Comprehensive school reform in the wake of No Child Left Behind: Teacher perceptions in Dodgeland

Allyson Regina Haag
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Comprehensive School Reform in the Wake of No Child Left Behind:

Teacher Perceptions in Dodgeland

by

Allyson Regina Haag

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Anthropology
College of Arts and Sciences
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Keywords: Ethnographic research, educational Anthropology, urban schools, social capital Federal educational policy, applied research

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I would like to acknowledge two teachers that have inspired me to cherish education, and reach beyond what I can see: Robin Reddell and Bill Derman, Ph.D. Their love of teaching and compassion for others made an impact on my young life.

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<td>AAREA</td>
<td>The Alliance for Applied Research in Education and Anthropology</td>
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<td>AIR</td>
<td>American Institutes for Research</td>
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<td>ASP</td>
<td>Accelerated Schools Project</td>
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<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Education Officer</td>
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<td>CSR</td>
<td>Comprehensive School Reform</td>
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<td>CSRD</td>
<td>Comprehensive School Reform Development grants</td>
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<td>CT</td>
<td>The State of Connecticut</td>
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<td>DAC</td>
<td>The David Anchin Center</td>
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<td>ED</td>
<td>United States Department of Education</td>
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<td>ESEA</td>
<td>Elementary and Secondary Education Act</td>
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<td>IES</td>
<td>Institute of Education Sciences</td>
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<td>NAS</td>
<td>New American Schools Development Corporation</td>
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<td>NCCSR</td>
<td>National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform</td>
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<td>NCEE</td>
<td>National Center for Education Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCLB</td>
<td>The No Child Left Behind Act</td>
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<td>NLECSR</td>
<td>The National Longitudinal Evaluation of Comprehensive School Reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>OERI</td>
<td>Office of Educational Research and Improvement</td>
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<td>SFA</td>
<td>Success For All</td>
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<td>US</td>
<td>The United States</td>
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Comprehensive School Reform in the Wake of No Child Left Behind:
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Allyson Regina Haag

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an analysis of teacher perceptions of the implementation of their school’s comprehensive school reform, and the George W. Bush administration’s federal educational policy, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Data were collected by a research team as a part of the National Longitudinal Evaluation of Comprehensive School Reform (NLECSR), a project under the direction of the American Institutes for Research (AIR). The thesis is a supplemental qualitative analysis by the author who was part of the NLECSR research team from 2004 through 2005.

The NLECSR had a quantitative component (called the Core Study) consisting of a large-scale national survey, and a qualitative component (called the Focus Study) consisting of interviews and observations in a smaller subset of schools in five urban districts in the central and eastern United States. AIR was primarily responsible for the quantitative study while researchers at USF were responsible for the qualitative work. This thesis exploited a major strength of the Focus Study, which made classrooms within schools the unit of analysis. This thesis analyzed data from three schools from one of the five Focus Study districts.

Three research questions predominate: First, what do teachers who are implementing CSR say about how NCLB impacts their work? Second, what do teachers’ responses reveal
about how well NCLB as a policy aligns or misaligns with implementing CSR? Third, where might these perceived policy conflicts lie?

Thematic analysis revealed perceived competing pressures in the development of social capital, or the collective commitment, relational trust and communications that foster productive or supportive exchanges between teachers, students and other school stakeholders. I found that the NCLB mandates and sanctions were perceived by teachers as unfair, at odds with the goals of reform and potentially detrimental to some of the gains won through implementing CSR, such as social capital.
Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis is an anthropological analysis of teacher perceptions. As part of a larger ethnographic study, interviews were conducted in 2004 with elementary school teachers from three urban schools from a single district in the United States. I used pseudonyms for all respondents, as well as for schools and school districts, in order to best protect participants in the study. All three elementary schools were implementing CSR as a means to improve performance to meet state and federal standards of student achievement.

Teacher perceptions of their work, reform implementation, students, standards, and of the George W. Bush administration’s federal educational policy, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), were examined for thematic analysis. I used data from a larger study (known as the National Longitudinal Evaluation of Comprehensive School Reform, or NLECSR) to perform my analysis. Applied anthropology, or the practical use of anthropological theories and methods, informed my analysis and the discussion of my results. Results showed that teachers perceived conflicts between the NCLB legislation as a policy that affected their decisions, and the local policies of CSR.

The discussion chapter focuses on two themes. First, teachers as street-level bureaucrats made CSR implementation decisions based in part on their perceptions of alignments or “misalignments” in their policy environment. By misalignments, I mean the competing pressures and conflicts of practice that multilevel policies may cause. Second, teachers’ perceptions revealed policy misalignments that center on the development of social capital a concept
elaborated by Pierre Bourdieu in a book chapter entitled “Forms of Capital,” (Bourdieu 1986:241-258). A heavily cited adaptation of social capital theory comes from James S. Coleman (Coleman 1988:S95-S120). Extensive literature exists on the theory of social capital. According to a recent report, collegial interaction, working cooperatively and dense networking among teachers is necessary for successful school reform (Uekawa, Aladjem and Zhang 2005:3). Collegial interaction and networking foster trust, facilitate persuasion toward collective goals and reinforce collective beliefs (2005:3). The authors of the report define social capital as “school capacity or teacher capacity to sustain learning efforts, as well as their collective commitment to teaching” (Uekawa, Aladjem and Zhang 2005:3). Forces that threaten social capital among teachers implementing reform are those that weaken teacher capacity by erecting barriers to communication and hindering the development of trust among stakeholders.

**Significance of the Thesis**

The significance of this thesis is that it acknowledges the people on the frontlines – in this case teachers – who are directly affected by shifts in educational policy. While much research is devoted to education, teachers’ voices can lend a critical perspective to policy formation and effectiveness. More effective alignment of policies at all levels, of efforts and measures of student achievement can help overcome the ills of our educational system. Unfortunately, recent federal policies have ignored local district and school contexts and therefore often conflict with local policies generated in response to local contexts.

Exploring teacher perceptions for possible misalignments or competing pressures in the policy environment has merit. This approach encourages an emic understanding of multilevel policies from the perspective of those directly affected by the possible conflicts. Including teacher voices in the discussion of educational policy contributes to a more holistic approach to policy formation. “Human experience takes shape in particular contexts and cannot be
understood if removed from those contexts” (Kincheloe, Slattery and Steinberg 2000:278-279). Further, “Qualitative research focuses on all aspects of research” including “underlying complexities of school experience” often overlooked by highly quantitative research (Kincheloe, Slattery and Steinberg 2000:279). Therefore, contextualizing educational research is critical to a holistic and emic understanding. This thesis aims to: (1) Examine teacher voices toward an emic perspective of the recent shifts in educational policy; (2) Promote further qualitative and cultural study using ethnographic methods of research in pursuit of a holistic view of educational improvement; and (3) Make recommendations for further study. These are the goals of this thesis.

**Organization of the Thesis**

The remainder of this chapter explains the principal elements of the thesis, beginning with the fields of anthropology and applied anthropology in education. The introduction closes with an overview of the two major policies that affected teachers in my sample. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature, covering NCLB, CSR, teachers as street-level bureaucrats, and social capital. Chapter 3 is the methods section, and will begin by familiarizing the reader with the research project from which this study was directly drawn. Then it will cover sample selection, organization of data, and analytical methods.

Chapter 4 is the results section. The results are comprised of narrative summaries organized first by school, then by veteran versus newer teachers’ voices. The chapter subheadings under each school are: Teachers, CSR Adoption, CSR Components Articulated, Model Fit, Challenges to Implementation, Outcomes, Materials/Resources, Professional Development, followed by NCLB and AYP. I then turn to the Discussion section to address the themes found in the Results. The discussion section opens with an introduction to policy
misalignments in the data. I use supportive literature to illuminate these misalignments, and conclude with recommendations for further research. I begin now with Anthropology.

**Applied Anthropology of Education**

Anthropology is simply the study of humans, though the field is one of the most complex areas of social theory and social thought today. Anthropology’s focus is upon human *culture* present in any group of people. Ward Goodenough defined culture, among other things, as “the shared products of human learning,” (1963:258). Anthropology has four fields: archeology, physical anthropology, linguistics, and cultural anthropology. Ethnography, a common methodological approach in cultural anthropology, utilizes multiple qualitative data-collection methods such as interviews, participant observations and focus group interviews in addition to surveys, demographics, and reviewing extant documents. This study employs ethnography as its methodological approach.

Research on teachers necessarily looks at the products of their teaching, student outcomes. Anthropological research on teachers necessarily includes the shared products of their *learning*. Products of teacher learning include the capacity to engage in street-level decision-making to implement or not implement reform measures, to focus on external demands and to engage in collegial activities that can build social capital. The larger study from which this study was carved used ethnographic data collection methodology, and thematic analysis that led to grounded theory, that is, theories emerged that were grounded in the data. This thesis uses ethnographic data, and involves teacher perceptions.

Applied anthropology is the utilization of the umbrella of anthropological knowledge from all four fields toward greater understanding of the practical issues of the day. Put another way, applied anthropology “is the field of inquiry concerned with the relationships between anthropological knowledge and the uses of that knowledge in the world beyond anthropology”
(Chambers 1985:x). This “knowledge” applies to an enormous range of concepts, methods, schools of thought, and areas of specialization. Among them is education.

Education in the United States is the focus of an enormous amount of research from developmental psychology to sociology, focusing on issues from instruction to desegregation. Why, then, is anthropology needed in education, and educational research? The answer comes from the four fields. Edmund Hamann paraphrased Laura Nader’s assertions in her 2000 address to the American Anthropological Assn. professional meeting that year. “The breadth of Anthropology positions us better than other disciplines to use multiple means, methods, and perspectives to guide our attempts to answer complex problems such as how equity-oriented educational policies translate into inequitable practices and how such cycles can be interrupted,” (Hamann 2003:438). This means applied anthropology has a policy-relevant nature (Chambers 1985:x, Van Willigen 1993:157-169). It is in these ways that this analysis explores teacher perceptions of recent shifts in policy and the implications of those perceptions for local policy.

Further, applied anthropologists admit something that other policy researchers do not. “In policy-relevant research, everyone has a position” (Hess 1992:179). Hess asserts in his article about educational anthropology that not only is it fantasy to pretend that there can be objectivity, but rather offering critique (or taking a position with a debate) can be appropriate for the discipline:

One of the strengths of ethnographic research is its ability to describe what is actually happening as policies are implemented, why various actors in the implementation process are acting as they are, either to make the implementation process successful or to frustrate it, and how these actors are doing what they are doing. Without such implementation studies, politicians and the public are quick to jump to premature conclusions about the viability of particular reforms (Hess 1992:181-182).
While my study is an informal study of implementation, I will attempt to make plain my own position for transparency’s sake. I begin with humanism, upon which I will later base a criticism of the federal educational policy in place at this time.

One definition of humanism is “concern with the interests, needs and welfare of humans” (American Heritage Dictionary 2004). I, however, prefer a definition with slightly more loaded terminology. Humanism is “any system or mode of thought or action in which human interests, values, and dignity predominate” (Dictionary.com 2006: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/humanism). I prefer this definition because it emphasizes dignity, which is “the quality or state of being worthy of esteem or respect” (American Heritage Dictionary 2006: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/dignity). I define these terms to establish two things.

First, I assume that Education means “citizenship education for democracy” as defined by Bradley A. U. Levinson, which is based on underlying humanistic principles, although these may be at odds with the reality. Levinson communicates the obvious irony of the educational system in this country:

Over the last 25 years, dominant discourses of economic competitiveness, academic basics, and accountability have driven national education policy in the United States…While embracing the rhetoric of democracy, this trend has actually crowded out policies and practices oriented toward civic education for democratic citizenship (2005:329).

Our system fails to further this laudable vision of schools as cites of learning democracy and citizenship. I agree with his assessment of the goals of education. Levinson defines three key terms:
Citizenship is about the rules and meanings of political and cultural membership, and the associated modes of participation implied by such membership; identity is about the varying senses of social belonging and commitment that form in each individual; and democracy is about the continual construction of a political order that sponsors reasoned deliberation, promotes civic participation in decision making, justly distributes political-economic power, and strives for cultural inclusiveness (emphasis added) (2005:336).

He uses these terms to promote the role of anthropological research in education based on critically important values, “The study of citizenship education for democracy is therefore the study of efforts to educate the members of a social group to imagine their social belonging and exercise their participation as democratic citizens” (2005:336). He posits that a “worldwide movement for democratic citizenship education” is currently underway (2005:337). Because I agree with his values, and due in part to his assertion of a global movement in this direction, I accept this vision of education for my purposes here.

Anthropology is oriented toward humanistic values as well, first, in that it is the study of humans by humans. More importantly, Anthropology seeks to expand humanity’s capacity for shared understanding based on core ideologies such as cultural sensitivity, which allow for diversity, respect and dignity to exist together. There is a growing sense in the literature that the appropriate role of cultural anthropologists involves “an avowed criticalist orientation toward positive social change” (McCarty 2005:302). Applied Anthropology, as I understand it, is humanistic in its own right, in that it integrates the principles, theories, methods and ethics of anthropology with the productive activities of society building, policy making, and the doing of scientific research toward changing “an unjust world” (McCarty 2005:302). Together, these suggest that applied anthropology of education is an appropriate field of inquiry and action, with humanist principles and goals, to contribute to the educational discourse. “To the extent that
educational anthropologists can shed light on [equitable education as a public responsibility]…” we are positioned to do democratically relevant work” (Hamann 2003:444). This view can be described as applied anthropology as a humanistic contribution to democracy. This is best characterized by Teresa McCarty, editor of Anthropology and Education Quarterly. She surmises that the anthropology of education, and the debates within the field “have been highly productive in nurturing a knowledge base with clear implications for a fairer, more just and equitable world” (2005:301).

The second reason I operationalize terms such as humanism and dignity is that I utilize humanistic principles to guide my evaluation of the results. Teacher perceptions in the data suggest that NCLB was for them, less than ideally humanistic in practice, despite the ironic title of the law. I use humanism as I defined above to locate my position in the discussion. Now that I have established my approach, as an applied anthropologist of education analyzing teacher perceptions, I begin to introduce the salient terms of the thesis. I turn to the two main policies at work in both my sample and the greater educational discourse.

Comprehensive School Reform

Comprehensive school reform (CSR) is a blanket term that refers to many federally funded, research-proven ways of improving schools serving disadvantaged populations. Unlike individual programs that target content areas, grades, or problems such as drop out rate, CSR utilizes a whole-school approach. This includes all grade levels, the governance structures, communications, teacher training, student instruction, resources and often the entire curriculum. CSR restructures all aspects of a school following research-proven methods shown to raise scores. A wide range of agencies have developed many models, or brands of CSR. Research has demonstrated that for many models, full implementation for five years or more lead to favorable outcomes, including increases in achievement scores (Borman, Hewes, Overman and Brown, 2004:83, 92-93) as well as the development of certain manifestations of social capital (Uekawa,
Aladjem and Zhang 2005:15). Teachers in my sample implemented CSR to varying degrees in all areas of their work, however, implementation varied due to perceived pressures to refocus energies elsewhere. The main sources of these perceived pressures were standards, and mandates from the No Child legislation. I turn now to this law, and the controversy surrounding its mandates.

**No Child Left Behind**

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was designed to improve the academic achievement of “disadvantaged” students through federal funding streams that were attached to accountability measures, or sanctions, that were arguably tougher than ever before. Sanctions in NCLB were based on mandated, aggregate achievement-score gains and were imposed on teachers and schools by individual states. These required score gains, that were expected to increase annually, were collectively called Adequate Yearly Progress in the legislation, or AYP. Schools were given twelve years of moving targets, or benchmarks. Schools that failed to make AYP and other mandates risked losses in funding and staffing, and faced the prospect of school-wide firings and takeovers that might be privately managed, and possible school closure (Haag 2007:302; Hochschild 2003:109; NEA 2002:6, Rudalevige 2003: 44). This meant that schools, often urban schools serving diverse populations, could find federal funding based on need; however, retaining federal funding depended on significant annual gains in student achievement scores (Rudalevige 2003: 26).

These accountability measures came with sanctions that continue to generate controversy. NCLB has earned many critics for various reasons, among them, the law’s use of race. Embedded in the law are student-subgroup mandates. Schools must demonstrate that all racial categories, socioeconomic categories and language learner and other categories must all meet the same AYP, as well as the general enrollment. This can mean that large segments of the
student population of some schools count against their AYP status more than once, particularly in urban areas where geographical and economic forces may play a role in the diversity. For one school in my sample, Shoreland Elementary, that has 92% Latino students, and 95% low-income students enrolled, these students are counted in a racial subgroup, a socioeconomic subgroup, often an English language-learner subgroup, and some may even be counted as members of a learning disability subgroup. If the majority of these students failed the school’s AYP mandates, the school would fail on several counts. Some argue persuasively that this unfairly punishes urban schools serving these disadvantaged populations (Marcos and Staiger 2003:152).

Moreover, one can see that principals (concerned about making AYP) who are able to turn away such students have several good reasons to do so. The practice of accountability, then, has not matched the goal of equitable educational opportunities. The student subgroup requirements are a central source of the controversy surrounding the accountability measures of NCLB.

Other issues sparking criticism of NCLB include the repeated cuts in funding, the punitive nature of sanctions, and the burden of time and money needed to demonstrate, or demonstrate again, the “highly qualified teacher” requirement (Borman, Aladjem and Le Floch 2004:110; Poftak 2003:24-27). Most importantly, this legislation significantly extended the reach of the federal government into individual schools and district affairs (Borman, Aladjem and Le Floch 2004:110). The highly qualified teacher requirement coupled with threats of firings due to failing to achieve AYP appears to heighten and complicate the growing teacher shortage (Ponticell 2007:399), and teacher mobility problem in America’s high-poverty, urban schools (Ponticell 2007:400-401). I discuss NCLB more thoroughly in the literature review.

Prior to the enactment of NCLB, a grant was offered by the U. S. Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) for a large-scale research study to evaluate CSR models, their effectiveness, and other issues. This reflected the popularity of CSR and prior to the
passage of NCLB. Data from this study are analyzed for this thesis. Next, I introduce this larger study.

**The National Longitudinal Evaluation of Comprehensive School Reform**

In 2000, the U.S. Department of Education (ED), through its Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), awarded a grant to American Institutes for Research (AIR) and their sub-grantees, at the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) and the David C. Anchin Center at the University of South Florida (USF), to conduct the National Longitudinal Evaluation of Comprehensive School Reform (NLECSR) (AIR Project Summary 2000:1). Thousands of U.S. schools have used a wide array of whole-school improvement models, and a great variety of research exists that sheds light on the effectiveness of such models. CSR by definition is research-based reform (Aladjem 2007:90, AIR 2000:1, Borman, Carter, Aladjem and Floch 2004:109, Borman Hewes, Rachuba and Brown 2004:54, Hamann 2003:441). However, the available research on model effectiveness at times leaves much to be desired, and the degree to which one can generalize across states and CSR models is low (Aladjem 2007:92, Fast et al. 2001:1, Borman, Hewes, Overman and Brown 2004:54). Most importantly for purposes here, the research on school reform tended to have schools, districts or CSR models as the unit of analysis (Borman, Hewes, Rachuba and Brown 2004:55), with little emphasis on classroom level data, where the implementation occurs, or on teachers who do the implementing. The NLECSR was designed to close these gaps, measure the effectiveness of many models, to compensate for other variables, and use multiple levels of data collection and analyses that telescoped down to the classroom level.

The NLECSR study was broad in scope. The study looked at eight models of CSR in 800 urban schools from 22 districts in 16 states. The study analyzed important issues for CSR developers and schools implementing CSR, such as sustaining established CSR in schools within
a shifting policy environment, and considering ways to adapt CSR model implementation to local contexts (AIR, NORC and USF 2001).

The evaluation consisted of both a Core Study and a Focus Study. The Core Study consisted of a national survey of teachers, principals and other education stakeholders in two waves of data collection conducted by The National Opinion Research Center (NORC) for the AIR. The AIR then incorporated demographics and achievement data from their sample schools over a period of three years. Results of the Core Study were primarily quantitative (AIR Project Summary 2001:3). The Focus study was a parallel quasi-experimental study of outliers from the Core Study; a smaller subset of districts and schools. I will next describe the Focus study conducted by the USF team, and its relationship to the Core Study.

The AIR contracted with Dr. Kathryn Borman at the University of South Florida (USF) to handle the Focus Study aspect of the NLECSR. The AIR Project Summary best described the USF Focus Study, and its relationship to the Core Study:

To complement the national survey data from the Core Study, we will also conduct a Focus Study of “high performing” and “high potential” CSR schools. These qualitative case studies of schools will contribute to our understanding of both implementation and the effects of CSR models’ key components and overall model effectiveness. In this component of the NLECSR, we will: observe classes to evaluate instruction, interview teachers and administrators about instruction and implementation and their experiences with their CSR effort, and collect extant documents about reform, student achievement, and school demographics in each school. The Focus Study sample of schools and districts will be embedded within the Core Study sample. The findings of the Core Study (survey) will provide the context for the Focus Study. The Focus Study, in turn, will provide the rich, detailed qualitative case data to allow for a deeper understanding of the survey findings from the Core Study (AIR Project Summary 2001:3-4).
The USF Focus Study was the ethnographic and qualitative component of the NLECSR. The Focus Study data included interviews of teachers, principals, facilitators, parents, students and district personnel, classroom observations, school scores and demographics, as well as other materials. Eight CSR models were included in the Focus Study, plus a control group (schools with no model) to give the study a quasi-experimental treatment-group and control-group structure.

The Focus Study sample used five metropolitan school districts, an outlier subset of the greater Core Study sample, in that the sample represented a sample of the lowest schools in the Core Study sample. Only the nations neediest schools are eligible for Title 1 money towards CSR or CSRD grants (Aladjem 2007:91). According to the analyses performed by Karen Moriarty at the University of South Florida, Berkland and Chamberland were in the lowest quartile of achievement in Dodgeland district, and Shoreland achievement was in the lowest 15% of district schools (Moriarty 2002).

One strength of the Focus Study was to bring the research questions about education reform into the classrooms, to examine the issues in real practice, through observation and interviews. The Focus Study project produced a wealth of ethnographic data from over 400 respondents.

The Focus Study was conducted and the data were collected by the team at USF. I did not develop the instrumentation, collect the data, nor did I code the data. I performed transcription, data entry, and authored summaries of schools and districts for the analysis. When the dust settled, I felt there was more that anthropology might say about the data collected. I began to look at the data in new ways.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction to the Literature Review

I conducted a literature review of the central issues informing the research in this thesis. I begin with two major policies that frame the policy environment of the respondents in my sample. First, I introduce the reader to NCLB, a piece of federal legislation passed at the end of 2001. Second, I familiarize the reader with CSR, a classification of school reform, supported by federal funding. I briefly describe the two models of CSR used in the three schools researched in the project to exemplify these reforms. These two policies, NCLB and CSR, provide a policy context for teacher perceptions.

I then turn to the literature on two of the more substantive issues of the thesis. I introduce the reader to the literature that discusses teachers as a street-level bureaucrat. This provides a way of seeing the respondents as actors within the policy context. Last, I introduce the theory of social capital to illuminate the cultural and social dynamics present in the data. Together, these core concepts frame the thesis and prepare the reader for the findings and the discussion.

No Child Left Behind

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), designed to improve the academic achievement of the disadvantaged, was passed by the 107th U.S. Congress on December 31, 2001. The legislation brought to Capitol Hill by the George W. Bush administration represented a six-year reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). NCLB
garnered bipartisan support and easily passed in both houses of congress, despite the fact that Republicans had turned down legislation with similar language only one session earlier (Rudalevige 2003:23-24, 24-38).

Andrew Rudalevige gives an exhaustive account of the gestation and birth of NCLB in his book chapter entitled “No Child Left Behind: Forging a congressional compromise,” in No Child Left Behind: The politics and practice of school accountability (West & Peterson, 2003). He asserts that in the previous reauthorizations of the ESEA, the Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and Bill Clinton administrations had all established fundamental language that would later turn up in NCLB (2003:29). Following the release of “A Nation At Risk,” there was a growing sense that accountability was the right medicine to address the widening achievement gaps between our nation and others including Japan and Germany (West & Peterson 2003:6-7). Subsequent administrations focused on accountability in their reauthorizations of the ESEA (Rudalevige 2003:27-35). Notably, in 1994 Clinton’s GOALS 2000 Act introduced state mandates called “Adequate Yearly Progress” or AYP, which held states and districts accountable to achievement standards (West & Peterson 2003:10). However, AYP was not enforced, nor were the standards very specific (Rudalevige 2003:29; West and Peterson 2003:7). The lack of accountability led to dissatisfaction among Democrats and Republicans alike, and a push began to strengthen or redefine accountability measures, specifically student testing requirements (Rudalevige 2003:31).

Historically, each new presidential administration in recent times had reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). For the first time, ESEA was not reauthorized in 2000, a history-making stalemate (2003:33). The failure to pass this critical legislation fueled a sense that bipartisanship was required to offer constituents “something” (Rudalevige 2003:42). Meanwhile, other key aspects of the original NCLB framework, such as national testing and vouchers that had been borrowed from the wreckage of previous bills, were
ultimately subject to compromise, or eliminated (Rudalevige 2003:33, 42). The bones of NCLB had been crafted much earlier, but those previous iterations lacked power. Yet neither party was able to offer a supportable compromise until late in 2001 (2003:36-40).

