reading achievement. The study measured reading achievement for fifth grade students in Illinois using data from the Illinois Scholastic Achievement Test from 2006 to 2007 and compared the results of selected schools in the 40% to 90% low income range with populations of 200 to 1,00 students in Northern Cook County and Lake County, Illinois. Schools used for this study were split between those using schoolwide assistance and those using targeted assistance.

The study provides information that indicates the impact of Title I funding on reading achievement by comparing the use of schoolwide and targeted assistance. The outcome of this study is important to school leaders in determining the general direction to take with school programs when receiving federal funding through Title I.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

“... opportunity is a prerequisite for success, whereas success is not necessarily a condition of opportunity” (Mullin & Brown, 2008, p. 5).

Education is frequently noted as the means to success for our nation’s future. The ability to read and comprehend material is one of the most fundamental of all educational skills and the core building block for all other learning (Lewis, 1996; National Reading Panel [NRP], 2000; National Research Council [NRC], 1998). If opportunity to a high quality education is indeed a prerequisite to success for students, then states and local school leaders must find a way to “level the playing field” for low income and minority students (Mullin & Brown, 2008).

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) act has increased an emphasis on meeting the educational needs of all students, including low income students. That emphasis has been primarily structured around math and reading achievement (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002). Reading is generally considered the key to educational success for students (Allington & Walmsley, 2007; NRP, 2000). The vast majority of students leave our educational system reading fairly well. Concerns naturally arise about those who do not and students who come from poor families are more likely to land in this group than their more advantaged peers (Allington & Walmsley, 2007). The Title I funding Section A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965) was

the largest response by the federal government for providing equal opportunity for students who have fewer benefits due to economic hardship (Sack-Min, 2009; Tosh, 2003; Zigler, 2009). Title I allows school leaders with 40% or more of the students in their local school classified as low income the opportunity to choose either a schoolwide program or a targeted assistance model (Thompson Publishing Group [TPG], 2007). This study will examine whether schoolwide assistance or targeted assistance through Title I is associated with higher achievement in fifth grade reading scores as measured through the Illinois Scholastic Achievement Test. The ultimate generalization of the study will be to help school leaders determine the impact of schoolwide assistance and targeted assistance on the reading achievement to better inform their decision-making efforts when allocating Title I funds.

Poverty's Impact on the Success of American Children

In the State of the Union address of 1964, the President's Council of Economic Advisors reported an inverse relationship between the education of the head of a family and the prevalence of poverty and declared "a war on poverty" (Payne, 2005; Zigler, 2009) strongly linking education and poverty in America. Least we think that situations of dire poverty are confined to other countries, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2007) reminds us that the situation is more dismal in the United States than many believe. Students in the United States fare poorly, in the bottom half of nearly all indicators of poverty, when compared with students of other wealthy nations. UNICEF (2007) uses the term poverty, which is even more restrictive than the federal definition of low income which is used in allocating Title I funds and that will be used in this study.

UNICEF (2007) continues by saying that poverty can have devastating effects on the educational lives of children. Their report, *Child poverty in perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries*, states that "...when prolonged, poverty is likely to have an effect on children's health, cognitive development, achievement at school, aspirations, self-perceptions, relationships, risk behaviors, and employment prospects"(UNICEF, 2007, p. 39).

Thus, a child's cognitive, physical, and educational development is severely hampered by the influence of poverty preventing their full potential from being realized (UNICEF, 2007). Parents in poverty often are preoccupied fending for basic needs and less able to contribute in meaningful ways to their child's education (Richmond, 2008). Children are left unable to develop resources that are vital to their well-being and overall development (Payne, 2008).

Poverty impacts children through a variety of influences outside of the school environment. Children living in poverty have higher rates of lead poisoning, are not as well fed, relocate more frequently, watch more television, are read to less, develop their verbal abilities slower and less deeply, and do not have access to adults who can engage them in intellectually developmental ways (Lewis, 2004; Lewis, 2008; Walker Tileston & Darling, 2008). When under-resourced, children of poverty enter the academic world at a disadvantage. The disadvantages continue to grow over their academic careers resulting in lower achievement than their more advantaged peers (Payne, 2008). The less educated and poor population is in poorer health with a shorter life expectancy, has lower paying jobs and more frequently is unemployed, and lands in prison at a higher rate and for a

longer duration than their more educated and well-off peers (Evans & Schamberg, 2009; Kirp, 2008).

Better resources enable the poor to make a difference in the overall quality of their lives. Higher income levels allow parents to provide safer home environment for their children, healthier food choices, and better healthcare. Communities can provide better parks, schools, and libraries enabling parents to give their children a more enriching educational experience (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997). An increase in available income would aide in the overall development of children increasing their availability to learn. The poor are a product of their environment in that when parents are better educated themselves; they are more able to provide the approach for their children to navigate the system better and to escape the detriments of poverty (Kozol, 1991). Parents with less income tend to lack the education, the political insight, or understanding of the educational system to enable their children to effectively use an education to their benefit according to Kozol. That family income level has a greater impact on a child's achievement in school than any other factor suggests that there is more at work than simple cognitive differences (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997; Evans & Schamberg, 2009).

Payne (2005) considers education the key to getting students out of or keeping them out of the cycle of poverty. Payne states that people will leave poverty for one of four reasons: 1) They have a goal or vision of something they want to be, 2) the situation is so painful that any alternative would be better, 3) a mentor or role model shows them a different way to live and convinces them that it is possible for them to live in a different

way, or 4) they have a specific skill or talent that provides the opportunity. Payne (2005) also notes that this transformation can happen through interactions that take place in the educational system. Education is often seen as a means to reversing the cycle of poverty for the disadvantaged (Lewis, 1996; Payne 2005; Walker Tileston & Darling, 2008).

Unfortunately, the stark reality is that the poor and disadvantaged often suffer not only from the effects of poverty, but from a poor schooling experience as well. This experience compounds and creates a fundamental inequality in the education between the advantaged and disadvantaged (Payne, 2005; Sawchuck, 2009). Poor and minority children more often receive instruction from teachers who are less experienced, teaching out of their field more frequently, less qualified, and generally considered substandard to their counterparts in higher income areas (Sawchuck, 2009).

A moralistic perspective would state that there is no limit to the price one can place on a child's education, particularly when we are speaking of children who come with the disadvantages associated with poverty (Hoff & McNeil, 2008). The number of children living in poverty continues to grow around the world (Samuelson, 2007) however; the reality is that there are increasingly limited funds available for education with the current economic conditions and there will always be a finite amount of funding available for public initiatives such as education (AP, 2008; Malone & Napolitano, 2009; Rado, 2009).

School leaders and politicians alike have argued that a higher level financing is required with the increased demands and higher standards imposed through No Child Left Behind (Quaid & Pope, 2009). Some policy makers have argued that the amount of

funding is at an adequate level and simply needs to be spent more efficiently to provide for the needs imposed (Hill, 2008; Podesta & Brown, 2008). The premise that increased funding will always result in corresponding increases in achievement is not shared by all. Samuelson (1997) argues that money does not necessarily change the outcome for those living in poverty and that simply putting more finances into education for children living in poverty is not an answer by itself. An increase of funding alone is not the answer and more money for the poor and education is simply not as important as Americans believe it is, but rather larger changes in the educational system are required (Samuelson, 1997).

Pertinent Statutes Impacting the Education of Low Income Students

With the implementation of Public Law 89-10, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, education was for the first time clearly tied to a federal initiative designed to create a more uniform educational plane for low income students (Bailey & Mosher; 1968, Klein, 2009; Payne, 2005; Zigler, 2009). The Title I section of ESEA (1965) targeted categorical funds toward enhancing low income students' education (ESEA, 1965). The intent of the Title I section of ESEA (1965) was to provide more education funding to schools with higher numbers of students living in poverty and to provide these students with an equal opportunity of receiving a quality education (Payne, 2005). Funding was seen as a means of improving the education of students living in poverty. This primary notion carries through today with the reauthorization of the original ESEA (1965) into the No Child Left Behind act. The alterations to Title I through NCLB (2002) have been made in an overt attempt to focus the attention of

school leaders on the learning of low income students (Podesta & Brown, 2008; Sack-
Min, 2009).

Over 100 billion dollars has been spent by the federal government on education since the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (White House, 2002 & NCLB, 2002). In 2008 alone, over \$13.9 billion was spent to serve over 12.5 million students (Institute of Education Sciences [IES], 2007). This study intends to seek if the funding provided by the Title I section of No Child Left Behind legislation is more effective at impacting the achievement of low income students in reading when school leaders choose to implement schoolwide use of funds or to target their Title I funds to specific populations.

No Child Left Behind requires that all students regardless of race, ethnicity, income level, special education status, or language proficiency, achieve established state achievement targets for learning by 2014 (Hoff, 2008; NCLB, 2002). NCLB specifically spells out subgroups, including the disadvantaged and low income, for the first time in history that schools and states must track as groups of students at the same targeted levels of achievement as all other students (Hoff, 2008; NCLB, 2002). According to Rothstein (2007) the premise behind NCLB (2002) is that poor and minority students will perform better if they are provided a higher quality education.

Section 1001 Statement of Purpose of Title I amended the Elementary and
Secondary Education Act to give the following direction:

The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments. (NCLB, 2002)

No Child Left Behind has directed school leaders to use Title I categorical funds to focus on disadvantaged children in the areas of reading and math (Hoff, 2008; TPG, 2007).

Title I is considered the key fiduciary component of NCLB (2002), the Bush administration's primary educational policy (Hoff, 2008). Many educators have disagreed with the foundational components and level of success of NCLB (2002) has had, but Hoff (2008) notes that most educators would generally agree that no law has had a greater impact on education since the implementation of the original Elementary and Secondary Act in 1965, particularly when dealing with the disadvantaged.

No Child Left Behind further states that goals of Title I can be achieved by meeting the reading needs of our most needy children and meeting these needs will close the achievement gap between the lower income population and their more advantaged peers (NCLB, 2002). Reading is often considered the "gate keeper" to all learning (Lewis, 1996; NRP, 2000). When disadvantaged youth enter the education system, they are often behind their more advantaged peers who have had the benefit of growing up in an environment more conducive to establishing the norms necessary for learning in our formal education system (Hoff, 2008; Payne, 2007). Title I, in the early stages, seeks to level the field with the disadvantaged for basic educational needs to better prepare disadvantaged youth for an entry into formal education. Title I further seeks to continue serving low income students throughout their school years to equalize experiences that may be lacking due to poverty (Hoff, 2008; Zigler, 2009).

No Child Left Behind has given state and school leaders greater flexibility with the use of Title I funds (TPG, 2007). The goal is to allow state and school leaders the

ability to focus funds on students who are in most need. Title I notes that states are to give priority to local education agencies that have the lowest achieving schools and students, schools that demonstrate the greatest need, and districts that have demonstrated the greatest commitment to their lowest achieving schools through their school improvement plans (NCLB, 2002). States have been given more control over how to distribute funds and school leaders can demonstrate the desire to more effectively serve students through their school improvement plans (NCLB, 2002).

Dilemma School Leaders Face with Title I Funds

Under NCLB (2002), school leaders were given the option of choosing either a schoolwide program or in targeting their assistance with the funds provided by Title I depending on the level of poverty that exists in their building. If the overall level of low income, free or reduced lunch eligible students, is at 40% or higher school leaders may choose whichever program they believe will most benefit their students (IES, 2007; NCLB, 2002; United States Department of Education [USDE], 2002). From the school year 1994-95 to the school year 2004-2005, the number of school leaders choosing schoolwide assistance rose from 10% to 58% (USDE, 2007). This study seeks to find if the increase in schoolwide use of funding is associated with higher achievement in fifth grade. The current trend is a movement toward schoolwide use of funds and school leaders face the choice of schoolwide or targeted assistance with very little guidance or research to support their decision. The purpose of this study is to examine whether schoolwide assistance or targeted assistance through Title I is associated with higher achievement reading scores in fifth grade as measured through ISAT. The results of this

study will help school leaders determine if it is more effective for reading achievement to use Title I funds in a schoolwide manner or if it is more effective to target their assistance.

Continued and best use of Title I funds is an important issue for school leaders because the achievement scores of low income students still lag behind the scores of their more advantaged peers. Low income students in Illinois have scored lower on the Illinois Scholastic Achievement Test, ISAT, every year: 34% to 15% below their more advantaged peers in 3rd grade since 2002, 34% to 19% lower in 5th grade, and 30% to 17% lower in 8th grade (Northern Illinois University [NIU], 2008). By reviewing these data from the Illinois Interactive Report Card in Appendix A, one will see that low income students in Illinois are not performing to the same level as their more advantaged peers. School leaders are under increasing pressure to bring all subgroup populations up to the target goals established by the state and federal government since the inception of the No Child Left Behind act making the proper use of federal Title I funds an increasingly more important issue (Mintrop, 2008; Sack-Min, 2009).

There would seem to be a common sense relationship that would say if a school is better financed, that the students will be better enabled to meet their academic goals (Klein, 2009). This study will set out to determine what research says about the use of funds through Title I for schoolwide assistance and targeted assistance and give school leaders a better sense of which direction to turn when using federal funds from Title I. Is either schoolwide or targeted use of funding associated with higher reading achievement for Illinois students in fifth grade? Hill (2008) says that even when adequate funding is

available in schools, that if it is not appropriately focused it will not necessarily produce desired increases in student achievement. Determining whether to apply Title I funds to a targeted set of students or whether to institute a schoolwide program can mean a substantial shift in financing of building level resources. This study will provide evidence of the effectiveness if increasing the overall reading achievement of the school through schoolwide assistance is more effective or if the targeted assistance at selected schools results in higher achievement scores as measured by fifth grade ISAT reading.

Research Question

This study will address the following question:

When Illinois school leaders of buildings with over 40% of their school population identified as low income choose between Title I schoolwide assistance or targeted assistance programs, which method of distributing Title I funds is associated with higher reading achievement scores in fifth grade as measured by ISAT?

Organization of the Study

Chapter I introduces the study describing the purpose, the impact of poverty on students in the United States, relevant statutes impacting the education of low income students, the dilemma school leaders face with Title I funding, the research question, the organization of the study, definitions of terms, and the limitations of this study.

Chapter II presents a review of educational literature pertinent to the topics of funding and reading achievement. Subjects included in this chapter are the historical nature of funding in education, No Child Left Behind, Title I, choosing schoolwide and targeted assistance, schoolwide guidelines, targeted assistance guidelines, reading

achievement, the role of leadership in achievement, and funding and achievement research.

Chapter III includes a statement of the research problem, states the hypothesis, lists the research question, describes the population studied, the choice of fifth grade students, the use of ISAT for fifth grade, the two choices of Title I funding options in schoolwide and targeted assistance, the school leaders decision-making role, the demographic area of the sample population, choosing the sample population and refining the study, the IRB approval process, the procedure used for gathering data on the sample population, the procedure for identifying the school leader, the procedure for analyzing the data, and the limitations of the study.

Chapter IV provides the results of the data analysis. This includes an overview of the sample population, data that emerged as a result of contacting principals, the racial composition of the sample population, the low income characteristics of the sample population, the relationship between low income level and achievement scores, the relationship between race and achievement scores using aggregate school-level data, and the association of schoolwide and targeted assistance with achievement scores. Schoolwide and targeted assistance are also compared descriptively in terms of racial composition, socioeconomic status, and enrollment.

Chapter V summarizes the findings including conclusions and recommendations for further study and action. The chapter begins with a statement of the research question, describes findings from the sample population characteristic data, the racial composition data, findings from the White population and achievement, findings from the Black

population and achievement, Hispanic population and achievement, the low income characteristics of the sample population, the impact of schoolwide and targeted assistance on achievement, data that emerged from principal contact, a summary of the findings, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

Appendix A includes information about the achievement gap in Illinois

Appendix B is a copy of the Freedom of Information Act request sent to the Illinois State Board of Education.

Appendix C is a copy of the script used when contacting schools to verify the use of Title I funds.

Appendix D includes complete data for all the schools on the sample population.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study are limited by several factors. Some of the limiting factors are complexities in generalizing data from Illinois to the rest of the nation because each state has set its own standards and target goals for achievement under NCLB (2002), the continual changing nature of achievement measures over time, the diversity of local communities and schools, and the current economic times during a recessionary period.

One limitation on a full-scale national study is that each state has set its own standards and target goals for achievement under NCLB (2002). This provides an array of widely varying standards by which students across the country are evaluated. Each state has been given the right under NCLB (2002) to determine what standards it will measure and what type of assessment it will use to measure those standards. Naturally there is a tremendous variance in the emphasis of standards measured and in the quality of the

assessment tools. Some state standards are quite rigorous and accurately applied to measure growth in students. Other states have not identified appropriately rigorous standards and have not set up measures that will accurately determine if students are making progress toward those standards (Popham, 2004). This lack of standardization among states in terms of tested items, the incremental steps of progress in meeting the requirements of NCLB (2002), and the assessment used would make it very difficult to complete a comparative study across the entire nation. This limits the researcher's study to results from Illinois alone.

Some states, such as Illinois, have changed the assessment used over the course of the existence of No Child Left Behind (Aarons, 2009) making a comparative study virtually impossible to complete with long term data. States have tended to first retract the overall testing and type of testing prior to complying with the No Child Left Behind law. Illinois is an example of a state that altered the testing bank of questions significantly for the 2005 ISAT. This has caused difficulty in comparing pre-2005 data to data after 2005. According to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE, 2007), fifth grade reading scores were not significantly affected, another reason this study only focused on fifth grade scores (ISBE, 2007; NIU, 2008). Nonetheless, the study acknowledges the use of data prior to 2005 may not provide a precise comparison of achievement and that a limit of this study is that it applies only to the selected schools.

Illinois is addressing concerns that there is a potential disconnect between the elementary and high school assessments which will result in a change of the ISAT in the year 2011 or later (Leveque, 2009). In an effort to clarify and reduce standards that were

developed in 1997, ISBE (2007) has voted to become the 34th state to join the American Diploma Project which will help review the Illinois standards against national and international standards. These include the American Diploma Project standards for college and work readiness, the National Assessment for Education Progress, and the Massachusetts Science and Technology Engineering Curriculum Framework (Leveque, 2009). ISBE (2007) will work with the Illinois Community College Board, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Business Roundtable, and the Governor's Office in a process that is expected to take between 18 to 24 months beginning in March of 2009 (Leveque, 2009).

The study attempted to control for location by choosing only schools located in suburban collar counties of Chicago. Illinois is an extremely diverse state. This study has limited for demographic location by restricting the schools to a suburban area of Chicago. The researcher acknowledges the regional limits of the study to the immediate Chicago suburban area which may not be transferable to a broader population in a different demographic area.

Care was taken to account for the size of schools by selecting schools identified from IIRC data in the 200-1000 student population range and for low income level by selecting schools in the 40-90% range. Schools in this range of low income would have the option of selecting their allocation method. The study accounts for variables of ethnicity by including the covariates of number of White, Hispanic, and Black students. This adjustment allows the researcher to reduce the observed variation between schoolwide allocations and targeted assistance methods of distributing funds, caused not

by the treatment itself but by variation of the covariates. The study chose to focus only on the use of schoolwide and targeted funding; so results may or may not extend beyond the sample population. This study does not attempt to answer questions for all demographic conditions; therefore, it is limited in scope only to similar populations. This study did not attempt to account for all variations of low income students that would be possible. The hope is that the study can first determine if there is a significant impact on the selected demographic group that may be expanded upon in further research if determinations indicate a significant change results in the selected group.

Recent economic times in a recessionary period have altered the current structure of state budgets and will likely continue to impact financial investments in state education systems. With a Consumer Price Index of only 0.1% for the 2010 school year (Malone & Napolitano, 2009; Rado, 2009), all of the counties in this study will be impacted with severe financial issues because of the tax cap law of 1991. This means little to no increases in revenue for the next few years while school districts are already locked into contracts that call for much higher increases (Malone & Napolitano, 2009; Rado, 2009). Projected additional budget cuts are likely and the investment in educational budgets is likely to be more drastic since reserves have been drawn down or eliminated and states, unlike the federal government, are not allowed to run a deficit (McNichol & Lav, 2008). Cuts in state services are most likely to affect the group of students who benefit most from Title I services. Social services provided by states are generally focused to help the most disadvantaged.

By limiting the study to schools in the suburban Chicago area, the researcher acknowledges that the results obtained will not occur in every situation outside of the conditions set within this study. The limited number of schools decreases the accuracy of the information and the reliability in predicting results from the generalized conclusions obtained from the information in this study. This study is not exhaustive and all potential factors may not have been accounted for that would affect the outcome.

Finally, the new administration at the national level will most certainly mean changes in how federal laws are interpreted and implemented. The new federal stimulus package includes significant increases in funding to Title I. This may alter perceptions of the No Child Left Behind Act and the inadequacy of funding arguments that have been made since 2002 (Klein, 2009; Sack-Min, 2009). How the increase in financing plays out over time as to whether it changes the future of federal financing or proves to be a one-time infusion, will impact how states and schools use the funds (Klein, 2009). Early indications are that regardless of the outcome, a reauthorized education bill will pay close attention to the needs of the disadvantaged (Sack-Min, 2009).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of related literature focuses on the historical nature of funding in education, No Child Left Behind, Title I, choosing schoolwide or targeted assistance programs, schoolwide assistance program guidelines, targeted assistance program guidelines, reading achievement, the role of leadership in achievement, and funding and achievement research.

Historical Nature of Funding in Education

One could conceivably argue that the role of the federal government in education began with the formation of the preamble of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, but most certainly with the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment with its equal protection and due process clauses (Bailey & Mosher, 1968; Borman, Stringfield, & Slavin, 2001). Whenever Americans are concerned about the equality of rights or the disparity of educational opportunity, the federal government can intervene to provide opportunities for the success of all individuals (Bailey & Mosher, 1968; Jennings, 1995). The federal government has been involved in a number of efforts to equalize the opportunity for all. A few examples are the formation of public schools in the 18th century, the desegregation of schools through the *Brown vs. the Board of Education* decision that led to a greater concern over the equality of education for the economically disadvantaged, the educational initiatives of former president John F. Kennedy, and

finally the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These and many other initiatives led to the passage of Public Law 89-10 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Borman et al., 2001).

Passed on April 9, 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, commonly referred to as ESEA (1965), was considered to be the key piece of educational legislation for President Lyndon Johnson's "war on poverty" and widely heralded as a guarantee of equality of education for all (ESEA, 1965; Podesta & Brown, 2008; Zigler, 2009). ESEA (1965) primarily targeted the economically disadvantaged. ESEA (1965) provided special funding through Title I to allocate resources to meet the needs of "educationally deprived" children, especially through compensatory programs for the poor that would balance the inequity that existed between disadvantaged students and the rest of the population (Hess & Rotherman, 2007; Zigler, 2009). This marked the entry into education financing of the federal government through categorical funding, which is specifically targeting funds to the needs of a particular group of students (Jennings, 1995). Prior to this time, federal funds had been generalized in the form of blanket grants with the option on specific uses of the funds left to the state or local education organization (Hess & Rotherman, 2007). Section 201 of the ESEA (1965) states:

In recognition of the special educational needs of low income families and the impact that concentrations of low income families have on the ability of local educational agencies to support adequate educational programs, the Congress hereby declares it to be the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance ... to local educational agencies serving areas with concentrations of children from low income families to expand and improve their educational programs by various means ... which contribute to meeting the special educational needs of educationally deprived children (ESEA, 1965).

President Johnson stated that with the passage of ESEA (1965), Congress had taken the most significant step in United States history to helping American schoolchildren (Bailey & Mosher, 1968). ESEA (1965) was developed under the principle of “redress” which establishes that children from low income homes, who come to school without the advantages of children from more affluent homes, require more educational services to be successful (Bailey & Mosher, 1968). Johnson envisioned better health and safety measures for urban schools, active recruitment of teachers to poor schools and training when they arrived, after school programs of enrichment and remediation, increased instructional materials and textbooks, and better libraries to name a few means to help disadvantaged students gain the same advantages that their peers already had been accustomed to receiving (Hess & Rotherman, 2007).

As part of the ESEA (1965), Title I allocated funding to schools with the highest concentrations of low income students (ESEA, 1965; Hess & Rotherman, 2007). Head Start, a preschool program for disadvantaged children aiming at equalizing equality of opportunity based on “readiness” for the first grade, Follow-Through, to complement the gains made by children who participated in the Head Start Program, bilingual education which primarily targeted Spanish-speaking children in the mid to late 1960s, and other guidance and counseling programs were established as a part of ESEA (1965). These programs were all aimed to help disadvantaged youth overcome educational barriers to success (ESEA, 1965; TPG, 2007). This type of funding is now recognized as “categorical funding” (Srikantiah & Swayhoover, 2008).

Following the enactment of ESEA (1965), President Johnson stated that Congress had finally taken the most significant step of this century to provide help to all schoolchildren after decades of stating the need in America. There had been attempts at passing a school bill for all of children in the United States since 1870 without success (ESEA, 1965). The federal government has taken a larger role in funding education ever since. President Johnson argued that the school bill was wide-reaching, because "it will offer new hope to tens of thousands of youngsters who need attention before they ever enroll in the first grade," and will help "five million children of poor families overcome their greatest barrier to progress: poverty" (ESEA, 1965). He also contended that there was no other single piece of legislation that could help so many for so little cost: "for every one of the billion dollars that we spend on this program, will come back tenfold as schools dropouts change to school graduates" (ESEA, 1965). For the first time, federal funding was used with the unmistakable intention of increasing achievement for a specific group of students (Hess & Rotherman, 2007; Jennings, 1995; Srikantiah & Swayhoover, 2008).