Both political parties opposed a program of both national testing and a national curriculum, fearing the federal government might overreach its bounds into local affairs (Rudalevige 2003:29-30; Hochschild 2003:107-108). This and other commonalities made room for a bipartisan agreement (Rudalevige 2003:34-36). A year after the expiration of the GOALS 2000 Act, Democrats and Republicans eventually struck a balance with this watershed trio: national standards, (state) tests to measure standards, and a system of rewards and sanctions to ensure compliance (Rudalevige 2003:36-37). This balance avoided the top heaviness that a national test and national curriculum would entail; yet the sanctions gave lawmakers the tough accountability they believed were missing in prior iterations of the ESEA (West & Peterson 2003:9-10). Previous policies contained softer accountability measures, whereas NCLB possessed what Hess called “coercive accountability” (Hess 2003:57-58). The No Child accountability meant that schools could only rely on funding streams as long as they made significant annual gains in achievement scores, in other words, achieved AYP (Rudalevige 2003:26). Some have argued that because federal funding comprised only 7-8% of all public funding in primary and secondary education in recent years federal sanctions attached to these funds posed no threat to schools (West and Peterson 2003:1). However, some schools are more reliant on federal funding, especially those that are most in need and eligible for ESEA funding. I will not elaborate more on funding for public education, because that is not the focus of this research. The threat of withholding federal funding comprises one of several accountability measures or sanctions in NCLB if a school does not achieve AYP.

Targets for achieving AYP increase each year until the year 2012, and the legislation provides for states to set the AYP benchmarks (NEA 2002:3-4). Schools could fail just once to
avoid sanctions. Sanctions against schools that failed to achieve AYP for more than two consecutive years varied from loss of funding, jobs and freedoms to school closure and reconstitution (Haag 2007:302; Hochschild 2003:109; Rudalevige 2003: 44, U.S. Department of Education 2002:6). The law also dictated that all student subgroups “defined by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic disadvantage, disability status and English learner status” must meet the minimum proficiency levels just as other students (Marcos and Staiger 2003:154). Other mandates included minimum attendance in a testing population, and a “highly qualified teacher” requirement that forced a recertification of all teachers.

As schools across the nation failed to meet AYP targets, many of these schools faced budget cuts, private takeover and reorganization. Schools serving migrant or economically disadvantaged populations that succeeded in meeting testing requirements often failed to make AYP due to student attendance requirements. The law requires 95% of students and subgroups to be tested to achieve AYP (NEA 2002:. Others were unable to raise scores high enough to meet AYP standards at all. Some districts chose to focus on training to get teachers approved for the “highly qualified teacher” requirement. The consequences for not meeting this requirement are severe (Standerfer 2006:26-27). The professional development needed to meet this requirement competed with instructional time, as well as test preparation (National Education Association [NEA] 2005:1). Schools felt increasing pressure as the deadlines for meeting both AYP and teacher certification requirements approached (Sunderman, Orfield and Kim 2006:16).

Although many expected the accountability sanctions to ease up as deadlines approached, that is not what occurred (West & Peterson 2003:10-12). Six years following the passage of NCLB, the nation’s schools are reeling from the severity of sanctions imposed by this legislation. The policy’s accountability requirements in particular earned many critics. Interestingly, critics tended to agree that the ideology of NCLB was admirable (NEA 2005:April 20; Noddings 2005:24-25; State of CT 2005:1-2). Critics allege, however, that the
implementation of NCLB failed in its aim to protect disadvantaged populations, that gains were underwhelming, and funding was conspicuously nonexistent. Teachers themselves faced significant costs in training, professional development classes, travel and time away from work in order to become certified (Hess 2006:170-171). “There is disturbing evidence that certification may especially dissuade accomplished minority candidates” (Hess 2006:171) and that the certification system may actually be undermining the perception of teaching (2006:170-172) and thus undermining teachers themselves. Organized opposition to the law quickly grew.

In April 2005, the National Education Association (NEA) filed a lawsuit against U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings for the funding the NCLB Act promised to help states meet the federal mandates. The suit represented districts and teachers’ unions from nine (and later, ten) states, making the first wave of opposition widespread, if not long lived (NEA 2005: April 20). In November of 2005, a District Court Judge granted the U.S. Department of Education’s request to dismiss the case, citing that the Act does not prohibit any and all unfunded mandates (NEA 2005:November 23). The NEA filed an appeal. At this time, the outcome of the suit is still unknown.

In August of 2005, the State Attorney General for the state of Connecticut (CT) filed a lawsuit against Secretary Spellings for illegally imposing over $50 million in unfunded federal mandates on the state, under NCLB. The lawsuit cited the Act’s “general prohibition” which stated that, “Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to authorize...the Federal government...to mandate a state...to spend any funds or incur any costs not paid for under this chapter,” (State of CT 2005:1-2). In the Connecticut news release announcing the suit, the goals of the NCLB Act are praised, but the state’s Attorney General asserts that NCLB represents a unlawful and unfunded mandate (State of CT 2005:1-2).

In fact, President George W. Bush had cut funding for education early in his presidency. A month after the NCLB Act passed, his education appropriations bill was $2.6 billion less than
what was promised in the package that passed Congress (NEA 2002:January 29). At the end of 2005, the President cut over $3 billion from the overall education budget (Murray 2006:3). The NEA reports that in late 2005 and into January 2006, the Bush administration cut over $13 billion from education (2006 January 30). While lawmakers gave lip service to support NCLB, both houses of congress were apparently equally eager to drain the federal budget for existing NCLB programs by $800 million in 2006, setting the budget for NCLB at less than the level three years before (NEA 2006:February 6). The senate has since then passed a resolution to add $7 billion for public education, (NEA 2006:March 17). The funding for NCLB has clearly not been in step with the spirit of the Act itself. Educators hope that the backlash will continue to make headway to replace much needed funding. The lawsuits, according to Michael Heise, are not likely to succeed in their stated goals (2006:7). However, Heise is optimistic that the suits are having a greater impact on the funding deficit, and on the rigidity of NCLB than all the efforts of lobbyists and other political pressures could (Heise 2006:7).

While lack of funding is a compelling complaint, critics of NCLB have other objections to the law and its language that go beyond money. Educators continue to attack the law for its high-stakes accountability, just as some critics had predicted (West & Peterson 2003:19). The NEA website states that the law is “seriously flawed” due to its punishment-not-assistance focus, the rigidity with which the mandates have been applied, and the one-size-fits-all testing paradigm (2005:Statement). ‘A good law does not demoralize good people,’ leveled one educator, who also cited the lack of positive impact that NCLB has had on disadvantaged populations that the law intended to help (Noddings 2005:38). Investing (as opposed to divesting) in urban schools, she argues, holds more promise than punishing everyone (Noddings 2005:38).

Others opposed to NCLB include educational researchers, and rural education advocates representing districts with small populations. Cynthia Reeves thoroughly discusses how the NCLB mandates “create challenges unique to rural schools” (2003:1). Rural schools may test as
few as 100 students and therefore have large variation in testing numbers from year to year. Rural schools spend more on transportation and spend more per student than urban schools. Also, the NCLB sanctions are more difficult to support with relatively stretched budgets, and lacking infrastructure and population. The law applies to the nation, yet was specifically designed to address urban needs. The argument that rural districts are a very poor fit for the mandates has some merit (Reeves 2003:1-7).

Most importantly, critics who are engaged in educational research have noted the significant political power-shift that followed NCLB, none quite as eloquently as Kathryn Borman, Kevin Carter, Daniel Aladjem, and Kerstin Le Floch in their chapter entitled “Challenges for the Future of comprehensive school reform:”

Historically, the federal role (in education) was quite limited. However, over the past half-century, the federal role expanded to include issues related to supporting the service of traditionally underserved populations. The federal role changed so dramatically with the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 that the U.S. Department of Education now delves into policy areas previously considered beyond its purview, (Borman, Carter et al. 2004:110).

The primary example of this was in the realm of teacher certification. “... NCLB’s requirements in the area of teacher qualifications provide a good example of how federal policy can extend into the classroom, affecting school and district-level hiring decisions,” (Borman, Carter et al. 2004:110). The researchers concluded that despite the fact that the Act targeted underserved populations, it is at odds with other federal programs that bring assistance and funding to urban schools. NCLB emphasized priorities, such as reading and math achievement, that conflict with schoolwide improvement efforts (Borman, Carter et al. 2004:111). This may force many urban schools to give up certain sources of funding to focus on NCLB mandates.
Others take aim at the underlying assumptions made in the bill’s language. One such assumption undergirds the law’s requirement that schools use scientifically based research in deciding upon which reforms to introduce to improve schools. It is the subject of debate as to whether schools or the federal government should decide or select what is scientifically based and what is not (Hademenos 2006:22). The government has established detailed guidelines for the “scientific basis” of educational interventions; however, these guidelines are not strictly enforced. The U.S. Department of Education (ED), with the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE) set forth guidelines in 2003 to establish well designed and implemented randomized controlled trials as the “gold standard” for educational interventions (ED, IES and NCEE 2003:1). CSR models are just one category of educational interventions. The guidelines provide a checklist for model developers, schools, and districts to evaluate whether an intervention is supported by rigorous evidence (2003:16-17). The checklist includes the following key items: (1) The study should be clearly described; (2) Assignment to intervention group and control group must be truly randomized; (3) Intervention group and control group must be well matched with no systematic differences; (4) Outcome measure must be valid, meaning they measure the outcomes the intervention addresses; (5) Percentage of participants that drop out must be small; (6) Outcomes for entire sample must be reported, even for those who drop out; (7) Long-term outcomes should be measured to show sustainability of effects; (8) Research should report effect size and statistical support for this; (9) Research that claims the effects are different for racial and other subgroups should be suspect; (10) All outcomes should be reported, not just outcomes with a positive effect; (11) Multiple sites should be studied for strong evidence; and finally (12) Study sites should be typical settings with regular teachers, or setting should be similar to the setting being considered for implementation (ED, IES and NCEE 2003:16-17). It is clear that the
guidelines were designed to assist districts and schools considering an intervention, not simply to enforce the guidelines.

Sunderman, Orfield and Kim (2006) further take aim at the assumption of the centrality of teachers. The authors submit that NCLB is a law about how to remove flawed teachers from schools. Sunderman et al. remind us that a wealth of research has shown that reform will fail “unless teachers embrace the ideas of the reform and receive extra support and resources to support the change” (Sunderman, Orfield and Kim 2006:16). NCLB targets teachers, and forces districts to hire “better” or newer teachers (Sunderman, Orfield and Kim 2006:16). It is not clear whether all schools can benefit from this process.

Even more basic is the attack on accountability itself. Some say accountability may have roots in shaky ground. “The law is based on the assumption that external accountability and the imposition of sanctions will force schools to improve and motivate teachers to change their instructional practices, resulting in better school performance” (Sunderman, Orfield and Kim 2006:16). They claim that the law is a contradiction:

The provisions that all teachers in schools receiving aid must be highly qualified is in conflict with the implicit assumption in the law's sanctions that any school not making the prescribed level of annual progress on standardized tests must put its teachers under intense pressure to do better” (2006:17).

They argue that “teachers are the central targets of the act” (2006:16). And they further suggest that the act provides no support or mechanism for attracting teachers to failing schools (2006:17). The mandates and sanctions greatly exacerbate the staffing problem with which high-poverty and urban schools already struggle, that of retaining quality teachers (Anyon 2007:425, Ponticell 2007:401, Sunderman, Orfield and Kim 2006:18). For these reasons and other more complex issues, critics maintain that NCLB is a law with “flawed assumptions” and a
fundamentally unfair focus on teachers as the problem element (Sunderman, Orfield and Kim 2006:16-19).

Despite the lure of accountability and the law’s romanticized language that promises a pure equitability, many argue that NCLB is leaving our nation’s children increasingly behind. Once touted as a sweeping bipartisan legislative victory, NCLB has divided educators and their representatives on Capitol Hill. Lawmakers appear to be continually supportive of the legislation, and its cornerstone: accountability. Yet educators, researchers and critics continue to organize in order to fight the sanctions and rigidity of NCLB.

**Comprehensive School Reform**

To begin I will illustrate the emergence of CSR, also known as CSR. I will then introduce the two models or brands of CSR particular to this study. One model, Success For All is in popular use nationwide, and provides a complete curriculum for schools. Two schools used Success For All from the sample: Berkland and Shoreland. The other model present in the sample is the Accelerated Schools Project. Also widely used, this model was designed to work with any existing curriculum, and provides no curriculum to schools. The Accelerated Schools Project was in use in the third school in the sample: Shoreland. I will continue now with an overview of what CSR is, and how it came about.

Following the report “A Nation at Risk,” (National Commission of Excellence in Education 1983) educators and government agencies became aware of the failure of the education system in the United States to create a competitive workforce; the report called this failure “the rising tide of mediocrity” (NCEE 1983:1). This report and others that followed demonstrated that US schools were in a crisis, evidenced by the poor comparison with schools in other developed nations (Desimone 2000:1-2). This led to three waves of reform efforts to remedy the issue. The first wave of reforms that followed the report was an “intensification of
the system that was in place,” and was criticized for its “top-down” and “piecemeal” approach (2000:2-3). The second wave of reforms involved improving relationships between schools and families, and better working conditions for teachers (2000:2). Yet this wave did not address the organization of schools; thus the status quo was maintained (2000:2) and only negligible effects on student achievement were realized (Desimone 2000:2; Rowan, Barnes and Camburn 2004:7).

According to Laura Desimone at the American Institutes for Research, the third wave of education reform that followed “A Nation at Risk,” became known as the Comprehensive School Reform, or CSR, movement. This movement involved scientific research that would distill and refine the practices of the most effective schools, and restructure schools to improve capacity, and eventually implement these on a broad scale (Desimone 2000:2-3; Aladjem 2007:90-91). The RAND Corporation is credited with forging this new direction in education reform, due to its ground-breaking 1975 “change agent study,” that eventually led to the establishment of the New American Schools Development Corporation (NAS) (Desimone 2000:7; Rowan, Barnes & Camburn 2000:5-9; Aladjem 2007:91). “Buried within the massive, five volume report of the RAND change agent study were a number of insights about factors promoting more successful and lasting implementation of planned educational change efforts—insights that have been confirmed repeatedly in successive waves of research on educational change,” (Rowan, Barnes & Camburn 2004:6).

As a result of these findings, education reform turned toward the reorganization of schools, combined with fundamental changes in the “delivery of instruction” based on deep understanding of teaching and learning (Desimone 2000:4). According to Rowan, Barnes and Camburn, the following factors were among those associated with favorable outcomes: teacher training, regular teacher planning meetings, quality curricular materials, empowerment of teachers in the implementation process, as well as alignment of goals and activities, and stable leadership (Rowan, Barnes and Camburn 2004:6).
The RAND Corporation founded the NAS in an effort to financially support the developers of eleven research-based models of “break the mold schools,” and to propagate successful models nationwide. They succeeded. In the 1990’s, the body of CSR research grew to inspire support from congress. The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program (CSRD), established by congress in 1994 (Cross 2004:iii-iv), provided schools and districts with funding streams called CSRD grants starting in 1998 to sustain reform efforts that fit the criteria within the CSRD program guidelines (Aladjem 2007:91). The CSRD program defined CSR as any reform efforts that met the following eleven criteria:

1. Employs proven methods and strategies based on scientifically based research
2. Integrates a comprehensive design with aligned components
3. Provides ongoing, high-quality professional development for teachers and staff
4. Includes measurable goals and benchmarks for student achievement
5. Is supported within the school by teachers, administrators and staff
6. Provides support for teachers, administrators and staff
7. Provides for meaningful parent and community involvement in planning, implementing and evaluating school improvement activities
8. Uses high-quality external technical support and assistance from an external partner with experience and expertise in schoolwide reform and improvement
9. Plans for the evaluation of strategies for the implementation of school reforms and for student results achieved, annually
10. Identifies resources to support and sustain the school's comprehensive reform effort
11. Has been found to significantly improve the academic achievement of students or demonstrates strong evidence that it will improve the academic achievement of students (US Department of Education 2004:). [Above criteria are listed on the US Department of Education website under the link “About CSR.”]
Due in part to these CSRD grants, and in part to the efforts of the NAS and the RAND Corporation, a multitude of designs or brands of CSR emerged. Some models were eventually widely used, while other grassroots models were specific to a single school (Aladjem 2007:91; Rowan Barnes and Camburn 2004:9). Support from the federal government quickly expanded to include the National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform (NCCSR) in 1999 to make available the wide array of research and resources to “build the capacity of schools to raise academic achievement of all students” (Cross 2004:ii). The NCCSR is still an active resource for educators and researchers alike interested in whole school improvement.

CSR garnered enormous support and attention since the 1990’s. Among Title 1 schools (schools serving disadvantaged populations, therefore eligible for Title 1 federal funding), CSR became commonplace. Today there is language within the NCLB legislation dedicated to support CSR activities (Aladjem 2007:91; Le Floch, Taylor and Thomsen 2005:2). CSR is in wide use today among the nation’s urban schools. Some researchers offer estimates of the number of the nation’s schools implementing CSR, however others caution that such a count can not be accurately measured (Aladjem 2007:92). More importantly, such a statistic has no bearing on the focus of this study. My concern is how teachers navigate the processes at the intersection of these reform efforts.

Research has shown that CSR was an effective strategy on the whole for raising achievement scores (Borman, Hewes, Overman and Brown 2004:54, 92-94). As the use of CSR became widespread among America’s urban schools, research turned toward support structures. Recent research has focused on the quality of implementation, shifts in the policy environment, as well as on the quality of the research that meets criteria number one: proven effectiveness of methods (Borman, Hewes, Overman and Brown 2004:94-97). In her compendium “Making CSR Work,” Laura Desimone delineated several factors as most contributive to the effectiveness of CSR. Implementation factors, leadership, role of the district, and resources topped her list.
Two of the most popular models of CSR according to the findings of the NLECSR are Accelerated Schools Project (ASP) and Success For All (SFA). These two models were heavily represented in the NLECSR sample. These two models had very different emphases and strengths. For the Accelerated Schools Project (ASP), collaboration was a key concept, in teaching, learning, and governance. ASP provided several tools for schools to self-monitor implementation. While ASP encouraged a part-time facilitator both onsite, and offsite with a partner such as a university, the school was the locus of decision-making. For Success For All quantity and quality of instruction is emphasized. Everything is provided, from materials, lessons and curriculum, professional development and assessments. Governance and monitoring of implementation is aided by a full time facilitator, making the process very specific and expensive. The model developer is the locus of decision-making (Accelerated Schools Plus 2006).

The NLECSR set out to define the outcomes of CSR, to uncover what conditions correlated with success of CSR implementation. One report that followed the study was entitled “A Review of the Design of Eight Comprehensive School Reform Models,” (Fast, Park, Kaplan, Herman and Aladjem 2001). The research design rated the eleven components specified above by the US Department of Education (ED) on scales of centrality and specificity. Centrality measured the degree to which the component is central to the design of the model (2001:9-11). Specificity measured the degree to which the component was prescribed (or controlled) by the model developer (2001:9-11).

Table 1 compares and contrasts the level of CSR control, for each model, in twelve organizational dimensions of schools. The table is based on factors established by Ellen Forte Fast, Jennifer Park, Jessica Kaplan, Rebecca Herman and Daniel Aladjem in an unpublished
report for the NLECSR (Fast, Park, Kaplan, Herman and Aladjem 2001:9-18). In Table 1, each organizational dimension is rated for *centrality and specificity*, comparing ASP and SFA.

Following Table 1 is a discussion of the terms *centrality* and *specificity* that authors used to describe these models.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of models pertaining to teacher data</th>
<th>Accelerated Schools Project</th>
<th>Success For All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Central, Guided</td>
<td>Peripheral, Guided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professional development</td>
<td>Central, Guided</td>
<td>Central, Prescribed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technical assistance</td>
<td>Secondary, Assisted</td>
<td>Secondary, Prescribed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Secondary, Guided</td>
<td>Central, Prescribed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Central, Guided</td>
<td>Secondary, Guided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Peripheral, Guided</td>
<td>Peripheral, Assisted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>Peripheral, Assisted</td>
<td>Central, Guided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>Peripheral, Assisted</td>
<td>Central, Prescribed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time scheduling</td>
<td>Peripheral, Assisted</td>
<td>Central, Prescribed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student grouping</td>
<td>Secondary, Assisted</td>
<td>Central, Prescribed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessment/monitoring</td>
<td>Secondary, Guided</td>
<td>Central, Prescribed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data-based decision-making</td>
<td>Central, Prescribed</td>
<td>Secondary, Guided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Fast, Park, Kaplan, Herman and Aladjem 2001:10-16)

Centrality and specificity both refer to and describe the level of control that a CSR model has over a particular school dimension. For example, some CSR models develop and provide their own mandatory curricular materials, making the curriculum central to, or a core component of, the model. This also would make the curriculum specific, or a prescribed requirement from which little room for deviation is given. Success For All (SFA) is an example of a model with high centrality and specificity of the curriculum, as well as other dimensions or components (Fast, Park, Kaplan, Herman and Aladjem 2001:13-18). In fact, on centrality and specificity of all dimensions or components, SFA was an outlier, scoring higher on specificity.
than the other seven models examined by the AIR’s review, and higher on centrality than most others (Fast, Park, Kaplan, Herman and Aladjem 2001:11-13).

Another CSR model that provided no curriculum might merely guide schools on how to approach and utilize their own existing curricular materials. The model would therefore score low centrality, meaning the curriculum was relevant but not a core concept for the model. The same school would score low on specificity for the curriculum because it would provide schools with the freedom to use any curriculum. The Accelerated Schools Project (ASP) is an example of such a model (Fast, Park, Kaplan, Herman and Aladjem 2001:13-18). In fact, ASP scored lower on centrality and specificity than all other models reviewed by the AIR (Fast, Park, Kaplan, Herman and Aladjem 2001:11-18), making this model an outlier in the opposite direction as SFA. I will now go into more detail in describing these two models in my sample.

According to the supplemental materials produced by the AIR for the NLECSR grant, Success For All (SFA) was specifically designed to address the problems of urban students (Fast, Park, Kaplan, Herman and Aladjem 2001:23). This popular model has a highly structured curriculum and detailed methods of instruction, as well as strictly timed instructional blocks, and even specified student grouping styles. Also known by some teachers as Roots and Wings, SFA provides an entire specific curriculum across all school subjects, and is made for first grade through sixth, including integrated assessments, and provides for tutoring as well, according to principal and teacher respondents from the Focus Study and from a preliminary report from the NLECSR (AIR 2001). Most instructional decisions are made for the school and for the teachers by the model. A facilitator is required to maintain implementation. Schools that adopt SFA put the faculty through intensive training at the beginning, and this training continues through the facilitator. SFA appealed to those who wanted everything covered in one funding package: new and integrated curricular materials and assessments, intensive teacher training, and simplified methods of monitoring teachers.
The Accelerated Schools Project (ASP) based on John Dewey’s collaborative inquiry theory, was designed by Henry Levin to promote analytical skills in students by emphasizing cross-curriculum connections, and exploring topics in depth rather than breadth (Accelerated Schools Plus 2007). This widely used model offers schools much more flexibility than any other model covered by the NLECSR study (Fast, Park, Kaplan, Herman and Aladjem 2001:11-18). ASP does not require or provide any materials, uses no timed portions or daily scheduling, and no specific assessments are provided. Rather, the models encourage portfolio, project and creativity assessment, and emphasize the measurement of critical thinking skills, and problem solving abilities in students (Accelerated Schools Plus 2007). Teachers attend professional development to learn how to organize and present materials, and pull resources together for in-depth instruction. The model developer expects the school to make decisions about instruction, curriculum and assessments (Accelerated Schools Plus 2007). This model appealed to those who preferred a high level of flexibility, or those who wished to avoid unnecessary changes (Fast, Park, Kaplan, Herman and Aladjem 2001:11-18).

According to Fast et al., ASP and SFA could not be more different (Fast, Park, Kaplan, Herman and Aladjem 2001:15). While all the other models clustered together on centrality and specificity scores, SFA scored highest for centrality and specificity and ASP was an outlier with the lowest score for these dimensions (2001:15). If model attributes were likely to influence teacher perceptions of No Child legislation, then a comparison of ASP and SFA, almost polar opposites, would reveal differences. It is not the focus of this research to complete a picture of either the Accelerated Schools Project model or the Success For All model, but rather to acquaint the reader with the basic differences between them, to facilitate an understanding of some potential differences in the results. CSR has become entrenched in the policy and process of schooling in the United States (Aladjem 2007:92, Desimone 2000:2-3). What remains is to better understand how these models emphasize priorities that may be at odds with NCLB. I will
concentrate on the teacher data from the NLECSR, in an effort to illuminate the intersection of CSR and NCLB, as they play out in the classrooms where implementation takes place, and teachers navigate competing pressures.

**Teacher as Street Level Bureaucrat**

Teachers and their practices are vital to any reform success (Desimone, 2000:50) and studies of teachers have in the past been severely limited (Borman, Carter et al., 2004:3-4; Hess 1992:176). Teachers more recently became the central figures in reform research, due to a “consensus about the importance of teacher change in the reform process” (Desimone 2000:3). Teachers are the ones that enact the reform to and for the students where the learning takes place (Bryk and Schneider 2002:5). Some argue that teachers also bear the primary responsibility for the success or failure of educational policies such as NCLB (Hess 2006:242).

The finding that teachers served as street-level bureaucrats was revealed in one of the reports issuing from the NLECSR, entitled “A Deeper Look at Implementation: School-level Stakeholders’ Perceptions of Comprehensive School Reform” (Cotner, et al. 2005:7-12). Authors argued “that school stakeholders respond to unique factors in [school, model and district] contexts that affect their understanding of CSR and ultimately their decisions to use model practices,” (2005:9). Authors used the street-level bureaucrat theory established by Michael Lipsky in 1980. Lipsky argued that people working in bureaucratic organizations establish strategies and routines to cope with pressures, and these routines define, or become, the policies that they enact (Lipsky 1980:xii). I agree with the findings that teachers engage with reform in an organizational context that “may either support or undermine reform” (Cotner et al. 2005:9).

If teachers are central to the success of reform, then it follows that certain supportive social dynamics between teachers and other school stakeholders, are important to the processes
of reform. I turn now to these dynamics in the research literature under the rubric of social capital.

**Social Capital**

Research has shown that social capital plays a crucial role in schools and in the enactment of educational reform. Social capital, a term that was first introduced to social science research by Pierre Bourdieu who distinguished social capital other forms of capital such as human capital by noting that social capital is “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network or more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu 1986:249).

Sociologist James S. Coleman adapted the concept and related it to trust in a system that in turn made the productive use of other resources possible (Coleman 1988:S98). Social capital exists between actors in a system, not within the actors as would a skill (e.g. human capital), and varies with changes in reciprocal relationships within that system (Coleman 1988:S98). Possessing a wealth of social capital makes certain achievements possible that would otherwise be out of reach (Coleman 1988:S98).

Educational policy-makers may soon take heed of a growing trend in research. Ample literature exists establishing that social capital is important to school outcomes such as academic improvement, retention, and capacity (Bryk and Schneider 2002:7-8, 123; Goddard 2003:70; Spillane and Thompson 1997: 189-190, 193-196). “Where schools build social capital, student achievement improves” (Uekawa, Aladjem and Zhang 2005:15). Roger D. Goddard found that “schools characterized by high levels of social capital had higher pass rates for their students on the high-stakes state-mandated assessments” (2003:69). Another study found social capital correlated with decreasing high school drop-out rates, or with increased student retention.
(Coleman 1988:S118-S119). There remains, however, an unfortunate lack of concern with these relational and social dynamics in educational policy (Bryk and Schneider 2002:7).

Not only are social capital and retention related; one study found that teachers wealthy in social capital are an important source of social capital for high school students deemed to be at risk for dropping out, irrespective of risk factors present (Croninger and Lee 2001:564-569). Further, teachers were the most important source of social capital for these students who were academically at risk (Croninger and Lee 2001:564-565). This meant that retention of these students was predicated on vital transmission of social capital from the teachers to their at-risk students (Croninger and Lee 2001:568-570). Teachers then serve as conduits, requiring social capital in their work relationships, and passing on social capital as a resource to their students.

Anthony S. Bryk and Barbara Schneider reported in 2002 that “social relationships at work in school communities” can build up a critical “broad base of trust” (2002:5) between the stakeholders. The authors supplant the term social capital with their own theory they called “relational trust” (2002:12-34). Relational trust is “an organizational property in that its constitutive elements are socially defined in the reciprocal exchanges among participants in a school community (2002:22). Respect and personal regard for others are two important elements of this relational trust (2002:23-25). Authors delve deep into the realms of personal choices, openness to improvement, types of relationships in schools, and asymmetry of power and knowledge among relationships, just to name a few of the dimensions explored in recent research. For example, Bryk and Schneider conducted research in three urban schools to develop their understanding of the important of trust in the formation of social capital. They found that trust among coworkers strengthens professional relationships; trust in leadership lubricates the day-to-day functions of schooling; and trust in teachers is critical to parent involvement (2002:5-34).

It follows that relational trust is crucial to teachers engaged in reform. However, relational trust and social capital are more than inputs for reform. The NLECSR study revealed that social capital itself is an important distinct outcome of some CSR models (Uekawa, Aladjem and Zhang 2005:16). Kazuaki Uekawa, Daniel Aladjem and Yu Zhang argued in their paper presented at the American Educational Research Association in 2005 that “social capital should be treated as an independent outcome goal of CSR” because that can lead to improved performance, and increased capacity (2005:1, 21). They found that teachers implementing CSR were “more embedded in a collegial network than those in comparison schools” (2005:10); that CSR governance practices had a significant effect on collegial networking; and that CSR strongly affects social capital through social roles (2005:10-15). They defined the following roles as “key manifestations” of social capital: collective commitment, collegial influence and teachers monitoring the capability of students through social roles (2005:2-3, 21-21). Trust may play an essential role in these outcomes. Studies point to the critical importance of social capital, collegial relationships and relational trust in school improvement efforts (Bryk and Schneider 2002:xiii-xv, Uekawa, Aladjem and Zhang 2005:15).
Trust is the main ingredient in a recipe for building strong social capital in a school. Further, social capital represents a kind of wealth—a resource of great importance in school improvement (Bryk and Schneider 2002:118-121). Spillane and Thompson described a “widening gap between the rich and the poor—that is, between districts [and schools] that are rich in human capital and social capital and those that are poor in these respects” (1997:199). The authors assert that this gap “poses a major educational policy challenge for anyone concerned about social equity” (1997:199).

The widening gap that authors described a decade ago continues, based on the collective findings of the Anthropology and Education Quarterly theme issue entitled “Race, Power, and the Ethnography of Urban Schools” (Volume 35, number 1, 2004). The issue is dedicated to exploring ethnography’s contributions to “understanding—and transforming—educational inequities in urban schools” (McCarty 2004:5). “Relentlessly and sometimes painfully, the articles in this issue document those inequities” (2004:5). Social equity in education is an American value, while inequity in education is an American reality. Educational policy must therefore show custodial concern for the social capital as well as potential for growth in social capital within schools, and for that matter, within teachers. However, the reality is that educational policies stubbornly fail to acknowledge these social dynamics (Bryk and Schneider 2002:7). NCLB is no exception. I intend to show that teacher perceptions in Dodgeland showed evidence of conflict between NCLB and CSR implementation. I suspect that the conflict between these policies centers on the development of social capital.

In the next chapter, I will explain the methods used in the original study from which my study was drawn. I will then explain my methods. First I will describe my sampling method, and then explain my analytical methods for this supplemental analysis to the recently completed study called the National Longitudinal Evaluation of Comprehensive School Reform (NLECSR).
Chapter 3
Methods

Methodology Overview

I performed a thematic analysis of qualitative data to illuminate my three research questions. First, what do teachers who are implementing comprehensive school reform (CSR) say about how No Child Left Behind (NCLB) impacts their work? Second, what do teachers’ responses reveal about how well NCLB as a policy aligns or misaligns with implementing CSR? Third, if there are perceptions of conflicts or misalignments among policies, where might these perceived misalignments lie? In order to explain my sampling method, I first turn to the sample of the National Longitudinal Evaluation of CSR (NLECSR) from which my sample was pulled. I described this study and the actors involved in the previous section.

The Focus Study Sample

The Focus Study team from the University of South Florida (USF) collected data from five urban school districts over the course of the NLECSR research. However, as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation began to draw national attention, the entity directing the NLECSR, the American Institutes for Research (AIR), directed the Focus Study team to develop instrumentation that probed respondents about NCLB and adequate yearly progress (AYP). The team returned to only three of the five districts for the second wave of data collection. Most importantly, the team only polled all levels of respondents (including teachers) in one particular district using the NCLB and AYP instrumentation. Because I was interested in teacher
perceptions of NCLB, this naturally limited me to this one district, Dodgeland. I analyzed interviews from only the second wave of data collection (2004) for the same reason. The data analysis strategy allowed me to exploit the richness in the ethnographic record; however, unlike the Focus study, my research is therefore not longitudinal.

**Dodgeland**

Dodgeland is a major metropolitan city in the Midwestern United States with a large proportion of its schools qualifying for Title I monies. Dodgeland School District was implementing standards-based school improvement long before NCLB required similar standards. Dodgeland had a strong district identity, and reputation for progressive schools, while resisting CSR prior to the mid 1990’s. According to District personnel, achievement scores eventually began to stagnate, and CSRD funding began to look like a solution to Dodgeland’s Board of Education. For the Focus Study, there were eight schools within the Dodgeland school district; however, only four were CSR schools; the others had no model, and were called “comparison” schools in a Focus Study report (Zhang, Shkolnik and Fashola 2005:1) reflecting the Focus Study’s quasi-experimental design.

**Sampling Method**

The NLECSR Focus Study sample was derived as an outlier subset of the much larger Core Study sample (AIR 2001: Project Summary.). This meant these schools were among the lowest performing in their respective districts. The rationale for the selection of Focus Study schools was reported by Karen Moriarty of the University of South Florida Focus Study Team in two unpublished documents. In a 2002 document entitled “Splits on the Elementary CSR Data—All Districts,” she reported that all schools in the Focus Study were drawn from the lowest 25% of schools in each district, based on district data (Moriarty 2002.). In another document entitled “Candidate Schools for Focus Study”, the author categorizes the achievement levels of schools in
the sample (Moriarty 2002.). Schools in the bottom quartile of district achievement fell into the “Top” category and schools where achievement was in the lowest 15% of district achievement fell into the “Bottom” category (Moriarty 2002).

My sample of CSR schools included three of the four possible CSR schools from Dodgeland. These were Berkland, Chamberland and Shoreland. According to the analyses performed by Karen Moriarty, Berkland and Chamberland were in the lowest quartile of achievement in Dodgeland district, and Shoreland achievement was in the lowest 15% of district schools (Moriarty 2002). The reading and math achievement data, collected by the research team for the Core Study, are available in Appendix A: Reading and Mathematics School Achievement Scores 1997-2004.

The Dodgeland school removed from the sample was Traceland, the largest school in the Dodgeland Focus Study sample. The decision to omit Traceland data was because Traceland had dropped its CSR model two years before data collection. Therefore, no data would be available regarding CSR implementation. The three remaining schools clustered together with regard to achievement (see Appendix A). My sample included these three remaining clustered schools: Berkland, Chamberland and Shoreland.

Schools reported levels of students’ achievement to the research team. Truly comparable state and national data are not available. School comparisons with state and national averages were not performed. However, the Nation’s Report Card, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), reported longitudinal national achievement averages for some of the same years. Appendix B is entitled “Reading and Mathematics: Percent at or Above Proficiency Nationwide” and provides national averages of reading and math achievement in 4th and 8th grades.
In considering the constructs appropriate for the purposes of this study, I narrowed my focus to data that reported teacher responses and perceptions of a series of key items that correspond to the central conceptual framework undergirding this study and these are teachers’ perceptions of: (1) school context, (2) school leadership, (3) CSR reforms, (4) curriculum, (5) professional development, (6) accountability and (7) policies, and (8) materials and resources. The Focus Study team coded the interviews using Nud*ist Qualitative Analysis software using two coders for each interview, to increase validity. The software then can pull all segments of an interview belonging to one code, or two intersecting codes, or can compare two codes, and much more. Using the Nud*ist software can aid the researcher by preventing the loss of data. Many combinations of the variables of interest were explored, and the team could easily measure by the number of hits or segments how powerful or common a connection might be. The next step was to place coded and pulled responses into tables. These tables, used to display data by code and category, are necessary for data reduction (Huberman and Miles 1994:432-434). Display in tables also helps to further illuminate connections within the data, and are best for developing theory grounded in the data itself (1994:432-434). Next I will discuss the organization of data within the display tables.

Teacher Interviews: Veteran Teachers and Newer Teachers

I included a total of twelve teacher interviews from three Dodgeland schools: Berkland, Chamberland and Shoreland. Pseudonyms established by the Focus Study served to protect the participants’ confidentiality. I divided the four teachers from each school into two groups. I defined veteran teachers as those teaching for 10 years or more. I defined newer teachers as those who taught for less than 10 years. Appendix C: Respondent Demographics contains demographic information for all respondents, including gender, ethnicity and grades and subject the teachers
taught. I created narratives to frame the teacher perceptions in their respective contexts. For more about the analysis, I turn to the analytical framework in the research.

**Analytical Framework for the Research**

The Core Study team worked with Focus Study team to develop a complex construct key for the entire study. Interviews, observations and other documents were coded based on the construct key the team developed. All teacher interview questions used by the Focus Study are available in Appendix D: Teacher Interview Protocol for the Focus Study.

I necessarily added codes required by my research questions, and removed certain codes that did not reflect the focus of the research. I coded data related to enrollment policy and student population. For example, teachers spoke about the *kinds of students* they had. This reflected teacher awareness of the context-blind policy contexts in which they worked. I removed codes that dealt with dimensions not covered in the research. The Focus Study dimensions I removed included: some aspects of leadership, principal experience, district support, role of the facilitator, community involvement and partnerships, technology, specific (named) assessments, opinions of math curriculum, and additional (meaning non-CSR) school improvement programs in place.

Table 2 displays the analytical constructs under-girding the conceptual framework of the research. The constructs in Table 2 were adapted from the framework utilized in the Focus Study. Table 2 reflects the organization of minor constructs within the central conceptual framework. Data display tables used in my analysis were organized with respect to the structure in Table 2. Meanings of the constructs, for example, *resources*, were established by the Focus Study and embedded in the instrumentation. For example, *resources* in this context referred to teacher perceptions of resources including, but was not limited to, books, teacher guides, manipulatives, computers, paraprofessionals, tutors and facilitators.
I simplified the Focus Study display tables based on my adaptations. Then I returned to the interviews to input any missing data. I compiled the data into display tables that contrasted the veteran and newer teacher perceptions. H. Russell Bernard asserts that an important part of qualitative analysis is the table (1994:365). Tables of ethnographic data may lose some of the rich detail, but the power to bring patterns to the surface is worth the reduction into such tables (1994:370). This is in agreement with Coffey and Atkinson who indicate that after coding, data must then be sorted before analysis is appropriate (1996:31). After pouring over the extensive tables arranged by construct within schools, I looked for themes. Themes would be responses that revealed salient rhetoric, were alike or similar, or conversely, those that disagreed. I then used tables to construct summaries with respect to the constructs. These summaries were narratives that explored the themes found in the data. This method was appropriate because it paralleled the methodology utilized in the Focus Study research.

The Results chapter contains three school narrative summaries that frame the teachers’ perceptions in the context of their school, CSR model and experience level, in order to present

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Constructs</th>
<th>Minor Constructs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Context</strong></td>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>District role; District policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher turnover; Student mobility</td>
<td>Principal Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment; Class size</td>
<td>Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School climate</td>
<td>Decision-making structures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the thematic findings. Themes included teacher perceptions of misalignments of the pressures they face, as they navigate their way through shifting standards, goals and constraints.

There are two reasons I performed an additional analysis even though the NLECSR had one already in place. The first is that there were data on opinions of NCLB that the USF team deemed unimportant, and left out. These data were relevant to the research. The other reason is that I wanted to ask more questions of interest to an anthropological thesis than the client structure allowed.

Research Questions

My research questions were these:

1. What do teachers who are implementing CSR say about how NCLB impacts their work?

2. What do teachers’ responses reveal about how well NCLB as a policy aligns or misaligns with implementing CSR?

3. Where might these perceived policy misalignments lie?

I further asked whether model attributes influence teacher perceptions, and if veteran teachers and newer teachers offered different perspectives. I then turned to the literature for support of the themes found in the data.

Some research suggests that No Child is compatible with CSR (Le Floch, Taylor and Thomsen 2005:13-15). I used teacher data to reveal whether or not teachers perceptions in Dodgeland tend to reveal misalignments between CSR and NCLB policies, and if so, how teachers characterize these.
Chapter 4

Results

Organization of the Results

Dodgeland is a pseudonym for the urban school district in which my three sample schools are located. I first introduce the district, and briefly cover school demographics in my sample. I then organize summary narratives for each school. School summaries begin with an introduction to the teachers. I then organize results of under headings that parallel those utilized by the Focus Study. I use district, school and teacher pseudonyms to protect participant confidentiality.

The subheadings for the school summaries are based on the format utilized in the Focus Study. The headings begin with an introduction to the teachers. The headings that follow are: Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) Adoption, CSR Components Articulated, Perceived Outcomes, Model Fit, Challenges to Implementation, Professional Development, Materials and Resources, and finally, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

These subheadings refer to dimensions developed by the Focus Study that undergirded the instrumentations as well as the analyses. I utilized these constructs because each relates to one or more of my research questions.

The first research question is “What do teachers who are implementing CSR say about how NCLB impacts their work?” The dimensions that address the work of teachers who are implementing CSR are specifically: CSR Adoption, CSR Components Articulated, Perceived
Outcomes. *CSR adoption* addresses how CSR involves structural changes at all levels of a school. This addresses shifts in local policy that are relevant to *how teachers say NCLB impacts their work*. *CSR components* addresses how teachers say NCLB impacts their work. Because CSR has many components, and is therefore comprehensive, teachers’ perceptions of these components addresses how model attributes contribute to alignment, and how model attributes influence teachers’ perceptions. *Perceived outcomes* of implementation addresses whether teachers perceive the model to be effective in addressing school goals. This address more directly what teacher say about implementation and its effectiveness and this influences teachers’ perceptions of alignment or misalignments of policies.

The second and third research questions are, “What do teachers’ responses reveal about how well NCLB as a policy aligns or misaligns with implementing CSR?” and “Where might these perceived policy misalignments lie?” The dimensions utilized in the results that address these are: Model Fit, Challenges to Implementation, Professional Development, Materials and Resources, and finally, NCLB and AYP. Perceptions of model fit, or how appropriate the particular model of CSR fits with the specific needs of a school, are critical to understanding how CSR and NCLB may align, and to determining where these policies may misalign.

Professional development addresses teacher certification mandates imposed by NCLB. Materials and resources addresses both the contexts of these schools, and teachers’ perceptions of how the policy environment supports their work. NCLB and AYP address the teachers’ awareness of the federal policy and the AYP mandates, and teachers’ perceptions of NCLB and how the policy aligns or misaligns with CSR implementation.

I do not deeply interrogate the meanings of some of these constructs, for example, *materials and resources*, and chose to adopt the meanings from Focus Study because these were embedded in the interview instrumentation and therefore the actual teacher responses.
Demographics

Dodgeland is a major metropolitan city in the Midwestern United States with a large proportion of its schools qualifying for Title I monies. Dodgeland has a strong district identity, and reputation for progressive schools based on building local capacity, according to the field summary report from the Focus Study. Dodgeland was implementing standards-based school improvement reforms long before NCLB required similar standards. According to Focus Study data, achievement scores eventually began to stagnate, and CSRD funding began to look like a solution to Dodgeland’s Board of Education. Eventually the district began to require the schools identified for improvement to adopt a model.

All three Dodgeland schools in my sample had over 90% low-income students. Two schools in my sample had adopted and implemented the Success For All (SFA) model of CSR; the third adopted the Accelerated Schools Project (ASP) model. Next, I will briefly cover the school level demographics.

Table 3 contains the demographic information for the three schools in my sample for 2004. The table includes total enrollment for each school, percentages of ethnic minorities, percentages for low-income students, and student mobility rates.

Table 3
School Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Berkland</th>
<th>Chamberland</th>
<th>Shoreland</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European American</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian /Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low income</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Mobility Rate</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The three Dodgeland schools in my sample, Berkland, Chamberland and Shoreland, have varying demographics which are displayed in Table 3. Berkland, a Success For All school, served 750 students, who were approximately 75% Latino, and 15% African American students, over 90% of whom were low-income students. According to the Focus Study summaries, Berkland had a 25% student mobility rate. Chamberland, an Accelerated Schools Project school served 700 students who were entirely African American and low income. Chamberland had 25% student mobility according to the Focus Study summary. Shoreland, the smallest, was a Success For All school with an enrollment of 400 students; 95% percent were Latino, 5% of were African American, and 95% of Shoreland students were low-income. Shoreland had a 30% student mobility rate according to the Focus Study summary. It is fair to note that the student mobility rates among these schools were not high, however teachers tended to report these levels as high, or to report mobility as a major challenge in implementing CSR and meeting mandates.

The teachers in my sample worked in depressed neighborhoods, served low-income populations, used old materials in the classroom, and often worked long hours. Many were committed to long term goals. Although some teacher turnover was reported, many teachers had taught in their respective schools for several years. Veteran teachers are those that have ten or more years teaching experience. Newer teachers were those that had less than ten years teaching experience.

**Berkland**

Berkland is the largest school among my sample of three Dodgeland elementary schools. The school served an enrollment of 750 students. Berkland’s principal, who had brought the SFA model to the school, had announced her retirement earlier in 2004. Data was collected during the principal’s last two months on the job. Strong principal leadership and a principal’s loyalty to CSR are both critical for its continuance (Borman and Aladjem 2005:2-20). Due the instability of
leadership at the time, the continuation of the Success For All (SFA) model of CSR was in question. Berkland did not achieve AYP in 2004. According to teachers and other stakeholders, the school struggled with outdated materials, dwindling material resources, student-mobility, challenging enrollment policies, growing class size, teacher certification and achieving AYP.

In 1996, Berkland adopted the CSR model Success for All (SFA) eight years prior to data collection. The principal initiated the process, sold the staff on the program, and the staff participated in a vote. Berkland’s staff agreed that reading scores were low and inconsistent before model adoption. Teachers shared a desire to bring everyone together and focus efforts on reading as a target. The model passed the vote in the fall of 1996.

By 2000, the CSR&D funding had run out for Berkland. Additionally the school began to fail AYP, and NCLB mandates increased, implementation became more and more difficult. Teachers were polled about implementing CSR, and about NCLB, for the Focus Study in 2004. Teacher morale suffered during this time, from both principal leadership instability and competing pressures. Berkland teachers were dedicated, qualified teachers who understood the CSR model, were concerned about their students as well as their jobs, and were knowledgeable about NCLB mandates and sanctions. I turn now to introduce the teachers at Berkland.

Berkland Teachers

Berkland has four teachers, Ms. Amond, Ms. Nunes, Ms. Haas and Ms. Ingles. Ms. Amond and Ms. Nunes were newer teachers with less than ten years of experience. Ms. Haas and Ms. Ingles are veteran teachers with well over ten years of experience teaching.

Table 4 displays the pseudonyms for Berkland teachers, and includes my classification as a newer teacher or veteran teacher. I included Table 4 to facilitate the reading of the results for Berkland.
Ms. Haas is a veteran teacher at Berkland, with 17 years of teaching experience. She teaches 7th and 8th grade reading and Science. Ms. Ingles is a veteran teacher at Berkland, with 17 years of teaching experience. Berkland was one of the earliest schools in the district to adopt Success For All, and because of this, veteran teachers collectively see Berkland Elementary School as a CSR pioneer community. Berkland had failed AYP that year (2004), and Ms. Ingles doubted the school would pass AYP the following year. One of her main concerns is that Berkland lacked leadership, “I’ll be blunt. We are a ship without a rudder right now.” At the time of data collection veteran teachers at Berkland served on a committee that would assist the district in selecting a new principal.

Ms. Nunes is a newer teacher at Berkland with seven years of experience.

Ms. Amond taught for four years, all four at Berkland Elementary, teaching 3rd grade. Ms. Amond describes her third grade students as being below second grade level, “I’m supposed to be at one; first grade, eight months...But I think they are working on a lower level than that...Some of them may be working at, maybe one; first grade three months, seven months. Some of the students are at maybe the beginning of first grade.” Here she indicates that her 3rd grade students are at an achievement level found toward the end of first grade. Although she does not teach dual language she admits, “Some years they give me Spanish Reading. Some years I get English Reading.” Ms. Amond does not like the model, and mentioned several
challenges to implementation. I now turn to the teacher perceptions of CSR, from adoption to outcomes.

*Comprehensive School Reform: Adoption*

Ms. Ingles recalls the process of adopting the Success For All CSR model, “I remember that somebody came in from SFA. And they talked to us, and they explained it. I know that we had time for question and answer. I know we were allowed to vote as a staff. And then I can remember that vote was in favor. And therefore, we adopted it. And then we were trained… We’ve had it for like eight years now.” Because she had voted for the model, her perspective was important to understanding the adoption process.

Ms. Haas recalls the reasons the model was selected. “Reading scores were just everywhere up in the air. They weren’t where they should’ve been.” She relates that the principal initiated the process to bring up the reading scores. “We figured we needed a program that everybody was doing the same thing at the same time, teaching the same technique. And when the child goes, is promoted, they will have had that basis.” When asked how new teachers learn the model, Ms. Haas said simply, “The teacher is required to go to where the service is, and get the training for SFA, be it one day or two days, however long it takes them to get that service.”

Ms. Amond arrived at Berkland after SFA was in place. When asked about the adoption of the model, she had this to say, “I don’t know. I think the model was selected by the principal…It started about five years earlier before I came.”

Ms. Nunes knows why the model was selected. Despite being newer, she offers this when asked for the reasons the model had been selected, “Because of the data that was—they showed was positive. They said that the reading level would go up.” She reasons that a powerful reason to adopt the model was that it was proven to raise scores. She demonstrates awareness that CSR is research based intervention.
Ms. Amond received some training in SFA. “There are some workshops.” But when Ms. Nunes was asked how new teachers came to learn the model, she said, “Very haphazardly.” She went on, “I tell you I learn it, because I took it upon myself to take the manual.” She continued, “They give the new teachers an equivalent of let’s say a week’s training. There is no way that that program can be learned in a week’s time. And it’s a sink or swim kind of situation.” She indicated that new teacher training was just not enough, and added, “I would say (it is) counter productive.”

Teachers’ responses reflect an understanding of why the model was being implemented, and an understanding that SFA had been in place for several years. Ms. Ingles recalls voting on the model, and remembered the feeling among the staff at the time that something was needed to unite teachers’ efforts, and have an impact on reading scores. Ms. Amond knows enough of the model to lament her superficial training.