President Johnson's statements about the significance of Title I and ESEA (1965) would soon be challenged with the release of *Equality of Educational Opportunity* report by James Coleman and others in 1966. This has since become known as the Coleman Report (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996). The Coleman Report states that significant funding of schools only has a modest impact on students at best. The study reports that home and peers have a greater influence over student achievement than schools. The debate over increasing resources to affect student achievement has raged since these

counterclaims over the effectiveness of funding on a child's achievement in public education (Greenwald et al., 1996).

Some took the Coleman Report to mean that schools could not provide the necessary means to significantly alter a child's academic path. The outside influences from family and friends were too significant to overcome. Furthermore, they took this as an opportunity to proclaim that focusing energy and financial support in schools was unnecessary (Hill, 2008). Others have refuted the claim. Richmond (2008) notes that with increased funding, schools can impact low income students in many ways such as: before and after school programs and tutoring for struggling students, roving substitutes to provide professional collaboration time for teachers, and family activities outside of the school day are just a few opportunities that need additional funding infused so that schools can provide for the disadvantaged. These strategies intervene to provide opportunities to students that will positively impact their achievement levels through our public schools (Richmond, 2008).

Disagreements in funding have resulted in resistance at the federal, state, and local levels. One outcome of this continued battle is a wide disparity in the financing from school district to school district across the nation. In Illinois, for example, the average amount spent in schools ranges from less than \$6,000 to over \$20,000 per student (Winfield, 2009). Such a disparity in financing education is bound to produce a disparity in performance. Historically, schools that tend to perform the best, tend to have the highest dollar amount per pupil expenditure (Rosborg, McGee, & Burgett, 2003). Voices for Illinois Children, a nonprofit organization concerned for the well-being of Illinois

children, contends that the gap is increasing between the rich and the poor. They note that, “there are great inequalities between school districts with high and low property values” and that “test scores and graduation rates show notable disparities” between the wealthy and the poor (Winfield, 2009).

Leveling the financial field will certainly help; however, increasing student achievement is certainly a complicated matter. Barton (2004) identifies fourteen different factors that have the highest impact on a student’s overall achievement. The fourteen factors were: birth weight, lead poisoning, hunger and nutrition, reading to young children, television watching, parent availability, student mobility, parent participation, rigor of curriculum, teacher experience and attendance, teacher preparation, class size, technology-assisted instruction, and school safety. While one could argue about the importance and order of importance of each particular factor, it is difficult to argue that any of these factors do not impact an individual student’s achievement. Which factor impacts a particular child the most or what combination of factors is having the most impact is very difficult to tell (Barton, 2004). This could be one reason behind the lack of research directly linking funding and achievement.

How can one definitely state that funding for the school would or would not make a difference? Walters (2009) argues that the larger issue may be in coordination of funds from the state and local level to address the underlying causes of poverty. He notes that we have so many issues to address and so many different programs designed to help students that the better coordination may provide a better opportunity to impact the lives of families living in poverty. Some of the root causes may be lack of adequate health

care, single parent or absent parent homes, parents with little or no formal education themselves, kids who are parents themselves, unsafe neighborhoods, gangs, drugs, language issues, and students who work long hours to supplement the family income (Walters, 2009). There are many programs designed to address these issues, however, there is minimal collaboration between the various groups responsible for helping students and schools (Walters, 2009). Resources should be coordinated to help students who are in most need (Walters, 2009). All of these factors influence the performance of students in the building, yet how do we determine which is addressed and how equipped are schools to deal with each or any of these conditions?

The advent of No Child Left Behind spurred a rash of lawsuits concerning unfunded mandates and adequacy of funding. Americans have identified “lack of adequate funding” as the number one problem facing our schools today for the sixth year in a row (Bushaw & Gallup, 2008). Federal initiatives have been imposed on states which have the legal responsibility of providing public education. The federal government still produces less than ten percent of the financing for school districts, on average, across the nation (Shen, 2000) demonstrating a disconnect between mandates and funding of those mandates (Hoff, 2008; Walsh, 2009). The Illinois public education system relies heavily on local property tax contributions to finance public schools. Local funding has long been rooted in the system of government in Illinois, through the autonomy sought by local educational institutions to oversee their own educational systems. This system of governing and funding schools in Illinois is known as “local control” (Mullin & Brown, 2008; Verstegen & Driscoll, 2008). Inequities in funding are to be theoretically balanced

out through state and federal means so that all students are provided an equal opportunity to receive a high quality education. With such disparities existing across Illinois, this funding equalization from the state and federal government is certainly not a reality (Mullin & Brown, 2008).

Illinois has the nation's second largest school funding disparity, in the United States, between low and high income schools ranking 49th out of all fifty states in contributing to public school funding (Urban League, 2008; Winfield, 2009). State levels of funding have fallen in Illinois, from 48% of the overall expenses that school incur in 1976 to 28% in 2007 (Urban League, 2008). This has resulted in shifting the burden for financing public education to local property tax owners while requirements from the state, through NCLB (2002), have increased the cost of educating children (Dobbs, 2004; Mathis, 2003; Podesta & Brown, 2008). This coupled with the given that local property tax owners in lower income areas are less able to adequately fund schools than their wealthier peers has created a tremendous system of inequality especially in a locally controlled education state like Illinois (Urban League, 2008; Verstegen & Driscoll, 2008; Winfield, 2009).

In its lawsuit against Illinois, the Urban League (2008) claimed that because of the financial inequities of the state, Illinois was denying students' rights to a high quality education. Although the lawsuit was brought forth on behalf of minority students, one may draw the conclusion that the impact is felt by all communities that are less able to finance their educational system with the same level of support financially. The impact is lower achievement, more students dropping out of school, and less college attendance for

these students than their peers. The Urban League (2008) contends that the lack of funding is significant because it results in higher class sizes, poorer condition of facilities, fewer extra and co-curricular activities, less qualified teachers, a shortage of supplies, and outdated textbooks and curriculum. In the lawsuit, the Urban League estimates this deficit at \$6 billion in Illinois alone.

Inequitable funding for education is an issue in many states. The assurance of equal opportunity for low income students to a high quality education should be elevated as a priority in our country (Arroyo, 2008). If closing the achievement gap continues to be a high national priority, funding of education and equitable funding of education need to become higher priorities (Arroyo, 2008). Federal funding initiatives, such as Title I, are intended to help bridge the gap; yet the sad truth is that the gap has grown over time rather than decreased (Hoff, 2008; United States Census Bureau [USCB], 2006; Urban League, 2008; Winfield, 2009). Most educators and legislators agree that more funding of the mandates required by NCLB (2002) is necessary (Sack-Min, 2009).

The federal government, under President Bush, stated that NCLB (2002) did indeed provide adequacy in financing. Under the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995, federal agencies are required to assess their actions on all other government bodies. Federal government research states that NCLB (2002) increased funding by 18%, in Title I in 2002 (USDE, 2002), which the Bush administration asserted was adequate to fund all the new requirements of NCLB (2002). Because of these increases, the United States Department of Education claims that the provisions of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act do not apply. Lawsuits, to date, have upheld the claims of funding adequacy for the

federal government. The lawsuits have not been successful, effectively passing the challenge of funding programs back to the state and local level (USDE, 2002).

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the new federal stimulus package, offers substantially higher funding for education. Among the initiatives of the act are an emphasis on high-poverty students and recruitment of teachers to less affluent schools (Klein, 2009; Parsons, 2009). The argument of underfunding or unfunded mandates has been weakened by this act and the infusion of billions of dollars, however, to this point; the act continues the emphasis on accountability measures that were brought by No Child Left Behind (Klein, 2009; Toppo, 2009). Rep. George Miller of California, head of the House Education and Labor Committee, has vowed to lead Congress in working with the new administration to rework NCLB (2002) into a more flexible, fair, and better funded law (Sack-Min, 2009).

No Child Left Behind

No Child Left Behind legislation has promised to help every child in America become proficient in both reading and math by the year 2014. With the onset of this new legislation signed into law on January 8, 2002, came the largest sustained increase of funding in the history of education in the United States. Title I funds rose 52% from \$8.8 billion to \$13.3 billion (Bush, 2004; IES, 2007). As the largest federal financing program, Title I has been used by NCLB (2002) to influence schools and “leverage” the change that the administration was pursuing. Title I accountability through NCLB (2002) measures the accountability of all students and rewards or withholds funds for schools that meet or fail to meet achievement standards (TPG, 2007).

Improving the education for all children can and should be of national importance and the federal government should play a large role in helping our schools educate all children, especially those who begin their education with a disadvantage (Rothstein, 2007). No Child Left Behind was widely hailed as a victory for poor and minority children by Democrats and Republicans alike (Hess & Rotherman, 2007). The premise of NCLB (2002) is a simple concept of taking a few standards, primarily reading and math related, and enforcing them rigorously. In doing so, improvement is expected (Hess & Rotherman, 2007; Mintrop, 2008). For schools that are struggling to meet these standards an initial step of involvement from the federal government, according to Education Secretary, at the time, Rod Paige and President Bush is an increase in available funding for that school to enable implementation of intervention programs such as tutoring for students and professional development and training for staff. According to their press release, “the public has a right to demand great returns on their investment” (Mathis, 2003). For schools that fail to meet the standards, NCLB (2002) requires changes in their programming from offering students tutoring services all the way up to demanding closing or restructuring of the school. If schools fail to comply with these requirements, they forfeit their funding (TPG, 2007).

No Child Left Behind has changed the landscape of instruction in classrooms across the country (Hess & Rotherman, 2007; Srikantaiah & Swayhoover, 2008). The Center on Education Policy notes that teachers are using more class time for activities to focus on test preparation. Many teachers claim that it is to provide an opportunity for disadvantaged children to participate in the format of the test they will be using and

provide a better assessment of every child's actual achievement level (Srikantaiah & Swayhoover, 2008). Teachers report that they are using less variety in their instruction for the lower performing students and in lower performing schools (Srikantaiah & Swayhoover, 2008). Teachers also feel a need to stick more closely to the required objectives and learning skills, yet that creative learning for students has weakened their overall education. Curriculum is more closely aligned to state goals and articulation K-8 has drastically increased (Srikantaiah & Swayhoover, 2008). There has been an increase in the focus on reading and math skills (not disputed as vital for every child's education) and on the use of reading skills in all other courses, but at the expense of all learning goals for all other subjects (Hoff, 2008; Srikantaiah & Swayhoover, 2008).

NCLB (2002) has caused American educators to begin looking systematically at education as a whole for the first time in this country (DeLorenzo, Battino, Schreiber, & Gaddy Carrio, 2008). Overall successes of NCLB (2002) include more informed and better use of data to drive instructional goals, targeting students who are not learning and an increase focus on differentiating to meet the needs of all students, increased efforts to involve parents in their child's education, an overall rise in achievement across the country, and a narrowing of the achievement gap between the general population and the disadvantaged (Hess & Rotherham, 2007; Srikantaiah & Swayhoover, 2008). Problematic areas reported by educators include the focus on the punitive measures for not meeting achievement targets, continually changing policies or programs in underperforming schools because of a different sense of urgency, and a reported increase in under or

unfunded mandates as a result of No Child Left Behind (Hess & Rotherham, 2007; Mintrop, 2008; Srikantaiah & Swayhoover, 2008).

Despite the United States Department of Education claims of improving the educational opportunities of disadvantaged children, No Child Left Behind has inadvertently provided an opportunity for proponents of more equitable financial backing of schools (Hess & Rotherman, 2007; Mintrop, 2008). States have made progress toward advancing curricular goals and targets. They have set the baseline for defining what constitutes an adequate education in their own state, defining this through outcome goals and standards (Mintrop, 2008).

No Child Left Behind requires the states to meet their own established standards. Many state test results show that many schools are not meeting the standards that the states have set for themselves (Schmoker & Marzano, 1999; Weingarten, 2009) and when comparing scores since the inception of NCLB (2002) to scores prior, the same success is not demonstrated by national assessments such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress or NAEP (DeLorenzo et al., 2008). Some have used this as an opportunity to call for national standards because all states are not measuring student progress in the same manner and all schools are not held to the same standard (Weingarten, 2009). At this time, the new education administration has not demonstrated any support for national standards despite a call for a better and more uniform system of assessment (Sack-Min, 2009).

Legislators have voiced the concern of whatever shape the reauthorization takes, that the focus will continue to be on ensuring an adequate education for all children

(Sack-Min, 2009). Especially in light of our current economic crisis, the needs of the poor continue to be a priority (Sack-Min, 2009). Supporters of inadequate funding initiatives seized the opportunity to hold states accountable for funding the schools that do not meet the adequate yearly progress that states themselves have defined (Hoff, 2008; Winfield, 2009). The vast majority of these failing schools happened to be in low income areas with less available funding. Critics claim that the “soft bigotry” that former President Bush spoke of when addressing the need for NCLB (2002), has not been addressed and that the federal government has not provided the funding to adequately pursue its policy (Blankstein, 2004; Hoff, 2008). With the current gap between well-funded school districts and their poorer counterparts, lawsuits have risen out of the nature of equitably funding schools (Mintrop, 2008; Winfield, 2009).

Illinois currently has one of the most inequitable school funding systems in the nation (Carey, 2004; Dobbs, 2004; Rosborg et al., 2003) and has been the target of a number of adequacies in funding lawsuits (Urban League, 2008; Verstegen & Driscoll, 2008). Key to the defense of NCLB (2002) is the clause that was inserted by lawmakers that “Nothing in this act shall be construed to ... mandate a state or any subdivision to spend any funds or incur any costs not paid for under this act.” Judges, however, are questioning why Congress would include an unfunded mandate as it did (Walsh, 2009).

Early indications are that the new presidential administration will make fully funding educational mandates a priority, further politicizing the situation, but delighting educators across the country (Quaid & Pope, 2009). The federal stimulus money provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has not addressed full funding,

yet remains a significant increase in funding for federal mandates such as the Individuals with Disabilities Act for special education and Title I for the disadvantaged. There is an opportunity for this to alter perceptions around the concept of unfunded mandates (Klein, 2009; Parsons, 2009). Some legislators are cautioning that the stimulus money is substantial, approximately \$100 billion, but that it may cause challenges for schools when the money runs out in two year. It is unclear at this point as to whether the stimulus is temporary, the most likely scenario, or part of a plan of large increases from the federal government to public education (Dillon, 2009).

Title I, Part A

Federal funding for schools through programs such as the Title I, Part A provision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act which is known simply as Title I, were to help impoverished communities engage “at risk” students by targeting extra resources and funneling funds into their schools (Shen, 2000; USDE, 2003). Although primarily intended to help the most impoverished students, Title I is used in over ninety percent of all public school districts and fifty percent of all schools in the United States (Cowan, 2003; TPG, 2007). Even with alterations made to the provisions in Title I with the reauthorization of ESEA (1965), now called the No Child Left Behind act, it is still the largest single federal financing program for primary and secondary schools in the United States (Shen, 2000; USDE, 2003).

It is helpful to have a little background and understanding of how funds flow from the federal level to the local level. Title I funds arrive to Local Education Agencies, the LEA or school district, through what is known as “a state-administered program.” This

means that funds are transferred to the State Education Agency, the SEA, from the U.S. Department of Education, the USDE. If the LEA meets requirements established by both the SEA and the USDE for income level and achievement of all students, funds are transferred to the LEA to be used at the local schools (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007).

In determining the initial funding level, the USDE looks at the SEA's average per-pupil expenditure and the LEA's count of low income students. In addition, all LEAs must have at least ten children that meet the low income standard and an overall population of low income students that exceeds two percent of the LEA's total student population (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). The SEA then modifies the findings of the USDE to account for new districts and schools through information that was not originally available to the USDE (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). Initially, these funds are allocated into four separate funding sources: basic, concentrated, targeted, and finance incentive grants. Basic uses the previously mentioned count of low income students and SEA per pupil expenditure to provide a foundational funding level for schools (Cowan, 2003; TPG, 2007).

The basic funding level provides funding to the most LEAs and contains the largest total amount (Cowan, 2003; TPG, 2007). Concentrated and targeted funds provide an additional boost of funding per child for LEAs with higher levels of poverty. Finally, finance incentive grants are awarded to SEAs that direct more of their funding toward high poverty areas and have highly equalized school finance systems (TPG, 2007). This rewards the states that most closely follow the spirit of the original intent of Title I (Cowan, 2003). Title I also contains a "hold harmless" provision. This means that LEAs

are guaranteed a certain portion of their previous year funding depending on their level of poverty. This amount can be 85%, 90%, or 95% and applies to all of the funds. All of these funds: basic, concentrated, targeted, and education finance incentive grants are grouped together in the end to provide an LEA with one set grant amount for Title I (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007).

Title I requirements prior to No Child Left Behind, inadvertently created a conflict with other interventions and programs in some schools (Cowan, 2003; Kimbrough & Hill, 1981). Title I requires that schools document the use of specific interventions with students and demonstrate that they are exceeding the service provided to all other children. This created a system in many schools where students are pulled out of their regular classrooms and from the rest of the student population (Cowan, 2003; Kimbrough & Hill, 1981). In an effort to document that students received an additional, or supplemental, program schools pulled students out of their regular classroom instruction (Cowan, 2003; Kimbrough & Hill, 1981). Pull out programs are a manner of simplifying the recordkeeping and financial management. This method, though not inherently bad, may cause the unintended consequence that students miss the instruction provided in the regular classroom with the general education curriculum with their peers. Frequently this prevents students from making gains with the general classroom curriculum that are the intended outcome through the supplemental services (Kimbrough & Hill, 1981). By requiring the supplemental program documentation, Title I may inadvertently be reducing students' achievement levels because state tests are typically

based upon standards that are included in the regular classroom curriculum (Kimbrough & Hill, 1981).

The allocation of funds from the LEAs to schools has changed little since the inception of NCLB (2002) and remains fairly restrictive (Cowan, 2003; TPG, 2007). Title I funds can only be distributed to schools that are in the geographic location of the attendance area of eligible schools or to students who reside in the same geographic location (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). LEAs must first reserve a comparable amount of funding to educate eligible children who do not attend a Title I school (students who are homeless, neglected, or sheltered) and reserve funds for administrative costs to provide service to both public and eligible private school children. In addition, if the LEA receives over \$500,000, funds must be set aside for parental involvement, teacher and paraprofessional training to achieve NCLB (2002) qualification guidelines, twenty percent for supplemental educational services or SES and transportation if any schools in the LEAs jurisdiction did not meet AYP targets, and an additional ten percent if the LEA itself did not meet AYP targets as established under No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). Although NCLB (2002) has increased the funding available through Title I, it has clearly restricted the use of such funds and added a layer of complicity to the process of distributing the funds (Cowan, 2003; Tosh, 2003).

Furthermore, schools must be ranked by poverty levels. LEAs may rank schools by free and reduced lunch eligibility, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families eligibility, Medicaid eligibility, the census data, or a composite of all of these (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). Most public schools use free and reduced lunch eligibility because of the ease of

acquiring the data (TPG, 2007). The first consideration is to account for any school with over a seventy five percent poverty level according to the above criteria. These schools must be given priority regardless of grade-level and age of students. For example, if an LEA has a priority goal of servicing students at the younger grades, yet has a high school that meets the 75% limit, then the LEA must service students in the high school first. Schools over 75% must be served first of all of the LEAs eligible schools (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007).

LEAs with enrollment over 1000 students and more than one school have been given limited options in determining eligible schools if below the 75% poverty level (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). The LEA may use actual enrollment figures in the school rather than in the schools attendance area, designate any school with at least 35% of the students low-income eligible for funds, may skip any eligible school if equivalent amounts are available from any state or local fund comparable to Title I, may use the percentage of low-income students from schools that feeds into it rather than its own since many high school students fail to report low-income status, or may “grandfather” any school for an additional year if it was eligible the previous year (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007).

Finally, funds are distributed to all schools based on the total number of children designated as low-income without regard to achievement levels or the identified needs of the students or schools. If choosing to fund any school with less than 35% poverty, then funding to all other eligible schools must be at least 125% of the per pupil amount received for the year (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). Expenditures are commonly used to

offset teacher and paraprofessional salaries and add additional instructional help in classrooms or for books and other materials. Title I services can also be used for counseling, health, nutritional services, or social services if other sources of funding are not readily available and the services are deemed appropriate to improving student achievement (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007).

Choosing Schoolwide and Targeted Assistance Programs

Greater flexibility in the use of federal grants has been allowed with the advent of No Child Left Behind. One of the areas with greater flexibility was in Title I categorical funding. Schools are now allowed the option of implementing a schoolwide system according to Section 1114 of NCLB (2002) or in targeting their assistance as noted in Section 1115 of NCLB (2002) to students if their overall low income level at the school is 40% or higher, as determined by Title I criteria, most commonly free and reduced lunch data (TPG, 2007). Since the establishment of Title I in 1965, schools have generally targeted the assistance to students who were in most need (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). With the number of schools choosing schoolwide assistance rising from 10% to 58% from 1994-95 to 2004-2005 (USDE, 2007) one would naturally wonder how the programs differ, which has proven to be more effective, and what has sparked the change in school Title I programs in just ten years.

When originally introduced as an option in 1978, schoolwide programs were based upon the concept that by improving the overall educational opportunity of all students that the needs of all would be met. More has been learned since that time and LEAs are now more likely to implement a comprehensive school model to improve the

performance of all (TPG, 2007). The U.S. Department of Education asks that schools consider whether the program is likely to improve the performance of the lowest performing student or whether it is more likely to be effective at enhancing their performance by targeting additional programs only to these students (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007).

Although schools had the flexibility in choosing either a schoolwide program or a targeted assistance model since 1998, No Child Left Behind added another layer of flexibility for schools considering a schoolwide program. Prior to NCLB (2002), the threshold of 50% poverty was the guideline for LEAs to have a choice. NCLB (2002) lowered that level to 40% allowing more schools the option (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). Critics have argued that the level is too low and the intent of the law has been diminished with this flexibility. Proponents argue that the impacting the entire school program is more effective and by allowing more flexibility, more students will be served (TPG, 2007).

Schoolwide and targeted assistance programs through Title I are similar in that both are intended to enhance the overall achievement of the most disadvantaged children and the students most at risk of failure so that they may reach acceptable levels of performance on state achievement tests. NCLB (2002) requires that all schools receiving Title I funds use a scientific-based and research method of instruction in an effort to prove the effectiveness of the instructional method (Hopper, 2008; NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007).

All schools receiving Title I funds are required to use highly qualified teachers, certified in the subject area to be taught, to work with eligible students and coordinate programs with all other state and federal programs as well as the school's regular education programs. All services provided through Title I are expected to supplement, or add to the regular education program, rather than to supplant or take the place of the regular education program (Hopper, 2008; TPG, 2007). As a categorical funding initiative through the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Title I programs are anticipated to be an enhancement or addition to the regular educational program of qualifying students (ESEA, 1965; Hopper, 2008; NCLB, 2002; USDE, 2002).

The important distinction between the two Title I programs is that schoolwide programs are comprehensive reform designed to upgrade the entire educational program whereas targeted assistance is designed to provide support only to the identified students (TPG, 2007). Hess (2005) argues that school leaders must focus Title I funding on students who are in most academic need and not based upon a child's socioeconomic status. Initial determinations in Title I service are made based on poverty level, but then allowances are made to serve the most academically needy students. The point is well taken, yet does not help resolve the dilemma that school leaders face in deciding whether to implement a schoolwide program or a targeted assistance model (Hess, 2005).

A growing body of evidence shows that when implementing a schoolwide program that it is possible to increase the achievement of all students, including the economically disadvantaged, despite the overall demographics of the school (TPG, 2007). With the relaxation of restrictions on schoolwide programs, more and more

schools are choosing this type of Title I program with the use of federal funds to enhance the learning of all of their students (USDE, 2007). This study will determine if schoolwide Title I programs or targeted assistance programs have resulted in higher increases student achievement with Illinois fifth grade low income students.

Schoolwide Assistance Program Guidelines

Schoolwide programs are designed to provide an upgrade to the educational program for all students, including low achieving students. Schoolwide programs offer the opportunity to upgrade all programs, curriculum, structures, and resources to impact the entire student body. In a schoolwide program for Title I, services are integrated into the regular educational program and not a distinct separation from it (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). The belief is that in improving the entire school program, it will benefit the disadvantaged students (Pogrow, 2005). Schools must have a low income level over 40% with their overall student population to have the choice of a schoolwide program. An important note is that all students in a schoolwide program are considered Title I students and are therefore be eligible for services (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). This stipulation allows the school to implement programs that would enhance their overall curriculum rather than just working with specific groups of students, provide professional development for all staff, and blend or consolidate all other funds to enhance purchasing power (Hopper, 2008; NCLB, 2002; USDE, 2002).

In a schoolwide program, overall school needs are identified through an annual needs assessment for the building and services may address the needs of all of the students. A commitment to ongoing continual overall school improvement is required

(TPG, 2007). Specific students do not need to be identified that will receive focused instruction as in the targeted model; however, the needs of the lowest achieving students are expected to be met. Schoolwide programs are also required to implement a plan that addresses the transition of preschool children into their local elementary school and if Migrant Education Program funds are received, must continue to address the needs of these children regardless of Title I status (Hopper, 2008; NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007; USDE, 2002).

Schools at or above the 40% level have the option available to them of providing targeted assistance or the option of implementing a schoolwide program. Schools below the 40% threshold do not have the option and must provide targeted assistance to the students who are in most need (Hopper, 2008; NCLB, 2002; USDE, 2002). A school need only meet the criteria of 40% at the time of determining eligibility and if numbers subsequently dip below this barrier, schools will retain their status. If schools do not meet the eligibility requirement or choose not to offer a schoolwide program, then they are a targeted assistance school as described in the next section (TPG, 2007). Thompson Publishing reports in 2008 that Title I schoolwide programs have further responsibilities and:

... are still required to meet all programmatic requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In addition, schoolwide programs must still meet program-linked requirements relating to health, safety, civil rights, student and parental participation and involvement, services to private school children, maintenance of effort, uses of federal funds to supplement, not supplant non-federal funds, and the distribution of funds to state and local educational agencies. Finally, the authority to combine federal funds only applies to program funded by ED; programs supported by other agencies, such as the school lunch

program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, may not be combined.