**CSR Components Articulated**

Success For All is a CSR model that has a high level of specificity, according to Ellen Forte Fast, Jennifer Park, Jessica Kaplan, Rebecca Herman and Daniel Aladjem (2001). Their comparison research of eight CSR models found that different CSR brands handle model components with varying levels of control. Beginning with the highest amount of control, CSR components might be: prescribed, tailored, guided, merely assisted or simply not addressed. Where as one brand of CSR offered assistance with time scheduling, another strictly prescribed time scheduling down to the minute (2001:6-18). The Success For All model scored higher than most, prescribing many of its components: governance structures, professional development, time scheduling, student grouping, curriculum and assessments. SFA offered tailored instruction style and inclusion guidelines (indicating slightly more flexibility), but did not yet offer a curriculum tailored for students learning English. SFA provided more flexible control over other components, offering only guidance on parent involvement and data-based decision-making, and
merely assisting with the technology component. Because SFA prescribes several components, teachers will often describe the model as “structured.” [Table 1: Centrality and Specificity of CSR Dimensions by Model has information about centrality and specificity for dimensions of both models in the sample.]

Teachers at Berkland are able to several of these components, displaying deep understanding of their CSR reform. Ms. Ingles likes the model because of the pedagogical approach. She explained:

I think the thing that we liked most about it is that it was it was starting where the child was, and moving them up, and not necessarily…that the grouping was more homogenous, instead of heterogeneous. I think that they liked it because their, the hope of having less than 20 in your Reading class, that there was going to be tutoring for the students…It was a structure that seemed to have a lot of support with it. I think those were all reasons why we voted for it…

Ms. Ingles also likes the instruction and assessment components. “I like the fact that it is assessing the children where they’re at and constantly striving and pushing them forward. I like the fact that we can use novels. I like the fact that they’re constantly reviewing what they have themselves to keep things current and new.” She reports that Success For All was making improvements that kept the momentum going, “That they’re growing and that we’re growing with them. I like that. They never used to have anything up past sixth grade. Now they have a Reading program for 6th, 7th and 8th grade.”

Ms. Ingles appreciates the approach to student grouping. “I like the fact that it is homogeneous, not heterogeneous. I think that’s a strength.” Ms. Haas also likes the student grouping, saying she saw positive results. “It makes the children work together, and they’ve got to reason through why they see it as one way. And then have to work with a group, in getting the
group’s input. So I think that it helps them to learn.” And in addition to grouping, she said of the
strict time scheduling, “It gave me more structure to go by.” Ms. Haas praises the instructional
component, “So it gave me the structure, and it addressed some areas that we did not want to
address before, in just the general Reading program. Like we didn’t read to the children.” Here
she indicates that a strategy important to reading achievement had been missing, that SFA
supplies.

Ms. Ingles also remembers the promises of support from the developers. In relating why
she voted for the model, she said it “seemed to have a lot of support with it.” When probed about
what kinds of support, she elaborated. “The aides were all supposed to be used for tutoring.” She
explains, “Support in that we have two people who are not in classrooms who are supposed to be
helping us implement, and handle all the administrative parts of the program.” She admits that
most teachers “don’t always like the paperwork that comes with the SFA.” Having voted for the
model, Ms. Ingles is able to articulate the many of the complexities of the SFA model.

Ms. Haas also touches on other components such as data-based decision-making, “They
look at the test scores, and look at where the child, where the children fall in the test scores, in
how they’re grouped.” She also mentions parent involvement, “A weakness is the parental
component. The parents do not enforce the 20 minutes of reading at home, or don’t understand it,
or don’t appreciate it.”

Veteran teachers articulate several of the components of the SFA model, including time
scheduling, student grouping, instruction and curriculum, professional development, data-based
decision-making, parent involvement and class size. Ms. Haas who had been implementing SFA
for eight years was very familiar with the components and is able to discuss these, and
understood that the model was comprehensive, or had many components. She is fully
implementing SFA, and did not appear to have difficulties, except with those supports that she
cannot control, such as class size and parent involvement. In all, she is able to mention more components than any other teacher in my sample.

Berkland’s newer teachers articulate several of the components of the SFA model. Professional development, research-tested methods, and the curriculum and instruction alignment were among them. Ms. Nunes lists some of the components as though they were ingredients in a recipe, “This is like the making of a lets say oatmeal… I think what happens is that the teachers become so overwhelmed because they have to learn all these components in such little time that what you get is a haphazard kind of oatmeal.” She continues, “They use partner reading. They use listening comprehension. They use read aloud, book shares and a court of cooperative teams. That is a must.” Here she shares her understanding of the instructional and student grouping components in SFA, “They do a lot of partner—You’re supposed to read with your partner… They need to be helping each other. And they need to make sure that their partner is on task and knows how to read all the words.” Ms. Nunes also understood the comprehensiveness of the SFA model, “I think what happens is that the teachers become so overwhelmed, because they have to learn all these components in such little time.” Ms. Nunes also articulates the link between the effectiveness of CSR and the staff support, “What I want to say is that there’s got to be a uniformity of the practices of all of the classrooms, regardless of their likes or dislikes.”

Ms. Amond reports that the prescribed grouping was made difficult by her students, who were the lowest scoring students, “I have a lot of problem students too, so it’s hard. So I try to separate to separate the kids who don’t listen…But when you have more than four it’s hard to group them.” She lists these instruction components, “You know, there’s like the Reading portion, then there’s a Phonics portion, and then at the end there’s a Writing portion.” She struggled with the time scheduling, “It’s split up into day one you do these things. Day two, you
do these things, and day three you do these things. But I just, I can’t get through the whole lesson.”

Both newer teachers were trained in the SFA model and had been with the model for four years, and clearly understood the model, its comprehensiveness and the need for full implementation. I will turn now to the perceptions of model fit, perceived challenges to implementation and perceived outcomes of the model.

Model Fit

Perceptions of model fit are related to teacher support of a model. Model fit can be described as the appropriateness of a particular model for the school where it has been adopted. Models differ greatly in their approach, components and level of prescription upon components and therefore offer varying degrees of flexibility.

Ms. Ingles likes the model. “I think that most teachers will tell you yes, they’re excited and they like SFA, and they want SFA to continue.” Because she praises aspects of Success For All, she suggests an apparent fit between model and teacher, “I think that SFA has strengthened my beliefs that what I was doing is correct.” Ms. Ingles represents a veteran teacher loyal to the model. Ms. Haas agreed the model was a good fit with the school, she replied, “Uh, yes. Because it takes children from where they are.”

Ms. Nunes provides no direct responses to the issue of model fit with the school. She likes the model, “It is a difficult program to follow. None-the-less it’s good.” She also says, “I definitely like it compared to [other schools where you’re] on your own you basically do your own program.” Although Ms. Nunes struggles with certain aspects of implementation, she shows her support of and commitment to the model. Ms. Amond has no responses with respect to the model fit at Berkland.
Challenges to Implementation

Ms. Ingles touches on several challenges to successful implementation of the SFA model. First she describes the quality of the instructional materials, “We’re not always getting the newer material that’s being offered by SFA. And most often that is a money issue…We have all the old material, all the material that is wrong, because it wasn’t edited well.” She also indicates that there are no materials for seventh and eighth grades. Instructional materials are not the only resource Ms. Ingles claims is lacking, “Well the aides were all supposed to be used for tutoring… And I did not get tutoring (laugh)!“ She indicated that facilitators and tutors were expected when the staff voted for the model, “We have two people who are not in classrooms who are supposed to be helping us implement, and handle all the administrative parts of the program.” It was not clear why facilitators are not being used to help with implementation. She says resources relate to class size, “In the beginning of the program we were really good about keeping the class to 20. But as money has dwindled from States, and the City positions have been cut, your reading class is going to go up, because we have fewer teachers.”

Beyond the overburdened resources, Ms. Ingles reports that low parental involvement was a challenge to implementation, “The parents do not enforce the 20 minutes of reading at home, or don’t understand it, or don’t appreciate it, or…I mean we’ve been doing this for eight years. It’s been the same for eight years. We’ll have the parents come and say, “Well my kids say they have no homework.” But they have 20 minutes of Reading homework every night.”

Ms. Haas said that student mobility had a negative impact on her successful implementation of SFA in the classroom. She illustrated what happens when new students arrive:

Our children had to tell them, “At this time, when that happens, we are quiet and we’re listening attentively,” or whatever. So it takes us a little while to get them in the skill. The writing skills are not there. The reading skills are not there. Many of the new
children don’t like reading to, orally. So even one-to-another they don’t like doing it. So it’s almost like pulling teeth, to get them up to speed.

Veteran teachers elucidate several challenges to implementation, describing a lack of resources, growing class size, low parent involvement, and student mobility.

Ms. Nunes is able to articulate several perceived challenges to her successful implementation of the model. First she recognizes that successful implementation required full support, “They said that the reading level would go up. However they did not say that if you did not get the materials to use, for example getting new books and keeping your class size small, you know, those are components to this program that make it a success or not a success.” Among the staff, Ms. Nunes says support for the model was thin:

There has got to be some kind of uniformity that a teacher is following. If a teacher follows the program to the ‘T’ so to speak, and then you get students from let say class B where the teacher just read to kids and let them do whatever. What I want to say is that there has got to be a uniformity of the practices of all of the classroom, regardless of their likes or dislikes, because that is the problem. You have a good population that hates the program.

Ms. Nunes also struggles with the student grouping component. “It is just when you come to the cooperative grouping that becomes difficult because, again, we have children that are coming and leaving. And it becomes difficult in that way.” Ms. Nunes dislikes having a structured curriculum combined with a lack of new materials. “It’s a structured program. I think that where we have a problem is the overpopulated classroom and not enough books for the kids.” When asked if there were other weaknesses, she replied, “The book. The children having to repeat the same book…Last year, they were doing the beginning sixth grade. And yet, some of those materials that I need to use now have been used already. So I can’t re-read some of the
books, because I’ll have children that are bored.” She desires newer SFA materials, and supplemental materials to provide more flexibility for her students.

Ms. Amond perceives that teachers were not universally committed to the model. Likewise, she suggests the developer was less than fully committed to Berkland. She is clear that developer supports were lacking, especially monitoring implementation, and providing technical assistance:

They were supposed to come back in [pause] January? I think they were supposed to come and they never did for some reason. I don’t know if they were going to reschedule or what. But they come every year, and they observe the teachers. And then after they observe teachers, they get together and discuss what they saw, what they like, or how you can improve it.

Ms. Amond struggled with other prescribed components. The first of which was student grouping, “I have a lot of problem students…So I try to separate the kids who don’t listen. But when you have more than four it’s hard to group them.” She admits having trouble grouping, but shares that students have trouble with the grouping as well, “I don’t know if you heard but one of the children actually said, ‘He can’t read.’ So he was upset that his partner couldn’t read. And I’m supposed to group them like that, so they can help each other. But some of them don’t want to help their partner. So it’s hard.” The next prescribed component Ms. Amond struggles with is time-scheduling:

There are days that I get frustrated at it, because I have to cover all these things in a certain amount of period of time. And I can’t do it. I can’t cover all that, especially with these kids that are struggling…There’s like the reading portion, then there’s a phonics portion, and then at the end there’s a writing portion. But I find myself, that I cannot cover everything…It’s split up into day one you do these things. Day 2, you do these
things, and day 3, you do these things. But I just, I can’t get through the whole lesson. So it’s frustrating. Whereas if I didn’t have to follow that program I think I would feel more at ease, in kind of pacing myself. With this I feel like I have to cover all those things.

Ms. Amond perceives the prescribed nature of the SFA model as frustrating, especially with regards to the time-scheduling. She makes the connection between the promised outcomes and prescribed components, as she indicated here, “The program tells you that they’re flexible. But then I feel like if I’m not covering all those things, then I’m not doing the program the way I’m supposed to. And I won’t see that progress.” Ms. Amond mentions several challenges to implementation, including lacking developer support, student grouping and time management. She also desires newer SFA materials, and supplemental materials to provide more flexibility for students.

Newer and veteran teachers alike share a desire for more flexibility in implementation, more technical assistance and CSR developer support, as well as improved materials and a lower class size.

Perceived Outcomes

Veteran teachers report several positive outcomes that she attributed to the SFA model. Some of these were teacher outcomes. “I think that SFA has strengthened my beliefs that what I was doing is correct,” asserts Ms. Ingles, implying that the model gives her confidence. Later when asked to give a specific outcome of the model, she replied, “My excitement!”

In addition to teacher outcomes, Ms. Haas attributed student outcomes to the model, such as, “More consistent reading scores with those children who have been in the program for, three to five years, I want to say. We have a lot of students transfer in, and we can see the difference.” Ms. Haas says the model improved student writing. She says when new students enroll, “We know that these children haven’t been doing the writing component in the schools
[they attended before]. These children haven’t been doing the listening.” She has confidence in its power to make a positive impact on student outcomes. The veteran teachers report positive outcomes, and commitment to the model.

Ms. Nunes, like Ms. Haas, had praise for the model, “I thank God for the last [few] years for SFA. Most of my students have grown a year.” Like her veteran colleague, she also saw positive outcomes in her students, “In my particular practice I have seen my students grow in their reading. And for the ones that do not like to read, at least it has minimized their attitude of how they hate reading. So that is a good thing. In the general population I think it is systematic so it lets the kids know what to expect.” Here she shared her classroom observations, and attested to the positive impact of the model’s systemic nature upon the school culture. Ms. Nunes was able to clearly elaborate on the growth she had seen, much of it having to do with school culture:

The success that the kids experience—When you see them walk in, they are happy. They want to share books. The fact that they could shine, even if it is for three minutes, about a book that they have read! They are connecting with it and having others connect with it. I think it gives the students a voice. It gives them self-esteem. It is like being part of something…a community.

Ms. Amond hesitated when probed for the impact on reading scores, “So I think they made 1%. Don’t quote me because I don’t know. But I think they’ve been making like 1% progress in Reading. Maybe a little better, I’m not sure. But I think they like the program, so they just kept it.” She couldn’t quantify a shift in scores, however, she saw growth in the past, “With the kids that I had before, most of them were making that progress. And I felt good actually. But with this, this new group of kids, I feel like they’re not. And so then I get frustrated. And I feel like I should be…spending more time at this portion or whatever portion, and not worry about, ‘I have to do this next and I have to cover that!’”
Three of the four teachers see positive changes as a result of the SFA model. However, Ms. Amond admits that with the latest shift in student population, it was her frustration that was growing, Ms. Nunes did attribute growth in her students, and cultural and attitudinal improvement in her school community to the SFA model. Ms. Ingles reports positive outcomes in her own practice.

**Materials/Resources**

Material resources are a primary challenge to implementation according to the Berkland data. Teachers repeatedly mention a lack of SFA resources when discussing challenges to implementation. I return to teachers’ perceptions of resources, to better understand the resources at Berkland in general.

Ms. Ingles reported a lack of materials, as well as commented on the age and poor quality of existing materials at Berkland, most of which were original SFA materials. This is in part due to Berkland pioneering SFA in the district. She also knew that the developer had made improvements, “And they’ve made modifications to it, which they should. But we haven’t gotten any of those newer materials. We’re still working off the original treasure hunts, the original reading comprehension books.”

Teachers lament the growing class size, as I reported in the challenges to CSR implementation section. Teachers relate resources to the issue of class size. Ms. Ingles underscores the impact of funding on class size, “But if the building doesn’t have the money to finance it, what do you do? You have class size higher then.” She alludes to a general funding crisis that lay at the root of her unmet resource needs, “We’re here in this classroom. And we’re not always getting the newer material that’s being offered by SFA. And most often that is a money issue.”
Ms. Ingles lists other sources of reading material that fit with Berkland’s approach, “And because SFA uses, allows you to use either a basal or a novel approach—and this school has picked up a novel approach—I go to all kinds of workshops and I get 30 books, and then I come back and I’m like ‘treasure hunt!’” Ms. Harris found supplemental materials at workshops and district libraries to support a love of learning for her students. She relies on district support and ingenuity in order to close what she perceived as a resource gap, and faithfully implement CSR.

Ms. Ingles says that class size has an impact on her practice, and as a result, more teachers were needed. When asked to sum up a wish list of resources, she replies, “Well, more teachers, to lower class size down to 20 again…It does make a difference. It’s amazing. It doesn’t sound like six would make a difference, but six does make a difference. I have 26 in my Reading class now.” She reports lacks in developer support, “The aides were all supposed to be used for tutoring…We have two people who are not in classrooms, who are supposed to be helping us implement and handle all the administrative parts of the program…” She reports that the promised tutors never arrived. In spite of a lack of resources and growing class size, Ms. Harris has found ways to make reading and learning more fun, and find the resources that she needs to fully implement SFA.

Ms. Haas does not have enough materials to implement CSR, claiming that her students are faced with reading the same books from year to year, as I reported in the section on challenges to implementation, “Some of those materials that I need to use now have been used already. So I can’t re-read some of the books, because I’ll have children that are bored.” Ms. Haas now searches outside of Berkland for supplemental materials, “But, I’m getting books from other places now. And the books are interesting, and they really have the children involved in the reading. And if I can get that interest level right there, then the rest of my work is basically done. Even to answering the questions, if they’re interested in that book, they’ll have read it, and they’ll be capable of answering questions.” Here she makes her case that quality resources were
integral to maintaining student interest. She discovered a district resource that no other teacher in the district reported using, “There’s a professional library at [Dodgehill] and that’s a like a professional development center for all [Dodgeland] Public Schools. And somebody told me about a library that they have there, and you can take books out. I’ve got a copy of a book that I’ve had since December.”

Ms. Nunes agreed with Ms. Haas, that new books and reading materials were sorely needed, and that class size was a problem, “I think that where we have a problem is the overpopulated classroom and not enough books for the kids.” She cites an instance of this repetition, “For example, if a child had to repeat lets say 3.2…and they read, I don’t know, “Charlie, Did You Carry the Flag,” –they read that last year–I think that the following year there should be another selection, maybe high interest, low level, so that they experience success. Because after all, the acronym is Success for All.” Both Ms. Nunes and Ms. Haas agreed that the model-specific materials were lacking, especially for overcrowded classrooms.

Only Ms. Amond mentioned technology resources, “There is a computer lab. That’s the room that the writing teacher uses.” She did not report using these technology resources. Ms. Amond focuses on a lack of resources, except in the case of technology. No teachers say they integrate technology or use the computer lab in their implementation.

Teachers agree that Berkland has increasing class sizes, and that they have aging materials. Veteran and newer teachers alike expressed a desire for more teachers on staff, new and supplemental materials, technical support and support personnel.

Berkland teachers discuss the lack of resources and materials from the perspective of practitioners and implementers of CSR. For example, because SFA does not prescribe the integration of technology (Fast et al. 2001:8), the teachers do not lament any lack of technology resources, nor did they report using them. Even though eight years had passed since staff received the intensive SFA training, both the veteran and the newer teachers consider the
implementation of CSR to be integral to their practice. Where resources and services are more clearly tied to implementing SFA, teachers say there is a need. In the next section I explore teacher perceptions of professional development.

**Professional Development**

I turn now to look at the teacher perceptions of professional development. Teachers are asked to discuss sources of professional development, the offerings they have attended, to quantify these, and discuss the quality of professional development opportunities and experiences.

Ms. Ingles went out of her way to attend a professional development seminar out of state, because it was model-related, “The SFA convention, the national convention. But I paid for the conference myself, because I think it’s worth the money.” She knows about SFA developer activities at Berkland, she knew “There’ll be—supposedly there’s somebody coming in from SFA to talk to us.” She describes them, “There’s usually like a ‘We’re going to talk to you for an hour, and you can have some questions and answers.’” She said of the SFA conference, “And there’s a lot. Because that’s where you learn…heavens! That’s where you learn all the new stuff, and you see what’s out there, and you reaffirm or you ask your questions.” She added, “I have been able to go every year.” Ms. Ingles also made plain that the school had the money for this professional development, “Some teachers don’t want to go. And there’s money available.” She admitted paying her own way, adding, “So the only I get from the school is the availability to be gone for three days.” Here she implied that the school will pay for teachers to go, but that she may have used up her share of available monies. She also implied that the SFA convention is so important to her that “I have actually paid for the conference myself…because I think it’s worth the money.” Due to her rich experience with SFA, Ms. Ingles, who is not a facilitator, serves to assist with inducting new teachers into the model:
They are allowed to go in and watch a teacher for up to a week. So, somebody can come in and watch me do their program, and then they are sent to local training. Every now and again there will be training events during the summer or at the beginning of the school year. But they did not have the intense program, and they do not have the intense program that we did at the very beginning of the program.

Ms. Ingles hesitated to include onsite offerings, “I don’t necessarily consider that professional development. I consider that part of my teaching responsibility to learn what I need to keep going on a daily basis.” It is clear that she is committed to implementing SFA, and utilizing developer supports, even when they aren’t free. This veteran rarely passed up an opportunity, “Two years ago, I did NASA Science for Teachers, and that was two weeks all day long.” When asked to quantify the amount of professional development activities she typically attends, she said, “Oh my gosh, you don’t want to know that (laughing)! I’m a neurotic!” She outlined the offerings she attended, and explained, “But you know, you’ve got three days for a conference. If you add up all the days that you go to your graduate classes, and then if you, like I said, two weeks of training last summer. It adds up real quick.” After calculating, she estimated a number than included the onsite activities, “Let’s say seventy five to a hundred days a year…See I told you I was neurotic!” For veteran Ms. Ingles, a significant investment in her own professional development yields a worthy return.

Ms. Haas reports attending a great variety of other professional development activities, both internal and external. “I’ve taken computer courses through Skill Path. The [Dodgeland] Teacher Center has offered some courses. Universities have offered courses through [Dodgeland Public Schools]. The Union has offered courses.” Ms. Haas continues, “They come from everywhere. And it’s my choice what I take.” She admits to seizing as many opportunities as possible to further her craft, especially those offerings from Success For All. She has attended
Ms. Amond is a newer teacher, and as such, her discussion of professional development centers mainly on her upcoming certification as a “highly qualified teacher, a requirement of NCLB, “For certification there’s a whole bunch of workshops that teachers have to go to earn [certification credits].” She also mentioned attending the SFA national conference and onsite staff-development meetings. Ms. Amond discussed the ways in which she became aware of available professional development opportunities. She said, “There’s many workshops that you can go to. You can get them in the mail. They will tell you at meetings when we have a meeting on half days. I think there’s lot of opportunities for that.” Here she indicates that the district sent notices of workshops to her by mail, and she became aware of even more events via the staff development half-days. Ms. Amond has not yet started the “recertification” process. This refers to the NCLB mandate that teachers become recertified as a “highly qualified teacher.” She claimed that she was ineligible at that time, “I haven’t started the [QTED] process yet—the certification…I can’t really tell you about that because I haven’t started my re-certification process yet, because I still have an initial certificate. And after four years I can apply for my standard certificate.” Ms. Amond gave details about the professional development events she
attended, “So there’s a lot of workshops. Actually I’m going to one today. I have to be there at three. But that’s for ESL strategies. Because every year you have to, if you’re a dual language teacher, you have to go to at least four ESL/SSL workshops.” Although she did not claim to be a dual language teacher at the time, she mentioned teaching reading in both English and Spanish. She doesn’t elaborate on the implied requirement regarding dual language workshops. Ms. Amond was alone in mentioning the facilitators. “There are people in charge. [Ms. Ivy] does the Roots. That’s the 1st grade, 2nd grade I believe, too. And then [Ms. Nora], she’s our Reading specialist, and she does the Wings portion. That would be like for 3rd grade and up. And so they give like little workshops.” Ms. Amond elaborates on additional opportunities at Berkland that come from the developer, “And then we have videos that we can watch. Other teachers are video taped, and we can watch them. But you get those from the Success For All program people.” As she talked, she also mentioned the SFA national conference, “And then we just got back from a conference. Some teachers were able to go to San Francisco, for the Success For All Reading Conference. We just got back from there, not too long ago…It was good; it was good.” She claimed that at the conference, some seminars would fill up to capacity, “Sometimes you don’t get the ones you want. But they let you switch. You know, if there’s room, and somebody else wants to give up theirs and trade it in for another session, you can do that.”

Ms. Nunes attends a variety of professional development activities as well, “I have taken it upon myself to take class upon class, upon class, upon class. But that is just because I like to learn.” She had only praise for the district level offerings, “The professional development that I have gone through sponsors—let’s say through [Dodgeland’s District Teacher Center], have been very helpful.” She claims to have attended a wide variety of professional development activities. She praises them briefly, having only positive comments. “But it is because I am self motivated. It is not because I have been requested to go.” When asked to quantify these activities, she stated, “Since I came here, I think I have acquired like 15 graduate credits. So that
is like five classes, five graduate classes.” She conceded taking “class upon class, upon class, upon class,” and clarified,

Teachers at Berkland are avid consumers of professional development opportunities from a wide range of sources and sponsors. Veterans and newer teachers alike take pride in their own professional growth and development of their craft. No teacher reported experiencing conflicting pressures associated with their own recertification, nor a conflict between staff development and instructional time.

No Child Left Behind and Adequate Yearly Progress

Berkland’s teachers articulate several aspects of NCLB, and are critical of the mandates and sanctions, citing the enrollment policy, class size, and proportion of language learners. I will now examine the teacher perceptions of NCLB and the sanctions these mandates posed. I will begin by addressing the teachers’ awareness of AYP.

Both Berkland teachers responded similarly to questions about their AYP, citing between 40% and 44% achievement scores were needed to meet the AYP mandates. To explore teacher perceptions of AYP further, I will first turn to Berkland’s veterans.