Although the intent is to continue services through all other funded programs and is still to increase offerings to students in low income areas, schoolwide programs have much more freedom in determining allowable costs because of the impact on the entire student body (TPG, 2007). Schoolwide programs have the freedom to implement nearly any program to impact the achievement of all students if the services are integrated together to produce higher achievement. Schoolwide programs have been given the opportunity to implement what would be considered “radical programs” if the intent is a comprehensive improvement. Nearly any expense that is made with the intent of supplementing the regular schoolwide plan and not to supplant it is allowable (TPG, 2007).

Schoolwide plans are determined through a needs assessment for all students in the school, a plan developed to address the needs of all these students based upon the assessment, and a determination of how well the plan has worked for these students and improvements for the future (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). Due to the accountability requirements basically being the plan itself and the freedoms associated with schoolwide plans since the inception of NCLB (2002), schoolwide plans have become the Title I program of choice for schools that have the option. If the plan fails to advance student achievement over time, then an LEA may require a school to revert back to a targeted assistance model (TPG, 2007).

Targeted Assistance Program Guidelines

Targeted assistance schools must select students based upon the lowest achieving and not upon the lowest income. Students who are failing or most at risk of failing should be given priority (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). The individual school is selected based upon the overall low income level and the poverty level of the district, but the individual students are selected based upon low achievement levels regardless of the individual student's poverty. Students who fit the federal criteria for Head Start and Even Start which are pre-Kindergarten services, Migrant, Neglected or Delinquent, and Homeless children must be included as a part of the selection process. Criteria must be listed along with a plan for the supporting services that will enable this group to meet state standards (Hopper, 2008; NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007; USDE, 2002). Children from preschool through grade 2 must be identified on the basis of teacher judgment, parental input, and other developmentally appropriate measures (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). Children in grades three and above must be chosen based upon "multiple educationally related, objective criteria established by the LEA" (TPG, 2007). Funds are to be used for services that directly support the eligible students and professional development funds are only allowed for staff members that work directly with Title I students (Hopper, 2008; NCLB, 2002; USDE, 2002).

Targeted assistance programs are to focus their attention on students, staff, programs, and resources that will impact the identified students. While this criterion is more restrictive in identifying students to qualify than a schoolwide program, other students are not entirely excluded. If other requirements of Title I are met, students may

be receive service in a targeted assistance school if they fit the context of “incidental inclusion” (TPG, 2007). Incidental inclusion may occur only if services are designed to meet the needs of identified Title I students, if the services focus on identified students, if inclusion of others does not decrease the amount, quality, or duration of services for identified students; does not increase the cost of the services; or does not exclude any students who would otherwise qualify for Title I services (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). Students may be included for service through incidental inclusion if they are in the same small reading group, benefit from the same materials as identified students, or benefit in some way simply by being present when identified students receive their service. They may not be directly or individually served (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007).

Targeted assistance schools are directed to minimize pull out services and provide them in a general education setting whenever possible. A model that encompasses services provided in a general education classroom is accepted and preferred by the federal government. Additional educational opportunities are expected through extended day programs that happen before or after school, during the summer, or on days when school is not normally in session (Hopper, 2008; NCLB, 2002; USDE, 2002).

A key principle of targeted assistance to students is that the service provided must be supplementary to the regular education program or in addition to the regular classroom instruction that all other students receive. Service must not supplant or replace the general classroom instruction (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). Generally students in targeted assistance programs are provided with extra instruction in math or literacy (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). The most prevalent interventions focus on younger students with reading

difficulties. Providing early readers with interventions to help offset the disadvantages of poverty as quickly as possible is the most common of all Title I strategies (Hopper, 2008).

Title I Indicators of Success

Title I was designed to improve the academic achievement of disadvantaged students (TPG, 2007). Both schoolwide and targeted assistance programs through Title I are intended to enhance the overall achievement of the most disadvantaged children and the students most at risk of failure so that they may reach acceptable levels of performance on state achievement tests (Hopper, 2008; NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). Title I, Section A, subpart 1, section 1111B of NCLB (2002) states that the academic standards required should be the same that the state applies to all other schools.

Meeting the same academic standard is defined in Illinois as meeting or exceeding the scale score chosen each year on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test, ISAT, by the state of Illinois. This academic standard of achievement changed with the inception of the No Child Left Behind act to be the same achievement goals set by the states for all students regardless of income (NCLB, 2002). The threat of withholding federal funds, Title I being the largest federal funding source for public schools in our country, has been the primary incentive for states and local school districts to follow the requirements of No Child Left Behind (Hess & Rotherman, 2007; NCLB, 2002).

NCLB (2002) requires school leaders to document progress for low achieving students and to identify students who are having difficulty with reading or who are at risk of failure in reading according to measures used at the school level. The measures chosen

at the local level must meet the criteria referenced in Section 1112 of the No Child Left Behind act which states that “at the local educational agency's discretion, a description of any other indicators that will be used in addition to the academic indicators described in section 1111 for the uses described in such section” (NCLB, 2002).

School leaders must demonstrate the reliability of measures they use in this process to the state educational agency (Illinois State Board of Education [ISBE], 2010). According to Section 1112 of the No Child Left Behind act, targeted assistance schools must also include “a description of how teachers, in consultation with parents, administrators, and pupil services personnel, in targeted assistance schools under section 1115, will identify the eligible children most in need of services under this part” (NCLB, 2002).

Leaders choosing schoolwide assistance must demonstrate the overall achievement plan for their school while targeted assistance schools must additionally show plans for how Title I identified students will reach state achievement levels (NCLB, 2002; ISBE 2010).

Other indicators of success may be used in addition to achievement to demonstrate progress. These include, but are not limited to, increasing graduation and attendance rates. Options are chosen by individual school leaders and the rationale for inclusion of these measures as indicators of the success of the school Title I plan must be justified and approved by the state (ISBE, 2010; TPG, 2007). Illinois requires that all districts receiving Title I funds have an approved plan on file electronically at www.iirc.niu.edu which indicates the use of allocated funds with activities described in

the Title I plan that will be incorporated into the school and district improvement plans (ISBE, 2010). The stated goal is to integrate all school and district planning to provide a more concentrated effort (ISBE, 2010).

School leaders have a duty to be knowledgeable about the differing programs and their effect on the achievement of their students. At a time of difficult financial stress, it is imperative that school leaders know what programs will have the most impact on their student and to use their limited funds most effectively (Allington & Walmsley, 2007; NRC, 1998). Understanding if schoolwide programs have a greater impact on the achievement of fifth grade students than targeted assistance programs, will help school leaders make difficult decisions about the use of their Title I funding in all elementary schooling years to maximize the impact on improved reading.

Reading Achievement

With the increased emphasis on meeting the educational needs of all students, through No Child Left Behind, schools amplified their efforts in establishing proficient readers (NCLB, 2002). As noted previously, reading is considered the key to educational success for students (Allington & Walmsley, 2007; NRC, 1998). The vast majority of students leave our educational system reading fairly well. Concerns naturally arise on the work must center on those who do not and students who come from poor families are more likely to land in this group than their more advantaged peers (Allington & Walmsley, 2007; NRC, 1998).

Emergent readers must be able to coordinate a variety of thinking skills such as recognizing words, making meaning of words and text, and remembering the information

that was read. The development of reading skills is commonly divided into the following three common areas: alphabetic including phonemic awareness and phonics, fluency, and comprehension with vocabulary and text comprehension. Each can of course be subdivided further or labeled differently, yet these three divisions are generally accepted (NRC, 1998; NRP, 2000). Literacy acquisition is a complex cognitive skill and one must keep in mind that each of the above areas is essential for students to learn to read and cannot be taken as a separate practice from the other in helping students learn the process of reading. For most children, this is a fairly predictable process. Some, however, continue to struggle. An interruption in any of the skill developments increases the possibility that reading will be delayed (NRC, 1998; NRP, 2000).

The National Reading Panel states that phonemic awareness is “the ability to focus on and manipulate phonemes in spoken words.” The English language contains 41 phonemes, or sounds, that combine together to form words and syllables. Phonemic awareness is not a complete reading program, but rather a part of an overall process of helping students learn to read. It is an important first step in helping students understand the alphabet and how the English language works primarily up to, but not limited to, the first grade level (NRP, 2000). Phonemic awareness is an imperative means to help students understand how to use the alphabet and how to read and spell words. Phonemic awareness and letter knowledge and recognition are the two most important predictors for whether or not children will learn to read in their first few years of school, thus emphasizing the importance of instruction in phonemic awareness (NRP, 2000; Pogrow, 2005).

Phonics instruction stresses the acquiring of letter-sound associations with the alphabet and understanding how this translates into spelling and reading words. Like phonemic awareness, phonics instruction is primarily designed for beginning readers in the early grades or for students who are struggling to read later in their school careers (NRP, 2000; Pogrow, 2005). Phonics instruction differs from phonemic awareness in that children are taught to manipulate phonemes with letters and not just the sounds. Both alphabetic instructions are designed for primary school age children or for children who are struggling to read. Students who fail to grasp the concepts of alphabet at an early age fail to develop the indispensable skills for reading later (NRC, 1998; NRP, 2000; Pogrow, 2005). This study focuses on fifth grade children and it is assumed that most students, except struggling readers, have mastered these skills by the time they take the fifth grade ISAT (ISBE, 2007).

Fluency has often been described as the most neglected of all reading skills because early educators spent little instructional time developing fluency in students (Allington, 1983; NRP, 2000). The assumption was that if students understood how words went together and were proficient in recognizing words that improved fluency would follow. Such skills likely have a positive impact on fluency; however, the outcome is not inevitable. Fluency is the ability to read text with speed, accuracy, and the proper expression needed to extract the proper meaning from the text (Allington, 1983; NRP, 2000). Readers become more fluent through a combination of quick recall of sight words, guided reading, repeated oral practice, and independent or recreational reading. There is a

close relationship between fluency and the ability to comprehend what is read (Allington, 1983; NRC, 1998; NRP, 2000).

The final component, and what many call the “real reason” for reading, is comprehension (NRC, 1998; NPR, 2000). Durkin (1993) describes comprehension as the “essence of reading” and describes it as being “essential not only to academic learning but to life-long learning”. Skilled readers blend all of their learning to gain a better understanding when interacting with text. A reader who is able to blend the skills is making use of the text to gather information, learn about a topic, or simply to be entertained (NRC, 1998; NRP, 2000).

Word recognition and understanding, or vocabulary, is an important comprehension developmental skill. Words that are not in the reader’s vocabulary are not understood and can have a significant impact on the reader’s comprehension, or misconceptions that may occur, of the text. Vocabulary is crucial to the learned skills of effective readers (NRP, 2000). Skilled readers who comprehend can recall, question and answer, and summarize text. Reading comprehension is a complex intentional cognitive process that blends all of the skills together to help readers make sense out of the text (NRC, 1998; NRP, 2000). Students certainly begin to comprehend material when they first learn to read. Intentional understanding does not come until readers are able to recognize and sound out text, they read it fluently enough to prevent distraction. Educators generally agree that most students begin to effectively comprehend material and use read material for learning in the upper elementary grades (NRC, 1998; NRP, 2000). This concept aligns well with the Illinois Learning Standards and the assessment

of comprehension on achievement tests, ISAT, in Illinois in upper elementary school (ISBE, 2007).

Given the emphasis nationally on early reading success and interventions, it is not surprising that the bulk of Title I funding is directed toward primary and elementary students (TPG, 2007). Program benefits for services provided by Title I are much higher at the early grade levels and with younger children. This has led many educators and policy makers to call for service to children in the preschool and early elementary years to maximize the effectiveness of Title I funds (Zigler, 2009).

Early intervention remains a key for students who struggle with reading because most reading issues can be prevented (NRC, 1998). Many students are identified for special education services because of reading difficulties. If reading interventions can be successfully implemented in schools at early stages, then inappropriate referrals to special education can be reduced (Allington & Walmsley, 2009). Most do not argue against the need for early intervention, they would maintain that all students attain higher reading scores when there is consistency and continuity in curriculum aligned to goals and expectations of general classroom learning. School leaders should not allow the focus on high needs students to the neglect of the entire school population (Borman et al., 2001).

To prevent reading difficulties, children must be provided with the opportunity to master uses of the alphabet orally and in writing, experiment and explore the different functions of language, be identified early and provided with appropriate interventions as well as solid classroom instruction, and become enthusiastic about reading for lifelong learning with opportunities to experience success (NRC, 1998; NPR, 2000). School

leaders need to ensure these opportunities are available to their students. Teachers need to have an understanding of the developmental need of students and how to assess reading difficulties and interpret data received, as well as the process of reading and writing.

School leaders must ensure the opportunity for staff members working with children to be provided with solid professional development that continually allows staff members to update their skills with the most recent research and best practices (NRC, 1998). The primary role of school leaders should be to ensure that consistent, high quality learning takes place for all students regardless of their ability or life circumstances (Hess, 2005).

One suggested negative impact of NCLB (2002) is that with the increase focus on test preparation, teachers are narrowing their instruction and, correspondingly, decreasing the enjoyment of reading. A byproduct is a reduction in graduates who will become lifelong readers (Gallagher, 2009). School leaders cannot allow this to happen (Hess, 2005). Others argue that apparent achievement gains, through standardized tests, will not play out over time if teachers truly do narrow the focus of instruction. The importance of standardized testing cannot be downplayed. There is a high correlation between students who score poorly and children who come from poor and less educated families (Allington & Walmsley, 2007). High scores on standardized test can open possibilities for college education and better or higher paying jobs after school. With a higher proportion of low income and disadvantaged students meeting standards on achievement tests, the need for a program such as Title I that will help reduce the disadvantages that come with poverty is greater now more than ever (Allington & Walmsley, 2007; Podesta & Brown, 2008; Shen, 2000).

The Role of Leadership in Achievement

School leaders have a duty to be knowledgeable about the differing programs and their effect on the achievement of their students. At a time of difficult financial stress, it is imperative that school leaders know what programs will have the most impact on their student and to use their limited funds most effectively (Allington & Walmsley, 2007; NRC, 1998). Understanding if schoolwide programs have a greater impact on the achievement of fifth grade students than targeted assistance programs, will help school leaders make difficult decisions about the use of their Title I funding in all elementary schooling years to maximize the impact on improved reading.

Since early intervention programs have proven the most effective at enabling students to be lifelong readers, school leaders should use a majority of their Title I funds in the early stages of a child's learning (Allington & Walmsley, 2007; NRC, 1998). A commitment should be made to small class sizes and attracting and retaining excellent teachers in the primary grades. There should be a stated and committed effort to understanding the unique needs and the importance of learning in the initial grades. Too often there is less of a commitment to academics with the youngest children, severely inhibiting the growth of the most disadvantaged (Hess, 2005; Ladd, 2002). School leaders must maintain a commitment to the success of academic reading programs in the primary grades to decrease intervention needs when children advance in age (Hess, 2005; NRC, 1998; TPG, 2007). School leaders must understand the importance of good instruction for early learners. The National Reading Council (1998) has identified first grade as a critical year and notes that poor instruction in first grade may have lasting long-term effects and

lead to increased interventions and higher costs later. School leaders should be wary when making staff assignments of placing quality staff members in the early grades, particularly with first grade assignments (Allington & Walmsley, 2007; NRC, 1998).

Effective leaders establish the proper priorities and challenge students and teachers alike to raise their expectation level by setting the proper conditions for success (Marzano & Waters, 2009). When students are taught with low expectations, the pace of instruction tends to slow and less learning occurs over time (Lewis, 2008). Many teachers in this scenario believe that since the students are not capable, they must slow the pace. The outcome tends to be exasperated over time with students falling continually farther behind their peers (Lewis, 2008; NRC, 1998). An effective school leader does not minimize the effects that poverty can have of students, nor do they minimize any out of school experiences that hinder learning, yet they certainly set the tone and expectation that all will learn (Blankstein, 2004; DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008). Effective school leaders understand that most educators entered the teaching profession with a sense of social justice and a hope to make a difference in the lives of children. Priorities are placed on high quality and effective instruction for all students (Blankstein, 2004). The moral purpose remains intact in most educators and bringing out the continual commitment is one function of leadership (Blankstein, 2004; DeLorenzo et al., 2008; NRC, 1998; Walker Tileston & Darling, 2008).

Highly effective educators understand the importance of results and accountability (Blankstein, 2004; Marzano & Waters, 2009). A function of the best leaders is to ensure that the curriculum, instruction, and assessment are aligned to the

state standards. They work with staff to ensure that all learning is focused on what students need to know and be able to do and establish effective assessments to determine the effectiveness of their school programs (Blankstein, 2004; DeLorenzo et al., 2008; NCLB, 2002; NRC, 1998; TPG, 2007). Practices are grounded in research and proven to be effective with teachers (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). Data is analyzed and a professional culture is established where everyone is allowed to critique the work of others in a proactive and collegial manner (Hess, 2005).

Even though Title I is categorical assistance to impact the achievement of low income students, it is imperative that school leaders use Title I funding to enhance the instruction of students who are struggling the most academically; regardless of their socioeconomic status (Hess, 2005). The success of all students has become a significant priority since the passage of NCLB (2002) and with the recent changes in the use of either schoolwide or targeted assistance as a means of addressing academically struggling students; either program can be used effectively to address targeted populations (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007).

We know that disadvantaged students tend to make up a significant portion of all students who fail and by concentrating efforts on the academically at-risk, the intent of Title I funding is still maintained (Hess, 2005). Schoolwide assistance is designed to impact all students with a particular concentration on the academically struggling while the central purpose of targeted assistance is focusing on the most academically challenge students who are at risk of failing (TPG, 2007). A decision about who to focus funding on is in the inherent nature of Title I. School leaders need to ensure that the focal point

remains helping all students succeed regardless of the chosen use of funding option (Allington & Walmsley, 2007; NRC, 1998).

Schools that do well despite the challenges they face with disadvantaged students do so, in large part, because of effective leadership (Allington & Walmsley, 2009; Lewis, 2008; Marzano & Waters, 2009). Hess (2005) believes that there is no more important individual in a school building than the principal. Principals need to focus the building on establishing the proper priorities, setting the conditions for success, and have an understanding of how a solid reading program will effectively impact the students in their building. District support staff must ensure that the principal and the school have opportunities for success by providing the proper resources and establishing the right parameters across the district (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Principals must be allowed to be the instructional leader of the building with a minimization of managerial tasks (Blankstein, 2004; DeLorenzo et al., 2008; DuFour et al., 2008; TPG, 2007).

As the instructional leader, the primary objective of building principals should be to ensure that high quality adult learning and collaboration takes place that will positively impact student achievement. All discussions and decisions should revolve on the impact student learning they will have on the achievement of students (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Hess, 2005). Principals need to understand their role as the instructional leader of the building involves the primary tasks of coaching adults or helping teachers become better at their craft and impressing upon the students the priority of academics in a school building (Hess, 2005). The primary goal of an instructional leader or coach is to increase the capacity of the staff working with children. Professional development, with proper

coaching, that centers on student learning and best practices with time for the adults in the building to collaborate and discuss best practices and to review student achievement data is imperative in propelling schools forward (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Hess, 2005).

Effective leaders are able to read the culture and climate of their building and know how to blend together their own leadership to have maximum impact on student learning. Many school leaders have this skill, yet few take the actions necessary to truly become effective. When the time is right to implement changes, far too often in education, we fail to act. In education, particularly in the neediest schools, we allow resistance to change to grow instead of acting. Leaders need to alter their habits by making more timely changes (Hess, 2005). Education is a highly personal business with those living in poverty the most in need of a personalized education (Walker Tileston & Darling, 2008). School leaders have a moral imperative to make changes quickly that will benefit students and to ensure that the education of youth is not subservient to the needs of the adults in the building (Blankstein, 2004; DeLorenzo et al., 2008; DuFour et al., 2008; Hess, 2005).

Processes and procedures should first be determined school and district wide to ensure the proper focus and allocation of resources. You must first determine the direction needed (Blankstein, 2004; DeLorenzo et al., 2008; DuFour et al., 2008; Hess, 2005). Hess notes that in a traditionally recalcitrant institution, you may need to jolt the system to help people understand that you are serious about the change that is needed. If you allow resistance to grow, the bureaucracy will overtake you. When principals have demonstrated the ability to move a school forward and properly have established

priorities, more discretion must be allowed (Blankstein, 2004; Hess, 2005). The more success that a principal can demonstrate with their staff, the more leeway they should be allowed. If a building is not producing, then more oversight may be necessary. If children are making appropriate progress, then building leaders need to be allowed the opportunity to tailor the programs in their building to best meet the needs of their students (DeLorenzo et al., 2008; Hess, 2005). Building leadership understands the unique needs of their population and must be allowed the opportunity to innovate, be creative, and take risks that will deal with their students in ways that they determine to be most effective. At this point effective district leadership should be working to free the building of excessive policies and mandates so that they have the freedom to act (DeLorenzo et al., 2008; Hess, 2005).

Being the leader in a school with high needs is a stressful situation. Lower income schools are often plagued with low paying positions, few resources, lack of recognition for success and other obstacles creating a more difficult leadership position. Many effective leaders do not remain for long periods of time in their positions (Lewis, 2008). Unfortunately, a drawback to effective leadership playing such a key role in a school's success is that when the leader leaves, the success does not sustain itself (Lewis, 2008). Districts need to ensure that effective leadership is rewarded and retained (Hess, 2005; Lewis, 2008).

Whatever the specific paths that are taken to enhance the learning of struggling students by school leaders, the path must be a comprehensive reform (Hess, 2005; TPG, 2007). Effective educators acknowledge the difficulties they face with a disadvantaged

population, but do not accept excuses for failing to meet the needs of students. They understand that it takes a community investment to impact students' lives and seek out opportunities to engage parents and community members in whatever manner would provide the most success (Hess, 2005; Houston, 2008; NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). They understand the importance of impacting the community of students as well as their school day. Effective leaders take all of the best practices and weave them together into an effective learning environment for all students (Hess, 2005; Houston, 2008; NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007).

Funding and Achievement Research

There would seem to be a common sense relationship between school funding and the ability of students to meet their academic goals. One would think that such an argument would not exist; however, there are opposing views (Klein, 2009). This study will set out to determine what research says about the impact of Title I funding on the reading achievement of fifth grade students through schoolwide assistance and targeted assistance.

Results of funding in education and the adequacy of funding for education are inconclusive (Hill, 2008; Klein, 2009; Viadero, 2008). While the argument that no price can be put on the proper education of a child is a valid moral argument, some argue that funding is already at adequate levels to provide a high quality education for all children. One issue noted with Title I is that the federal government allocates funds through a combination of the number of low income students and the state per student expenditure (Podesta & Brown, 2008). This effectively puts states with a low tax base at a

disadvantage because of the low level of their state expenditure on students (Viadero, 2008). States with the highest poverty rates also tend to have the lowest tax base leading to less of an infusion of Title I money. This is the opposite of the intent of Title I (Podesta & Brown, 2008).

Another issue noted by Hill (2008) and Viadero (2008) is that it is not the amount of funding, but rather the use of the funds. Schools could do a better job of allocating funds for specific uses or of using their existing funding base as it was intended by taxpayers. When categorical funding such as Title I is increased some school districts have reallocated local funds to decrease the intended increase for this group of students. This effectually negates the purpose of this categorical benefit (Hill, 2008; McKinnon, 2009). This replacement of local funds with federal funds is counter to the general purpose of categorical funding. Categorical funding is intended to supplement local funds for programs and not to supplant it (Kimbrough & Hill, 1981). Zigler (2009) expresses that schools that receive Title I funding spend the resources on an array of services and do not focus their efforts enough to impact the achievement of students adding another dimension to the allocation of Title I funds. A more focused effort on the early elementary reading needs of students to follow up the gains that have been made by many states with preschool education is needed (Pogrow, 2005). Use the resources for a central theme instead of the myriad of options currently available through Title I and achievement of the disadvantaged will follow (Zigler, 2009).

Local funding is a politically charged issue and so deeply engrained the American education system that changes in the methods of funding may not be possible

(McKinnon, 2009; Miller, 2008). Local funding, when not equalized by federal or state funds, naturally creates a disparity in funding across the country. Lower property values equal smaller local tax bases that equate to less money for schools. For an area with a less property value to generate the same amount of money as a higher property value, residents have to share a larger burden through a higher tax rate. This increases their share of the burden (Hill, 2008; Miller, 2008). Miller claims that this system of property tax revenue is antiquated and based upon ideals from the nineteenth century when the wealthy and the poor lived within the same taxing area and shared the same public schools. Federal and state funds are needed to offset this change along with less reliance on local property tax revenue. If not, then the disparity will grow. Miller estimates the level of federal spending should increase to 25% to 30% to limit the impact of the inequalities caused by property tax funding through local control.

Some opponents have pointed to minimal or no significant increase in test scores to correspond with comparable increases in funding (Barton, 2004). Barton would argue that there is no evidence to support increases in achievement when money is infused into a system. Greenwald et al. (1996) argue the opposing view point when they note that school financial resource levels are positively associated with student achievement. That increase in resource allocation can have a significant positive effect of student achievement. Dobbs (2004) agrees when he states, when substantial funding changes are initiated with primary grade students that there is a slow, but gradual improvement in student achievement that will sustain itself given enough time. Funding changes that have been initiated in some states simply need more time to prove their ability to change. More

knowledge on this topic will be gained with the significant increases in federal funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, according to Randi Weingarten the president of the American Federation of Teachers, “If the money is well spent, and if we’re able to maintain and improve educational outcomes for kids, we will make a powerful case that money still matters” (Klein, 2009, p. 24).

Interestingly, Dobbs (2004) also notes that there has been no significant change in the achievement of students with an influx of funding. According to Dobbs, there has been little change in the overall achievement of schools when funding levels were increased. He cites examples of schools in South Carolina and New Jersey where great pains were taken to level the financial playing field. The intended purpose was to allow equal opportunity for low income students. These states saw little change in their overall achievement levels. Individuals can lie on either side of the argument, or in Dobb’s case, both sides.

Research has not provided a definitive answer as to whether or not increased financing results in a corresponding increase in achievement, nor can it probably do so until more long-term studies are completed and funding equities remain stable. Far too many states, as is the case in Illinois, rely on local property taxes to supplement funding for public services (Winfield, 2009). During difficult financial times the battle for public finances can be a difficult one. Consistent financing needs to remain in order to truly ascertain the correlation. There are many factors that lead to increase student achievement. An influx of money to low income districts is just one factor that may help improve overall student performance (Carey, 2004; Hill, 2008).

Even when money is provided to financially poor districts, there is great inequity in the manner in which this financial gain is allocated (Carey, 2004). School districts have not always distributed their funds based upon academic need. Frequently funds have been distributed to schools based upon budgetary means. One example, provided by Carey, is that funds allocated for staff salaries are distributed based upon the salary of each staff member. Typically the lower performing schools with the highest low income students receive less because they tend to have the least experienced teachers who make the least (Hill, 2008). Staff placements and union contracts can be a prohibitive factor when improving student achievement. Generally one would argue that the most experienced teachers would be most capable of providing the best education for disadvantaged students, yet placement is not always determined by the greatest need (Hill, 2008). It would seem that when allocating funds, the decisions need to be based upon the total dollar figure rather than the allocation of staff members. If not, the appearance of inequitable distribution of funds will exist (Carey, 2004; Hill, 2008; Podesta & Brown, 2008).

Funds need to be allocated and targeted properly to have the most impact in schools. Principals report difficulty with state and district officials in restrictions that are put on the use of funds. They also report confusion on how to properly and best use Title I funds (USDE, 2003). Hill (2008) argues for a better reallocation of funds. Under current systems and methods of allocation, it may not be possible to determine how to best use funds and what individual interventions may be providing the best results. He states that we may not end up with a better type of education, but rather a more expensive one.

In the United States, we must face the fact that inequality of funding is still an issue and will continue to be an issue for the foreseeable future (Podesta & Brown, 2008). Resources are limited and with the advent of tax caps in Illinois, schools face a future of limited increases in revenue. The recent 0.1% increase in the Consumer Price Index, the CPI, is a good example of how funding will need to be pared back and schools will need to become much more cognizant of how they spend finances (Malone & Napolitano, 2009; Rado, 2009). All of this comes at a time when the federal stimulus package is intended to increase financial options for students and help reduce the so called “unfunded mandates” imposed by No Child Left Behind (Malone & Napolitano, 2009; Rado, 2009; Toppo, 2009).

What remains to be seen is how the economic downturn will mesh with local funding to prevent a reduction in services. Title I has been mentioned as a significant benefactor in the stimulus package with noted increases of \$5 billion in 2009 alone (Dillon, 2009; Malone & Napolitano, 2009; & Mehta & Song, 2009). Critics argue that this will lead to a significant expansion of the federal government in the role of education and shift the balance of power from the state and local level (Mehta & Song, 2009). We need to be careful to provide the funding where the most need is, acknowledge that the American school system is made up of an unbelievably unique set of school systems and to ensure a minimization of micromanagement from the federal government so that schools have the freedom to meet the needs of their students (Sack-Min, 2009).

Proponents argue that the role of the federal government in the achievement of the disadvantaged is long overdue and will help level the educational opportunity for this

long neglected subgroup. It has led to a renewed call for national standards and would eliminate some of the concerns over reliability with NCLB (2002) and states setting their own accountability standards (Hoff, 2009; Weingarten, 2009). Critics call this a case of “federalism” while proponents counter that it is “nationalism” with the distinction being that the federal government would not set the standards, only support the cause (Hoff, 2009). Certainly the movement is gaining momentum. What remains to be seen is if this movement will continue forward or bow to the political pressure that past efforts have conceded to difficult to overcome (Hoff, 2009; Weingarten, 2009).

It is generally agreed that substantial work on education policy will not begin until later in the year 2009 with potential passage of a bill in 2010 well before the 2014 deadline established by No Child Left Behind (Sack-Min, 2009). While the actual outcome of new legislation is unknown, there are certain common characteristics mentioned. The federal roles in accountability and funding are at the top of nearly everyone’s list (Sack-Min, 2009). Expansion of the experimental growth model and the potential use of multiple assessments to demonstrate adequate student progress will certainly contrast the rigid, “one size fits all” model that is currently in place. Concern still exists regarding helping the economically disadvantaged who will more likely face sanctions in the near future without changes to either accountability of funding to provide higher quality of service (Sack-Min, 2009).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodology used in this study. The chapter begins with a statement of the research problem, lists the research question, states the hypothesis, describes the population studied, the process for choosing the sample population and refining the study, the IRB approval process, the procedure used for gathering data on the target population, the procedure for analyzing the data, and the limitations of the study.

Statement of the Problem

When Illinois school leaders of buildings with over 40% of their school population identified as low income choose between Title I schoolwide assistance or targeted assistance programs, which method of distributing Title I funds is associated with higher reading achievement scores in fifth grade as measured by ISAT? With the onset of NCLB (2002) schools that qualified with 40% or more of their population considered low income were given a choice in either schoolwide assistance or targeted assistance for qualifying students. Prior to 2002, schools did not have this option (TPG, 2007).

This study will examine whether schools using Title I funds for either schoolwide assistance or targeted assistance are associated with higher achievement in fifth grade reading scores as measured through the Illinois Standards Achievement Test. There is a

limited amount of research available to help school leaders in determining which method of distributing Title I funds is associated with higher reading achievement scores in fifth grade as measured by ISAT. A comparative study will be conducted between schools choosing schoolwide or targeted assistance methods of distributing Title I funds, with fifth grade students reading scores on the ISAT from 2006 and 2007. In generalizing the outcome of this study to the larger target population, findings of this study will add to the body of knowledge that exists in helping school leaders determine the impact of schoolwide assistance and targeted assistance on reading achievement, and thus better inform decision-making efforts when choosing their method of allocating Title I funds.

Data from the Illinois Interactive Report Card website is demonstrative regarding fifth grade achievement scores on ISAT. Appendix A, IIRC data, demonstrate that fifth grade achievement scores for low income students throughout Illinois have increased from 38% of students meeting or exceeding standards to 58% from 2002 to 2008. This is a 20% increase in the overall achievement scores on ISAT in fifth grade over the six year time frame (NIU, 2008). Students who were in the category of “not low income” increased over the same time frame from 72% meeting and exceeding in 2002 to 86% in 2008, a 14% increase. While all test scores in Illinois rose from 2002 to 2008, a slightly larger increase has occurred with low income students (NIU, 2008).

Hypothesis

From the data of the study, the researcher predicts that reading achievement scores as measured on fifth grade ISAT for both schoolwide assistance programs and targeted assistance programs in Illinois have increased from 2006 to 2007. Because the

number of schools across the nation choosing schoolwide assistance rose from 10% to 58% from school year 1994-95 to school year 2004-2005 (USDE, 2007) the researcher hypothesizes that a larger increase in reading achievement will be measured on fifth grade ISAT from schools implementing the Title I schoolwide assistance model. The researcher theorizes that school leaders, as a group, will choose a method of distributing funds that result in higher achievement. The larger increase in ISAT reading achievement scores in fifth grade from 2006 to 2007 for Title I schoolwide assistance programs may or may not be significant.

Research Question

This study will address the following question:

When Illinois school leaders of buildings with over 40% of their school population identified as low income choose between Title I schoolwide assistance or targeted assistance programs, which method of distributing Title I funds is associated with higher reading achievement scores in fifth grade as measured by ISAT?

Population

Influencing factors in choosing the population for this section include the convergence of fundamental reading processes at the fifth grade level, frequent changes in ISAT measures, distribution of Title I funding, decision of school leaders in choosing schoolwide or targeted distribution of funds, and the composition of suburban Chicago demographics.

Choice of Fifth Grade Students

This study focuses on fifth grade students because the nature of learning to read at this age has evolved more deeply into comprehension (Borman et al., 2001), content on Illinois Standards Achievement Test contains items designed to assess a student's ability to master early reading skills as well as comprehension within content areas (ISBE, 2007). The researcher has made an assumption that the culmination of elementary reading skill learning peaks in fifth grade.

Simplistically, one could argue that learning to read can be divided into the fundamental processes of decoding to begin the initial reading processes and focusing on the higher order thinking skills required to understand and comprehend the material that is read (NRP, 2000; Pogrow, 2005). Around third grade, the cognitive ability of children begins to change resulting in a need for a different type of instruction for reading comprehension (Popgrow, 2005). Since one could argue that decoding and comprehension are equally important and that the purpose of all reading is to learn to understand the material being read (NRP, 2000; Pogrow, 2005), this study has chosen to focus on a grade level where both of these reading skills are required for learning in Illinois: in fifth grade. The Illinois Assessment Frameworks in fifth grade begin the more complex process of assessing a student's ability to comprehend and understand written material leading to an increased emphasis on the ISAT for testing comprehension skills (ISBE, 2007).

Individual elementary school buildings in Illinois contain a large variety of configurations such as K-2, K-5, K-6, and K-8. According to the Illinois State Board of

Education, most elementary buildings are structured to include some arrangement of fifth grade students (ISBE, 2007b). Based upon the configuration of grade levels in schools and the assumption by the researcher that grade five is a culmination of the elementary learning experience for many Illinois students, fifth grade was chosen.

Use of ISAT for Fifth Grade

ISAT is a criterion-referenced assessment that measures how well students are achieving relative to the Illinois Learning Standards (Ponisciak, 2005). Results are measured on scale scores. Cut points are established within score ranges and converted to performance levels of exceeds standards, meets standards, below standards, and academic warning (NIU, 2008). These performance levels can then be established for each individual student test score. Scores are reported for a school's performance based upon the number of students in each category (NIU, 2008). For the purpose of this study, the researcher intends to compare the percentage of students in fifth grade in a building that are meeting standards or exceeding standards in 2006 to the percentage of the population meeting or exceeding in 2007.

The ISAT was first piloted in Illinois in 1999 and then utilized statewide in 2001 (Srikantaiah & Sway Hoover, 2008). Illinois did not consistently test all grades prior to the 2006 testing session. However, when No Child Left Behind mandated yearly assessments in 2006, all grades from third through eighth were assessed. Before 2006, testing was only conducted in grades 3, 5, and 8 for elementary and middle schools (NIU, 2008). To provide a consistent number of years of data and to establish trends in future studies, one

of these grades on the ISAT was necessary to select. Fifth grade scores on the ISAT were chosen by the researcher.

Title I Funding: Schoolwide Assistance and Targeted Assistance

School leaders may use Title I funds for children from preschool age to high school (TPG, 2007). Sixty-five percent of students served through Title I funding are in grades one through six. Another 12% of students served through Title I are in preschool and kindergarten programs. School leaders employ just under 80% of all Title I funds for use with elementary students sixth grade and under (IES, 2007). For this reason, the researcher chose to focus the study in an elementary grade, specifically fifth grade.

Greater flexibility in the use of federal grants has been allowed with the advent of No Child Left Behind. One of the areas with greater flexibility was in Title I categorical funding. Schools are now allowed the option of implementing a schoolwide system according to Section 1114 of NCLB (2002) or in targeting their assistance as noted in Section 1115 of NCLB (2002) to students if their overall low income level at the school is 40% or higher, as determined by Title I criteria. The most commonly used criteria is free and reduced lunch data (TPG, 2007). Since the establishment of Title I in 1965, schools have generally targeted the assistance to students who were in most need (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007).

When originally introduced as an option in 1978, schoolwide programs were based upon the concept that by improving the overall educational opportunity of all students that the needs of all would be met. More has been learned since that time and local education agencies are now more likely to implement a comprehensive school

model to improve the performance of all (TPG, 2007). The U.S. Department of Education asks that schools consider whether the program is likely to improve the performance of the lowest performing student or whether it is more likely to be effective at enhancing their performance by targeting additional programs only to these students (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007).

Although schools had the flexibility in choosing either a schoolwide program or a targeted assistance model since 1998, No Child Left Behind added another layer of flexibility for schools considering a schoolwide program. Prior to NCLB (2002), the threshold of 50% poverty was the guideline for local education agencies to have a choice. NCLB (2002) lowered that level to 40% allowing more schools the option of choosing schoolwide assistance (NCLB, 2002; TPG, 2007). Critics have argued that the level is too low and the intent of the law has been diminished with this flexibility. Proponents argue that impacting the entire school program is more effective and by allowing more flexibility, more students will be served (TPG, 2007).

The important distinction between the two Title I programs is that schoolwide programs are comprehensive reform designed to upgrade the entire educational program whereas targeted assistance is designed to provide support only to the identified students (TPG, 2007). A growing body of evidence shows that when implementing a schoolwide program that it is possible to increase the achievement of all students, including the economically disadvantaged, regardless of the overall demographics of the school (TPG, 2007). With the relaxation of restrictions on schoolwide programs, more and more

schools are choosing this type of Title I program with the use of federal funds to enhance the learning of all of their students (USDE, 2007).

Data from federal Title I funding provided to individual schools will be analyzed to determine if schoolwide assistance or targeted assistance is associated with increases in the overall ISAT fifth grade reading scores of selected schools in Illinois. Schools with an enrollment of less than 200 or more than 1000 will be excluded from this study to provide a more reliable source of data over time and to better compare results to studies conducted by the U. S. Department of Education (NIU, 2008). The primary selection criterion, of schools over 40%, was chosen because these schools are allowed the option of implementing schoolwide or targeted assistance. Schools must designate annually and report to the state which method they have selected for distributing Title I funds (TPG, 2007).

The School Leaders Decision-making Role

Over time, the researcher believes that school leaders have worked to become more inclusive in their service delivery model to Title I students. The researcher has made the assumption that more schools are reducing their “pull out” approach and delivering more services to children in general classroom settings so that students may benefit from both classroom instruction and additional services provided through Title I. The researcher believes this will result in a movement toward more elementary school leaders in Illinois choosing schoolwide assistance.

Under NCLB (2002), school leaders were given the option of choosing either a schoolwide program or in targeting their assistance with the funds provided by Title I

depending on the level of poverty that exists in their building. If the overall level of low income, free or reduced lunch eligible students, is at 40% or higher school leaders may choose whichever program they believe will most benefit their students (IES, 2007; NCLB, 2002; USDE 2002b). From the school year 1994-95 to the school year 2004-2005, the number of school leaders choosing schoolwide assistance rose from 10% to 58% (USDE, 2007). This study seeks to find if the increase in schoolwide use of funding is associated with higher achievement in fifth grade. The current trend is a movement toward schoolwide use of funds and school leaders face the choice of schoolwide or targeted assistance with very little guidance or research to support their decision. The purpose of this study is to examine whether schoolwide assistance or targeted assistance through Title I is associated with higher reading achievement scores in fifth grade as measured through ISAT. The results of this study will help school leaders determine if it is more effective for reading achievement to use Title I funds in a schoolwide manner or if it is more effective to target their assistance.

Continued and best use of Title I funds is an important issue for school leaders because the achievement scores of low income students still lag behind the scores of their more advantaged peers. Low income students in Illinois have scored lower on the Illinois Scholastic Achievement Test, ISAT, every year: 34% to 15% below their more advantaged peers in third grade from 2002 to 2008, 34% to 19% lower in fifth grade, and 30% to 17% lower in eighth grade (NIU, 2008). By reviewing these data from the Illinois Interactive Report Card in Appendix A, one will see that low income students in Illinois are not performing to the same level as their more advantaged peers. School leaders are

under increasing pressure to bring all subgroup populations up to the target goals established by the state and federal government since the inception of the No Child Left Behind act, making the proper use of federal Title I funds an increasingly more important issue (Mintrop, 2008; Sack-Min, 2009).

There would seem to be a common sense view that would say if a school is better financed, that the students will be better enabled to meet their academic goals (Klein, 2009). This study will set out to determine what research says about the use of funds through Title I for schoolwide assistance and targeted assistance and give school leaders a better sense of which direction to turn when using federal funds from Title I. Is either schoolwide or targeted use of funding associated with higher reading achievement for Illinois students in fifth grade? Hill (2008) says that even when adequate funding is available in schools, that if it is not appropriately focused it will not necessarily produce desired increases in student achievement. Determining whether to apply Title I funds to a targeted set of students or whether to institute a schoolwide program can mean a substantial shift in financing of building level resources. This study will provide evidence of the effectiveness of increasing the overall reading achievement of the school through schoolwide assistance is more effective or if the targeted assistance at selected schools results in higher achievement scores as measured by fifth grade ISAT reading.

Demographic Area

Schoolwide assistance and targeted assistance schools were chosen from schools that were identified through the Freedom of Information Act, FOIA; request listed in Appendix B. The FOIA identified schools represent a broad cross section of schools in

north suburban Chicago, Illinois. Schools were chosen from the immediate Chicago suburban counties which for the purpose of this study were Cook, DuPage, Lake, and Will counties. Due to the unique nature of the Chicago Public School system, any school within CPS was eliminated to allow a better comparative study of suburban schools. The researcher further attempted to control for demographics by limiting the selected schools to Lake and northern Cook counties, as identified by the Illinois School Board Association (Illinois State Board of Education [ISBE], 2007). It is acknowledged by the researcher, that the chosen schools will still vary in their demographic consistency. Schools will only be selected if they have allocated funds through the same method, schoolwide or targeted assistance, in both comparative years of 2006 and 2007.

Choosing the Sample Population and Refining the Study

Choosing the population for this section was somewhat challenging. The original study was to be a simple t-test comparing the mean scores for fifth grade ISAT reading over a multi-year period between schools in the suburban Chicago area selecting schoolwide and targeted assistance distribution of Title I funds. Data were received through a Freedom of Information Act request from Illinois State Board of Education and eligible schools were identified. Schools were determined eligible for this study if they had met the 40% low income threshold and selected the same method of distributing Title I funds for each year.

Data were requested from 2002 to 2008 from ISBE but were only available for 2005 to 2007. Title I designation prior to 2005 was unavailable from at the state level and thus limited the study years. Further research determined that cumulative school ISAT

scores were altered in the year 2005 due to the inclusion of all non-English speaking students' scores. Illinois previously had used the IMAGE, Illinois Measures of Academic Growth Exam, for this population. With the inclusion of this population of students, the validity of comparing years prior to 2006 was no longer viable because the population of students compared was no longer similar.

There were a number of challenges in choosing schools for this study. Several schools on the original list did not include a fifth grade population. Schools from the list that did not contain a fifth grade population in the years 2006 and 2007 were removed. All schools on the list received from ISBE that were identified as containing a fifth grade population were separated out if also listed as having consecutive years of leaders solely choosing schoolwide or targeted assistance. Any schools that were included in the FOIA request, yet did not meet all the criteria, were removed from the list of eligible schools and not included in the sample population.

The original research method was to be a paired t-test, comparing the mean reading achievement scores of the schoolwide and targeted schools. The researcher attempted to limit other potential factors so as to increase the likelihood of finding a valid assumption that the change in reading achievement score was due to the method of Title I funding distribution chosen. Selected schools were closely matched with racial category, income level, previous year reading achievement score, and demographics within Lake County, Illinois. The results yielded a very small sample which was an unacceptable number of schools to compare for a valid study. When the sample was expanded within

each of these parameters, the researcher was unable to maintain a close enough match between schools and yield a high enough number.

After discussion of various options and potential changes to research methodology, it was decided to account for the common variables of demographic area, race, and income level through an Analysis of Covariance or ANCOVA. Since schools could not be matched closely enough with these factors, it was determined to account for the variables in the research instead. Demographic area was expanded to Cook, Lake, Will, and DuPage counties. Income level was controlled for by limiting the low income level to 40% to 80% and the student population in the school to between 200 and 1,000 students. Still an insufficient number of schools were pulled from the ISBE data. The original list of 493 schools was narrowed to only 15 schoolwide and 65 targeted. The researcher's advisors agree that this was insufficient and suggested alternative methods of grouping or perhaps even an alternative variation of the study.

Consideration was given to expanding the study to the entire state with the caveat that schools, even though all would be in Illinois, may have very little in common. Another consideration was to choose fewer schools and very closely match them. This idea was discarded due to the significance with such a small sample population. Finally, it was decided to expand the upper limit of income criteria to 90% and to observe how this impacted the overall number of schools in each category. This change altered the number of eligible schools to 32 schoolwide and 72 targeted. Of this number, only seven schools were deemed eligible for the study from Will and DuPage counties. The decision

was made to eliminate all schools from these two counties since the impact would be minimal on the overall population chosen.

The remaining dilemma the researcher faced was the variability between schools in Southern Cook County and northern Cook and Lake counties. When using guidelines established by the Illinois School Board Association to separate out northern Cook and Lake counties as the target population, 16 schoolwide and 21 targeted schools remained eligible. It was argued that even though two counties were remaining, the schools in northern Cook County share many common characteristics and educational philosophies. The researcher's dissertation advisors agreed that although the number of remaining eligible schools was on the lower end, the number was defensible and the counties were similar enough in their population. With the common characteristics these schools now shared, it was determined that the only variable that would be accounted for in the ANCOVA would be the three racial categories of White, Black, and Hispanic. The remaining schools had very small racial populations of multicultural and Asian. Due to the small populations, these variables would not be used in the study.

The criteria for the study were then finalized. Schools included in the study contain a fifth grade population in northern Cook and Lake counties, are between 40% and 90% low income, housed between 200 and 1,000 students, and chose either schoolwide or targeted assistance for two consecutive years in 2006 and 2007. Variables still to be accounted for were the racial designations of White, Black, and Hispanic as reported on each school's state report card available publicly from ISBE.

Institutional Review Board Approval

IRB, or Institutional Review Board, approval was sought for contacting any of the potential schools solely on the basis of the researcher determining if selected schools had used any of their funds for math. It is important to note that information regarding ISAT scores and Title I status is publicly available and the reason for personal contact with school leaders was only to verify the use of funds for reading improvement. If a selected school used funds for math, or was uncertain of the use of funds for either school year, the school was eliminated from consideration and another school was chosen. The researcher contacted the principal of each building to ask for such information or to request direction to the appropriate school or district personnel who would have information about expenditure of Title I funds. The script submitted for IRB approval is listed in Appendix C.

Procedure for Gathering Data on the Target Population

Illinois Standards Achievement Test data were gathered primarily through the school report cards of each of the selected schools and through the summary data listed in the Interactive Illinois Report Card, <http://iirc.niu.edu/>. These data are publicly available through ISBE, the Illinois State Board of Education, and the IIRC website. ISAT overall scores in fifth grade reading will be compared to note an increase or decrease in the percentage of students meeting and exceeding state standards from 2006 to 2007.

Title I designations and funding amounts were gathered through ISBE. A Freedom of Information Act, FOIA; request was mailed by the researcher on January 15, 2009 and data was received on March 3, 2009. Any information provided by ISBE prior

to school years 2006, 2007, and 2008 was removed from the original request due to unavailability of Title I information prior to 2006. A copy of the FOIA request is included as Appendix B. Since data from ISBE was limited to three academic years, the study became more restricted.

The researcher chose to eliminate the school year 2008 due to reliability concerns of ISAT data. Reliability in comparing data from 2008 to prior years 2006 and 2007 came into question because of a change in the ISAT test results in school year 2008. Illinois schools began testing all English Language Learners with the ISAT instead of the Illinois Measures of Academic Growth Exam, or the IMAGE, language proficiency test (NIU, 2008). Data erroneously included information from a few high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools not containing a fifth grade population. Since this study focuses on fifth grade reading achievement, the potential list of schools from the original list was reduced.

Ultimately the list of schools from ISBE included schools in the requested counties which were: Cook without the City of Chicago, Lake, DuPage, and Will. To more closely match the selected schools, the researcher then narrowed the group to schools in Lake and northern Cook counties. Included was whether the school had reported themselves as following the schoolwide assistance model and the amount of Title I funding each school received. After submission of the IRB request, individual school leaders were called by the researcher to verify whether or not the individual schools used any of their Title I distribution for math or if they chose to use all the available funding for reading. Schools that used any of the distribution for math, or that

could not verify if they did, were eliminated. The data were limited to only elementary schools that included fifth grade and were between the 40% and 90% poverty level defined by Title I. The researcher verified this information about the grade configuration and income level of individual schools received in the FOIA request through Illinois School Report Cards for 2006 and 2007. In addition to income level, the researcher also collected data on race for federally identified subgroups of White, Black, and Hispanic population as a percentage of total population. These data will be included as covariates in the ANCOVA. Reported racial percentages for Asian population were not included due to low reported percentages in the target school population. These data are all publicly available on the Illinois State Board of Education web site at <http://www.isbe.net>.

Procedure for Identifying School Leaders

The researcher identified the most current school leader through publicly available records. The purpose of contacting school leaders and seeking IRB approval was to verify the type of assistance chosen and if Title I funding was used solely for the improvement of reading achievement. The building principal for the targeted schools was identified through the Regional Office of Education, or ROE, listings of Lake and Cook counties in Illinois. The web site of each ROE lists all of the schools and the principal of each school in their respective counties (North Cook Intermediate Service Center [NCISC], 2010). The researcher then contacted each principal from the telephone number listed using the script submitted to IRB found in Appendix C. If the building principal

directed the researcher to another individual in the district, this individual was then contacted using the same script (see Appendix C).