Ms. Haas knows her school’s status with regard to AYP. When asked whether Berkland had met AYP the previous year, she answered “No we did not.” Ms. Ingles understands the sanctions are serious, saying that if they do not make AYP again, “We’re going to be taken over by the state…It means we’re all fired—and re-hired, okay.” She continues, “If we don’t make it, we are mandated to have all these new administrative positions…If we don’t make it next year, the 2004-2005 school year, we’d have to have a paid administrative Reading this, and a paid administrative Math this, and a paid this and a paid that.” Here Ms. Ingles acknowledges the uncertainty these sanctions bring to a school, however, she assumed the changes will remain primarily administrative. When asked if such a takeover would cause Berkland to discard SFA,
she replied, “I hope not! Because I think that SFA is a nationally recognized program for having merit. And it meets all the things of the No Child Left Behind.” Here she reveals her belief in the power of SFA to help Berkland meet its mandates. Next I turn to newer teachers for their awareness of AYP.

Ms. Amond, Berkland’s newer teacher, also knew that Berkland had failed AYP the previous year. When asked how the progress was coming the current year, she replied, “Not well. And honestly, I don’t think they’ll be able to—we’ll be able to make that progress.” Ms. Nunes also knew Berkland had failed to achieve AYP. In the likelihood that Berkland failed AYP again, her concern is “that we will go on probation; that we will be dismantled and, you know, not be a school any more.” Ms. Amond elaborates on what this might mean:

The people from the Board or from the state are going to come here. And I don’t know if they’re going to observe us, or see what we’re teaching or how we’re teaching it. And teachers can get fired. The principal can get fired. And they’ll have new people come in and just try to turn the school around, or close the school entirely and have kids go to other schools.

Clearly, newer teachers understood the ramifications of failing to meet AYP. Because Berkland had failed AYP the previous year, the situation was disconcerting to the faculty.

Veteran and newer teachers were aware that their school had failed AYP, and both perceived that sanctions would mean an administrative overhaul, and teachers could lose their jobs. No teacher discusses the possibility that the school’s CSR model might be dispensable, in the event of a state takeover. With so much at stake, teachers felt pressure to make AYP amidst the challenges. I turn now to the teachers’ opinions of No Child legislation.
I now turn to the teachers’ perceptions of the challenges the NCLB mandates brought, and the impact the new law has on teaching, and teacher opinions of NCLB. I start with Ms. Harris, who was quite articulate on the subject of NCLB.

Ms. Ingles spoke frankly and at length about NCLB, its consequences, and her opinions. Like other teachers in the study, she praised the goals and ideology of the law, yet sharply criticized the practice of accountability. When initially probed about her opinion of NCLB, she declared, “Maybe my quietness will contain how I feel about it. (Pause.) I claim the fifth!” Yet she does go on to share her perceptions, as one of the most articulate teachers in the sample.

One criticism Ms. Ingles offers had to do with the highly qualified teacher requirements. In answer to questions about recertification, Ms. Ingles, who was certified, had this to say, “I don’t know how a teacher who can be a superior teacher, and work and know their content and everything, and then all of the sudden because this law comes into effect, I am no longer a qualified teacher. I don’t know how that distinction is made. So I think that in that respect, I think that they have—the process has diminished the goal.” Here she makes the distinction between the goals and the practice. If the goal was to have qualified teachers, Ms. Ingles questioned the process of labeling everyone as unqualified. Her observation reflected many educators’ dissatisfaction with the practice of NCLB, in contrast with the law’s ideology.

Ms. Haas says that NCLB puts pressure on teachers, “I mean there’s more stress on the teacher. That’s changed. There’s still a child left behind! You’ve got to have all this up on the wall, or that up on the wall. That’s not going to help me teach my children. So I think the stress, and the paper work…That’s changed, but that’s not going to help.” She focuses on the practice of accountability, asserting that it lacks power to effect outcomes.

Ms. Ingles eloquently discussed the challenges posed by NCLB. She began by admitting, “I don’t know how to relate to the government (laugh)!” She charged the law with having erroneous priorities, “I think that the goal is a good goal. But I think that they’ve lost
focus of the goal. And I think that the money is being spent in every other kind of way except the way it needs to be spent, which is in the classroom—to lower the class size.” She measured these priorities by way of the funding. When asked to name the most serious challenges the law poses, she responded:

I think all the financial burdens. You know like for instance, if we don’t make it, we are mandated to have all these new administrative positions…We’d have to have a paid administrative Reading this, and a paid administrative Math this, and a paid this, and a paid that. That’s all administration. That’s not lowering my class size. That’s not lowering my Reading size. So once again, I think the administration is very heavy. And we’re not—we’re losing the money.

As a veteran teacher, Ms. Ingles reasoned the NCLB sanctions were out of alignment with the stated goals of the law.

Ms. Haas targeted the law’s inflexibility in regards to the school context, student population and enrollment policy. She replied that a significant challenge at Berkland was “the bilingual students first off, because they are very limited in their acquisition of English.” She explained, “Although (some have) been here five, six years. They’re still limited in their acquisition of English, and that’s because they were not strong in their native language to begin with…And they are counted in maybe three or four areas, different areas. So we think that’s not fair. But we have no control over it.” Ms. Haas refers to a loophole that permitted Berkland to opt-out students who arrived after September. But Ms. Haas refuted the logic of this as well:

We have so many children coming in, transferring in to the school…These children have not had the SFA program, so when we sit them down and try to go over the SFA program, they’re totally confused, and we’ve got to go back through and get them up to par. Although, they’re saying that the scores of those students that have not been here
since September won’t be counted. But it takes time away from what I’m teaching with the other children, to make sure that these children are ready to flow with the other children. And even in the teaching, the team tutoring, with those children, the students themselves have to take time and teach them where they are, and how to do, confidently do what they’re doing. There are so many components that come in to play.

Here she eloquently communicated the compulsory time investments that lie at the intersection between CSR and NCLB. Implementation of CSR, which by definition is comprehensive, was complicated by student-mobility as well as AYP. Ms. Harris articulated a deep understanding of NCLB, and the ways in which it affected her practice as a teacher. She expressed the sentiment common among teachers in the Focus Study, that the No Child mandates created a sense of hopelessness. I now turn to the newer teacher’s perceptions of AYP and the teacher recertification for NCLB.

Ms. Amond focuses on the unfair enrollment policy that she perceives is at odds with NCLB:

We are one of those schools that just accepts any student. And we’re getting students all the time who are very low. And we get them at all times of the year. And some schools actually say, “Well we can’t accept you because it’s already this time of the year. So we can’t accept you.” Whereas this school says “Okay,” you know. They let the child enroll right away. And I just feel like we’re getting all the students that other schools don’t want. Plus we’re already below, and I think that’s impossible to just make that jump with the type of students we have.

Ms. Amond also discusses the challenge of meeting mandates within the school context and enrollment policy. Here she illustrated the difficulties:
I think you’re supposed to make 40%, or 44%. I can’t remember. But most of the kids that we get here at [Berkland], we have a lot of bussed students. And every time we get a bussed student, the child is very low, or needs Special Ed. services. Since we lost many kids, and our population is low, we—well, since I got here, we accept any child that needs to get into the school. We accept anyone, whereas other schools, they, I don’t know how they do it. But they pick and choose what they want. Some schools, not all schools.

She perceives an inflexibility and a lack of fairness in the practice of accountability. Like Ms. Harris, she viewed the school context, or the types of students, as a significant variable in terms of meeting mandates. Schools were required to meet mandates on a playing field that was not level.

Ms. Nunes explained that as a result of NCLB, classroom observation was part of the school’s improvement plan, “We have walk-throughs—that’s the principal and other teachers of experience will come in and observe you…The only part about that is that you don’t get any feedback. And if you need to improve, I think you need feedback.” Here she talks about the many responsibilities required of teachers, and many opportunities to be observed and measured, but she reveals that much of the equation is out of the teachers’ control, or outside of the teachers’ power.

For Berkland’s teachers, No Child did not align with current reform, with district enrollment policies, nor with the culture at Berkland. For both veteran and newer teachers, the law pose unnatural hardships on already under funded urban schools

Chamberland

Chamberland Elementary is a middle-sized magnet school, located in a depressed area of Dodgeland School District. Chamberland had adopted the Accelerated Schools Project (ASP)
model of CSR approximately seven years prior to data collection. Enrollment in 2004 was at 700 students, 100 % of which was African American as well as 100% low income. Mobility at Chamberland in 2004 was at 26.3%, which was significant, although not considered high. Changes in the community may explain this mobility however. The school summary from the focus study sheds light on the changes in the community.

According to district and principal respondents from the Focus Study, Chamberland’s surrounding neighborhood was undergoing a zoning and building transition. Site visits revealed that nearby housing projects and other apartment buildings were recently demolished or slotted for demolition, while new complexes were under construction. Residents of the area were being relocated, yet many chose to keep their school-aged children at Chamberland. This change was in the process at the time of data collection. Students who had attended the neighborhood school prior to these changes were bussed in from further away during the transition and data collection.

Teachers at Chamberland reportedly had been teaching at the school for ten years on the average (in 2004). This led to a staff of largely veteran teachers, yet a high teacher turnover due to retirement. It is not known whether the changes in the community had an impact on teacher turnover.

*Chamberland Teachers*

Chamberland has four teachers, Ms. Rhodes, Ms. Turner, Ms. Thomas and Ms. Marcos. Ms. Marcos is the only newer teacher with less than ten years of experience. Ms. Rhodes, Ms. Turner and Ms. Thomas are veteran teachers with well over ten years of experience teaching.

Table 5 displays the pseudonyms for Chamberland teachers, and includes my classification as a newer teacher or veteran teacher. I included Table 5 to facilitate the reading of the results for Chamberland.
Ms. Rhodes is a veteran teacher at Chamberland with 20 years teaching experience and 13 years at Chamberland. She teaches 5th grade. Her interview was very brief. Ms. Thomas, another veteran spent all of her 17 years teaching experience at Chamberland, teaching 4th grade. Likewise, Ms. Turner had taught for 14 years, all at Chamberland. She taught 3rd grade. Ms. Marcos was the only newer teacher at Chamberland, with six years experience, all at Chamberland, teaching 6th grade The school has low teacher turnover, and a band of dedicated veterans in its ranks. I now turn to teacher perceptions of CSR at Chamberland.

Comprehensive School Reform: Adoption

Chamberland voted on the Accelerated Schools Project (ASP) model in 1997. Staff and principal reported that Chamberland received funding for three school years. Interview data suggest that those years were 1998-1999, 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. The principal reported that 2001-2002 was the first year of implementing without the CSRD grant funding. Data collection for my sample occurred in spring of 2004 (during the 2003-2004), over two years after the CSRD grant monies ended. Implementation of the model tapered off in the absence of funds. There was no evidence to suggest that Chamberland had a facilitator who used ASP. However one teacher reported the arrival of a new reading specialist in 2004, two years after teachers report the funding for CSR running out. This reading specialist could not be considered an Accelerated Schools facilitator.

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<tr>
<th>Teacher Pseudonym</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Rhodes</td>
<td>Veteran Teacher</td>
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<td>Ms. Thomas</td>
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<td>Ms. Turner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Marcos</td>
<td>Newer Teacher</td>
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Accelerated Schools Project (ASP) is a model of CSR that permits the use of any curriculum, and prescribes only four aspects or components of implementation: governance, professional development, inclusion and data based decision-making. This model is an attractive choice for schools that do not wish to make sweeping changes, or those that wish to use existing curricular materials. ASP is known for its approach to teaching and learning, and is more concerned with how to teach than with what to teach. Chamberland had lost its CSRD funding two years prior to data collection. In spite of a lack of funds, teachers at Chamberland continued to implement aspects of the CSR model.

Surprisingly, veteran teachers at Chamberland provide thin descriptions of the adoption of the Accelerated Schools Project (ASP), the CSR model in place for approximately six years. Ms. Rhodes had taught at the school beginning well before ASP adoption. She is the only teacher who recalls the process “We were all involved. And there was—We voted upon it, the teachers did. The administration as well as the teachers were involved in it.” When Ms. Thomas is prompted for the reasons the model was selected, she says, “Ooh. I’ll try to remember. Can I come back to that question?” Eventually she offers, “Because we thought it would fit our needs,” but lists no examples of these needs in her interview. Ms. Thomas reports that new teachers learn the model “Through mentoring. Older teachers mentor teachers, or seasonal teachers.” Similarly, Ms. Turner also has trouble recalling how the model was adopted “I was here, but I really can’t remember all that [much] about it. I’m getting programs mixed up.” Ms. Turner is not able to shed light on the reasons ASP was selected for Chamberland. Although she recalled voting on ASP, she stated, “I don’t know how they selected it. I tell you honestly I don’t know how they selected the model. We were just asked to do it.”

Ms. Marcos, however, is able to discuss the adoption in some detail although she was not at Chamberland when the adoption began. She knew quite a bit about the model adoption, despite arriving at Chamberland after that point, “Initially I may have been late like one year. I
believe I was late one year. But I was in. I was here when Accelerated Schools still came.” Here she recalls having the developer support visits. She also received training in the model “through staff developments.” Ms. Marcos also remembers traveling to a seminar for ASP:

And actually I was one of the few to go to the, the training. There was one in L. A [Los Angeles] I know I attended. Yes and that was a great experience, to see the speakers and hear the speakers and just network with different teachers throughout the country.

Because so many come from everywhere and you have, you get different ideas. I mean I think the vast majority of the ideas that work come from teachers.

From Ms. Marcos’s perspective, ASP provides training and support to new teachers like her. She appreciates the connection with other teachers. And she clearly remembers the model, the developer visits, and the training she received. When asked why the model was selected, Ms. Marcos gives an account despite arriving after the fact:

I believe because we always have high expectations for our students. In order for them to excel we have to show them that they can—as far as teaching them, not going back to let’s say phonics in sixth grade. But we just have to teach them in accelerated mode. We have to teach them higher order skills. We can’t teach them rote learning… We have to talk and discuss and just be on a higher level because it’s the high expectations we have.

She says the model was selected because it aligned with the philosophy already present in the learning environment at Chamberland. Ms. Marcos believes that the ASP way of teaching is the correct way of teaching students.

All teachers at Chamberland had several years of exposure to the Accelerated Schools Project, and some are familiar with aspects of the model adoption. But no teacher describes the processes or players involved in initiating the adoption, or the selection of ASP over other models. Although Ms. Rhodes, a Chamberland veteran, did not recall why the model was
selected, she does remember voting on the ASP model. Ms. Marcos, the newer teacher, thought the model was selected for its alignment with what the school was already doing. Interestingly, the teachers did not precisely agree on how new teachers learn the model. Ms. Thomas says new teacher learn through peer mentoring. Ms. Marcos says that staff development meetings and a model seminar for ASP. At Chamberland, two themes were emerging: that the newer teacher has a great understanding of the model; and veteran teachers who were present for the adoption process were not necessarily more knowledgeable about the model adoption. Next I will explore teacher perceptions of the CSR components of the Accelerated Schools Project.

**CSR Components Articulated**

Ms. Thomas was at first unable to specify distinct components of the ASP model. When asked about components, she again replies, “Can I come back to that?” She likes the instructional strategies, “What I’m doing is more group-type activities, where the children are more involved.” She says the model helps her “to use more of a variety of strategies in teaching, because our children don’t learn on the same level, doing the same things. So, it makes me be able to meet that child’s needs a little better.” Ms. Thomas says the model is appropriate for a variety of achievement levels. Embedded her other responses about CSR adoption, she mentions peer mentoring. Ms. Thomas also understands the importance of school-wide and consistent implementation, “If the teacher practices...from day one, from the time they get their students, and keep it going, it’s effective. I mean you can’t start them on one thing, and then deviate and do something else, okay. So it has to be a continuous progress, a continuous thing from teacher to teacher.” She recognizes the importance of the implementation being school wide, and building on the student progress. Ms. Thomas was able to speak to several components of the ASP model, including the comprehensiveness, or scope of implementation.

When probed for model components, Ms. Turner says, “I can’t really say one specific thing.” She does however mention student grouping, “You know cooperative grouping. I’m
enjoying that. The kids really enjoy that.” She says the students benefit from this component because “They kind of feed off each other.” Ms. Turner mentions no other components of the SAP model of CSR.

Ms. Rhodes has no responses reflecting awareness of model components.

Ms. Marcos targeted the ASP model’s approach, that it taught in an accelerated way, using higher level thinking skills, “Just as far as higher order thinking skills. We teach above the students.” This showed that she was able to articulate the most salient of all ASP’s components, the model’s accelerated approach. She elaborates, “We’re not teaching to them at their level.” For her this is the primary component still in use at Chamberland. In the previous section, she spoke of the professional development seminars meant to train her in ASP, another component. When asked about school improvement strategies, she indicated that teachers would “look at previous test scores. Looking at weaknesses, and build from there.” This show she knows about the component called data based decision-making as well. Ms. Marcos did not mention any other components of the ASP model.

Teachers were collectively able to mention several components of CSR. The data show that some components of CSR were still active at Chamberland, yet teachers were not always able to attribute them to the model. Even the veteran teachers, are inarticulate about the Accelerated Schools Project and its many components. This may have been an indication that the model was being phased out at the time of data collection. It may also indicate that ASP, with its low specificity in several areas, does not engage teachers’ understanding of its comprehensiveness or many components. In other words, because ASP ranks low in specificity (Fast et al. 2001:15), teachers may have had superficial understanding of components of the model. In order to understand more fully which components were still active and which were not, I will first turn to the teacher perceptions of model fit. I will cover teacher perceptions of model appropriateness, as well as which aspects were effective at Chamberland. Presumably,
effective components would be more likely to be continued, or assimilated; while ineffective or awkward components would probably be discontinued earlier.

Chamberland teachers reflected a superficial grasp of the comprehensiveness of the Accelerated Schools Project model of CSR. It is interesting to note that in a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, authors Bridget Cotner, Suzannah Herrmann, Kathryn M. Borman, Theodore Boydston, and Kerstin Carlson Le Floch rated Chamberland very high for teacher understanding of the two dimensions they discussed and defined: school-wide-use, and comprehensiveness (2005). This meant that at Chamberland teachers revealed deep understanding of ASP’s comprehensiveness, and an understanding that the model was designed to be implemented school-wide. I, however, disagree with their findings for Chamberland. I discovered one very high scoring comment that had been mistakenly attributed to a veteran teacher at Chamberland, which had in fact come directly from the principal. Also, I found the other comments to be on the whole, superficial. No teachers at Chamberland articulated much more than a cursory understanding of ASP’s many components. I now turn to teacher perceptions of model fit.

Model Fit

Teachers at Chamberland report that the model is effective, and a good fit for the school. Ms. Thomas approves of the model, saying, “I think it’s effective. If the teacher practices, and from day one, from the time they get their students, and keep it going, it’s effective.” She answers “yes” to the question of whether the model was a good fit for Chamberland, yet she isn’t able to clearly articulate exactly why this was so. “It’s made me become, I feel, a more effective teacher.” Ms. Thomas felt ASP was a good fit in part because she felt it advanced her practice.

Ms. Turner says the model is a good fit, and cites cooperative student grouping as a major factor:
The cooperative grouping is very wonderful, because the kids that are quiet, kind of shy, [who] wouldn’t normally talk, [he] gets involved in some things. And he contributes and feels good about that. The kid that is kind of the leader has to kind of sometimes wait and listen for someone else to give some input. They kind of feed off each other. They share the information or they’ll pull out something, “Well I remember doing it this way and I remember having this experience,” and kind of put their experiences together and come up with some pretty good answers to questions.

Here she shares that student grouping helped her overcome the participation differences in her students, as well as to use those student differences to benefit the whole class. Ms. Turner supports using ASP grouping, and continued to implement this component because it helped her in her classroom practice. Because of the ASP approach to student grouping she is better able to draw out the kids who didn’t want to verbally participate, and to utilize the collective student experience to further the lesson plan. Ms. Turner gave this reason she feels ASP is a good fit between model and school. I turn now to Ms. Marcos and her perception of model fit.

Ms. Rhodes has no responses reflecting a perception of model fit. Veteran teachers are able to discuss their perception of model fit, however, they do not display deep understanding of the concept, nor do they offer many examples. I turn now to Ms. Marcos and her perception of model fit.

Ms. Marcos does not respond directly to questions of model fit or appropriateness. She is able, however, to report that some of the model is still being implemented, “I don’t think we’re active, but we still use the tools that we learned from there. Some of the programs come and go. But then that many of the teachers that go through the training, we still implement it, even though we’re not quote, unquote, an Accelerated School.” She specifies that teachers were still using the accelerated approach, “Just as far as higher order thinking skills. We teach above the
Ms. Marcos repeatedly portrays this “teaching above the students” as a strength of the model. Presumably this component became somewhat entrenched at Chamberland because it fit well with the context of the school.

Teachers at Chamberland offer thin evidence that the ASP model was a good fit for the school. I turn now to teacher perceptions of challenges to CSR implementation.

Challenges to Implementation

Chamberland teachers describe several challenges to implementation of CSR. Each focused on different challenges. Teachers agree, however, that implementation continued to some degree. First I will explore the interview with Ms. Thomas for her reported challenges to implementation.

Ms. Thomas alludes to a series of changes in school improvement strategies, “Well, this could be improved if we stick to it. Don’t come up with something else next year for us try.” She dislikes that these strategies were too frequently changed or replaced, “We’ll do one thing one year, and then it’s something else. And it’s not giving a chance for it to work…And that’s the thing I have a problem with.” She sees changes coming down the pipeline as well. Clearly, Ms. Thomas exemplified a teacher who understands that reform takes time and commitment in order to develop sustainable growth. It is likely that teachers are unable to develop a depth of understanding of their model due to these shifting reform strategies.

Other teacher comments offer more evidence of this. Ms. Rhodes admits, “I really can’t remember all that [much] about it [ASP]. I’m getting, I’m getting programs mixed up.” With thirteen years at Chamberland, she saw programs come and go.

Ms. Thomas mentioned some student factors that make implementation difficult:

Getting children from other schools into a classroom at a late date and trying—and expect them to be at the same level. Or having too many children in the classroom, and
trying to make sure that they are at grade level or above. Okay. I think that we need—
teachers should—there should be a small classroom setting.

She reported having 30 students in her fourth grade classroom. She struggles with student
mobility and class size.

Ms. Thomas complains about the mathematics curriculum, “Now we’ve been thrust into
Trail Blazers…It’s a nice program, but to me, it works better as a supplement, because all the
children are not ready for…integrating science and the math.” She also says “it’s moving at too
much of a rapid pace.” The Accelerated Schools model does not address curriculum, permitting
the use of any program or textbook. It is possible that Ms. Thomas has trouble teaching the
“accelerated” way with Trail Blazers. But she also says it was lacking in ways other than the
pace:

It could be improved if they would organize the materials better. The people that publish
these books—it’s not teacher-friendly. You’ve got to hunt this place, that place for
different things. It needs to be more concise or organized. And they need to give us—
and the pace needs to be slowed down a little. It shouldn’t be moving at such a fast pace.

Ms. Thomas indicates the mathematics texts were disorganized, and she reiterated the pace was
inappropriate. She is not able to fully implement ASP with regard to the math curriculum due to
these difficulties. Despite this, she appeared to be implementing at least partially.

Ms. Thomas does not explicitly state that the ASP model had been dropped at
Chamberland, however she also characterizes her school as in a transition:

Everyone is not using (original emphasis) the Accelerated Schools Model. Just because,
there again—and I should have corrected that in the beginning when you asked me that,
because we’ve had a lot of teachers to retire and move on. So, and I may be one of the
few seasonal teachers that is still around when the Accelerated Schools Program is going on. A lot of the things we do keep, you know. But some of it we had to change.

She clearly suggests transition here, saying that all teachers are not implementing, and some components have been dropped.

Ms. Turner says parent involvement is a major challenge to implementation. She says Chamberland needs “some kind of way to get a connection between the parents and the school. It is so hard to do. If we could do that I think that would be a tremendous benefit.” She understands the importance of parent involvement, and reflects an awareness of several strategies, “They told us to do many things; all kinds of incentives to get parents to come out.” However, she conveys a sense of powerlessness, saying, “Trying to get the parents involved is the most challenging part of it, you know? I don’t know how (or) what we could do. I really don’t.” She laments the lack of meaningful reciprocal exchanges with parents. This suggests that relational trust is lacking with respect to teacher-parent relations at Chamberland.

Veteran teachers mention several challenges to CSR implementation. They describe a sense of instability in implementation, suggestive of transition away from the model. They report that student mobility and class size make it difficult to implement. One veteran expressed dissatisfaction with the math curriculum, especially with the pace. This, it would seem, kept her from implementing the Accelerated Schools model in mathematics. Aside from these challenges, veteran teachers continue to use student grouping and an accelerated approach to instruction. I now turn to Ms. Marcos for her perception of challenges to implementation.

Ms. Marcos had taught for six years at Chamberland. Her comments about the model reveal a loyalty to the ASP way of teaching, perhaps because she had no other school experiences for comparison. She did, however, mention challenges to implementing.
Ms. Marcos report having a mix of student levels in her classroom. When asked about challenges or obstacles to implementation, she says, “Maybe that some of the students are on different levels, even though we’re in a sixth grade class. Unfortunately, we know by their stanines on the test how—where they’re ranked at.” Here she introduces how testing revealed a range in abilities among her sixth grade students. She went on to explain the impact this had on her, “You kind of have to cater to those [students] and give them a couple of separate activities, but still in a higher mode than they’re at.” In order to implement the “accelerated” way, she said she had to find additional activities for students who needed extra support. “I mean it’s extra work, but it works out.” She conveys confidence that her efforts to spend extra time on these supplemental activities would garner results. And this exchange also reveals her commitment to implementation. Ms. Marcos claims the school was still active in ASP to a degree. She is referring to her first year, as she remarks, “When we were active in it—well, we’re still active in it, but when we were truly going to the training and implementing the skills…” Professional development and perhaps components had been phased out. Ms. Marcos believes that funding has stunted the sustainability of the model at Chamberland. When asked directly why the model was not continued, she says, “I’m not sure. The majority of things occur unfortunately because of lack of funds. And I’m sure if we had the funding or we had any budget money left over, it would’ve been taken care of.” She implies the school had wanted to continue the model, but was unable to come up with the needed funding. She agreed with Ms. Thomas that some implementation continued, but unlike her fellow teacher, Ms. Marcos’s statements are more than suggestive of transition. She indicates the model was being phased out.

Both veteran and newer teachers convey a sense that the model was valuable to their practice, as well as valued by the school. This might be further elucidated by the teachers’ perceptions of outcomes resulting from the ASP model. I will now explore the data for teacher perceptions of outcomes.
Perceived Outcomes

Both Ms. Thomas and Ms. Marcos reported positive outcomes that they attributed to the ASP model. Even so, teachers’ responses were brief, and focused on student outcomes. I turn now to Ms. Thomas for her reported outcomes.

Ms. Thomas liked the ASP model for the most part, “I think it’s effective.” She sees results with her students that she attributed to the model, “Children’s scores have increased…Children…are more receptive to learning. They want, you know, on everything. They’re more involved in it, in learning.” Here, she gives quantitative and qualitative positive outcomes. The model is effective in raising scores, and her students are more receptive and involved. This indicates that the ASP model encouraged student ownership of the learning process. “It’s made me become, I feel, a more effective teacher,” she claims. Ms. Thomas felt the model had been effective, and due to the positive outcomes she witnessed, she continued to implement certain components of the model.

Neither Ms. Turner, nor Ms. Rhodes reported outcomes of the ASP model. I now turn to Ms. Marcos.

I have established earlier that Ms. Marcos supports the use of the ASP model, and shows loyalty to teaching the “accelerated” way. Whether as a result or the cause, Ms. Marcos sees positive outcomes as a result of the model. She describes the impact of the model on her students this way:

I’ve been teaching for six years. And I know that many of the students, I still keep in contact with, like my first students. And they’re graduating. So I know that they have reached—a few—the acceleration, because they’re going off to college, as far as the different ways that we’ve taught them. When we were active in it—well we’re still active in it. But when we were truly going to the training and implementing the skills
[those students] I still keep in touch with them. They come back up. They’re excited. They’re going to college. They’re doing different things.

She implies a difference between her students who were raised up with the accelerated model and the ones with more spotty exposure. She equates plans to attend college with “acceleration” yet she is not clear why she does this. Her perception is that students taught the ASP way achieve success, and maintain their love of learning.

Chamberland teachers witnessed learning, achievement and success among their students. Both teachers attribute these outcomes to the Accelerated Schools Project model, reporting only positive outcomes resulting from the model.

**Materials/Resources**

Chamberland teachers did not complain of a lack of resources, nor did they catalog the available resources. Neither teacher spoke of computers or technology resources. In fact only Ms. Thomas shed light on the resources at Chamberland.

Ms. Thomas spoke of the Accelerated Schools Project materials, reporting that they arrived late after the adoption process. “I think it would be really good, if they had started with the children in pre-K or Kindergarten first, and that those teachers reach Stage One, because we didn’t get the materials until late.” One can see that early on, the upper grades struggled with no materials. However, it is clear that the materials did arrive, albeit late.

Ms. Thomas had to refer back at least six years to report a lack of resources. Teachers at Chamberland were apparently satisfied with resources, except for the complaints Ms. Thomas gave regarding the quality of the new math textbook, reported in the above section on ‘Challenges to Implementation’. Next, I will examine the data for teacher perceptions of professional development at Chamberland.
Professional Development

According to the data, Chamberland Elementary had begun a transition away from their Accelerated Schools Project model of CSR. As a result, the professional development plan had already begun to change, prior to 2004, the time of data collection. Teachers were no longer attending external ASP seminars, nor did ASP developers come in to Chamberland for onsite activities. I searched teacher data for evidence of this shift in the professional development plan, and the sort of professional development that had replaced these. I turn first to Ms. Rhodes, a veteran teacher, for her take on professional development at Chamberland.

Ms. Rhodes communicates her familiarity with the school plan for professional development, “Well here we have what’s called…the half days, and which are all part of the school improvement plan. And we meet twice a month for workshops, you know, exchange, sharing of ideas and practices that work. You know. Sharing those best practices and that kind of thing.” In addition to her overview of the school plan, Ms. Rhodes also gives information about professional development from her own perspective. When asked for her preferred professional development activity, she says, “I’ve gotten a lot of good, viable, real strategies from the reading consultant. She’s— no she hasn’t always been a reading consultant. That was new this year. I guess you know, they get money for it in the budget for, you know, where the needs are. And the principal then sets out to fill those needs.” Here, she mentions the budget, submitting that the administration invested in a reading consultant that year. Two years after CSRD funding had run out, a reading specialist may have posed a cost-effective alternative for Chamberland’s shifting professional development plan. This veteran teacher was able to encapsulate the school plan for professional development, consisting of primarily onsite consultant-led, workshops.

Ms. Rhodes sheds light on the availability of external offerings as well, “Outside the school whenever there’s, you know there’s any, anything that’s going to give us, going to help us in our efforts to see the children get the best education possible, we’re encouraged to go [by the]
administrative staff, all of them.” She also added, “We encourage each other.” In spite of this, Ms. Thomas did not appear to avail herself of any external activities.

Neither Ms. Thomas nor Ms. Turner gave any responses regarding professional development. Only one veteran teacher shed light on this dimension. However, she provides a succinct account of the shifting professional development plan at Chamberland. I turn now to Ms. Marcos for her responses with regard to professional development.

Ms. Marcos agreed with Ms. Thomas that Chamberland utilized the onsite specialist, and other teachers on staff to import professional development activities, “People who have been to different trainings—and they could be from a variety of things, even math and writing—our reading specialist will definitely share whatever she’s learned, whenever they train her on the new things that have come out.” Here, Ms. Marcos referenced Chamberland’s reading consultant activities, saying, “They do lead the half-day.” This affords Chamberland with ample opportunities for the specialist to cover professional development with the staff. Moreover, Ms. Marcos was able to quantify the time spent on the in-house half-day workshops, “They’re actually every, every other—every fifteen working days. They’re like every eighteen working days so about two times a month.” After recalculating, she adds, “Okay about four, we have about four hours, four hours a month.” She reiterates that these specialists were based in-house, “We don’t have professionals coming in all the time, I’ll tell you that. Because, I believe that we have in-house professionals that could share and elaborate on whatever they’re doing. In-house experts.” In this way, teachers agree on the majority of professional development activities available at Chamberland. When asked if teachers attended any district-offered workshops, she has this to say:

Actually no, not teachers. I know that they, that they meaning our administrators and like the specialists, math specialists, reading specialists, do go out to different meetings where all of the reading specialists and math specialists go. And then that’s when they
bring it back. We don’t have teacher district meetings. I haven’t been to a training this year. Now they do have them on like professional development days or institute days, which usually fall on Fridays, but we haven’t been sent. I haven’t been sent to any of them.

Ms. Marcos does not echo the sentiments of Ms. Rhodes who feels “encouraged” to attend external activities. Ms. Marcos indicated that the support for these external activities had all but dried up. Even so, she had a positive opinion of the activities that were available. When probed for the impact of these onsite activities on the school, Ms. Marcos says:

Again with reflection, and definitely enhancing us. When you have your, when you have someone, your co-workers telling you that “This works, and you should definitely try it,” and, “It’s a good thing to do;” I think that that effects us in a way that we’re more comfortable to trying it. Because some of us are like “Okay, whatever.” But, okay, research says this…and it really works. Here are some samples, and this is an example of what we’ve done. It is much easier for us to go ahead and attempt it.

Here, Ms. Marcos illuminates an important dimension of the school plan; the school plan of professional development was very reform-like. Even though the consultants or specialists were not ASP affiliated, the plan has cooperative dimensions, and facilitates relationships across and among teachers. This is a strong indicator of the assimilation of certain aspects of the reform.

The Accelerated Schools Project at Chamberland is phasing out, especially with regard to professional development. Even though teachers scramble to recall components and are unable to testify to the outcomes, some teachers are still implementing some components in the classroom. Teacher data did suggest that the reform had become part of the business of teaching at Chamberland, even part of the school culture. For Title 1 schools, this is a goal, to take on reform, and assimilate the aspects that work. If CSR serves as a remedy, or medicine for
struggling schools, then the goal is health, not the medicine itself. For Chamberland, teachers made classroom level decisions that promoted some sustained implementation. The fact that teachers were not always explicitly aware of components may have signaled the assimilation as well. Teachers at Chamberland overall were satisfied with the professional development in both quality and quantity.

In the next section, I turn my attention to the Chamberland teachers’ perspectives of the NCLB legislation and mandates.

*No Child Left Behind and Adequate Yearly Progress*

Chamberland had the highest achievement scores in the sample. As an urban school, with 100% African American students, Chamberland was supposed to benefit from NCLB. I will now examine the teacher perceptions of NCLB and the sanctions these mandates posed. I will begin by addressing the teachers’ awareness of AYP.

Teachers at Chamberland were informed about Adequate Yearly Progress and the school’s recent status. First I will turn to Ms. Turner, Chamberland’s veteran teacher, for her perspective on AYP.

Ms. Turner discussed AYP readily in her interview. She appeared informed and hopeful. When asked if Chamberland had made AYP that year (in 2004), she replied, “Yes.” When she was asked if her school was concerned about failing AYP she had this to offer, “No, no. I don’t think so. You just do the best you can for the kids you have. You know, they [the administration] don’t seem to be worried. Not worried, but we do everything we can to make sure kids get the best education that they can. I think that’s mainly the concern.” She then even commented on the ASP model and the No Child AYP mandates, “I think we always do make adequate yearly progress but I don’t think it has anything to do with that specific program.” Here, Ms. Turner, who says she desires more stability in school goals, denied any connection between achieving
AYP and implementing the ASP model of CSR. This suggests a disconnection, or misalignment between reforms at Chamberland. Ms. Rhodes was unaware of Chamberland’s status with regard to AYP. Ms. Thomas said “Yes,” the school would achieve AYP and, “No,” there was no fear they might fail the coming year. I now turn to Ms. Marcos for her perspective on AYP.

Ms. Marcos, Chamberland’s newer teacher is much more knowledgeable about AYP and her school’s status than were her fellow teachers. She is able to quantify AYP at Chamberland, “I believe we are, we’re like at forty something, close to fifty in reading and math. So therefore, we did meet our goal, as far as not being on probation in the No Child Left Behind Act.” She knows AYP was a NCLB mandate, and she was able to report percentages of students that met standards. When asked whether she had fears of failing AYP or concerns regarding probation, she stated, “No. I’ve heard about the probation schools and how they’re very strict, but I don’t believe that we’re not going to meet our goal.” Ms. Marcos is clear that she believes Chamberland would make AYP again.

Most teachers at Chamberland were aware of the AYP status at Chamberland, and optimistic about the future AYP goals. I look now at teacher responses regarding No Child. I will look for NCLB awareness, opinions and reported challenges.

Chamberland teachers discussed NCLB, and their opinions of the new legislation. Both Ms. Thomas and Ms. Marcos spoke of competing pressures and challenges to meeting the new mandates. I first look at Ms. Thomas’s responses to questions about NCLB.

When asked to discuss challenges to implementing CSR, Ms. Thomas brought up NCLB, cementing the idea of misalignment between the two reforms. Here is her list of challenges to implementing, culminating in NCLB:

Um, getting children from other schools into a classroom at a late date and trying—and expect them to be at the same level. Or having too many children in the classroom, and
trying to make sure that they are at grade level or above. I think that we need, teachers should, there should be a small classroom setting. I mean like for example, I did have over 30 kids in this classroom. And that’s hard, to try to meet each individual child’s needs. And we say *No Child Left Behind*, but that’s hard to do! [84]

She pinpointed the challenges posed by No Child legislation, citing class size, and the lack of resources in the classroom. She again turned back to CSR, saying that under NCLB, implementation too big a challenge, “In order for that program [ASP], from the way I understand it, to work, you need a lot more things in place—a lot more things…The school has to have—to me—every school, every classroom would need an assistant, an aide and you don’t get that. So, you’re kind of making the best out of what you have.”

Ms. Thomas spoke about the mandates and unreasonable expectations. In the block quote above, she felt “getting children from other schools,” and expecting “them to be at the same level,” indicates that enrollment policies and AYP are blind to the context of the students’ lives.

Teachers balk at the unfair expectation embedded in the NCLB mandates. Ms. Turner wished for a more humanistic approach, “You can’t really expect all human beings to act, perform and be the same. And I think it should allow for people to be individuals, I really do.”

She expressed how disheartening she perceived the situation to be,

And from what I understand about this *No Child Left Behind*, they want every child to be at a certain level. But that’s not going to happen. Because to me it’s impossible. Everyone’s not going be the same so there are some children who are not going to meet these criteria at this particular time as far as I can understand it and they may need more time or more help with something. So I think it makes it, makes it stressful for the child because when you want them to meet this certain level, they have to know all of this at
this time. They may not be able to do that. Even with individual instruction there’s some children who will never meet that level at that time. Eventually they might get there but not this year. It might take a couple more years. So it’s kind of difficult.

She says “it’s impossible” to meet the mandates. She admitted that teaching with this goal in mind “is kind of difficult.” It is clear that for Ms. Turner, No Child is a demoralizing standard without humanistic principles. Next I turn to Ms. Marcos, a newer teacher, for her perspective.

Ms. Marcos has a similar perspective on NCLB. For Ms. Marcos who had not been teaching quite as long as Ms. Thomas, education has lost sight of its human goals, in favor of more short sighted score-based goals:

"And [our goal] is to see that every child gets the best possible education. But we are you know, unfortunately, we are test-driven. I mean you have to face it, that’s just the way of the world now. And you say you want the children to get the best possible education but then, because you have to…make sure you’re here and sometimes things that would be best for children go, go lacking. Instruction in, in the arts, I mean. We need that to have well-rounded children but…"

She sees valuable aspects of schooling sacrificed for this rigidity in accountability. Ms. Marcos views the school’s perspective this way:

Yes, all we’re focusing on are the main goals and maybe even highlighted the goals that we need to focus on in order to make our quote, to help our kids learn and to make them successful on the test. So we’re just focusing on goals. We’re goal-driven at this school. And that’s not always the best you know but you have to work smart. You really do because the bottom line is; where are you when it comes to the, you know the order of things? Where are you on this list? Are you here, in the middle or down at the bottom?
And that, you know so you really have to let go of those things that don’t really carry that much weight on the test.

For Ms. Marcos, the mandates posed sacrifices. When asked of the major challenges to the No Child mandates, Ms. Marcos says, “I believe they are including but I’m not totally sure, the special ed. students.” She even admits to teaching test taking skills, “I will admit I do teach like test-taking skills so and I do teach like a process of elimination. I don’t start that off at the beginning because that’s not what our focus is. We’re focused on the goals. But during, when it’s close to the test I’ll tell them the process of elimination so it’s driven when it’s closer to the test.”

Chamberland teachers are aware of their school passing AYP, and articulate challenges to the NCLB mandates. None mentions the “moving target” of AYP benchmarks. Teachers spoke of a great challenge to meet the mandates, and a lack of fairness and efficacy in the practice of accountability.

**Shoreland**

Shoreland Elementary School, the smallest in the sample of four Dodgeland schools, served an almost entirely Latino population of 400, and had a student mobility rate of approximately 30% a year, a marked decrease from the previous year when student mobility was over 40%. (It should be noted that one teacher reports that the mobility rate was 50% among students, however other sources do not agree.) Among Shoreland students, only 50% were English language proficient. Teacher turnover was high at Shoreland. Teacher data reveals that six new teachers were hired each year, out of approximately 20. Shoreland’s enrollment was referred to as “spill-over enrollment” by the administration. This indicated that incoming students were those that could not be housed in their own neighborhood schools. Most students were bussed in to Shoreland from varying distances. In general, the achievement scores at Shoreland were the lowest in the sample (Moriarty 2002).
Stakeholders report that Shoreland had been placed on probation in the mid 1990’s. As a result the principal was given a choice between two models of CSR, and she chose Success For All (SFA). The principal reported that she met with initial resistance in her local school council (LSC), therefore a compromise was struck; Shoreland would adopt SFA in only the primary grades during the first year. Because the school experienced repeated successes with SFA, the model was adopted in higher grades each year until the school was fully implementing the SFA model.

Shoreland Teachers

Shoreland has four teachers, Mr. Torres, Ms. Deluca, Ms. Gala and Ms. Upton. Mr. Torres and Ms. Deluca are veteran teachers with well over ten years of experience teaching. Ms. Gala and Ms. Upton are newer teachers with less than ten years of experience.

Table 7 displays the pseudonyms for Berkland teachers, and includes my classification as a newer teacher or veteran teacher. I included Table 6 to facilitate the reading of the results for Berkland.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Pseudonym</th>
<th>Classification as Veteran or Newer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Torres</td>
<td>Veteran Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Deluca</td>
<td>Veteran Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Gala</td>
<td>Newer Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Upton</td>
<td>Newer Teacher</td>
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</table>

Shoreland, and SFA school, employs mixed-grade instructional approach. For this reason, all teachers at Shoreland report teaching a range of grades. Mr. Torres has 20 years of teaching experience, however, he has only taught at Shoreland for one year. He teaches 4th through 8th grade. He appreciated on-site planning meetings, and the facilitator-modeled lessons.
He laments the poor parent involvement at Shoreland, “The only time they are visible is when the [state] test results come in…Of course then it’s too late.” Mr. Torres illuminates the context in which his students live, “Twenty three out of my thirty kids have actually seen someone shot in their neighborhood. So that’s their life.” He complains that mandates and testing ignored this dimension of his students’ lives.

Ms. Deluca has 15 years of experience teaching, and nine years teaching at Shoreland. She teaches 6th through 8th grades, and reports having special education students in her class. She says this complicates implementation.

Ms. Gala is a newer teacher at Shoreland with seven years of experience and three years at Shoreland. She teaches 7th and 8th grade. She desires more flexibility in implementing the SFA model, and demonstrates that she is knowledgeable about AYP.

Ms. Upton, another newer teacher, has six years experience, and has taught English language learners in 5th and 6th grade in all subjects at Shoreland for two years.

Comprehensive School Reform: Adoption

Shoreland had adopted the Success For All model of CSR three years prior to data collection. During school year 2001-2002, the school’s probationary status was revoked. According to respondents, Shoreland then failed AYP for two years in a row (2002-2003 and 2003-2004), and as a result had been placed back on probation. Teacher perceptions (data collection occurred toward the end of 2004) suggest that Shoreland would likely fail AYP again.

The Focus Study summaries concluded that Shoreland’s external partner assisting with CSR implementation abandoned the project after approximately two years. According to administrators, SFA developers reportedly felt committed to the school, and extended their support in the form of a staff facilitator. During data collection in 2004, the developer facilitator
remained on staff. Despite this, the school struggled with full implementation of SFA due to the English language learners, and student and teacher mobility.

Torres introduces the Local School Council, important because the LSC was involved in the adoption process, “Well they have the LSC you know which is the Local School Councils.” He explains that they alleviate problems, by comparing them with his prior experiences, “In my other school what you saw was…you’d see three parents who the principal wants. And he works with those and their kids. And as long as those three parents are happy the other—it really doesn’t—and I hate to say it, that’s where that’s a problem, because [of] the lack of accountability.” He clarified that Shoreland represents the opposite, “It’s night and day. Night and day…There was too much—and a lack of accountability in so many places, and that’s one reason I left the other school.” Mr. Torres does not claim to have direct involvement in the LSC. Yet he appreciates the accountability measure that he felt the LSC afforded. However, because he is new to the school, he has only superficial knowledge of the model adoption. “They’ve been doing SFA here six or seven years now,” Mr. Torres says. He reported that “the teachers and leadership team,” that he earlier called the LSC, were involved in the adoption of CSR at Shoreland Elementary School. He believes that the model was selected to “improve our reading scores.” He stated briefly that new teachers learn the model through “staff developments and meetings.” Mr. Torres offered no other information regarding the adoption of SFA. Mr. Torres makes several positive comments about teaching at Shoreland.

Ms. Gala, a newer teacher, who also came to the school after SFA had been established, has the impression that the district initiated the process and that the teachers voted on the model:

I’m assuming from what I’ve heard, it was a combination of low scores to improve, and I think it was that the Board would pay for certain books and stuff if certain models were chosen. That’s what I think. But I’m pretty sure that’s how it was and then they, they
voted. I wasn’t here for that. But I do know that like my old school, that was the transition they were going through.

Ms. Gala shares how she was introduced to, and trained in, SFA, “They just pretty much said, ‘This is how you’ll be teaching the reading.’ I went to some workshops and things like that.” Here she agrees with Mr. Torres on how new teachers are exposed to SFA.

Ms. Upton, also a newer teacher at Shoreland, further illustrates the SFA facilitator’s role in the training process:

Ms. Star explained to me that I would be working with Success for All. She asked me if I had any knowledge of it. Of course I said ‘no’ and I was interested. And she said if I was interested in the program, she would definitely get me some training…And while I was waiting to start in the fall I was sent to seminars…It was wonderful and they just trained me.

According to Ms. Upton the facilitator was involved in new teacher training prior to the start of the school year. She suggests that the facilitator may have been instrumental in coordinating trainings for new hires. After the seminars were held and school began, the facilitator continued to support the new staff with implementation, “Ms. Star, (in the) beginning of the school year like four days before the children arrived, she modeled lessons. She showed me the books. She explained the books to us. But the thing that really helped was when she modeled the lessons for us.” Ms. Gala revealed that the facilitator continued to be a valuable resource to her implementation of the model as a teacher new to SFA. Teachers offered no additional information on how, why or precisely when SFA came to be at Shoreland Elementary.

I turn now to the components mentioned, in order to explore teachers’ perceptions of the model, and gain insight into implementation at Shoreland.
According to Ellen Forte, Jennifer Park, Jessica Kaplan, Rebecca Herman and Daniel Aladjem (2001), CSR models by definition have many components, which may be prescribed, tailored, guided, assisted or not addressed. The Success For All model prescribed many components, such as governance, professional development, time scheduling, student grouping, curriculum and assessments (2001:15). The authors reveal the model was an outlier of their study, rating very high for centrality and specificity, or model control over components. Ms. Gala agrees, “It’s a very structured program.” And Mr. Torres called SFA “very scripted.” Teachers at Shoreland made explicit mention of few components of SFA, focusing on the curricular and instructional components only.

When asked to mention SFA components, veteran teachers list some briefly. Mr. Torres says, “It [the SFA model] does give expository text…We’re pushing extended response. That’s something that we as a school are really pushing, not only in language arts but also in math.” Mr. Torres reports that during SFA lessons there is time scheduling of expository text, listening comprehension, and for working on meaningful sentences and extended response. Ms. Deluca lists some more specifics, “Listening comprehension, meaningful sentences.” She also mentions the periodic assessments, “Every eight weeks, we're supposed to move them up.” Veteran teachers focus mainly on instruction and time scheduling, and periodic assessments that allow students to make progress at their own pace. “You have a format to follow, very scripted. You know, a five-day cycle, that you do on these five days.”

Veteran teachers mention student grouping. Mr. Torres also spoke briefly about student grouping, “I mean you pair read and stuff.” Ms. Deluca specifies how student are grouped, “They’re functional and grade level. The grade level they should be at. Those are the two basic things.” It is clear that veteran teachers know that student grouping was a component of SFA.
Ms. Gala likes the model. She also mentioned instructional components of the model, “The SFA lends itself to a lot of things that you learn about literacy. Vocabulary words…Success for All puts the vocabulary words up…Timed portions, partner reading, you know, I had done that. Silent reading. I had done that.” What she called ‘partner reading’ was a form of student grouping she utilized. When asked what grade or grades she taught, Ms. Gala replied, “I teach a split grade, fifth and sixth.” Here she clearly made mention of mixed grade instruction, “They grouped them together...by ability and that has helped a lot.” She liked the student grouping component of the model in her mixed grade classroom. “With the vocabulary words and meaningful sentences they look for...I think understand the story a little bit better,”

Ms. Upton taught English language learners in her class. She liked the instructional components such as the vocabulary and meaningful sentences. She says that model developers are working to refine an English language learner component of SFA:

Now the only thing that we are trying to still work with Success for All is the ESL component of it. It is still fresh for the Success for All people as well and they’re trying to find their way as well. But they’re trying. And since it’s an experimental model, they claim that you know with time and more experience, they will be able to help ESL teachers like myself.

Here Ms. Upton indicated that the model developer was working toward a more tailored ESL instruction component, but that this issue was not yet resolved. She liked SFA, “I think it’s a good program,” however her perception be that SFA is a curricular program only. She mentions several instructional components of the SFA model, however, like her colleagues, does not actively demonstrate knowledge of the multitude of components of SFA.

Teachers at Shoreland articulate several instructional components of the SFA model such as focusing on meaningful sentences, extended response and time-scheduled instruction or
timed portions. Mr. Torres did mention a “lack of parental support” which comprised a specific component of SFA, although he did not make any connection to the model itself. Unlike teachers at Berkland, Shoreland teachers did not demonstrate an understanding of the comprehensiveness of SFA and its many components, or at least did not give evidence of the model being implemented in a comprehensive, or school-wide manner. They identified SFA as a curricular “program,” which was atypical among teachers in my sample, as well as in the focus study. Components of the SFA model that Shoreland teachers did not address were teacher and staff buy-in, integrating technology, data-based decision-making, and research-proven methods. Now that I have examined what CSR components were articulated by Shoreland’s teachers, I now turn to the next section, where I will determine teacher perceptions of model fit.