Procedure for Analyzing Data

The research question in this study was answered through both quantitative and qualitative means. Qualitative research was used in verifying the use of Title I data. The researcher telephoned school leaders selected from the sample population, as outlined with the script in Appendix C, solely to verify the use of Title I funding for reading purposes only.

From this broader suburban population, it is acknowledged by the researcher that it is often difficult to see changes associated with variables in two years of data. Due to the inability to control for all possible variables the ANCOVA, analysis of covariance regression analysis, was chosen to reduce the unexplained variance that might occur through possible variables of race and thus increase the precision of group mean estimates in determining whether schoolwide or targeted assistance is associated with higher reading achievement scores. From this population, the researcher administered the ANCOVA program through a computer software package called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences or SPSS v15.0. The choice of this program is for the purpose comparing the mean values of fifth grade ISAT reading scores with schoolwide and targeted assistance schools. The results of this were then compared to the covariates of race to reduce the unexplained variance and thus increase the precision of group mean estimates. After initial entry, all information was again checked for accuracy by the researcher. A second party confirmed the data a third time. Results illustrated the current

information involving the distribution of Title I funding assistance and fifth grade reading scores on ISAT.

The final population chosen represented schools with fifth grade populations in Lake and northern Cook counties in Illinois that chose either schoolwide or targeted assistance for both 2006 and 2007. Selected schools were to use all of their Title I funding distribution on reading programs. The mean fifth grade ISAT reading scores were compared for 2006 and 2007 between schools that chose schoolwide and targeted distributions of Title I funds. These results were then compared to the racial categories of White, Black, and Hispanic.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study are limited by several factors. The intent of the study is to determine which source of Title I funding, schoolwide assistance or targeted assistance, is associated with higher reading scores on the fifth grade ISAT. The ultimate generalization is to provide school leaders with guidance in making decisions about their use of Title I funding. The study is limited only to public schools. While private schools in Illinois are allocated Title I funds, limits are placed on the amount and based upon calculations from the public school area in which the private school is located (TPG, 2007). This study intended to focus only on public schools in Illinois and is therefore limited in nature to this population.

The study attempted to control for location by choosing only schools located in suburban Chicago counties of Lake and the northern section of Cook. This study has limited for demographic location by restricting the schools to this suburban area of

Chicago. The researcher acknowledges the regional limits of the study to the immediate Chicago suburban area which may not be transferable to a broader population in a different demographic area. By limiting the study to schools in the suburban Chicago area, the researcher acknowledges that the results obtained will not occur in every situation outside of the conditions set within this study. State educational policies and laws for the distribution of funding and curricular requirement vary across the nation. Illinois has three separate tax systems in counties that have tax cap limits, those that do not, and entirely different rules for the Chicago Public School System. The limited number of schools and restrictions on selected counties decreases the accuracy of the information and the reliability in predicting results from the generalized conclusions obtained from the information in this study. This study is not exhaustive and all potential factors may not have been accounted for that would affect the outcome.

Some states, such as Illinois, have changed the assessment used over the course of the existence of No Child Left Behind (Aarons, 2009) making a comparative study virtually impossible to complete with long term data. States have tended to first retract the overall testing and type of testing prior to complying with the NCLB (2002). Illinois is an example of a state that altered the testing bank of questions significantly for the 2005 ISAT. This has caused difficulty in comparing pre-2005 data to data after 2005. According to ISBE, fifth grade reading scores were not significantly affected, another reason this study only focused on fifth grade scores (ISBE, 2008; NIU, 2008). Nonetheless, the study acknowledges the use of data prior to 2005 may not provide a

precise comparison of achievement and that a limit of this study is that it applies only to the selected schools in the selected years.

Care was taken to account for the size of schools by selecting schools identified from Illinois School Report Card data in the 200-1,000 student population range and for low income level by selecting schools in the 40% to 90% range. Schools in this range of low income would have the option of selecting their allocation method. The study accounts for variables of ethnicity by including the covariates of the number of White students, the number of Black students, and the number of Hispanic students. This adjustment allows the researcher to reduce the observed variation between schoolwide allocations and targeted assistance methods of distributing funds caused not by the treatment itself but by variation of the covariates. The study chose to focus only on the use of schoolwide and targeted funding; results may or may not extend beyond the sample population. This study does not attempt to answer questions for all demographic conditions; therefore, it is limited in scope only to similar populations. This study did not attempt to account for all variations of low income students that would be possible. The hope is that the study can first determine if there is a significant impact on the selected demographic group that may be expanded upon in further research if determinations indicate a significant change results in the selected group.

Recent economic times in a recessionary period have altered the current structure of state budgets and may continue to impact financial investments in state education systems. With a Consumer Price Index of only 0.1% for the 2010 school year (Malone & Napolitano, 2009; Rado, 2009), both of the counties in this study may be impacted with

severe financial issues because of the tax cap law of 1991. This means little to no increases in revenue for the next few years while school districts are already locked into contracts that call for much higher increases (Malone & Napolitano, 2009; Rado, 2009). Projected additional budget cuts could occur and the investment in educational budgets could be more drastic since reserves have been drawn down or eliminated and states, unlike the federal government, are not allowed to run a deficit (McNichol & Lav, 2008). Cuts in state services could affect the group of students who benefit most from Title I services. Social services provided by states are generally focused to help the most disadvantaged (McNichol & Lav, 2008).

Finally, the new administration at the national level could mean changes in how federal laws are interpreted and implemented. The new federal stimulus package includes significant increases in funding to Title I. If this occurs, perceptions of the No Child Left Behind Act and the inadequacy of funding arguments that have been made since 2002 may be altered (Klein, 2009; Sack-Min, 2009). How the increase in financing plays out over time and whether it changes the future of federal financing or proves to be a one-time infusion, will impact how states and schools use the funds (Klein, 2009). Early indications are that regardless of the outcome, a reauthorized education bill will pay close attention to the needs of the disadvantaged (Sack-Min, 2009). Therefore, the effective use of Title I funds may become even more important to school leaders in the future.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The chapter provides the results of the data analysis. This includes an overview of the sample population and the characteristics of schools, data that emerged as a result of contacting principals, the relationship between low income level and achievement scores, the relationship between race and achievement scores using aggregate school-level data, and the relationship between schoolwide and targeted assistance and achievement scores. Schoolwide and targeted assistance are also compared descriptively in terms of racial composition, socioeconomic status, and enrollment.

Below is a series of tables and figures that describe the information referenced in this study. The information includes the overall characteristics of the schools included in the sample population: the county in which the school is located, whether the school chose schoolwide or targeted assistance for both 2006 and 2007, the percentage of low income students in the school, the percentage of students in fifth grade meeting or exceeding standards on the ISAT reading exam, the total enrollment of the school, and the percentage of White, Black, and Hispanic students in each school. Further information is included on the relationship between achievement, income, race, and schoolwide and targeted assistance available through Title I.

Sample Population Overview and Characteristics

The table below is a set of data collected from schools chosen for this study on the characteristics of the overall population of students in each school. Table 1: Sample Population Overview and Characteristics, represents an overview of the characteristics of schools in the sample population in 2006 and 2007. The applicable data are in Table 1.

The first column represents the number assigned by the researcher to the identified school. This process was used by the researcher to protect the identity of schools involved in the study. The actual names are listed in Appendix D. The assigned number was used to identify the school while analyzing the data in SPSS Statistics v15.0.

The second column indicates the location of the school by the two counties, Lake or Cook, in Illinois chosen by the researcher for this study. Schools included in this sample population were either located in Lake County or northern Cook County of suburban Chicago, Illinois. Schools not within the boundaries of these two areas are not included in the study.

The third column contains whether the school leader chose schoolwide or targeted assistance for both 2006 and 2007. If the school leader chose schoolwide assistance for both years it is indicated as Yes. If the school leader chose targeted assistance for both years, it is indicated with a No. Any school that did not choose either schoolwide or targeted assistance for both 2006 and 2007 was not included in this study.

Table 1

Sample Population Overview and Characteristics

# in SPSS	County	Schoolwide	Low Income Percent		5th % Meet & Exceed		Total Enrollment		White		Black		Hispanic	
1	Cook	No	44	45	93	84	567	608	46	40	6.3	5.3	38	45
2	Cook	No	46	51	75	78	771	755	38	37	7	4.6	43	44
3	Cook	No	42	41	76	85	845	794	50	50	5.7	7.6	36	33
4	Cook	No	42	45	87	90	394	371	52	47	0.3	0.8	45	50
5	Cook	No	49	51	87	81	360	370	39	37	5.8	4.3	45	49
6	Cook	No	65	59	70	75	352	359	15	19	3.1	2.8	77	72
7	Cook	No	43	47	75	76	536	526	37	34	14	17	34	32
8	Cook	No	55	57	61	83	294	293	20	18	1.7	1.7	68	68
9	Cook	No	51	56	84	79	352	348	19	21	3.1	2	61	60
10	Cook	No	45	44	86	72	307	302	41	40	1.3	1.7	51	53
11	Cook	No	40	41	70	77	401	411	35	33	7.7	7.3	26	26
12	Cook	No	47	51	72	76	363	348	24	24	48	43	24	28
13	Cook	No	58	71	60	65	391	427	28	22	49	50	21	25
14	Cook	No	56	54	74	83	500	457	32	32	23	23	43	43
15	Cook	No	44	40	71	76	510	474	40	42	13	13	12	14
16	Lake	Yes	68	54	57	57	390	436	21	20	39	39	34	32
17	Lake	Yes	70	76	61	61	347	326	16	13	42	39	38	41
18	Lake	Yes	73	77	74	48	492	488	15	15	39	39	38	36
19	Lake	Yes	86	79	45	33	690	596	0	1	13	13	87	85
20	Lake	Yes	58	68	67	58	299	278	13	11	28	29	41	43
21	Lake	Yes	80	77	46	52	501	488	4	3	16	14	78	81
22	Lake	Yes	65	75	59	60	601	605	5	4	16	16	77	76
23	Lake	Yes	58	64	58	51	326	273	14	13	45	40	33	40
24	Lake	Yes	67	84	44	48	330	293	6	6	34	32	56	57
25	Lake	Yes	77	64	56	57	626	623	7	6	14	14	77	76
26	Lake	Yes	82	61	63	83	564	542	2	1	20	17	78	81
27	Lake	Yes	45	42	84	77	400	411	18	15	28	28	52	51
28	Lake	Yes	76	60	61	65	534	695	2	2	6.6	7.3	90	89
29	Lake	Yes	82	57	55	68	607	519	3	3	6.1	6.2	89	90
30	Lake	Yes	62	49	70	66	590	583	5	4	7.8	10	84	82
31	Lake	No	66	67	89	94	491	498	30	31	2.9	1.6	64	64
32	Lake	No	59	64	54	56	810	835	18	14	3.3	6.8	78	78
33	Lake	No	55	48	64	54	678	678	38	38	11	12	45	44
34	Lake	No	69	69	71	54	618	671	16	14	4.9	5.7	79	78
35	Lake	No	60	59	60	50	691	691	24	25	7.8	7.8	63	61
36	Lake	No	54	54	66	55	512	516	31	27	5.3	5	59	65

The fourth and fifth columns are under the heading low income percent. The fourth is the percentage of low income students in the overall population of the school in

2006 and the fifth column is the percentage of low income students in the overall population of the school in 2007. The percentage is what each school reported to the state of Illinois in 2006 and 2007.

The sixth and seventh columns are under the heading fifth grade percentage meeting and exceeding. The sixth column represents the percentage of fifth grade students in the overall school fifth grade population that met and exceeded standards on the reading portion of the ISAT in 2006. The seventh column represents the percentage of fifth grade students in the overall school fifth grade population that met and exceeded standards on the reading portion of the ISAT in 2007.

The eighth and ninth columns are under the heading total enrollment. The eighth column is the reported number of all students enrolled in the school in 2006. The ninth is the reported number of all students enrolled in the school in the school in 2007.

The tenth and eleventh columns are under the heading White. The tenth column represents the percentage of the overall the student population in the building classified as White in 2006. The eleventh column represents percentage of the overall the student population in the building classified as White in 2007.

The twelfth and thirteenth columns are under the heading Black. The twelfth column represents the percentage of the overall the student population in the building classified as Black in 2006. The thirteenth column represents percentage of the overall the student population in the building classified as Black in 2007.

The fourteenth and fifteenth columns are under the heading Hispanic. The fourteenth column represents the percentage of the overall the student population in the

building classified as Hispanic in 2006. The fifteenth column represents percentage of the overall the student population in the building classified as Hispanic in 2007.

Fifteen of the selected schools from the sample population are in Cook County and 21 schools are located in Lake County. Fifteen school leaders selected schoolwide assistance and 21 targeted assistance. All 15 of the schools that selected schoolwide assistance were located in Lake County. Of the 21 schools selecting targeted assistance, 15 were in Cook County and six were in Lake County. The percentage of low income students in all schools in the sample population ranged from 40 to 86% of the overall school population. The overall population in all sample population schools ranged from 273 to 845 students. The percentage of overall student population identified as White in all schools in the sample population ranged from 0 to 52%, Black from 0.3 to 50%, and Hispanic from 12 to 90%.

Data that Emerged as a Result of Principal Contact

The researcher contacted the principals of all schools included in the sample population to verify the use of Title I funds in their school. The intent of this study was to determine if Title I schoolwide or targeted assistance was associated with higher reading achievement. School principals were contacted to verify if funds were spent entirely on reading or if any were spent on math interventions. When contacting principals as planned for the study, issues evolved that the researcher did not anticipate. In nearly every case, when the researcher contacted the principal, the researcher was directed to a member of the district office. Principals either did not know or were not certain if any of the Title I funding was used for math programs and interventions. Most often the

principal referred the researcher to a reading director or assistant superintendent when asked if any Title I funds at the school were used for math in 2006 and 2007. As planned in the IRB submission, the researcher thanked the principal and did not probe further with questions. Many principals voluntarily replied with comments and summary of these comments is noted in Table 2. It is important to note that the researcher did not plan for this type of commentary in the study and did not ask for elaboration of any commentary made by principals.

The original question was:

When Illinois school leaders of buildings with over 40% of their school population identified as low income choose between Title I schoolwide assistance or targeted assistance programs, which method of distributing Title I funds is associated with higher reading achievement scores in fifth grade as measured by ISAT?

Based upon responses received, it was determined by the researcher to include all information given by building and district leaders. Once a pattern emerged from the answers given by school leaders, the answers were grouped into common topics discussed and captured as data.

The table below is a set of data collected from principals of schools chosen for this study that emerged from the researcher contacting the principals. Table 2: Data that Emerged as a Result of Principal Contact, represents commentary from the principals of schools in the sample population. The applicable data are in Table 2.

Table 2

Data that Emerged as a Result of Principal Contact

# in SPSS	Schoolwide	Spent on Math? Yes or No	Additional Principal Comments
1	No	None directly intended	You should talk to the Reading Director. I'm just a principal.
2	No	None directly intended	I wouldn't know. You should ask ... Reading Director.
3	No	None directly intended	Not sure. Did you try the district?
4	No	No	No, you aren't supposed to do that.
5	No	No	Oh, I'm just a principal. I wouldn't know that.
6	No	No	He's not with us anymore, you should call the district.
7	No	Likely	I don't really know. You should call ...
8	No	Likely	We probably did since we have a variety of interventions, but you should call ...
9	No	Likely	Maybe, we usually run through the district.
10	No	Likely	Highly likely.
11	No	Yes, some	Yes, but I'm not sure how much.
12	No	Yes, minimal	Most was reading. I'm not really sure. Call our reading director.
13	No	Yes, minimal	I was the assistant then. Call our reading director.
14	No	Yes, minimal	I wasn't here. Call our reading director.
15	No	Yes, we believe so	You really should call the Assistant Superintendent
16	Yes	Yes, likely	Hmm, good question. Try the district office.
17	Yes	Yes, likely	I really don't have a clue.
18	Yes	Yes, likely	I think we did, but call ...
19	Yes	Yes, some can't recall	Probably, not sure. Call Assist. Supt. They would know for sure.
20	Yes	Yes, some can't recall	I really don't know. Not the right person to talk to.
21	Yes	Yes, some can't recall	Good question, call district office.
22	Yes	Yes, some can't recall	Yes, probably, but I'm not sure how much.
23	Yes	Yes, some can't recall	I think so, but talk to ...
24	Yes	Yes, some can't recall	Probably, not sure. Call Assistant Superintendent. They would know.
25	Yes	Yes, some can't recall	Don't know for sure.
26	Yes	Yes, some can't recall	Maybe, we usually run through the district.
27	Yes	Yes, some can't recall	Wouldn't know. You should call district.
28	Yes	Yes, some can't recall	Usually not, but maybe. Can you?
29	Yes	Yes, some can't recall	Most is for reading, but may have.
30	Yes	Yes, some can't recall	I'm not sure. You're talking to the wrong person.
31	No	No	No, we use all for reading support.

Table 2 (continued)

# in SPSS	Schoolwide	Spent on Math? Yes or No	Additional Principal Comments
32	No	No, don't think so	Not sure. Did you try the district?
33	No	No, don't think so	I don't know. Call ... (district office).
34	No	No, don't think so	Probably not.
35	No	No, don't think so	You should probably talk to ...
36	No	No, don't think so	Call the district.

The first column represents the number assigned by the researcher to the identified school. This process was used by the researcher to protect the identity of schools and principals involved in the study. The actual names are listed in Appendix D. The assigned number was used to identify the school while analyzing the data in SPSS Statistics v15.0.

The second column contains whether the school leader chose schoolwide or targeted assistance for both 2006 and 2007. If the school leader chose schoolwide assistance for both years it is indicated as Yes. If the school leader chose targeted assistance for both years, it is indicated with No. Any school that did not choose either schoolwide or targeted assistance for both 2006 and 2007 was not included in this study.

The third column represents the principals response to the questions of whether any of the Title I funds were used for math programs. The intent of the researcher was to classify each as a simple yes or no answer. After receiving these data, it was necessary to elaborate since few responses received were simply yes or no answers.

The fourth column represents additional information supplied by the principals in the sample population schools. Principal in the sample population offered additional commentary that the researcher did not solicit nor ask principals to elaborate upon. Of the

answers received from school leaders, 12 were classified as a response that no Title I funds were spent on math interventions. Four replied with a direct no response, five replied with a no that they did not think so, and three replied that none was intended directly for math interventions. All twelve of the schools classified as a no response chose schoolwide assistance for Title I funding.

Of the answers received from school leaders, 24 were classified as a response that yes some Title I funds were spent on math interventions. One replied with a yes some, one replied with a yes we believe so, three replied with yes but minimal, three replied with yes it is likely, twelve replied with a yes some was used but they could not recall how much, and four replied with a likely. Every yes answer received was a qualified answer, meaning that school leaders were not certain of the amount of impact or if there was any impact of including Title I funds for mathematics on reading achievement scores. Every school leader who responded that some Title I funds were used for math programs noted that the majority of Title I funding used in their school was still intended to enhance the reading ability of students. Schools that responded with yes answers consisted of all 15 of the targeted assistance schools and nine of the 21 schoolwide assistance schools.

Racial Composition of the Sample Population

Data was collected about the racial composition, White, Black, and Hispanic, of the sample population. The table below represents the racial composition of schools choosing schoolwide assistance through Title I. Table 3: Racial Composition of

Schoolwide Assistance Population, represents the average percentage of each racial category in all of the sample schools that chose schoolwide assistance in 2006 and 2007.

Table 3

Racial Composition of Schoolwide Assistance Population

Race	2006 Average Percentage	Standard Deviation	2007 Average Percentage	Standard Deviation
White	8.64	6.61	7.85	6.09
Black	23.58	13.69	22.82	12.65
Hispanic	63.40	22.15	63.93	21.52

The first column contains the three major racial categories accounted for in this study. The three categories are White, Black, and Hispanic.

The second column indicates the average percentage of all schoolwide assistance schools in each of the racial categories in 2006. The average percentage of the students who were White in schoolwide assistance schools was 8.64% in 2006. The average percentage of the students who were Black in schoolwide assistance schools was 23.58% in 2006. The average percentage of the students who were Hispanic in schoolwide assistance schools was 63.40% in 2006.

The third column represents the standard deviation from the mean for all of the schoolwide schools in the sample population in 2006. The standard deviation in 2006 for the White population was 6.61, 13.69 for Black, and 22.15 for Hispanic.

The fourth column indicates the average percentage of all schoolwide assistance schools in each of the racial categories in 2007. The average percentage of the students who were White in schoolwide assistance schools was 7.85% in 2007. The average

percentage of the students who were Black in schoolwide assistance schools was 22.82% in 2007. The average percentage of the students who were Hispanic in schoolwide assistance schools was 63.93% in 2007.

The fifth column represents the standard deviation from the mean for all of the schoolwide schools in the sample population in 2007. The standard deviation in 2007 for the White population was 6.09, 12.65 for Black, and 21.52 for Hispanic.

The percentage of students in schoolwide assistance schools in each racial category remained relatively consistent from 2006 to 2007. The percentage of White students on average in the schoolwide assistance schools was 8.64% in 2006 and 7.85% in 2007, the percentage of Black students on average in the schoolwide assistance schools was 23.58% in 2006 and 22.82% in 2007, and the percentage of Hispanic students on average in the schoolwide assistance schools was 63.40% in 2006 and 63.93% in 2007.

The table below represents the characteristics of school choosing targeted assistance through Title I. Table 4: Racial Composition of Targeted Assistance Population represents the average percentage of each racial category in all of the sample schools for targeted assistance schools in 2006 and 2007. The applicable data follows:

Table 4

Racial Composition of Targeted Assistance Population

Race	2006 Average Percentage	Standard Deviation	2007 Average Percentage	Standard Deviation
White	32.00	11.02	30.71	10.52
Black	10.65	13.51	10.59	13.12
Hispanic	48.17	19.29	49.18	18.36

The first column contains the three major racial categories accounted for in this study. The three categories are White, Black, and Hispanic.

The second column indicates the average percentage of all targeted assistance schools in each of the racial categories in 2006. The average percentage of the students who were White in targeted assistance schools was 32.00% in 2006. The average percentage of the students who were Black in targeted assistance schools was 10.65% in 2006. The average percentage of the students who were Hispanic in targeted assistance schools was 48.17% in 2006.

The third column represents the standard deviation from the mean for all of the targeted schools in the sample population in 2006. The standard deviation in 2006 for the White population was 11.02, 13.51 for Black, and 19.29 for Hispanic.

The fourth column indicates the average percentage of all targeted assistance schools in each of the racial categories in 2007. The average percentage of the students who were White in targeted assistance schools was 30.71% in 2007. The average percentage of the students who were Black in targeted assistance schools was 10.59% in 2007. The average percentage of the students who were Hispanic in targeted assistance schools was 49.18% in 2007.

The fifth column represents the standard deviation from the mean for all of the targeted schools in the sample population in 2007. The standard deviation in 2007 for the White population was 10.52, 13.12 for Black, and 18.36 for Hispanic.

The percentage students in targeted assistance schools in each racial category remained relatively consistent from 2006 to 2007. The percentage of White students on

average in the targeted assistance schools was 32.00% in 2006 and 30.71% in 2007, the percentage of Black students on average in the targeted assistance schools was 10.65% in 2006 and 10.59% in 2007, and the percentage of Hispanic students on average in the targeted assistance schools was 48.17% in 2006 and 49.18% in 2007.

Between 2006 and 2007 there were only minor differences in racial groups for schools in the sample population. However, among the Title I funding options of schoolwide assistance and targeted assistance there were substantial differences in racial composition. In 2006 the average percentage of Black students in schoolwide assistance schools was 23.58% which was higher than the targeted assistance average of 10.65% in 2006. The average percentage of Hispanic students in schoolwide assistance schools of 63.40% was higher than the 48.17% average in targeted assistance schools. Again, the same trend is observed in 2007 with the average percentage of Black students in schoolwide assistance schools at 22.82% which was higher than the targeted assistance average of 10.59% in 2006. The average percentage of Hispanic students in schoolwide assistance schools of 63.93% was higher than the 49.18% average in targeted assistance schools. The proportions are reversed for White students with an average percentage of 8.64% in schoolwide assistance schools in 2006 while targeted assistance schools contained an average of 32.00%. The same trend is observed in 2007 with 7.85% on average in schoolwide assistance schools and 30.71% on average in targeted assistance schools.

Data were collected on the racial composition of schools and presented for schoolwide and targeted assistance for the sample population. Figure 1: Racial

Composition of Schoolwide and Targeted Assistance Population, are comparative figures representing the percentage of the overall population in selected schools that fall into each racial category.

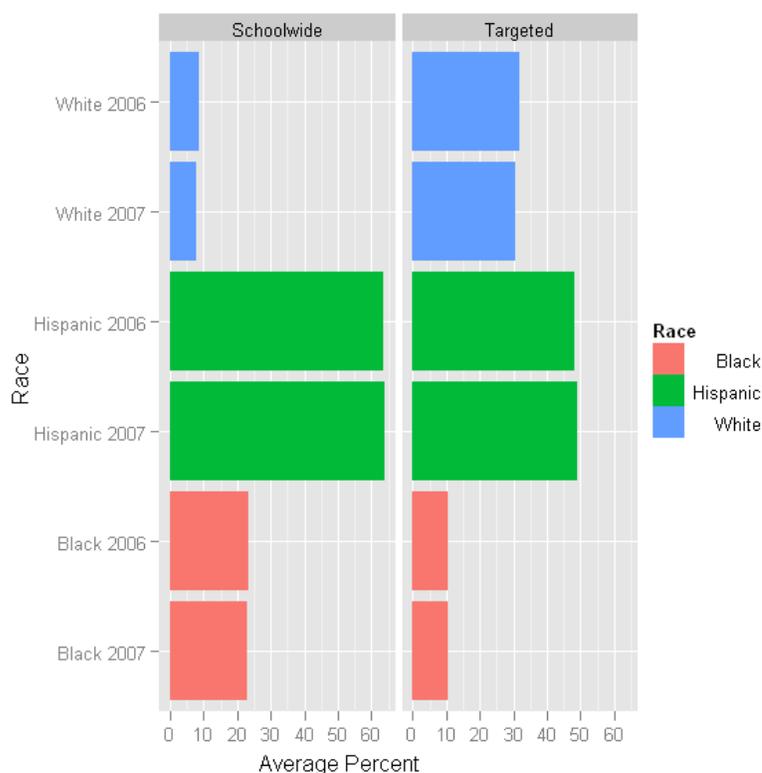


Figure 1. Racial Composition of Schoolwide and Targeted Assistance Population

The left half of the figure represents the analysis of data for schoolwide assistance and the right side represents targeted assistance schools. The racial category for each year of the study, 2006 and 2007, is represented along the Y axis and the mean percent is along the X axis. Each racial category is grouped together to allow comparison from 2006 to 2007 and by type of assistance to compare from race to race.

The first two bars on the left side of the graph represent the average percentage of White students in schoolwide assistance schools in the sample population is 8.64% in

2006 and 7.85% in 2007. The second two bars under schoolwide assistance represent the average percentage of Hispanic students in the sample population is 63.40% in 2006 and 63.93% in 2007 and the third two bars represent the average percentage of Black students in the sample population is 23.58% in 2006 and 22.82% in 2007.

The first two bars on the right side of the graph represent the average percentage of White students in targeted assistance school in the sample population is 32.00% in 2006 and 30.71% in 2007. The second two bars under targeted assistance represent the average percentage of Hispanic students in the sample population is 48.17% in 2006 and 49.18% in 2007 and the third two bars represent the average percentage of Black students in the sample population is 10.65% in 2006 and 10.59% in 2007.

Figure 1 represent that schools selecting either schoolwide assistance or targeted assistance had consistent levels of racial composition in each category from 2006 to 2007. The population did not change much in terms of racial composition from year to year. This consistency helped generated a useful sample population for the purposes of this study. The population had very little shift in all racial groups between both schoolwide and targeted assistance schools. The overall trend was for more White students in schools that selected targeted assistance and more Hispanic and Black students in schools that selected schoolwide assistance in both 2006 and 2007.

Low Income Characteristics of the Sample Population

The next table represents the low income characteristics of the sample population. Table 5: Low Income Characteristics of Sample Population, represents the average percentage of low income of the overall population of schoolwide assistance schools and

targeted assistance schools in the sample population in 2006 and 2007. The applicable data follows:

Table 5

Low Income Characteristics of Sample Population

Title I Assistance Selected	2006 Average Percentage	Standard Deviation	2007 Average Percentage	Standard Deviation
Schoolwide	70.00	11.24	65.73	12.08
Targeted	51.93	8.79	53.03	9.34

The first column represents the type of Title I assistance chosen by the school leader. Schools chose either schoolwide or targeted assistance.

The second column represents the percentage of the overall population that was classified as low income on average in all schools in the sample population in 2006. The percentage of low income students on average in schoolwide schools was 70.00% in 2006. The average percentage of low income students in targeted schools was 51.93% in 2006.

The third column represents the standard deviation from the mean for all schools in the sample population in 2006. The standard deviation for schoolwide assistance schools was 11.24. The standard deviation for targeted assistance schools was 8.79.

The fourth column represents the percentage of the overall population that was classified as low income on average in all schools in the sample population in 2007. The percentage of low income students on average in schoolwide schools was 65.73% in

2007. The average percentage of low income students in targeted schools was 53.03% in 2007.

The fifth column represents the standard deviation from the mean for all schools in the sample population in 2007. The standard deviation for schoolwide assistance schools was 12.08. The standard deviation for targeted assistance schools was 9.34.

Schoolwide assistance schools had higher percentages of students classified as low income compared to the targeted assistance schools. The averages were consistent across both years in 2006 and 2007.

Data were collected on the low income characteristics of both schoolwide and targeted assistance school in 2006 and 2007. Figure 2: Low Income Characteristics of Sample Population, represents a comparison between 2006 and 2007 of the average percentage of low income in schoolwide and targeted assistance school in the sample population.

The left half of the figure represents information collected from schools in the sample population that chose schoolwide assistance and the right half of the figure represents sample population schools choosing targeted assistance. The X or horizontal axis represents the two years of the study, 2006 and 2007. The Y or vertical axis represents the percentage of the overall population of students classified as low income in the sample schools.

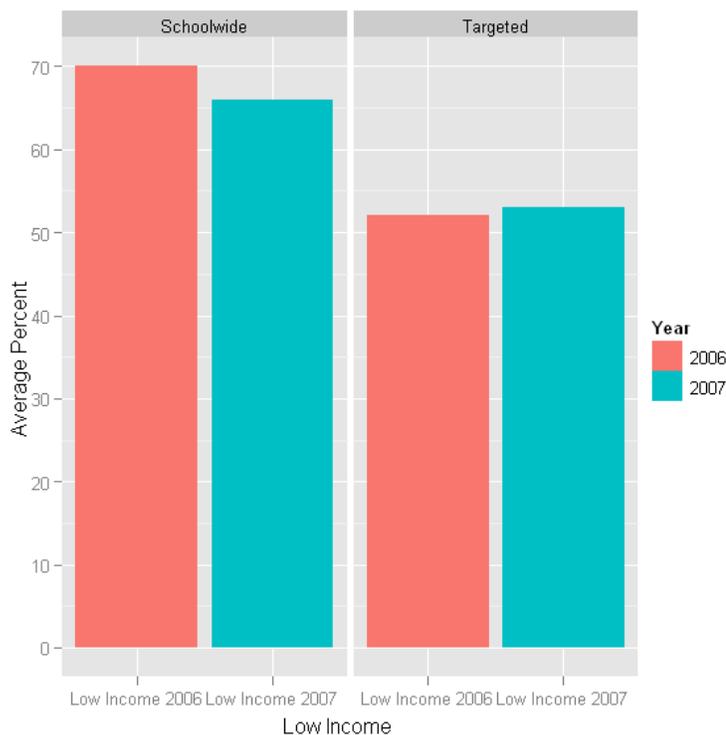


Figure 2. Low Income Characteristics of Sample Population

The first bar on the left side of the graph represents that the average percentage of students in schools that selected schoolwide assistance was 70.00% low income in 2006. The second bar represents the average for the same schools decreased slightly to 65.73% of students classified as low income in 2007.

The first bar on the right side of the graph represents that the average percentage of students in schools that selected targeted assistance was 51.93% low income in 2006. The second bar on the right half of the graph represents the average for the same schools increased slightly to 53.03% of students classified as low income in 2007.

Figure 2 represents that schoolwide assistance schools were consistently higher in the average percentage of students classified as low income from the overall sample

population in both years 2006 and 2007. The figure also demonstrates that the level of low income was fairly consistent from year to year in schools that selected either schoolwide or targeted assistance through Title I.

Low Income Percentage and Achievement Scores

Data were collected from each school in the sample population on achievement scores and compared to the overall percentage of the population classified as low income. Figure 3: Low Income Percentage and Achievement, represents the relationship between the percentage of student population in sample schools classified as low income and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading on the fifth grade ISAT.

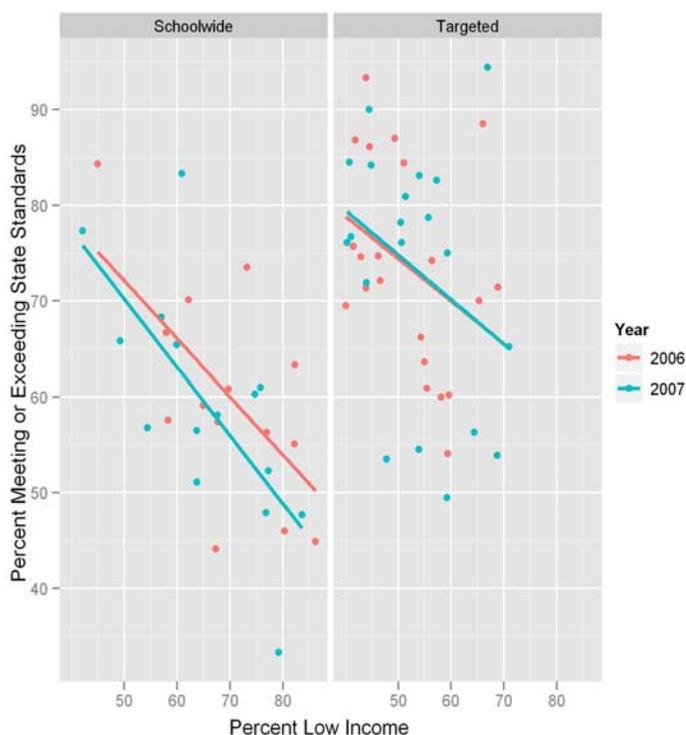


Figure 3. Low Income Percentage and Achievement

The left half of the figure represents information collected from schools in the sample population that chose schoolwide assistance and the right half of the figure represents sample population schools choosing targeted assistance. The X or horizontal axis represents the percentage of students classified as low income from the overall population in sample population schools. The Y or vertical axis represents the percentage of students in sample population schools meeting or exceeding standards that were established for the reading portion of the fifth grade ISAT.

Figure 3 displays each school from the sample population plotted as a dot with the percentage of low income on the X axis and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding on the Y axis. The left side of the figure represents the results for each school from the sample population in red for 2006 and the corresponding results for the same schools in blue for 2007. Targeted schools follow on the right side of the figure with the results for each school from the sample population in red for 2006 and the corresponding results for the same schools in blue for 2007.

The lines through each figure are regression lines representing the relationship between the X axis and Y axis variables. The relationship between the variables of percentage of low income and the percentage meeting or exceeding for each year are represented by the regression lines. Each year is represented with a different color with 2006 in red and 2007 blue.

Regression lines for schools selecting schoolwide assistance are angled in both years downward from left to right. This downward angle represents that the higher the percentage of low income students in sample schools, the lower the percentage of the

overall population that met or exceeded standards in reading on the fifth grade ISAT. In 2006 the correlation between low income and meets is -0.61 and significant. In 2007 it is -0.70 and significant. The regression lines comparing the variables of low income and meeting or exceeding represent minor differences from 2006 to 2007. The separation of the regression lines represents that scores in 2006 were slightly higher when compared to 2007 with a larger difference in scores in sample population schools with higher percentages of students classified as low income.

Regression lines for schools selecting targeted assistance are angled in both years downward from left to right. This downward angle demonstrates that the higher the percentage of low income students in sample schools, the lower the percentage of the overall population that met or exceeded standards in reading on the fifth grade ISAT. In 2006 the correlation between low income and meets is -0.45 which is not statistically significant. In 2007 the correlation is not different than zero. The regression line comparing the variables of low income and meeting or exceeding demonstrate little difference from 2006 to 2007. The similarity in the regression lines represents that scores in 2006 were nearly the same as scores in 2007 at all income levels.

Figure 3 represents that when sample schools have lower percentages of their student population classified as low income, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards is higher on the fifth grade ISAT. Conversely, schools with higher percentages of low income students had smaller percentages of students meeting and exceeding. This holds true for sample schools that selected schoolwide assistance as well as sample schools that chose targeted assistance. There is little change from year to year

in both schoolwide and targeted assistance schools with the patterns remaining consistent from 2006 to 2007. This represents little change from year to year for either schoolwide or targeted assistance.

White Population and Achievement Scores

Data were collected from each school in the sample population on achievement scores and compared to the overall percentage of the population classified as White.

Figure 4: White Population Percentage and Achievement, represents the relationship between the percentage of the student population classified as White in sample schools and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading on the fifth grade ISAT.

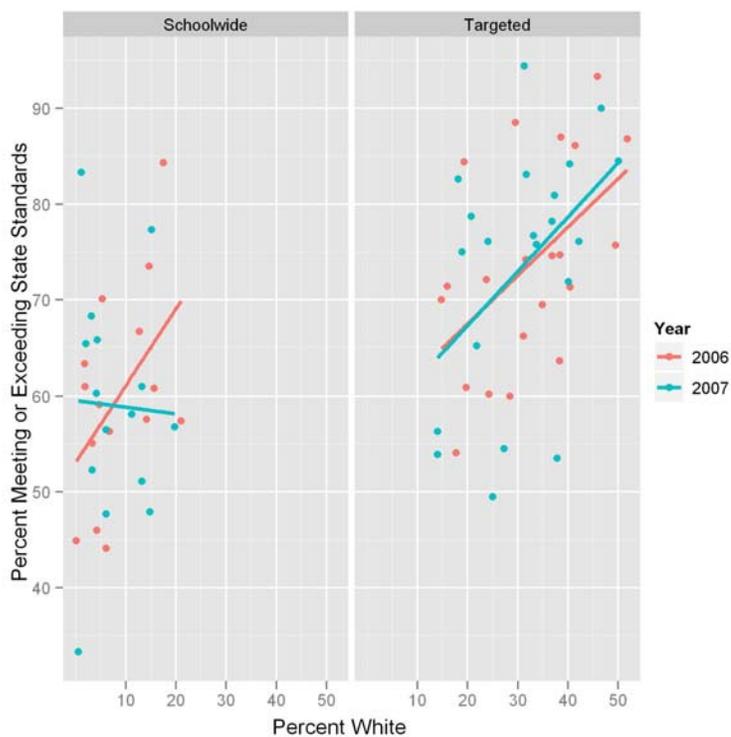


Figure 4. White Population Percentage and Achievement

The left half of the figure represents information collected from schools in the sample population that chose schoolwide assistance and the right half of the figure represents sample population schools choosing targeted assistance. The X or horizontal axis represents the percentage of students classified as White from the overall population in sample population schools. The Y or vertical axis represents the percentage of students in sample population schools meeting or exceeding standards that were established for the reading portion of the fifth grade ISAT.

Figure 4 displays each school from the sample population plotted as a dot with the percentage of White students in the sample population schools on the X axis and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding on the Y axis. The left side of the figure represents the results for each school from the sample population in red for 2006 and the corresponding results for the same schools in blue for 2007. Targeted schools follow on the right side of the figure with the results for each school from the sample population in red for 2006 and the corresponding results for the same schools in blue for 2007.

The lines through each figure are regression lines representing the relationship between the X axis and Y axis variables. The relationship between the variables of percentage of low income and the percentage meeting or exceeding for each year are represented by the regression lines. Each year is represented with a different color with 2006 in red and 2007 blue.

Regression lines for schools selecting schoolwide assistance are angled upward from left to right in 2006 and downward from left to right in 2007. The upward angle of the 2006 regression line represents that the higher the percentage of White students in

sample schools, the higher the percentage of the overall population that met or exceeded standards in reading on the fifth grade ISAT. The correlation is 0.81 and significant. The downward angle of the regression line for 2007 in schoolwide assistance represents fewer students meeting or exceeding standards as the percentage of the overall White population increased in the sample schools. The correlation is not different than zero. The regression lines comparing the variables of low income and meeting or exceeding represent differences from 2006 to 2007. The separation of the regression lines represents that scores in 2006 were much higher for White students when compared to scores in 2007. This difference represents that achievement levels tended to decrease for White students in schools selecting schoolwide assistance from 2006 to 2007.

Regression lines for schools selecting targeted assistance are angled in both years upward from left to right. This upward angle demonstrates that the higher the percentage of White students in sample schools, the higher the percentage of the overall population that met or exceeded standards in reading on the fifth grade ISAT. The correlation between low income and meets is 0.52 in 2006 and significant. In 2007 the correlation is 0.57 and significant. The regression line comparing the variables of low income and meeting or exceeding demonstrate little difference from 2006 to 2007. The similarity in the regression lines represents that scores in 2006 were nearly the same as scores in 2007 for White populations in targeted assistance schools.

Figure 4 represents that schoolwide assistance may have a negative impact on achievement for White students and that targeted assistance may have no significant impact on the achievement of White students in the sample population.

Black Population and Achievement Scores

Data were collected from each school in the sample population on achievement scores and compared to the overall percentage of the population classified as Black.

Figure 5: Black Population Percentage and Achievement, represents the relationship between the percentage of the student population classified as Black in sample schools and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading on the fifth grade ISAT.

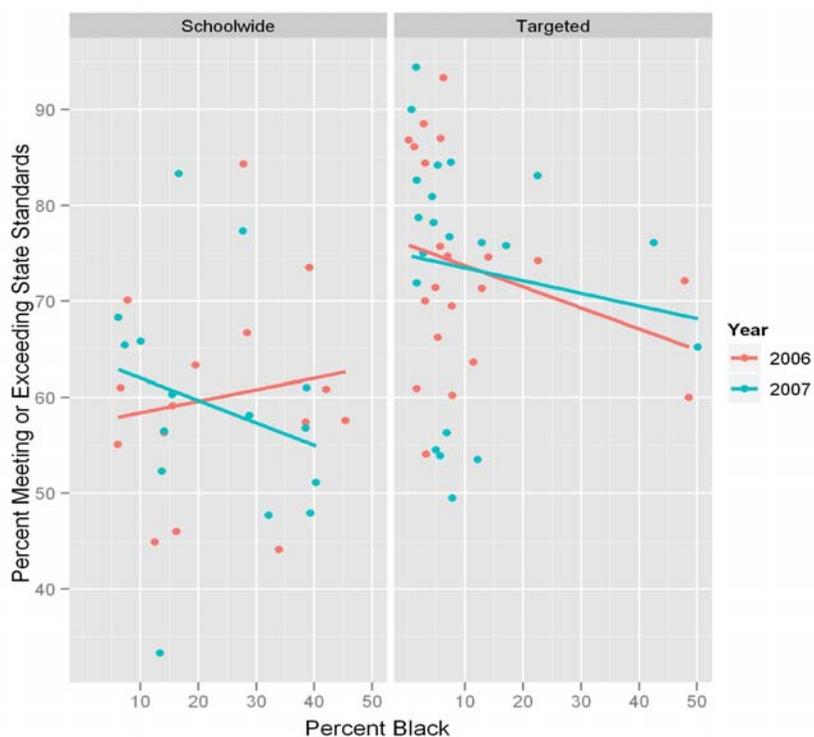


Figure 5. Black Population Percentage and Achievement

The left half of the figure represents information collected from schools in the sample population that chose schoolwide assistance and the right half of the figure represents sample population schools choosing targeted assistance. The X or horizontal

axis represents the percentage of students classified as Black from the overall population in sample population schools. The Y or vertical axis represents the percentage of students in sample population schools meeting or exceeding standards that were established for the reading portion of the fifth grade ISAT.

Figure 5 displays each school from the sample population plotted as a dot with the percentage of Black students in the sample population schools on the X axis and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding on the Y axis. The left side of the figure represents the results for each school from the sample population in red for 2006 and the corresponding results for the same schools in blue for 2007. Targeted schools follow on the right side of the figure with the results for each school from the sample population in red for 2006 and the corresponding results for the same schools in blue for 2007.

The lines through each figure are regression lines representing the relationship between the X axis and Y axis variables. The relationship between the variables of percentage of low income and the percentage meeting or exceeding for each year are represented by the regression lines. Each year is represented with a different color with 2006 in red and 2007 blue.

Regression lines for schools selecting schoolwide assistance are angled upward from left to right in 2006 and downward from left to right in 2007. The upward angle of the 2006 regression line represents that the higher the percentage of Black students in sample schools, the higher the percentage of the overall population that met or exceeded standards in reading on the fifth grade ISAT. The downward angle of the regression line for 2007 in schoolwide assistance represents fewer students meeting or exceeding

standards as the percentage of the overall Black population increased in the sample schools. The regression lines comparing the variables of low income and meeting or exceeding were zero in both 2006 and 2007 indicating no relationship. The separation of the regression lines represents that scores in 2006 were higher for Black students when compared to scores in 2007. This difference represents that achievement levels tended to decrease for Black students in schools selecting schoolwide assistance from 2006 to 2007. The difference was not significant in this study.

Regression lines for schools selecting targeted assistance are angled in both years downward from left to right. This downward angle demonstrates that the higher the percentage of Black students in sample schools, the higher the percentage of the overall population that met or exceeded standards in reading on the fifth grade ISAT. The correlation between low income and meets is not different from zero in either 2006 or 2007. The regression line comparing the variables of low income and meeting or exceeding demonstrate little difference from 2006 to 2007. The similarity in the regression lines represents that scores in 2006 were nearly the same as scores in 2007 with a small increase for Black populations in targeted assistance schools.

Figure 5 represents that schoolwide assistance may have a negative impact on achievement for Black students and that targeted assistance may have no significant impact on the achievement of Black students in the sample population.

Hispanic Population and Achievement Scores

Data were collected from each school in the sample population on achievement scores and compared to the overall percentage of the population classified as Hispanic. Figure 6: Hispanic Population Percentage and Achievement, represents the relationship between the percentage of the student population classified as Hispanic in sample schools and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading on the fifth grade ISAT.

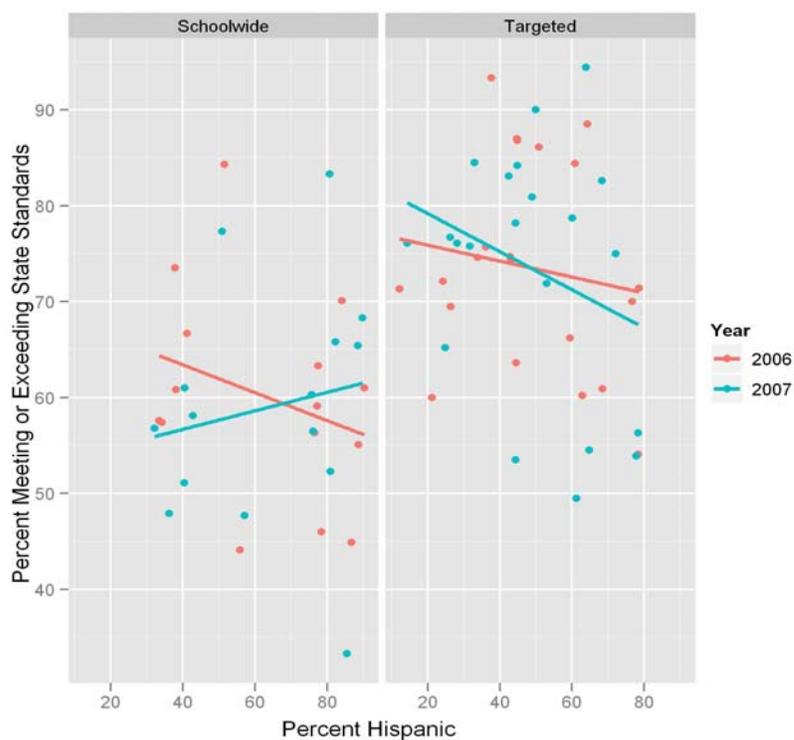


Figure 6. Hispanic Population Percentage and Achievement

The left half of the figure represents information collected from schools in the sample population that chose schoolwide assistance and the right half of the figure represents sample population schools choosing targeted assistance. The X or horizontal

axis represents the percentage of students classified as Hispanic from the overall population in sample population schools. The Y or vertical axis represents the percentage of students in sample population schools meeting or exceeding standards that were established for the reading portion of the fifth grade ISAT.

Figure 6 displays each school from the sample population plotted as a dot with the percentage of Hispanic students in the sample population schools on the X axis and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding on the Y axis. The left side of the figure represents the results for each school from the sample population in red for 2006 and the corresponding results for the same schools in blue for 2007. Targeted schools follow on the right side of the figure with the results for each school from the sample population in red for 2006 and the corresponding results for the same schools in blue for 2007.

The lines through each figure are regression lines representing the relationship between the X axis and Y axis variables. The relationship between the variables of percentage of low income and the percentage meeting or exceeding for each year are represented by the regression lines. Each year is represented with a different color with 2006 in red and 2007 blue.

Regression lines for schools selecting schoolwide assistance are angled downward from left to right in 2006 and upward from left to right in 2007. The downward angle of the 2006 regression line represents that the higher the percentage of Hispanic students in sample schools, the lower the percentage of the overall population that met or exceeded standards in reading on the fifth grade ISAT. The correlation between low income and meets is not different from zero and is not significant. The upward angle of the regression

line for 2007 in schoolwide assistance represents more students meeting or exceeding standards as the percentage of the overall Hispanic population increased in the sample schools. The correlation between low income and meets is not different from zero and is not significant. The regression lines comparing the variables of low income and meeting or exceeding represent differences from 2006 to 2007. The separation of the regression lines represents that scores in 2006 were lower for Hispanic students when compared to scores in 2007. This difference represents that achievement levels tended to increase for Hispanic students in schools selecting schoolwide assistance from 2006 to 2007.

Regression lines for schools selecting targeted assistance are angled in both years downward from left to right. This downward angle demonstrates that the higher the percentage of Hispanic students in sample schools, the higher the percentage of the overall population that met or exceeded standards in reading on the fifth grade ISAT. The correlation between low income and meets is not different than zero in either 2006 or 2007. The regression line comparing the variables of low income and meeting or exceeding demonstrate a no difference from 2006 to 2007. The similarity in the regression lines represents that scores in 2006 were nearly the same as scores in 2007 with a small decrease for Hispanic populations in targeted assistance schools.

Figure 7 represents that schoolwide assistance may have a positive impact on achievement for Hispanic students and that targeted assistance may have no significant impact on the achievement of Hispanic students in the sample population.