*Model Fit and Perceived Outcomes*

In this section I will cover teacher perceptions of model fit and perceived outcomes of model, because at Shoreland, teachers justify their perception of model fit using positive outcomes. Teachers at Shoreland support the SFA model, and actively implement the instructional components of the SFA model. They enjoy the assistance and support in their implementation in the form of a facilitator who holds professional development activities on-site, models lessons for teachers in their own classrooms, and trains new teachers in the ways of SFA. Overall, teachers have many positive things to say about the model. I begin with Mr. Torres’s responses about model fit.

Mr. Torres felt that SFA was a good fit with the school culture and students’ needs. In response to the question of model fit, he explains the impact on students:

I think for this school it is (a good fit) because…when I’ve seen it in action I—it’s amazing. At nine-thirty when that bell rings, now all the kids, how they just scatter through and they go to their rooms. At first I’m thinking, “Oh my goodness. Kids are
going all over this building. And how is that going to be, and behavior going to be? And everything else.” But that wasn’t a problem.

Mr. Torres is impressed that the halls are orderly, and students are on best behavior. He bolsters his discussion of model fit with another example:

And then too, seeing—Having kids fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grade in my classroom. At first I wasn’t sure. I thought “Oh these poor seventh and eighth graders who are in here with fourth, fifth and sixth graders!” And I thought, “How would that be?” It never seemed to bother anyone’s self-esteem whatsoever.

He perceives that the model serves as a somewhat dominant force in the school culture, bringing grades and students together for learning. He offers another outcome in proof of the power of the model. He speaks directly of student achievement, an important outcome of CSR:

I mean it was so difficult at the beginning. I’m thinking, “Oh, these kids can’t write. How am I ever going to get them to a place where they can write a sentence?” But it’s constant vocabulary review; writing a sentence; coming back to it; looking back at it. It’s truly amazing. I mean they’ve come a long way. So I, I give all the credit to that program for doing that, because just the way it’s set up. Just the vocabulary development, the way you do it with these kids that don’t know what the heck these words mean. It’s a good thing.

He admits the difficulty of teaching vocabulary to students who speak another language.

Ms. Deluca specifies where her students have made progress, “Improvement in reading and writing sentences, meaningful sentences,” she recapitulates, “Yes, we’ve seen results.” She sees positive growth in these students, beyond his expectations. For this reason, he is confident
the model is a good fit with Shoreland. It is however, interesting that teachers at Shoreland refer to the model as a ‘program’. I now turn to Ms. Upton.

Ms. Upton, a newer teacher at Shoreland taught dual language at Shoreland, and for this reason her perspective centers on making SFA fit with her own needs in a dual language classroom. She was asked if SFA was a good fit with Shoreland. She responds, “It fits in the sense that they take seriously trying to learn reading comprehension, which is part of the reading initiative and teaching writing.” She says that her students took learning seriously using the SFA model, perhaps because she witnessed students engaging in learning. “I think it’s a positive with our school, because it’s a language-based instruction. And it’s a big focus on vocabulary and sentences, which is a big positive because we don’t have… English is a second language for 98% of our students. You know, it’s not widely used at home, so I think that’s big, a big thing.” She explained that the primary instructional focus of the model is on language learning, which she says fits with her students’ needs.

Ms. Gala, perceives some flexibility within the highly structured model. “When we first got it in our school, it was very ‘you had to follow this, this and this.’ They were afraid not to follow it exactly. But through the workshops I’ve gone to, and the other teachers have gone to, you’ve come to find out, it’s not as structured as we think it is.” When probed for her meaning, she said, “You can’t change the model necessarily.” then she offered an example, “Let’s say you finish that section, and you want to do an art project that goes with that section. Then you can take the time to do that and then come back to it.” Ms. Gala found that she could integrate arts into SFA time scheduling. This exemplified her strategy to implement SFA.

Teachers agree that the Success For All model of CSR was a good fit for Shoreland Elementary. However, teachers also agree that they implement with some difficulty. Next I will take on the teachers’ perceived challenges to implementation.
Challenges to Implementation

Teachers at Shoreland are implementing CSR at a time when the largely bilingual school had failed to achieve AYP. I will now explore teacher perceptions of challenges to implementing CSR, and what, if any, strategies teachers utilized to mitigate these perceived challenges.

Mr. Torres is vocal about the challenges he faced teaching at Shoreland. In his most detailed complaint, Mr. Torres laments the poor parent involvement present at Shoreland, “You call parents and you’re cussed at. And they tell you, ‘Don’t call me back. That’s not my problem. You deal with it. You find a way to take care of it.’ I was never exposed to that…It’s like you’re bothering them.” He explained the impact of this from his perspective:

Well if that is what they get at home, I don’t know how we’re going to, how we can change that—the lack of parental support. You’ll have two or three [parents] out of every twenty-seven to thirty kids in a class that actually [comes]. The only time they are ever visible is at the very end when the [state] test results come back and the promotion or summer school…of course it’s too late then.

He relates the lack of parental support to test scores, implying that consistent support is needed during the school year for his students to achieve success. Mr. Torres clearly desires more assistance from his environment in garnering much-needed parental involvement. Mr. Torres describes the kinds of students his school served. For him, student mobility poses a challenge, yet he suggests that SFA is up to the challenge,

I think it’s a good, a good, a good fit for this population of students. We also have such a high mobility rate here. You know we’re, all our kids are bused in. And so with this program every, in an eight-week period I may do two novels. And so every four weeks, every four to five weeks, we’re in a new book. And so if a kid comes in it’s not going to be long before they get into the new novel.
Although the student mobility was high, the SFA time scheduling and assessment structure facilitated the integration of new students at all times of the year.

Ms. Deluca does not appreciate the SFA assessment schedule in her crowded classroom. When asked for challenges to implementation she replies, “The different grade levels. Every eight weeks we’re supposed to move them up and we—Some of them are having to be pushed to go up…It all depends on an assessment that we give them every eight weeks. “ Mr. Torres agrees saying, “It was hard for me with twenty-six, twenty-seven, thirty kids. How do I assess all these kids? How can I be everywhere at one time?” Both Ms. Deluca and Mr. Torres have difficulty evaluating mixed grades in a classroom with thirty students. However, the model facilitator mitigated some of the difficulty. In order to garner more information and overcome the challenge of assessing mixed grades in a crowded classroom, an SFA specialist recommended a solution. During the interview, Mr. Torres produced a student journal:

Well this, this helped. Because now I can take this home and I can read what they were thinking too…I got that from bringing the, when they brought the reading specialist in from the other schools. That’s what she was doing, and I thought, wow, that’s the key darling. You just—that’s it, something as simple as that; taking paper and making your own booklets.

He requires students keep journals of their processes from group work, and he shares how this has worked. “They [the students] know that I’m going to grade them. They know that I’ll respond to them. They know that I write in there. They can’t wait to get them back.” Mr. Torres found a solution to one of his biggest challenges: managing the assessment and promotion of students in a mixed grade, overcrowded classroom, on an eight-week assessment schedule, where the emphasis was on group work. He discovered that requiring all of his students to produce written results from group work (i.e. journaling) alleviated much of the challenge.
Although both veteran teachers identified this combination of circumstances as a challenge, Mr. Torres, with the help of the model facilitator, found a strategy that eased some of the difficulty.

Veteran teachers recognize the following as challenges to implementing SFA: a lack of parental support, mixed-grade assessments, crowded classrooms, and student mobility. Facilitator assistance mitigates some of the challenges. Newer teachers also identified challenges to implementing SFA. I now turn to Ms. Gala for her responses.

Ms. Gala outlines certain challenges in her environment. When asked what are the major challenges to implementing SFA, her biggest concern is that few students are being instructed on level:

A big challenge I see is that they don’t—We switch classes, so each teacher teaches a different level class...Kids are pulled from multiple classrooms. I don’t have that big of a problem with that because I teach 8 and 8.5. So I have all 8th graders and enriched 8th graders, so it’s mostly 8th grade. I have a 6th grader who is just very smart…But then the draw back to that is I only have 18 students. I am the only 8th grade teacher and there are 50 8th graders.

Here, she quantifies the plight of eighth graders at Shoreland, revealing that just over a third are reading on level, in a grade critical to testing. She explains the impact from her perspective, “So all those students are not reading on level. And it is a big problem for the school because a lot of kids aren’t reading on level. And it really…it separates that whole, that whole section.” She laments the impact this had on the school.

Ms. Gala also reports a lack of parental support for her students. From Ms. Gala’s perspective, a language barrier and poor parent involvement are related. When probed about parental support, she says, “I think it is a big thing. The big problem. A lot of parents can’t help their kids with the homework, so it is not much.” In response to a question about parental support
she says that there “is not much” parental support for her students learning English. Although her comments are quite different in tone from those of Mr. Torres, Ms. Gala rules out parents as a source of academic assistance for her students. In this way, the responses of both Mr. Torres and Ms. Gala reflect parent involvement barriers, and stress in the relational trust between teachers and parents.

Ms. Upton reveals that her own challenge in the classroom was the integration of bilingual education into the SFA model. Here again was a teacher who struggled with the types of students in her class. First she mentions the time scheduling component of the model:

Depending on the teacher and depending on the student population I think it would be, time could be a good thing or a bad thing—the timed portions. The bad thing for ESL is that they’re still trying to find a way to present the material. But it’s not only SFA. It’s everyone, almost every other kind of materials that I’ve seen. I’ve yet to find a portion or you know materials for ESL that are great. The only thing that I’ve found has been something in England that I found for preparations for the, for the baccalaureate and that’s what I actually use.

She found that bringing in supplemental materials, and making room in the time scheduling for these new materials, worked in her practice. Because SFA is strictly time-scheduled, presumably something would have to be cut to make room for these alternatives. As she continued, she alluded to the aspects of SFA that didn’t work in her dual-language classroom:

Now the one thing that I don’t see very helpful with the writing portion of the SFA is the meaningful sentences, and how much time is given to meaningful sentences. Because I’ve done my own, I’ve done my own research and I found out that doing meaningful sentences does not really help students…For example if you look at the board right there. For ESL, “spice,” “community.” Those are wonderful words because they are part
of the book. But I need to be concentrating much more on the simple words, which is the high frequency words.

Here Ms. Upton makes the case that the vocabulary in SFA was developed for mainstreamed students, however, her students had different needs, and were better served using a different instructional strategy. Ms. Upton pulled in additional materials and strategies in order to address the lack that she perceived, thus mitigating the challenge dual language presented to implementation.

The inflexibility of SFA also inspires adjustments, according to Ms. Gala. As initially discussed in the section on Model Fit, Ms. Gala at first resisted the rigidity of SFA, only to find solutions to this as well.

It’s a very structured program—that is the only thing that I sometimes have a problem with sometimes, because you can’t be as creative. But it’s becoming… When we first got it in our school it was very “You had to follow this, this, and this.” They were very afraid not to follow it exactly, but through the workshops… you come to find out that it’s not as structured as we think it is.

Here she affirms that even within a structured model, she is able to find ways to be creative and find freedom. Ms. Gala is a teacher determined to implement the model, even though this required local adaptation, flexibility and modification.

Both veteran and newer teachers at Shoreland struggle to implement SFA in a largely bilingual school. It is interesting that no teachers describes the model as comprehensive, nor articulates a wide range of components. This introduces the possibility that the school was not implementing fully, despite the presence of an on-site model facilitator. In general teachers praised the developer supports that they enjoyed, and both appreciated the Language Arts curriculum. Teachers agreed on several aspects of implementation, including those having to do
with professional development. I turn now to teacher perceptions of professional development at Shoreland.

Materials/Resources

No data were coded for materials and resources at Shoreland.

Professional Development

Dodgeland schools had a wide range of professional development opportunities. Because Shoreland housed an on-site facilitator, Shoreland teachers had an advantage. They had access to ongoing professional development within their own school, even in their own classrooms. Shoreland teachers valued the school’s facilitator and had general praise for the planning meetings and on-site activities. Teachers were polled for several facts about, as well as their opinions of, professional development. I turn now to teachers for their specific responses.

When asked about professional development, Mr. Torres has praise for the staff development meetings, contrasting this with his previous experiences:

We have one Thursday. This is probably our eighth one. My other school, [I] was there three years. We never had one of those, not ever. So again it goes back to the administration and those teachers who made the SIPA. They saw the need for that, and built that into our improvement plan, and allowed for that time to train and to get together with teachers.

Here appreciates the school plan for professional development. To quantify professional development opportunities he attended, Mr. Torres says this of the ongoing activities, “We have one every month.” He added that they “would be a total of three hours [each].”

Mr. Torres referred above to the School Improvement Plan, which he called a SIPA. Both the planning meetings and the SIPA are reform-like organizational activities. However, Mr.
Torres attributed planning meetings and the SIPA to the administration and their wisdom. He did not appear to view theses as related to or driven by the SFA model.

Professional development at Shoreland was almost entirely onsite, and supported by or run by the in-house SFA facilitator, or other SFA reading specialists brought in. Mr. Torres holds the facilitator in high esteem, saying, “Our reading specialist, [Ms. Eckerd] who has just, I mean, the lady will bend over backwards…” He acknowledges the value of having the facilitator on staff, and remarked on her approachability. Naturally Mr. Torres focuses on the staff development meetings and the facilitator activities when indicating how he learned about SFA. He describes this training, and revealed his excitement:

All those reading specialists come in…They came in and did the different types of—like think, pair share, different strategies in your reading class. You just sit at your desk and you watch and you grade them. But what I even liked better about that was it just wasn’t me. Not only did I just hear my point of view with what I saw. I was able to hear it also from another, a reading specialist who was trained in that. And so that was very beneficial.

With his first training meetings, as well as the ongoing development meetings, Mr. Torres feels supported in implementation. However, he did not have such praise for external PD activities. Mr. Torres is not impressed with the district professional development activities. He relates an anecdote about one such activity. He takes issue with a comment the meeting’s director made:

“They’re really pushing this literacy thing at us.” I’m sitting there thinking, “I couldn’t believe she just said that!” That was her comment when she was introducing this new initiative. She goes, “They’re really pushing this literacy thing now.” I’m thinking, pushing it? Isn’t that what we’re doing every single day? And I don’t care what you call
it. You’re teaching kids word knowledge. You’re teaching them how to read fluently. You’re teaching them to write about what they read…I can’t believe that that would be something new. It’s not something [Dodgeland] created and they’re shoving it down your throat. If you haven’t been doing it, because they may call it something different—

But isn’t that what your reading program should’ve always been anyway?

Mr. Torres distinguishes between activities that provided more strategy-oriented focus, versus the district’s more goal-oriented focus. He disapproves of using his time to simply re-word the goals. His distaste was such that he left the meeting, saying, “I had to (go), it was, it was— Oh, it was getting to me.” He prefers professional development that was more useful, more germane to his practice. He reiterates his appreciation for the facilitator, “They’re very good at providing learning opportunities like that.”

Ms. Deluca simply says she learned the model “through staff developments and meetings.” She agrees that she attends “about 3 hours a month.” She offers no other responses about professional development.

Ms. Gala attended staff development meetings as well, “We have half-day professional development days.” She agrees with Mr. Torres, similarly praising the facilitator, “[Ms. Eckerd] also gave me the seminars. Beginning of the school year like four days before the children arrived, she modeled lessons. She showed me the books. She explained the books to us, but the thing that really helped was when she modeled the lessons for us…Yes, that was helpful.” She quantifies her time spent on professional development, “Probably 12 hours [a month].”

Ms. Gala admits that the school plan gave preference to onsite PD, “For us to go to a workshop outside of school, usually it’s a big route to get to go. You really have to beg and plead.” She explained why this was the case, “Money. The principal always says there is no
money. She is not really big on people being out either. So that’s the other factor.” Here she implies that the principal values instructional time over professional development.

Ms. Upton indicates that the majority of SFA professional development is handled by the onsite facilitator or facilitators brought in, “Most of the time it is in-house.” Unlike Mr. Torres however, Ms. Upton valued and sought out external professional development opportunities. When asked about offerings she had attended, she exclaims, “What haven’t I participated in! It’s actually because the city of [Dodgeland] takes it seriously and sends you everywhere and anywhere.” Her perception was that a wide variety of PD opportunities is available through the district. She quantified this, saying, “Okay, a month, probably if I accepted more, I would probably be at twenty hours away. Twenty hours away from my students.” Her estimate although higher than her real hours away by her own admission, far exceeded that of Mr. Torres and Ms. Deluca. It is clear that the difference in number applied directly to external professional development activities.

Ms. Upton expresses some conflict over external professional development activities, “It could be a good thing and it can be a bad thing, depending on the seminar.” She explains the competing pressures from her own perspective:

I think sometimes that what’s really frustrating is the time spent away from the students. Did I learn something? Was it worthwhile for me to miss being with my students? …I only get them for 180 days. And of course [Dodgeland] has the shortest school [year] of the whole country. And six days—I mean six hours turns out to be only like five hours in reality. And it’s not enough.

Here she appeared to agree with the principal, indicating that external activities may not be worth the risk of being away from students. Then she revealed the real reason behind her efforts to attend such activities. For her, the big draw off school grounds was materials:
I mean they, they try to do it sometimes by paying us, and by giving us freebies and giving us material. When they say “material” my eyes lit up, and I’ll definitely be in that seminar. The incentives are things that lure me. If you tell me you’re going to give me material, I will be there. The money doesn’t really grab me. It’s actually the materials.

Unlike Mr. Torres, who had only high praise for onsite activities, Ms. Upton sought external professional development offerings because of the incentives, especially when those incentives included materials she could bring to her classroom.

Newer teachers actively seek out both internal and external professional development activities. Veteran teachers prefer the onsite offerings. Teachers agree that the school plan for professional development is somewhat limited to onsite activities, through the SFA facilitator. Mr. Torres argues that external offerings tended to be less relevant to his practice than onsite offerings. For Ms. Upton, these risked valuable instruction time, a concern reportedly shared with the principal. But for the latter teacher, these district workshops occasionally brought in much needed resources, making the gain worth the risk.

I have explored the teacher perceptions of CSR at Shoreland. Next I turn to the policy environment, by examining teacher perceptions of NCLB.

_No Child Left Behind and Adequate Yearly Progress_

In order to better understand the policy environment at Shoreland, I will need to examine the teachers’ perceptions of NCLB and the sanctions these mandates posed. I will begin by addressing the teachers’ awareness of adequate yearly progress at Shoreland.

Shoreland teachers were probed for their awareness of AYP, both the mandate, and the school’s status. Interestingly, teachers at Shoreland did not agree on the school’s AYP status. I will begin with Ms. Deluca who spoke briefly about AYP.
When asked directly if she knew whether the school had met AYP, Ms. Deluca says “I, yes we did.” This, however, directly contradicts the other available data collected at Shoreland. When asked if she was concerned about failing AYP, she replies simply, “No.” Mr. Torres does not offer a response to questions about AYP. Veteran teachers at Shoreland are not well informed, or do not divulge what they know about AYP. I next turn to newer teachers at Shoreland for their awareness and perceptions of AYP.

Ms. Gala was aware of the school’s AYP status, and was able to discuss the difficulties the school faced as a result of AYP. When asked if Shoreland had made AYP, she had this to say, “No. And we won’t this year, sad part, because they keep higher-ing (sic) it.” Here, she showed an awareness of the benchmarks rising each year. Ms. Gala got right to the point as to why the school failed, “We have so many of our students that don’t speak English at home, and they don’t read and write English…It’s [not] their first language and the task are not geared… They [the tasks] are in English, whether you are Special Ed. or you are ELL student.” Ms. Gala felt that the English language learners were a big challenge, “I think it is a big thing… the big problem. A lot of parents can’t help their kids with the homework.” She related the types of students enrolled, and the capacity for parent involvement as factors in meeting AYP. Ms. Gala reveals the school strategy for coping with AYP failure, “They sign up for numerous programs,” she began. “We do the regular after school program through [Dodgeland] Public Schools but also there is the…another after school program with [Aspire]. She focused on this particular program:

They do an after school program for the kids…It’s funded through [Aspire]. It’s kids that have, are kind of what we call ‘bubble kids.’ They are not real low, but they are not real high. But they are…right close to meeting and they can either bring you up or bring you down. And it those kids. It’s those kids. It’s a small concentrated group of about 8 of those kids in each class. And they stay for the after school and you really work with making sure that they can cap the concept, and extra activities.
She agreed that Aspire provided funding for certain teachers to stay after school for this program. Here Ms. Gala provided a critical piece of information. Shoreland’s strategy for making AYP involved concentrating on the “bubble kids,” who were roughly the 25% of students who were closest to passing, but had failed benchmarks.

Ms Upton knows that Shoreland failed to achieve AYP, “We haven’t met it.” When asked if she is concerned about meeting AYP the current year, she says, “All of us are”

Ms. Gala’s has a better grasp than her colleagues of the challenges to achieving AYP, and the strategies in place at Shoreland than did her colleague. She specified strategies in place, and understood the funding to an extent. Next I turn to Shoreland teachers’ opinions of NCLB legislation.

Mr. Torres has his share of opinions of the No Child legislation. In fact, it comprises the bulk of his interview. “No Child Left Behind: a lot of mandates and no money,” he begins, “I can’t imagine Congress coming up with a thing for doctors and lawyers and people of other professions to follow, and not having somebody there that actually is in the trenches making those decisions.” Here he echoes the sentiment of many critics of NCLB, the focus on teachers is unfair, especially when politicians drafted the legislation. Like many critics of NCLB he praises the goals, but protests the practice of accountability, “I agree that no child should be left behind; I mean I agree that all children can learn. But do they all learn at the same rate? Absolutely not, which is the problem I had with [Dodgeland] because they, they choose the [state test] as their indicator for promotion and summer school purposes.” Mr. Torres feels that high stakes testing is inappropriate for Shoreland. He pointed to the types of students at Shoreland, saying that one test does not fit all students:

Again in a school like this, and my last school, when there’s all Hispanic children… watching these kids struggle in forty minutes, trying to read the seven reading selections. They get four, maybe on the fifth one that’s it; they have to totally guess the last two.
They don’t even have a chance to go back and use the strategy that you teach in the classroom. And if you’re going to teach those strategies, and these kids are struggling to learn a second language, then why don’t you pick an indicating test where it is? They have to read these seven selections in forty minutes and answer all the questions. You’re setting the kids up for failure. You’re not even giving them a chance to show what they know.

Here he argues that testing English language learners with a time limit amounts to leaving them behind. However, he saw the need for testing in general, “I’m a firm believer in benchmark tests. I think you have to have, I think there needs to be accountability. But saying that every school should be at what, 70% by the year 2000…? Okay, people. If that’s the case then, where, where’s the home in this equation?” Here, Mr. Torres accurately cuts to the lack of humanistic principles in NCLB; the policy is blind to the context of students’ lives.

Mr. Torres became defensive as he related the pressures and reality of teaching in an urban school. He conveyed the seriousness of the sanctions from the perspective of an experienced teacher. And he shared his feeling that the goals of No Child legislation set everyone up for failure:

And I’ve taught in many different school districts but when you look in a city school, this is my I think four years here but I have sixteen years to pull from elsewhere in wealthy, medium and poor school districts. I’ve never worked harder in my life; and I’m not making excuses; and I take it personally when kids fail. I’m one of those that when those test results come out, I’m the one, I cry. I mean I get emotional. I blame myself and so I’m not one that says well you know what, I can’t help the kids that don’t know. I do take it personally but at the same time I’m not going to, until parents buy into it and they, they work with their kids’ education we can’t do it. It’s impossible. So how do we
get there? I don’t know. But to mandate and say, you’re going to be here, this is what’s going to happen, you’re going to lose your jobs, you’re school’s going to lose funding. Well guess what? Most of them are going to lose their funding. It’s not going to happen. That’s like going to Mars; it’s not going to happen.

Mr. Torres points to the tremendous responsibility teachers shoulder, coupled with the lack of the power to make the changes required by the new mandates. Again, he indicated that the context of students’ lives is ignored.

Mr. Torres, like the other teachers polled, brings up the issue of funding. When asked what were the most serious challenges posed by No Child legislation, Mr. Torres replies:

The most serious, well, I think the, just the benchmark scores they want you to get to, and not giving you money…I mean there’s—you look in [Dodgeland] and most of my friends all have thirty-five, forty kids in the classroom. You don’t even give [students] the opportunity to have an environment in a setting with money and materials and supplies to do the job. And so if you’re going to require me to do it, set me up to do it. Don’t, don’t put me in a situation where I don’t have anything and then you still expect—. And that’s the problem with that, is all these mandates there is no funding for them and the school districts aren’t going to do it.

Here Mr. Torres refers to the cuts in funding, and burdensome class size as part of the most serious challenges posed by NCLB. He implies that the law sets up urban schools for failure. As he continues, he conveys the enormous pressure on teachers that NCLB created, and the lack of hope teachers hold as a result:

Again it’s that pressure putting on the teachers. And what you see is everyone’s about to explode. I can’t take anymore. I can’t do anymore. What more do they want me to do? I mean how many more ways? I mean there’s not even enough time in the day. I’m here at
6:30 every morning. I don’t have to be here until nine o’clock. Five days a week I put in two and a half hours early every day. I never stay after. Oh I teach the hour after school but then I take my work home and I grade for an hour. Then I’m through….If I can’t do it in the two and a half hours before school and the hour after school, I don’t do it.