Schoolwide and Targeted Assistance and Achievement Scores

The table below represents the achievement score average for schoolwide and targeted assistance schools. Table 6: Schoolwide and Targeted Assistance and Achievement Scores, represents the average percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading on the ISAT in 2006 and 2007 for schools in the sample population that selected schoolwide and targeted assistance funding through Title I. The applicable data follows:

Table 6

Schoolwide and Targeted Assistance and Achievement Scores

Title I Assistance Selected	2006 Average Percentage	Standard Deviation	2007 Average Percentage	Standard Deviation
Schoolwide	60.01	10.89	59.01	12.35
Targeted	73.55	10.83	73.39	12.39

The first column represents the type of Title I assistance chosen by the school leader. Schools chose either schoolwide or targeted assistance.

The second column represents the percentage of the overall population that met or exceeded reading standards on the ISAT on average in all schools in the sample population in 2006. The percentage of students on average meeting or exceeding standards in schoolwide schools was 60.01% in 2006. The percentage of students on average meeting or exceeding standards in targeted schools was 73.55% in 2006.

The third column represents the standard deviation from the mean for all schools in the sample population in 2006. The standard deviation for schoolwide assistance schools was 10.89. The standard deviation for targeted assistance schools was 10.83.

The fourth column represents the percentage of the overall population that met or exceeded reading standards on the ISAT on average in all schools in the sample population in 2007. The percentage of students on average meeting or exceeding standards in schoolwide schools was 59.01% in 2007. The percentage of students on average meeting or exceeding standards in targeted schools was 73.39% in 2007.

The fifth column represents the standard deviation from the mean for all schools in the sample population in 2007. The standard deviation for schoolwide assistance schools was 12.35. The standard deviation for targeted assistance schools was 12.39.

Targeted assistance schools had higher percentages of students on average meeting or exceeding standards compared to the schoolwide assistance schools. The averages were consistent across both years in 2006 and 2007. There was, however, very little change from year to year in either method of Title I funding selected. Neither schoolwide assistance nor targeted assistance scores actually rose, on average, from the previous year.

Data were collected on the achievement levels of both schoolwide and targeted assistance schools in 2006 and 2007. Figure 7: Schoolwide and Targeted Assistance and Achievement Scores, represents a comparison between 2006 and 2007 of the average percentage of students meeting or exceeding reading standards on ISAT in schoolwide and targeted assistance schools in the sample population.

The left half of the figure represents information collected from schools in the sample population that chose schoolwide assistance and the right half of the figure represents sample population schools choosing targeted assistance. The X or horizontal axis represents the years of the study, 2006 and 2007. Schoolwide scores for both years, 2006 and 2007, are placed next to each other for better comparison. Likewise, targeted assistance scores for 2006 and 2007 were placed next to each other on the right half of the graph. The Y or vertical axis represents the average of the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the reading portion of ISAT in the sample school population.

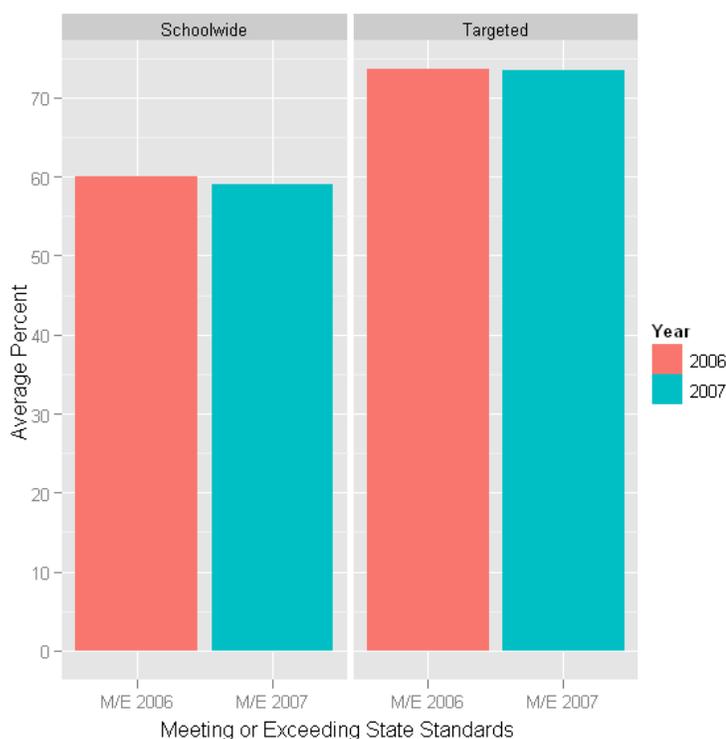


Figure 7. Schoolwide and Targeted Assistance and Achievement Scores

The first bar on the left side of the graph represents that the average percentage of students in schools that met or exceeded was 60.01% for schoolwide assistance schools in the sample population in 2006. The second bar on the left side of the graph represents the average for the same schools decreased slightly to 59.01% of students meeting or exceeding on average in 2007.

The first bar on the right side of the graph represents that the average percentage of students in schools that met or exceeded was 73.55% for targeted assistance schools in the sample population in 2006. The second bar on the right side of the graph represents the average for the same schools decreased slightly to 73.39% of students meeting or exceeding on average in 2007.

Figure 7 represents that targeted assistance schools were consistently higher in the average percentage students meeting and exceeding reading standards on ISAT in both years 2006 and 2007. The figure also demonstrates that the percentage of students meeting and exceeding reading standards for both schoolwide and targeted assistance was fairly consistent from year to year on average with neither demonstrating an appreciable gain, but rather demonstrating minor decreases from the study years of 2006 to 2007.

Conclusion

This study addressed the following question:

When Illinois school leaders of buildings with over 40% of their school population identified as low income choose between Title I schoolwide assistance or targeted assistance programs, which method of distributing Title I funds is associated with higher reading achievement scores in fifth grade as measured by ISAT?

In conclusion this chapter provided the results of the data analysis. This included an overview of the sample population and the characteristics of schools, data that emerged as a result of contacting principals, the relationship between low income level and achievement scores, the relationship between race and achievement scores using aggregate school-level data, and the association of schoolwide and targeted assistance with achievement scores. Schoolwide and targeted assistance were also compared descriptively in terms of racial composition, socioeconomic status, and enrollment.

Schools in the sample population did not change much in terms of any racial group from 2006 to 2007 in either schoolwide or targeted assistance schools. The overall trend was for schools with higher percentages of White students to select targeted assistance and schools with higher percentages of Hispanic and Black students to select schoolwide assistance in both 2006 and 2007. The percentage of students classified as low income was consistently higher in schoolwide assistance schools than in targeted assistance schools in both 2006 and 2007 with that percentage consistent and unchanging from year to year.

Schools in the sample population with higher percentages of low income students had lower percentages of students meeting and exceeding standards in reading on the fifth grade ISAT. Schoolwide assistance achievement scores decreased from 2006 to 2007 for White and Black students while increasing significantly for Hispanic students. Targeted assistance school achievement scores did not change for White students, increased slightly for Black students, and decreased for Hispanic students from 2006 to 2007 in the sample population. Both schoolwide and targeted assistance scores for the

overall sample population decreased slightly from 2006 to 2007 in reading on the fifth grade ISAT.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the findings including conclusions and recommendations for further study and action. The chapter begins with a statement of the research question, includes a summary of the findings, makes recommendations for school leaders, and includes suggestions for further research.

Research Question

This study addressed the following question:

When Illinois school leaders of buildings with over 40% of their school population identified as low income choose between Title I schoolwide assistance or targeted assistance programs, which method of distributing Title I funds is associated with higher reading achievement scores in fifth grade as measured by ISAT?

There was no significant difference between schools in the sample population that chose schoolwide assistance programs and schools that chose targeted assistance programs when measured by the fifth grade reading scores on ISAT in this study.

Sample Population Overview and Characteristics

Care was taken to account for the size of schools by selecting schools identified from IIRC or Illinois Interactive Report Card data in the 200-1,000 student population range and for low income level by selecting schools in the 40-90% range. Schools in this range of low income had the option of selecting either schoolwide or targeted assistance

and chose either for both 2006 and 2007. All schools in the sample population were located in Lake or northern Cook counties in suburban Chicago, Illinois to reduce variability from demographic location. The study accounts for variables of race by including the covariates of number of White, Black, and Hispanic students.

Table 1 represents an overview of the characteristics of schools in the sample population of this study in 2006 and 2007. In examining these data, one could find that fifteen of the selected schools from the sample population are in Cook County and twenty-one schools are located in Lake County. Fifteen school leaders selected schoolwide assistance and twenty-one selected targeted assistance. All 15 of the schools that selected schoolwide assistance were located in Lake County. Of the 21 schools selecting targeted assistance, 15 were in Cook County and 6 were in Lake County. The percentage of low income students in all schools in the sample population ranged from 40 to 86 percent of the overall school population. The overall population in all sample population schools ranged from 273 to 845 students. The overall percentage of the student population identified as White in all schools in the sample population ranged from 0 to 52%, Black from 0.3 to 50%, and Hispanic from 12 to 90%.

The researcher attempted to match schools closely through the location in the county, grade level served, low income percentages, size of student population, and racial composition of the school. Even through this process of matching, there is variance between schools in the sample population that had to be accounted for in the study. As a result of the variance in the population in schools in this study, one could argue that school leaders should be careful in comparing results from school to school. School

leaders should match schools as closely with any characteristics that are unique to their own school as possible when considering potential successful interventions or learning opportunities that might transfer to the leader's own school.

Racial Composition of the Sample Population

No Child Left Behind requires that all students regardless of race, ethnicity, income level, special education status, or language proficiency, achieve established state achievement targets for learning by 2014 (Hoff, 2008; NCLB, 2002).

Table 3 represents an overview of the racial composition of schoolwide assistance schools in the sample population in 2006 and 2007. In examining these data, one could find that the percentage of students in schoolwide assistance schools in each racial category remained relatively consistent from 2006 to 2007. The percentage of White students on average in the schoolwide assistance schools was relatively small at 8.64% in 2006 and 7.85% in 2007, the percentage of Black students on average in the schoolwide assistance schools was 23.58% in 2006 and 22.82% in 2007, and the percentage of Hispanic students on average in the schoolwide assistance schools was very high at 63.40% in 2006 and 63.93% in 2007.

The result of these data represents that the predominant racial category in schoolwide assistance school in the sample population was Hispanic. When adding the Hispanic and Black percentages, the vast majority of the racial composition is accounted for in schoolwide schools with approximately 87% of the overall population. The larger percentage of population in Black and Hispanic races renders the results more valid for minority populations selecting schoolwide assistance.

Table 4 represents an overview of the racial composition of targeted assistance schools in the sample population in 2006 and 2007. In examining these data, one could find that the percentage of students in targeted assistance schools in each racial category remained relatively consistent from 2006 to 2007. The percentage of White students on average in the targeted assistance schools was 32.00% in 2006 and 30.71% in 2007, the percentage of Black students on average in the targeted assistance schools was 10.65% in 2006 and 10.59% in 2007, and the percentage of Hispanic students on average in the targeted assistance schools was 48.17% in 2006 and 49.18% in 2007.

The result of these data represents that the predominant racial category in targeted assistance school in the sample population was Hispanic. Targeted assistance racial populations were more evenly divided between Hispanic and White races. School leaders with predominately Black racial populations will have less applicable information provided from targeted school data due to the low percentage of just under 11% on average for 2006 and 2007.

Figure 1 is comparative figures representing the percentage of the overall population in selected schools that fall into each racial category in 2006 and 2007. Figure 1 represents that schools selecting either schoolwide assistance or targeted assistance had consistent levels of racial composition in each category from 2006 to 2007. The population did not change much in terms of racial groups from year to year in 2006 and 2007. The population had very little shift in all racial groups between both schoolwide and targeted assistance schools from year to year. The overall trend was for more White

students in schools that selected targeted assistance and more Hispanic and Black students in schools that selected schoolwide assistance in both 2006 and 2007.

In examining these data, one could find that the consistency in percentages of racial category from 2006 to 2007 helped generated a useful sample population for the purposes of this study. The study compared school populations that on average were close to the same from 2006 to 2007.

White Population and Achievement Scores

Figure 4 represents the relationship between the percentage of the overall student population classified as White in sample schools and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading on the fifth grade ISAT. In examining these data, one could find that in 2006 when sample schools selecting schoolwide assistance contained a higher percentage of the overall population in the White category, achievement tended to increase rapidly. Conversely, in 2007 as the White category rose as a percentage of the overall population of schoolwide assistance schools, achievement scores decreased slightly. This decline in achievement from 2006 to 2007 in Figure 4 represents that schoolwide assistance may have had a negative impact on achievement for White students in the sample population.

In examining the sample population regression lines for targeted assistance in the White population, one would see a different trend. The higher the percentage of White students in the school, the higher the achievement scores for schools in the sample population. This is demonstrated by the upward trend in the regression line in Figure 4. Between year differences were very small with the regression lines in 2006 and 2007 for

targeted assistance schools indicating a minor or no impact of targeted assistance on achievement of White students in the sample population for this study.

Black Population and Achievement Scores

Figure 5 represents the relationship between the percentage of the overall student population classified as Black in sample schools and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading on the fifth grade ISAT. In examining these data, one could find that in 2006 when sample schools selecting schoolwide assistance contained a higher percentage of the overall population in the Black category, achievement tended to increase. Conversely, in 2007 as the Black category rose as a percentage of the overall population of schoolwide assistance schools, achievement scores decreased. This decline in achievement from 2006 to 2007 in Figure 4 represents that schoolwide assistance may have had a negative impact on achievement for Black students in the sample population.

In examining the sample population regression lines for targeted assistance in the Black population, one would see a very different trend. As the percentage of students in the Black category increased, achievement scores decreased. Figure 5 demonstrates an increase in the trend between scores in 2006 and 2007 for targeted assistance schools in the sample population indicating either no impact or a minor positive impact of targeted assistance on achievement of Black students in the sample population from 2006 to 2007.

Hispanic Population and Achievement Scores

Figure 6 represents the relationship between the percentage of the overall student population classified as Hispanic in sample schools and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading on the fifth grade ISAT. In examining these

data, one could find that in 2006 when sample schools selecting schoolwide assistance contained a higher percentage of the overall population in the Hispanic category, achievement tended to decrease rapidly. Conversely, in 2007 as the Hispanic category rose as a percentage of the overall population of schoolwide assistance schools, achievement scores increased. This increase in achievement from 2006 to 2007 in Figure 4 represents that schoolwide assistance may have had a positive impact on achievement for Hispanic students in the sample population.

In examining the sample population regression lines for targeted assistance, one would see a different trend. As the percentage of students in the Hispanic category increased, achievement scores decreased slightly in 2006. Conversely, when the percentage of students in the Hispanic category increased as a percentage of the overall population for targeted assistance schools in 2007, achievement decreased at a more rapid rate. This is demonstrated by the downward trend in the regression line in Figure 6. Between year differences were small with the regression lines demonstrating a negative difference between scores in 2006 and 2007. The regression line for 2007 has a steeper decline than in 2006 for targeted assistance schools in the sample population indicating a minor or negative impact of targeted assistance on the achievement of Hispanic students in the sample population from 2006 to 2007.

Low Income Characteristics of the Sample Population

Table 3 represents the average percentage of low income of the overall population of schoolwide assistance schools and targeted assistance schools in the sample population in 2006 and 2007. In examining these data, one could find that schoolwide assistance

schools had higher percentages of students classified as low income compared to the targeted assistance schools. The averages were consistent across both years in 2006 and 2007.

Figure 2 is comparative figures representing the percentage of the overall population in selected schools that fall into the low income category in 2006 and 2007. Figure 2 confirms that schoolwide assistance percentages of students classified as low income were consistently higher than the percentage of students in targeted assistance schools for the two years of this study. The average percentage of students meeting and exceeding on the fifth grade reading portion of the ISAT in schoolwide assistance schools was 70.00% in 2006 compared to 65.73% in 2007. These numbers are higher than for targeted assistance school in 2006 with 51.93% and 2007 at 53.03%.

The result of these data represents a disparity between schoolwide assistance and targeted assistance in the population served. Between year differences were small, but between program differences were larger as one would expect. Schoolwide assistance is meant to serve the overall population of the school by definition and targeted assistance is to focus more on the students who qualify through Title I low income standards (TPG, 2007). It would make sense that schoolwide assistance schools tend to have higher concentrations of low income students since the intent of schoolwide assistance is to aid the entire population of the school. The belief is that in improving the entire school program, it will benefit the disadvantaged students (Pogrow, 2005). The important distinction between the two Title I programs is that schoolwide programs are comprehensive reform designed to upgrade the entire educational program whereas

targeted assistance is designed to provide support only to the identified students (TPG, 2007).

The percentages of low income students in schoolwide programs vary little from 70% in 2006 to 66% in 2007. The percentage of low income students as a part of the overall population varies even less in targeted assistance school from 52% in 2006 to 53% in 2007. The small variance in the percentage of low income students in each schoolwide and targeted assistance make these data useful for the purposes of this study.

Low Income Percentage and Achievement Scores

Figure 3 represents the relationship between the percentage of student population in sample schools classified as low income and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading on the fifth grade ISAT. In examining these data, one could find that that when sample schools have lower percentages of their student population classified as low income, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards is higher on the fifth grade ISAT. Conversely, schools with higher percentages of low income students had smaller percentages of students meeting and exceeding. This holds true for sample schools that selected schoolwide assistance as well as sample schools that chose targeted assistance. There is little change from 2006 to 2007 in either schoolwide or targeted assistance schools with the pattern of downward achievement correlated to decreasing income level. This trend remains consistent from 2006 to 2007 and changes little from year to year for either schoolwide or targeted assistance.

Continued and best use of Title I funds is an important issue for school leaders because the achievement scores of low income students still lag behind the scores of their

more advantaged peers. Low income students in Illinois have scored lower on the Illinois Scholastic Achievement Test, ISAT, every year: 34% to 15% below their more advantaged peers in third grade since 2002, 34% to 19% lower in fifth grade, and 30% to 17% lower in eighth grade (NIU, 2008). By reviewing these data from the Illinois Interactive Report Card in Appendix A, one will see that low income students in Illinois are not performing to the same level as their more advantaged peers. School leaders are under increasing pressure to bring all subgroup populations up to the target goals established by the state and federal government since the inception of the No Child Left Behind act making the proper use of federal Title I funds an increasingly more important issue (Mintrop, 2008; Sack-Min, 2009).

The result of these data represents that with increases in the percentage of low income students in a school, the lower the achievement levels of students and is consistent with findings noted in Appendix A. The intent of Title I is to counteract the effects of a lack of resources for students who are less advantaged. These data would support the notion that lower income students are in need of assistance to equalize opportunity. We know that disadvantaged students tend to make up a significant portion of all students who fail and by concentrating efforts on the academically at-risk we maintain the intent of Title I funding (Hess, 2005).

One could argue as the Coleman Report did that significant funding of schools only has a modest impact on students at best. The Coleman Report notes that home and peers have a greater influence over student achievement than schools (Greenwald et al., 1996). Proponents have argued about the effectiveness of Title I assistance and the use of

federal funds (Hill, 2008; Podesta & Brown, 2008). Taken in isolation, these data from Figure 3 tend to confirm the Coleman report findings. Figure 3 data demonstrate little impact of Title I funding on higher levels of poverty because student achievement continues to decline as student income level declines. According to Title I (2007), the higher the percentage of students designated as low income, the higher the funding the school receives. This increase in funding should translate into an increase in achievement (Hill, 2008; Podesta & Brown, 2008). According to the sample drawn from this study, it does not.

The researcher contends that although the impact may not be seen in the results of this study, that generalizing to the rest of Illinois shows a stark contrast in the overall achievement of low income students. Data from the IIRC, Illinois Interactive Report Card, website is demonstrative regarding fifth grade achievement scores on ISAT. Appendix A, IIRC data, demonstrate that fifth grade achievement scores for low income students throughout Illinois have increased from 38% of students meeting or exceeding standards to 58% from 2002 to 2008. This is a 20% increase in the overall achievement scores on ISAT in fifth grade over the six year time frame. Students who were in the category of “not low income” increased over the same time frame from 72% meeting and exceeding in 2002 to 86% in 2008, a 14% increase. While all test scores in Illinois rose from 2002 to 2008, with a slightly larger increase has occurred with low income students. This demonstrates the gap between low income students and their more advantaged peers closing over time in Illinois. This study showed little to no difference between test scores from 2006 to 2007.

Schoolwide and Targeted Assistance and Achievement Scores

Table 4 represents the average percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading on the ISAT in 2006 and 2007 for schools in the sample population that selected schoolwide and targeted assistance funding through Title I. In examining these data, one could find that schoolwide assistance achievement scores for the sample population changed very little or dropped slightly from 60.01 in 2006 to 59.01 in 2007. This lack of change in scores would indicate that schoolwide assistance made very little difference in the overall achievement of students from 2006 to 2007.

In examining the targeted assistance scores there was no significant movement from 73.55 in 2006 to 73.39 in 2007. Targeted assistance schools had higher percentages of students on average meeting or exceeding standards compared to the schoolwide assistance schools. The averages were consistent across both years in 2006 and 2007. There was, however, very little change from year to year in either method of Title I funding selected. Neither schoolwide assistance nor targeted assistance scores actually rose, on average, for schools in the sample population from 2006 to 2007. This contrasts with the data in Appendix A from IIRC.

Figure 7 is comparative figures representing the average percentage of students meeting or exceeding reading standards on ISAT in schoolwide and targeted assistance schools in the sample population. Figure 2 confirms that schoolwide assistance percentages of students meeting or exceeding standards on the reading portion of ISAT were consistently lower than the percentage of students in targeted assistance schools in 2006 and 2007. It also confirms very little, if any, change from 2006 to 2007 for either

schoolwide or targeted assistance schools. This would seemingly indicate that neither schoolwide nor targeted assistance had an impact on the overall reading achievement of students in the sample population from 2006 to 2007.

The researcher had theorized that school leaders were making a conscious effort in choosing schoolwide assistance. Under NCLB (2002), school leaders were given the option of choosing either a schoolwide program or in targeting their assistance with the funds provided by Title I depending on the level of poverty that exists in their building. If the overall level of low income is at 40% or higher, school leaders may choose whichever program they believe will most benefit their students (IES, 2007; NCLB, 2002; USDE 2002b). From the school year 1994-95 to the school year 2004-2005, the number of school leaders choosing schoolwide assistance rose from 10% to 58% (USDE, 2007). With such an increase in the choices school leaders made, one would naturally presume that their choice would be to move toward the most effective program to enhance student achievement. Findings of this study appear to be inconsistent with the choices that school leaders are making.

A growing body of evidence shows that when implementing a schoolwide program that it is possible to increase the achievement of all students, including the economically disadvantaged, despite the overall demographics of the school (TPG, 2007). With the relaxation of restrictions on schoolwide programs, more and more schools are choosing this type of Title I program with the use of federal funds to enhance the learning of all of their students (USDE, 2007). This study intended to determine if schoolwide Title I programs or targeted assistance programs resulted in higher increases

student achievement with Illinois fifth grade low income students. This study found no significant impact of either schoolwide or targeted assistance on the overall achievement of fifth grade students on the reading portion of ISAT.

Data that Emerged as a Result of Principal Contact

Table 4 represents data that were collected from principals when contacted for verification in the use of Title I funding for reading purposes only. In examining these data, one could find that almost every principal voluntarily replied with comments. It is important to note that the researcher did not plan for this type of commentary in the study and did not ask for elaboration. Every yes answer received from a school leader was a qualified answer, meaning that school leaders were not certain of the amount of impact or if there was any impact at all of including Title I funds for mathematics on reading achievement scores.

These data emerged through the researcher contacting school leaders, specifically the building principals for schools in the sample population. Principals, as the leaders of their school, are required to track not only the type of assistance received but also how the funds were allocated at their school. It is clear from the data collected in Table 4 that principals did not comply with the legal mandates. NCLB (2002) requires school leaders to document progress for low achieving students and to identify students who are having difficulty with reading or who are at risk of failure in reading according to measures used at the school level (NCLB, 2002). Leaders choosing schoolwide assistance must demonstrate the overall achievement plan for their school while targeted assistance

schools must additionally show plans for how Title I identified students will reach state achievement levels. Clearly, school leaders did not comply with these legal mandates.

Every school leader who responded that some Title I funds were used for math programs noted that the majority of Title I funding was still intended to enhance the reading ability of students even if some had been used for other purposes such as math. School leaders believed a view shared by the researcher, that Title I funds spent on math programs likely had an impact on reading scores as well. School leaders noted that when any area of student learning is altered, there may be a resulting change in other areas of student learning. Many cited that the students receiving the support Title I funds were typically the same students regardless of which major subject area schools might chose to allocate Title I funds. This is consistent with the concept of incidental inclusion.

Incidental inclusion is when students are not identified specifically as Title I students in a targeted assistance school, yet still benefit indirectly from a service provided by Title I funds (TPG, 2007). Students may receive services simply by being present when an identified student is benefiting from the instruction, resources, or small group activity. For the purpose of this study, these scores were not excluded from the final results. Most school leaders believed that the researcher's question was not entirely relevant because students receiving Title I funding for reading were essentially the same students receiving the funding for math. Efforts are not so neatly divided between subject area and the impact from any interventions would alter the learning for the same group of students regardless of which subject was the focus of the funding.

Principals made comments such as: “Oh, I’m just a principal. I wouldn’t know.” “I really don’t have a clue.” “Good question ...” “Wouldn’t know.” “Probably not.” and “Not sure.” This confusion or lack of understanding ultimately impacted not only the use of Title I funds and proper interventions for children, but also the outcome of this study. Decision making was either insufficient or passed to another individual who was likely not as familiar with the student population as the principal. The researcher acknowledges that there may have been instances where the principal was not given the option by the district office. Nonetheless, more understanding of the implications and statutory requirements was expected. It was difficult to gain clear direction from the leaders who are purportedly making the decisions on the best use of funds and how to implement the proper programs. The unanticipated responses impacted the results of the study and provided unanticipated data.

Title I requires integration of all school and district planning to provide a more concentrated effort (TPG, 2007). If school leaders are not aware of district plans, the coordination of Title I efforts across the district is likely not occurring. School leaders could benefit from district efforts or save precious resources with better coordination. School leaders have a duty to be knowledgeable about the differing programs and their effect on the achievement of their students. At a time of difficult financial stress, it is imperative that school leaders know what programs will have the most impact on their student and to use their limited funds most effectively (Allington & Walmsley, 2007; NRC, 1998). School leaders also have a duty to be aware of efforts occurring across the district to assess the potential benefit for the students in their schools. School leaders

contacted in this study did not seem to know where funds were being spent, what they were spent on, who the students were that benefited, and what the interventions were across the district with Title I funds. This lack of knowledge inhibits a coordinated district effort and clouds the likelihood that funds are being used to the maximum benefit of the low income students they are intended to serve.

School leaders have a duty to be knowledgeable about the differing programs and their effect on the achievement of their students. At a time of difficult financial stress, it is imperative that school leaders know what programs will have the most impact on their student and to use their limited funds most effectively (Allington & Walmsley, 2007; NRC, 1998). The U.S. Department of Education asks that schools consider whether the choice they make of schoolwide assistance is likely to improve the performance of the lowest performing student or whether it is more likely to be effective at enhancing their performance by targeting additional programs only to these students (TPG, 2007; NCLB, 2002). Understanding if schoolwide programs have a greater impact on the achievement of fifth grade students than targeted assistance programs, will help school leaders make difficult decisions about the use of their Title I funding in all elementary schooling years to maximize the impact on improved reading. The data from this study demonstrated that school leaders either did not know or did not comply with the legal mandates of Title I and NCLB (2002).

Summary of Findings

From the data of the study, the researcher predicted that reading achievement scores as measured on fifth grade ISAT for both schoolwide assistance programs and targeted assistance programs in Illinois would have increased from 2006 to 2007. With the number of schools across the nation choosing schoolwide assistance rising from 10% to 58% from school year 1994-95 to school year 2004-2005 (USDE, 2007) the researcher hypothesized that a larger increase in reading achievement would be measured on fifth grade ISAT from schools implementing the Title I schoolwide assistance model. The researcher theorized that school leaders, as a group, would choose a method of distributing funds that resulted in higher achievement. This study did not find a significant difference between the achievement for students in either schoolwide or targeted assistance.

Interestingly, there did seem to be a difference in the scores of schoolwide and targeted assistance when comparing the predominant racial category of students and reading scores. More schools with a larger White population of students selected targeted assistance while more schools with nonwhite populations selected schoolwide assistance. Targeted assistance scores tended to be higher for White students and scores for nonwhite students tended to be higher where schoolwide programs were selected.

Title I is the most significant infusion of federal funding into education (TPG, 2007). Given the significance of this investment, one would expect an equalized result or at least a less pronounced decrease in achievement as the percentage of low income students increases in a school. There seems to be movement across the state in closing the

gap for low income and non low income students as demonstrated in Appendix A. This was not the case for the schools in the sample population. The intent of Title I was to balance the impact for disadvantaged youth in America (Tosh, 2003; Zigler, 2009). This seems to be the case in Illinois, yet not with the schools in the sample population.

Did school leaders intentionally select the program for their population that would lead to higher test scores? As a researcher, when starting with the problem, it was anticipated that school leaders were indeed making this conscious decision. The researcher is now worried that they may not be or that the decision is being made by other members of the district with little input from the school leader. It also was determined by the researcher that the participating school leaders really did not pay attention to or are not familiar with the statute requirements and how to implement them. Many school leaders referred the researcher to another district employee because they did not know how funds were being used. Many did not know how funds were being used and were not tracking the progress of Title I students in any way differently than they did for all other students despite the statute requirements of Title I.

School leaders are to track to the achievement of low income students to ensure that they are making progress toward state standards (TPG, 2007). It would seem that most school leaders are not aware of the progress their low income students are making. In fact, one school leader even noted that the district would not allow the leader to know who the low income students were for fear it was a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. This type of commentary is disturbing in that it is clear that most school leaders in this study were not aware of and did not follow the requirements of

Title I. This uncertainty was consistent with principals who reported to the U.S. Department of Education (2003) that they were confused on how to properly and best use Title I funds. The confusion certainly is present with principals in this study.

Recommendations

In viewing the demographic information of schools in this study, school leaders need to take care when comparing results. Successful interventions with similar populations that have been proven to work should be the focus of school leaders' efforts. School leaders should look closely when comparing results from schools other than their own and to take into account that results may vary in one school to another due to the variance in the student population. The results may have little to do with the Title I funding method chosen. School leaders should consult with colleagues who have had success with the achievement of students in Title I programs while keeping in mind that the characteristics of the student population in each school will differ, potentially impact resulting student achievement. The varying characteristics should not deter school leaders from reviewing strategies in other schools, but rather cause school leaders to use caution and to match the population of their own school with comparable schools particularly with race and income levels.

The study did find that there may have been marginal increases in targeted assistance programs and marginal decreases in schoolwide assistance programs for Black students which may lead school leaders with predominately Black populations to implement targeted assistance. There may have been marginal increases in scores for schoolwide assistance and marginal decreases in scores for targeted assistance programs

for Hispanic students. This should encourage school leaders with predominately Hispanic populations to consider implementing schoolwide assistance. There may have been marginal increases in targeted assistance scores for White populations and a decrease in scores for schoolwide. In some cases the number of students in the sample population is relatively small and school leaders should use caution in making broad generalizations about race. The results of this study should be expanded upon with further study in randomized experiments.

Given the significance of the investment in Title I by our federal government, there is a need for more professional development in the use of Title I funds for school leaders. School leaders were unaware of the statute requirements of Title I and their responsibilities under the law. There is a need for more purposeful collection of data on Title I performance and the use of funding as school leaders attempt to reach goals outlined under Title I. School leaders need to more closely monitor the relationship between achievement outcomes and interventions and track data and performance outcomes as required under Title I. School leaders need to make more purposeful decisions with Title I funds to enhance the overall achievement of students. The researcher would encourage school leaders to look closely at their own allocations for Title I funds and the capability of your school and district to provide greater opportunities for the disadvantaged based upon each local situation. Although generalizations can be made from the results of this study, certainly local factors may guide a school leader to an alternative decision. It is difficult to generalize without considering local school needs.

Further Research

The disparity between Title I options raises interesting questions that could be asked of school leaders in the future. Why is it that all of the schools selected for this study in Lake County chose schoolwide assistance and that 15 of the 21 schools in Cook County chose targeted assistance? Was there a focus of training through the Lake County Regional Office of Education, or lack thereof in Cook County, that encouraged schools to pursue schoolwide funding? Were there other reasons that could be probed deeper by future researchers? What questions might school leaders answer regarding the type of assistance chosen in their schools in either county that would lead to clarity?

Because the study was limited to only two school years, a more long-term study would yield more pertinent results. A nation-wide study with various assessment data other than ISAT would yield a more predictable result and allow future researchers to assess the impact of Title I funding over time. The use of nation-wide assessments such as NAEP, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, would allow for a broader comparison and not limit the study to Illinois. Title I is a federal funding program and naturally, more research should be conducted at a national level. Variations in ISAT tests and cut scores limited the years available in this study. The lack of consistency provided by ISAT limited the available years and population for this study.

There were challenges present with a study that was quasi-experimental in nature. In attempting to match the characteristics of the schools so closely, the researcher decreased opportunities for randomization. While this process allowed for a feasible opportunity to study schools and Title I funding in Lake and northern Cook counties, it

did decrease the likelihood that the condition of choosing schoolwide or targeted assistance could be identified as the cause of the change in achievement. Further research with randomization would be necessary to draw more valid assumptions.

There are so many factors that impact the learning of a child other than the type of Title I funding. Programs and funding are intertwined and cannot act alone. Each affects and impacts the other often with intentional and unintended consequences. Future research is needed to support, extend, and refine the process for matching general resources to specific contexts. A study on the effectiveness of individual reading interventions and programs currently utilized in schools would be very helpful for school leaders. What are some of the specific interventions in literacy that would improve the learning opportunities for students? Studies that differentiate between type of funding and various reading interventions across the country would be useful for school leaders. Generalized studies are helpful in providing broad direction and guidance for school leaders, yet more specific information on the type of reading interventions allowed through Title I would offer even more guidance for school leaders.

With such confusion abounding in school leaders as to the statutory requirements and the proper use of Title I funds, a deeper qualitative study would yield insight into the thinking of principals. This researcher was somewhat limited in the scope and depth or probing for answers from school leaders and all of the feedback from principals was unsolicited. The researcher suggests that further study be conducted in a purposeful manner to gauge the extent of confusion that seems to exist at both the national level and within the schools in the sample population.

During the period of time since the researcher began this study much has changed. With the changes in the Illinois state assessments and a potential national curriculum through the common core state standards, the researcher proposes a study from the point of implementation. Current proposals have the implementation occurring around 2014. Stimulus money had a significant impact on three fiscal years of 2008 to 2011. Title I funding amounts are skewed during this time with the influx of billions of dollars over a short period of time. This would either suggest potential research options with funding allocated only through these funds or a study of the changes and impact of funding over this three year period of time.

APPENDIX A

ACHIEVEMENT GAP BETWEEN LOW INCOME AND NON-LOW INCOME
STUDENTS IN READING IN ILLINOIS IN THIRD, FIFTH, AND EIGHTH GRADES
FROM 2002-2008

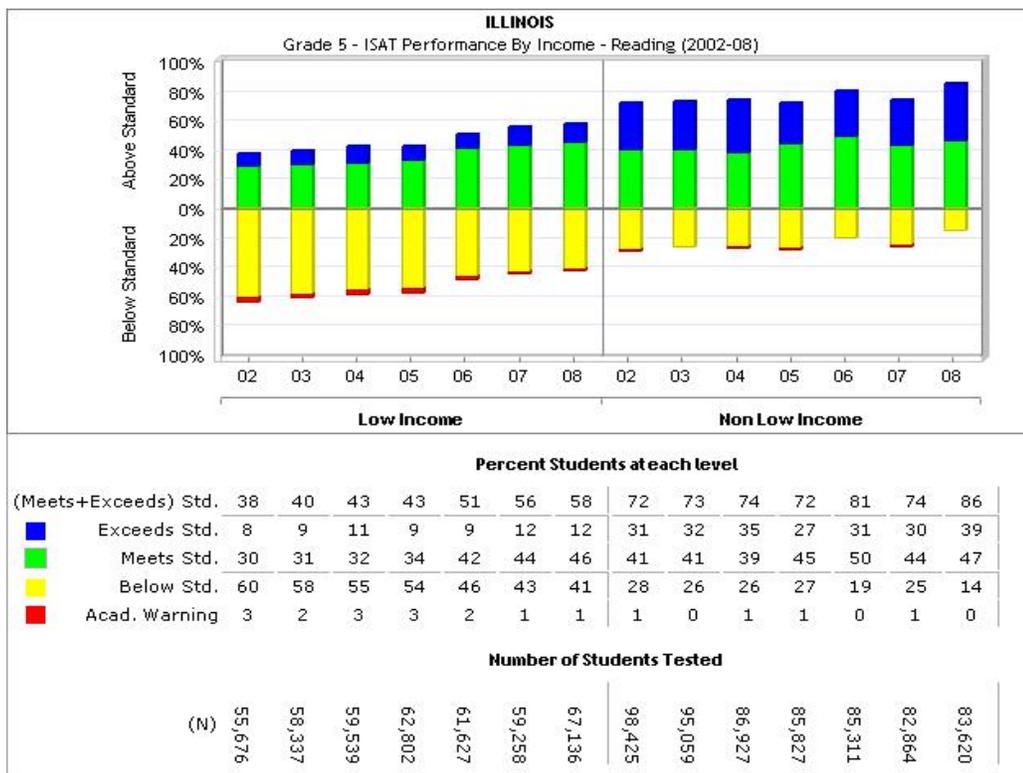


Figure A1. ISAT Performance Comparison by Income from 2002 to 2008

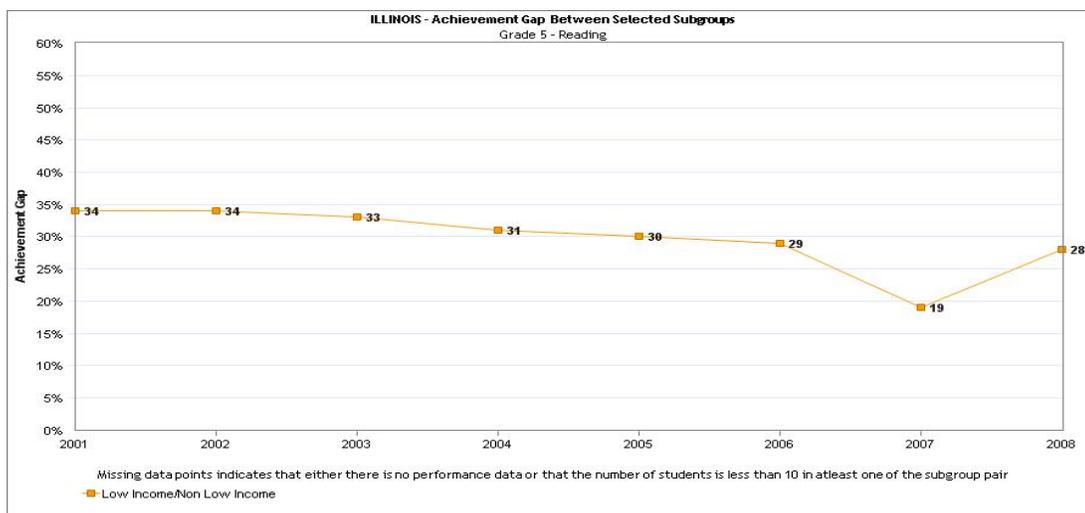


Figure A2. Illinois Achievement Gap Between Low Income and Non Low Income

APPENDIX B
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST LETTER

Thursday, January 15, 2009

Freedom of Information Office
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777-0001
ATTN: FOIA Request

To whom it may concern,

Please consider this a request through the Freedom of Information Act. I was directed to you at the request of Dana F. Kinley, Principal Consultant for Grants & Programs.

I am a doctoral student working on my dissertation at Loyola University Chicago. The study I am preparing is designed to determine for school leaders the value of participating in a schoolwide or a targeted assistance Title I program when individual schools have a choice. Information will only be used for the purpose of this research on my dissertation.

The information I am requesting can be delineated as follows:

- Schools receiving Title I funding in suburban Cook, DuPage, Lake, and Will counties.
- I do not wish to have any information from the Chicago Public School system.
- The designation of each elementary school with 5th grade students, as to whether they chose targeted assistance or schoolwide Title I assistance and the amount of funding each school received from the 2001-02 school year to the 2007-08 school year.

The overall yearly funding levels through Title I that the entire state received from the 2001-02 school year through the 2007-08 school year.

Information can be either emailed to robeym@district65.net or mailed to the address listed below in whatever format is most convenient. If there are any costs associated with the duplication or if you have any questions about my request, please let me know.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Robey

APPENDIX C

SCRIPT FOR CONTACTING SELECTED SCHOOL

Hello, my name is Michael Robey and I am a doctoral student at Loyola University in the process of completing my dissertation comparing changes in achievement scores on the 5th grade ISAT associated with schoolwide and targeted assistance Title I school funding allocations.

I have one very quick question that I'd like to ask you about your school and Title I funding if I may.

If principal refuses or chooses not to answer:

Thank you for your time.

If principal accepts:

Did your school use any portion of Title I funds in 2006 or 2007 for Math instruction or was the entire amount allocated for Reading? If you do not know, could you give me the name and phone number of the person in your school or district that would know?

Thank you so much for you time. I really appreciate it.

APPENDIX D

COMPREHENSIVE DATA FOR SCHOOLS IN THE SAMPLE POPULATION

Table D

Comprehensive Data for Schools in the Sample Population

RCDS Code	District Name	# in SPSS	School Name	Principal Name	County	2006 Schoolwide	2007 Schoolwide	2006 Low Income Status	2007 Low Income Status	2006 5th % Meet & Ex	2007 5th % Meet & Ex	2006 Total Enrollment	2007 Total Enrollment	2006 White	2007 White	2006 Black	2007 Black	2006 Hispanic	2007 Hispanic
140160150042001	Palatine CCSD 15	1	Jane Addams Elem School	David Morris	Cook	N	N	43.90	44.90	93.30	84.20	567	608	45.90	40.30	6.30	5.30	37.70	44.90
140160150042007	Palatine CCSD 15	2	Lake Louise Elem School	Adam Palmer	Cook	N	N	46.20	50.50	74.70	78.20	771	755	38.40	36.80	7.00	4.60	42.80	44.40
140160150042015	Palatine CCSD 15	3	Virginia Lake Elem School	Mike Carmody	Cook	N	N	41.50	40.80	75.70	84.50	845	794	49.50	50.10	5.70	7.60	36.10	33.00
140160590042002	Comm Cons SD 59	4	Adm Richard E Byrd Elem School	Mary Ellen Esser	Cook	N	N	41.90	44.50	86.80	90.00	394	371	51.80	46.60	0.30	0.80	44.90	49.90
140160590042009	Comm Cons SD 59	5	Robert Frost Elem School	Kelley Zerfahs	Cook	N	N	49.40	51.40	87.00	80.90	360	370	38.60	37.30	5.80	4.30	44.70	48.90
140160590042014	Comm Cons SD 59	6	John Jay Elem School	Thomas Seaton	Cook	N	N	65.30	59.30	70.00	75.00	352	359	14.80	18.90	3.10	2.80	76.70	72.10
140160620042008	CCSD 62	7	North Elementary School	Carol Gibbs	Cook	N	N	42.90	47.30	74.60	75.80	536	526	36.80	33.70	14.00	17.10	33.80	31.70
140160620042009	CCSD 62	8	Orchard Place Elem School	Lauren Leitao	Cook	N	N	55.40	57.30	60.90	82.60	294	293	19.70	18.10	1.70	1.70	68.40	68.30
140160620042010	CCSD 62	9	Plainfield Elem School	Rene' Carranza	Cook	N	N	51.10	55.70	84.40	78.70	352	348	19.30	20.70	3.10	2.00	60.80	60.10
140160620042011	CCSD 62	10	South Elem School	Lori Poelking	Cook	N	N	44.60	44.00	86.10	71.90	307	302	41.40	40.10	1.30	1.70	50.80	53.00
140160630022008	East Maine SD 63	11	Stevenson School	Howard Sussman	Cook	N	N	40.10	41.10	69.50	76.70	401	411	34.90	33.10	7.70	7.30	26.40	26.30
140160650042004	Evanston CCSD 65	12	Dawes Elementary School	Karen Bradley	Cook	N	N	46.60	50.60	72.10	76.10	363	348	23.70	24.10	47.90	42.50	24.20	28.20
140160650042014	Evanston CCSD 65	13	Oakton Elem School	Churchill Daniels	Cook	N	N	58.10	71.00	60.00	65.20	391	427	28.40	21.80	48.60	50.10	21.20	24.80
140160650042020	Evanston CCSD 65	14	Washington Elem School	Kate Ellison	Cook	N	N	56.40	54.00	74.20	83.10	500	457	31.60	31.70	22.60	22.50	43.00	42.50
140160690022001	Skokie SD 69	15	Thomas Edison Elem School	Joseph Hailpern	Cook	N	N	43.90	40.30	71.30	76.10	510	474	40.40	42.20	12.90	12.90	12.20	14.30
340490060022007	Zion ESD 6	16	Beulah Park Elem School	R. Lynn Butera	Lake	Y	Y	67.70	54.40	57.40	56.80	390	436	21.00	19.70	38.50	38.50	34.10	32.10
340490060022008	Zion ESD 6	17	Filmwood Elem School	Chris Cornella	Lake	Y	Y	69.70	75.80	60.80	61.00	347	376	15.60	13.70	47.10	38.70	38.00	40.50
340490060022006	Zion ESD 6	18	West Elementary School	Val Lampinen	Lake	Y	Y	73.20	76.80	73.50	47.90	492	488	14.60	14.80	39.20	39.30	37.80	36.10
340490600262004	Waukegan CUSD 60	19	Carman-Buckner Elem School	Vanessa Campos	Lake	Y	Y	86.20	79.20	44.90	33.30	690	596	0.10	0.50	12.50	13.40	86.70	85.40
340490600262005	Waukegan CUSD 60	20	John S Clark Elem School	Renee Sams	Lake	Y	Y	57.90	67.60	66.70	58.10	299	278	12.70	11.20	28.40	28.80	41.10	42.80
340490600262008	Waukegan CUSD 60	21	Glen Flora Elem School	Zenaida Figueroa	Lake	Y	Y	80.30	77.30	46.00	52.30	501	488	4.20	3.30	16.20	13.70	78.40	80.90
340490600262009	Waukegan CUSD 60	22	Glenwood Elementary School	Lee Gaiser	Lake	Y	Y	64.90	74.70	59.10	60.30	601	605	4.70	4.10	15.60	15.50	77.20	75.70
340490600262010	Waukegan CUSD 60	23	Greenwood Elem School	Joyce Meyer	Lake	Y	Y	58.30	63.70	57.60	51.10	326	273	14.10	13.20	45.40	40.30	33.40	40.30
340490600262011	Waukegan CUSD 60	24	Hyde Park Elem School	Brian Carr	Lake	Y	Y	67.30	83.60	44.10	47.70	330	293	6.10	6.10	33.90	32.10	55.80	57.00
340490600262013	Waukegan CUSD 60	25	Little Fort Elem School	Sharon A. LaViolette	Lake	Y	Y	77.00	63.70	56.30	56.50	626	623	6.70	6.10	14.10	14.10	76.50	76.10
340490600262014	Waukegan CUSD 60	26	Lyon Magnet Elementary School	Abbey Avellino	Lake	Y	Y	82.30	60.90	63.30	83.30	564	542	1.80	1.10	19.50	16.60	77.50	80.60
340490600262015	Waukegan CUSD 60	27	H R McCall Elem School	Linda Meczky	Lake	Y	Y	45.00	42.10	84.30	77.30	400	411	17.50	15.10	27.80	27.70	51.50	50.90
340490600262016	Waukegan CUSD 60	28	North Elem School	Angel G. Figueroa	Lake	Y	Y	75.80	59.90	61.00	65.40	534	695	1.90	2.00	6.60	7.30	90.30	88.50
340490600262017	Waukegan CUSD 60	29	Oakdale Elem School	Minerva Vega	Lake	Y	Y	82.20	57.00	55.10	68.30	607	519	3.30	3.10	6.10	6.20	88.60	89.80
340490600262018	Waukegan CUSD 60	30	Washington Elem School	Barbara Steinseifer	Lake	Y	Y	62.20	49.20	70.10	65.80	590	583	5.30	4.30	7.80	10.10	84.10	82.30
340491120022007	North Shore SD 112	31	Oak Terrace Elem School	Sandra Anderson	Lake	N	N	66.00	66.90	88.50	94.40	491	498	29.50	31.30	2.90	1.60	64.20	63.90
340491160262001	Round Lake CUSD 116	32	Raymond Ellis Elem School	Bill Pritchard	Lake	N	N	59.40	64.40	54.10	56.30	810	835	17.70	14.00	3.30	6.80	78.30	78.30
340491160262002	Round Lake CUSD 116	33	Indian Hill Elem School	Ken Rose	Lake	N	N	55.00	47.80	63.60	53.50	678	678	38.30	37.80	11.40	12.20	44.50	44.40
340491160262004	Round Lake CUSD 116	34	Round Lake Beach Elem School	Keel Vetter	Lake	N	N	68.90	68.70	71.40	53.90	618	671	15.90	14.00	4.90	5.70	78.60	77.80
340491160262005	Round Lake CUSD 116	35	W J Murphy Elem School	Jeff Prickett	Lake	N	N	59.60	59.20	60.20	49.50	691	691	24.20	25.00	7.80	7.80	62.80	61.20
340491160262006	Round Lake CUSD 116	36	Village Elementary School	Elisabeth Sullivan	Lake	N	N	54.30	53.90	66.20	54.50	512	516	31.10	27.30	5.30	5.00	59.40	64.70

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VITA

Michael E. Robey was born in Dubuque, Iowa on April 21, 1963 to Elmer and Mary Robey. He attended Warren High School in Warren, Illinois after moving from Iowa in seventh grade. After high school, he obtained an Associate Degree from Highland Community College in Freeport, Illinois and graduated cum laude in 1986 from Northern Illinois University with a B.S.Ed. in Technology Education.

In 1996, he completed his master's degree from National-Louis University in Evanston, Illinois in Technology in Education. In 2001, he returned to graduate school to obtain his Type 75 administration certificate, his Superintendent's endorsement in 2006, and completed his doctoral degree in educational administration and supervision in the Spring of 2011 all from Loyola University Chicago.

Michael has spent his entire educational career in Illinois teaching technology education and industrial arts in Rochelle, Crystal Lake, Fisher, and Skokie also serving as technology director and team leader for the final two years of his teaching career.

He entered into administration as the Assistant Principal of Wood Oaks Jr. High School in Northbrook from 2001-2004, was the Principal of Blackhawk Middle School in Bensenville from 2004-2007, Assistant Superintendent of Triad Community Unit School District in Troy from 2007-2008, and is currently the Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Schools in Evanston/Skokie School District 65.

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