Mr. Torres reports a truly critical situation among urban school teachers. They put in extremely long hours, are expected to make miracles, and have nowhere to turn for funding and assistance. He paints a bleak picture of the morale among teachers, saying that in urban schools, the class size was ridiculous, and the context ignored. And yet No Child was designed to help urban schools and students. Next I turn to newer teachers for their opinions of the No Child legislation.

Ms. Upton, like Mr. Torres, began with the context of Shoreland. She communicates the frustration resulting from the No Child mandates and Shoreland’s enrollment policy, “Our school has different, we have such—We’re such a special case and we’re trying so hard with what we have. It’s really frustrating. So I would like President Bush to come, and tell me how I am supposed to do this, with this wonderful lady who started No Child Left Behind, and explain it to me more.” She uses sarcasm to say that NCLB does not make sense, and meeting mandates seems impossible. She conveys a sense of powerlessness to affect change. As she continued, she also spoke of pressure and fear. She elaborated on the situation from her perspective:

We were on probation two years before I came, yeah the year before I came. When I came it was the first year that we were not on probation. And I can’t imagine being at a probation school. Right now we are—we work so hard. We have such a great team. Everybody comes from all of the school board to look at the way, the things that we do and we have enough people coming to school. I can’t imagine being it for something negative. So it scares me and I just—it just seems that it just puts so much more pressure, unfortunately on the kids and I feel a little bit bad that sometimes…We’re
pushing them and pushing them and pushing them. And it’s not even for something that deals with them per se, but it deals with the performance of the school.

Here she expressed that the situation “scares” her and “puts so much more pressure” that ended up placed on the students. She stated she felt “bad.” She demonstrated her awareness of how high the stakes were for the school and the students.

Ms. Gala demonstrates her strong distaste for the policy, saying, “Actually it’s a joke…There is [sic] so many things we cannot control.” Here, she points out her responsibility to uphold standards that do not account for context. She continues, “It’s a big problem and it is tons of pressure. I mean its trickle down theory if our school doesn’t meet standards our principal is blamed, so we are pretty much blamed for—We are held accountable for every single thing we do. We are given a very hard time if it is not [nonverbal gesture], which is very stressful if you are a teacher.” Ms. Gala remarks how stressful she perceived the situation to be. When asked if she is worried about the sanctions, she had this to say:

Um, you know, I’m not really—They say your school will be shut down and stuff like that. I’ll be honest that’s is going to be after a while and I don’t so much buy into that just because our school [is] a feeder school to begin with. These kids aren’t suppose to be here; their schools are too far. So to say that that is going to be the penalty is kind of ridiculous. I mean that goes along with a lot of other political ideas that people have, but you know, you are on probation you know to do certain things. They really keep an eye on your school which is so depressing because we’ve been on probation they come to our school and they are like “Oh, you guys are model schools. Your teachers are wonderful. They are so dedicated. Look at all these wonderful activities. Your students are great.” But every year we take the test and we do horrible; and every year they come back you know. You finally got off probation and then we are right back on.
She detailed the experience of being on probation from her perspective. She argues that the benchmarks are not reasonable, not attainable, and not fair. She argues that the sanctions were ridiculous, and demoralizing. The above comment reflected a hopeless feeling, as did other comments from teachers’ interviews at Shoreland.

In addition, Ms. Gala has a different opinion of the leadership at Shoreland than does her colleague, Mr. Torres, “I think the administration is very concerned about their own, watching their own, you know. That’s to be honest,” she began, “And so they make life miserable for some people, if they don’t feel they are up to par. And sometimes maybe they’re not. But it’s not always done the right way, in my opinion. And that’s a problem too.” She felt the administration had not always acted fairly toward teachers, however she gave no specific anecdotes. She related these complaints to the policy environment. Ms. Gala made no other mention of governance structures, nor did she report having any involvement in the LSC.

Being a newer teacher, Ms. Gala complains about the highly qualified teacher recertification. “Teacher accountability I think has been kind of a problem in certain ways just because of um the paper work and stuff…But to get a endorsement, you don’t exactly have to be a brain surgeon in that subject.” One might wonder what the problem was, if it is easy to qualify. However, Ms. Gala’s own story was one that pointed out failure in the system:

For example, [I’m] endorsed in math, and my endorsement is not on my certificate. So I send my paper work in. And I was not worried about it last year because I taught Social Studies. This year I had to worry about it. So I send all my paper work in August, because they said that this is not your certificate…“You’re endorsed but you have to… have to be printed.” So I sent it all in. And the state has now closed down all these positions. So they don’t even know where anything is. There are no phone numbers. There is no way to get in touch with anybody. And it’s lost. All my stuff is lost. And you know that has happened to so many people who have their masters, and they haven’t
gotten credit you know. And then they send these letters out…saying your student’s teacher is not qualified. Well you know—you know—yeah there are, but some of them are, but you can’t prove that.

Apparently, the onus is on the teachers to prove their qualifications to the very office that oversees highly qualified teacher certification. Perhaps due to that office becoming understaffed, or undergoing a reorganization of sorts, the relationship between district and state is becoming an antagonistic one. She illuminates the pitfalls in the road to NCLB.

And there were more pitfalls, according to Ms. Gala.

Ms. Gala is informed on the subject of school choice. “They sent out, okay, No Students Left Behind; so okay, every student can switch schools. Well that was not possible. There is what—30,000 kids wanting to switch, and 1,000 positions. It wasn’t possible.” Here she quantifies the students eligible for school choice in Dodgeland, and actual choices available. From her interview, one can see that the No Child legislation is not working in Dodgeland.

Teachers at Shoreland express sharp criticism about the No Child legislation. They report having overcrowded classrooms, feeling intense pressure to perform the impossible, and the vague suspicion that they were set up to fail. They have little hope that the situation will improve, nor are they empowered to make a difference. The most scathing critiques of NCLB made by teachers in my sample came from Shoreland.
Chapter 5
Discussion

In Chapter 4: Results, teachers at the urban schools included in this study expressed difficulty implementing their comprehensive school reform (CSR) within their policy environment. This policy environment included CSR implementation policies, district enrollment policies, as well as federal mandates stemming from No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Teachers’ perceptions revealed misalignments among these policies in three interrelated thematic areas: funding, enrollment and social capital. I use these themes to frame teacher perceptions within the supportive literature. I will begin by counteracting an important finding of the National Longitudinal Evaluation of Comprehensive School Reform (NLECSR).

Policy alignment is critical to the important work of educating the nation's children. “Education reform at the federal level intends to link state and district levels, in order to have an effect on, and address issues on the education system as a whole” (Natriello, McDill and Pallas 1996:73-74). However, these links are problematic. Some argue that these policy levels take one- another into account, and work well together. Based on the perceptions of teachers in my sample, I disagree.

Le Floch, Taylor and Thomsen found that “being identified for improvement [due to failing to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress or AYP] acts as a stimulus for CSR schools,” indicating that schools gained in what authors called “implementation fidelity” (2005:13). Thus schools identified for improvement “return to their CSR implementation process with great vigor” (2005:13). At the school level, it appeared from their research that the NCLB sanctions
stimulated schools to rely on their CSR model as a remedial strategy. Authors affirm that while certain aspects of NCLB had the potential to redirect schools energies away from CSR implementation, the two reforms were ultimately congruous (2005:20-21). Although the new federal policy environment appeared supportive of improvement strategies such as CSR at the school level, it was not clear that this congruence was evident at the classroom level. Further, the authors argue, specifically in Dodgeland, that few teachers had knowledge of AYP and sanctions, concluding that sanctions seemed to have no effect on the teachers’ implementation of CSR. I found that in Dodgeland, many teachers did in fact understand AYP and the sanctions (2005:21). For these reasons, I do not agree with their findings.

According to the report, they also found a surprising pattern. Teachers and administrators in Dodgeland “expressed concern that the impoverished, urban environments of their schools present challenges that would prevent them from meeting AYP targets,” (Le Floch, Taylor & Thomsen 2005:21). Le Floch, Taylor and Thomsen do little to reconcile the apparent abundance of teacher concern about the urban setting and the impoverished student population affecting their AYP with the reported dearth of awareness of AYP. Authors concluded that despite the intention of NCLB to improve support for schools facing severe challenges, school-level stakeholders considered the support inadequate (2005:21). My sense is that, adequate or not, the support NCLB brings comes with sanctions, and that these are perceived by teachers to be highly punitive and without appropriate supports. I find that the sanctions do not inspire confidence among, or provide meaningful advocacy for the teachers working with these populations. This contradiction coupled with my results caused me to reject their finding that NCLB had no effect on Dodgeland teachers’ implementation efforts. NCLB, I argue, demoralized and marginalized the teachers who were undertaking complex reform efforts.

Table 7: Perceived Policy Misalignments displays the most salient responses from the Results section.
Table 7
Perceived Policy Misalignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNDING</th>
<th>ENROLLMENT</th>
<th>SOCIAL CAPITAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Where we have a problem is the overpopulated classroom and not enough books for the kids.”</td>
<td>“We accept anyone, whereas other schools… pick and choose what they want.”</td>
<td>“Because this law comes into effect, I am no longer a qualified teacher… The process has diminished the goal.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Money has dwindled...positions have been cut. Your reading class is going to go up, because we have fewer teachers.”</td>
<td>“English is a second language for 98% of our students... It’s not widely used at home, so I think that’s big, a big thing.”</td>
<td>“I send all my paper work in August... and the state has now closed down all these positions... All my stuff is lost... And then they send these letters out... saying ‘your student’s teacher is not qualified.’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Twenty-six, twenty-seven, thirty kids. How do I assess all these kids? How can I be everywhere at one time?”</td>
<td>“It is a big problem for the school because a lot of kids aren’t reading on level.”</td>
<td>“Teachers can get fired. The principal can get fired. And they’ll...try to turn the school around, or close the school entirely.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The money is being spent in every...way except the way it needs to be spent... to lower the class size.”</td>
<td>“I think that’s impossible to just make that jump with the type of students we have.”</td>
<td>“Everyone’s about to explode. I can’t take anymore. I can’t do anymore. What more do they want me to do?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“There are 33 kids in a class, which isn’t right, and they are very, very low.”</td>
<td>“We’re getting students... who are very low, and we get them at all times of the year.”</td>
<td>“Unfortunately, we are test-driven... So you really have to let go of those things that don’t really carry that much weight on the test.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“All these mandates, there is no funding for them.”</td>
<td>“We’re getting all the students that other schools don’t want.”</td>
<td>“We’re going to be taken over by the state... It means we’re all fired—and re-hired, okay.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The principal always says there is no money.”</td>
<td>“When there’s all Hispanic children... You’re setting the kids up for failure.”</td>
<td>“The administration is very concerned about their own, watching their own, you know.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Actually it’s a joke... There is [sic] so many things we cannot control.”</td>
<td>“It’s impossible. That’s like going to Mars. It’s not going to happen.”</td>
<td>“It’s impossible. That’s like going to Mars. It’s not going to happen.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They want every child to be at a certain level. But that’s not going to happen. Because to me it’s impossible.”</td>
<td>“And if you need to improve, I think you need feedback.”</td>
<td>“It’s impossible. That’s like going to Mars. It’s not going to happen.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It’s a big problem and it is tons of pressure.”</td>
<td>“Finally got off probation and then we are right back on.”</td>
<td>“Where’s the home in this equation?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Honestly, I don’t think... we’ll be able to make that progress.”</td>
<td>“You call parents and you’re cussed at.”</td>
<td>“Honestly, I don’t think... we’ll be able to make that progress.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I found misalignments in three areas: (1) funding, (2) enrollment policies, and (3) development of social capital.

Teachers perceptions reveal that funding is out of step with their needs and that district enrollment policies unfairly complicated the goal of achieving AYP. Teachers’ perceptions reveal that policy misalignments impacted social capital. Teachers expressed sentiments of powerlessness and hopelessness. They described unfair policy practices, and great pressure and strain within their relationships with school stakeholders. The teachers describe an environment poor in social capital. I use supportive literature to expand discussion of these misalignments.

**Funding Misalignment**

Teachers at Berkland and Shoreland reported a lack of funding, leading to overcrowded classrooms, and fewer opportunities for professional development connected to their CSR model. Teachers at both schools reported increased pressures embedded in their discussion of funding. Both communicated a sense of being set up to fail. At Chamberland, teachers also reported difficulty with instruction and meeting mandates due to their high class size.

“Funding for CSR has become a real challenge for many districts” (Klugh and Borman 2005:33). The federal government could, and perhaps should “alter its role to be a more supportive partner” for districts and schools implementing CSR: to serve as information exchange facilitator, and support system for needs assessment, evaluation, funding and network building (Desimone 2000:43). “Policy makers have shoved aside sources of insight about why students learn or fail to learn in schools, and what supports would enable students to succeed” (Sleeter 2004:135).

Educational funding is an issue with geographical, political and class issues deeply embedded within the complexities. Frederick M. Hess stated that, “No federal law can wipe out the effects of family, attitude, innate capacity, mobility and other such differences and
influences…It may be essential to provide extra assistance or resources to educate children who are particularly disadvantaged” (Hess 2006:238). He goes on to sat that it is incorrect and harmful to label schools as “inadequate” where they fail to close this social gap (2006:238). Christine E. Sleeter put it this way, “Current policies that mandate high expectations for “all” students tend to ignore everyday practices in which the deficit ideology plays out...Current policies also tend to ignore ways in which the distribution of social resources follows racialized patterns and plays out in racialized ways” (Sleeter 2004:133). I submit that the onus is on the federal government to support school funding where these social distributions of wealth leave students and their communities behind.

Enrollment Misalignment

Teachers, again at Berkland and Shoreland complained of the unfairness of their schools’ open enrollment policies, especially how this burdened the schools with respect to meeting Adequate Yearly Progress, or AYP. English language learners comprised the majority of enrollment at both schools. This implied that the majority of their students counted against subgroup mandates more than twice. Teachers balked at the unfairness of this federal requirement. Some researchers in education agree that, “Today’s AYP calculation foolishly serves to punish principals who would otherwise accept students transferring from weaker schools,” and that “the law discourages rational principals from opening the door to many students” (Hess 2006:239). One solution is to calculate AYP based on students “who have been there for at least two years” (Hess 2006:239). District enrollment strategies cannot be viewed as an issue in isolation to the political and social contexts that permeate the district. However, I submit that at least Dodgeland district, if not all districts, ought to support schools where enrollment complicates the current AYP accountability with regard to racial and other subgroup requirements.
Social Capital Misalignment

Although teacher comments did not explicitly discuss social capital per se, the themes of trust and its importance in constructing a positive interactional environment along with building communities of learning among all teachers in the school were frequently mentioned alongside discussion of the erosion of trust that accompanied the pressures to achieve AYP. Initially, my analyses revealed a lack of trust that teachers voiced with respect to principal leadership and the policy environment. “The administration is very concerned about watching their own, you know,” remarked one teacher. This teacher conveyed mistrust of school leadership, based on the administration’s drive to save itself by meeting AYP. “If you need to improve, I think you need feedback,” said another teacher. This teacher conveyed a sense of being set up to fail in a system without appropriate supports. Comments such as “If you’re going to require me to do it, set me up to do it,” show how teachers paint a picture of pressure to succeed amidst a lack of supports. “Teachers can get fired. The principal can get fired,” said another who also said school closing was a possibility. Teachers perceived they were under the gun. They spoke about the impossibility of relying on school leadership for direction or relief. “We’re a ship without a rudder right now,” said one. No teacher statements reflect evidence of trust or positive social capital in the data I examined.

Gains in social capital won through CSR implementation have been shown to outlast the model-specific implementation activities (Uekawa, Aladjem and Zhang 2005:2). However, these effects would almost certainly diminish with teacher and administrative turnover, complicated, then, by shifts in policy. Anthony S. Bryk and Barbara Schneider found in their research that “the absence of trust…provoked sustained controversy around resolving even relatively simple organizational concerns” in a case study they conducted (2002:122). It is clear that relational trust and social capital make schools run. It follows that dehumanization, or the absence of democracy, can occur where “a worker’s well being can safely be ignored” (Kincheloe, Slattery
and Steinberg 2000:220). “Teachers are disconnected from their coworkers and isolated in their classrooms. Teachers lack the opportunity to influence their work environment [because] most decisions are made by administrators, school boards or state legislators” (Kincheloe, Slattery and Steinberg 2000:221), and now by congress. Protecting social capital development can be a tool in teacher empowerment and help to alleviate some of the demoralization that teachers face.

Teachers from all three schools in my sample expressed mounting pressures at work, and difficulties in their work relationships. They also conveyed the demoralizing realities of meeting their AYP, and the practice of accountability:

I’m here at 6:30 every morning; I don’t have to be here until nine o’clock; five days a week I put in two and a half hours early every day. I never stay after. Oh, I teach the hour after school but then I take my work home and I grade for an hour then I’m through. After that hour, if I can’t do it in the two and a half hours before school and the hour after school, I don’t do it. [Shoreland; Mr. Torres.]

He reported being under great pressure and putting in regular unpaid overtime. One teacher reported that the state office lost her highly qualified teacher certification proof, resulting in a demoralizing letter sent out to the parents of her students. Another claimed that trust relationships between administration and teachers had broken down. And another reported a lack of trust between parents and teachers. “You call parents and you’re cussed at,” said one. Teachers used the word “impossible” to describe the NCLB mandates. They reported feeling scared, pressured, and stressed. The picture they paint is one of scarcity in social capital.

It is easy to see how meeting mandates might seem impossible when such mandates are based on context-blind policies. I am not arguing that the teachers are right, however I recognize that they are important to any equation where schooling and learning are expected to dramatically improve. I do not have the answers. But some small solutions do present themselves
that may alleviate some of the pressure and provide supports for teachers implementing CSR under NCLB. I agree with Frederick M. Hess who suggested a “value-added” accountability (2006:237). He stated that NCLB as it stands now measures aggregate or overall achievement. This takes into account “learning in the current year, learning in all previous years, and everything else going on in the child’s life” (2006:237). He proposes measuring the growth from the beginning of the year to the end of the year, to show the growth actually attributable to the current teacher (2006:237). My sense is that this method is a significant improvement, because it would more closely reward what the law is trying to reward; good teachers and positive student achievement. Although simple and incomplete, this approach might alleviate a significant amount of the unfairness in the current system. And it may promote hopefulness among teachers working with disadvantaged students, something the teachers in my sample were lacking.

I found that teachers reported working under increasingly pressured conditions, with more students in their classrooms than ever before, with no support in their environments. I found in my analysis dramatic conflicts between the policies of CSR and NCLB. I found evidence that suggests that CSR has many humanistic principles and goals inherent in the policies and the activities, while NCLB appears to have far fewer humanistic attributes, especially in practice. Social capital gained through the implementation of CSR may be threatened by the sanctions and “tough accountability” of No Child legislation. The literature and critics of the NCLB law support these findings. The question becomes, “now what?”

What is needed is a more nuanced set of accountability measures in NCLB (such as value-added pre-test/post-test progress scores, and testing that is sensitive to English language learners) that allow for great diversity among school populations, and provide feedback systems for teachers and schools failing their AYP. Also, further research is needed.

I propose ethnographic research that utilizes focus group interviews and peer participant observations for trained paraprofessionals working with teachers implementing CSR in over
crowded urban classrooms. I envision a research design with three phases. The first phase would involve the trainees conducting focus group interviews with open-ended questions about implementation and supports, as well as regarding the policy environment. Based on the data collected, classroom observation instrumentation would be developed that would elucidate areas of need, or areas of conflict. The paraprofessionals would enter classrooms to provide assistance, and to conduct classroom observations. The analysis of these observations would clarify areas of need, and conflicts in the policy. I further suggest that the paraprofessionals would be able to free up some of the teacher time for conduct peer observations. This would offer an additional perspective, and would put teachers in a position to critically examine their policy environment. I envision a final wave of open-ended focus group interviews for two purposes: first to allow participants to delineate policy recommendations, second, to permit time and opportunity to “decompress” and allow for closure for participants. The result would be a collaborative inquiry into teaching using participant observation, and might provide temporary relief for teachers implementing in overcrowded classrooms.
Notes

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This analysis was made possible by the good will of the American Institutes For Research, the primary grantee of the National Longitudinal Evaluation of Comprehensive School Reform (NLECSR), and was shaped in part by the tremendous work and body of literature that emerged from that study. I gratefully acknowledge the research team at the University of South Florida (USF) known as the Alliance for Applied Research in Education and Anthropology (AAREA), in the Department of Anthropology; and the David C. Anchin Center for the Advancement of Teaching, at the University of South Florida (USF), in the College of Education.

1. The NLECSR project, and the research team, eventually transferred from the David C. Anchin Center at the University of South Florida to the Alliance for Applied Research in Education and Anthropology (AAREA), also at USF.

2. The Focus Study sample of schools and districts was embedded within the Core Study sample. The Core Study sample focused on 400 schools implementing CSR in 22 districts and 400 matched comparison schools in those same purposefully selected districts. Eight CSR models cooperated with the NLECSR for their comparison of models. These eight models were: Accelerated Schools Project (ASP), ATLAS Communities (ATLAS), Co-NECT, Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (ELOB), Modern Red Schoolhouse (MRSH), Success for All/Roots and Wings (SFA/RW), Turning Points (TP), and Urban Learning Centers (ULC).
The focus study necessarily avoided conflict with other OERI studies, and aimed at cross-case comparisons within district. The Focus Study took place over 2 years, in 5 urban districts in the Midwest and Northeast of the United States, included 40 schools, 80 district administrators, 200 teachers, 200 parents, an unspecified number of students and classroom observations. Parents and students focus groups were conducted using instrumentation specific to their perspective. Several hundred interviews and classroom observation checklists were coded, recoded and subsequently software-sorted to reveal findings. The official description of the study in a preliminary unpublished report states:

The studies funded under this program are important because, despite the success of many CSR models, and despite the research base on which these models rest, AIR’s recent work reviewing this literature (Herman, et al., 1999) demonstrated that, overall, there is less strong research on the effects of different CSR models on student academic outcomes than one might have thought. Indeed, of the 24 models reviewed by AIR, only three had strong evidence of positive effects on student achievement. Researchers, by nature, always think more research is needed. But clearly, this is one instance in which such a claim for more research is at least an understatement. (AIR 2001: NLECSR Project Summary. Unpublished document.).

3. In 2002, 191 schools out of 630 were identified for improvement in Dodgeland (Illinois State Board of Education 2002).
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Appendix A:

Reading and Mathematics School Achievement Scores 1997-2004
Appendix B:

Reading and Mathematics: Percent at or Above Proficiency Nationwide

![Graph showing percent at or above proficiency nationwide for different years and subjects.]

Appendix C:

Respondent Demographics

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<tr>
<th>Berkland (SFA)</th>
<th>Teacher Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Years Exper.</th>
<th>Yrs. at school</th>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Teaching Subjects</th>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>7, 8</td>
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Appendix D:
Teacher Interview Protocol from the Focus Study

Demographics

School Name and District

Teacher name

Gender, race, grades taught, subject areas

Curriculum

CSR model, Math program, Reading program

Please tell me about your teaching experience?

In all, how many years have you been teaching?

How long have you been at this school?

What subjects do you teach?

What grade levels do you teach?

School improvement

What are the main school improvement strategies currently underway in your school?

[Note to interviewer: If CSR is not mentioned, then ask]: I noticed that you didn’t mention CSR as one of your main improvement strategies. Why is that?]

CSR

We are gathering information of all kinds about CSR models [school reform efforts]. We are particularly interested to hear your views and observations about your school’s selection of the model and its implementation.

How was the model selected/who was involved?

Why was the model selected?

How do new teachers learn about the model?
Please share with us some of your impressions and opinions about the reform and its effectiveness.

How has the model impacted your practice?

What outcomes resulted from the model implementation?

Could you tell me what components of [name of CSR model] have been implemented/are being implemented at your school? How is it being implemented?

Do you think the model is an appropriate one for your school? Why? What are the strengths and weaknesses?

Have you noticed any changes in your school as a result of its participation in the model?

What do you see as the main challenges to implementing the CSR model?

Do other reform initiatives fit with the CSR model? If yes, how?

**Professional development:**

I’d like to know more about your professional development activities.

What opportunities have you had this year to further your professional development?

In general, what kinds of activities do you participate in? (listen for formal and informal PD: workshops, institutes, mentoring, classroom observation)

Can you estimate how much time do you spend in professional development? (get at how many hours and how long)

Has your professional development impacted your effectiveness as a teacher?

How has the use of technology (such as online networks) affected your professional development?

**No Child Left Behind**

I’d like to talk a bit about No Child Left Behind, and how you think it has affected your school and your teaching. From what I know about No Child Left Behind, each school is supposed to work towards meeting Adequate Yearly Progress targets for each year.
Do you know if your school met those targets last year? [Listen for awareness of AYP and NCLB]

If failed: Do you know if your school is taking any steps to improve your performance?

Is your school concerned about what might happen if you continue to not meet AYP? [Listen for potential reactions from administration, faculty, parents.]

If met AYP: Are you concerned that your school might not make AYP this year?

[Listen for concern about sanctions, actions to improve student achievement, potential conflicts with model implementation]

What aspect of NCLB has posed the most serious challenge for your school?

How has NCLB affected implementation of your school’s CSR model?

**Instruction and curriculum**

What do you think of the Mathematics curriculum adopted by your school?

Does it serve your students’ needs?

How can it be improved?

What do you think of the English/Language Arts curriculum adopted by your school?

Does it serve your students’ needs?

How can it be improved?

**Student grouping**

In mathematics, what do you consider when deciding how to group your students?

In English/Language Arts, what do you consider when deciding how to group your students?

**School Governance/Decision-making:**

Would you say that your school has a particular set of guiding goals this year?

Do you think other teachers would describe these goals in the same way?
Assessment

How do you use assessment to inform your Mathematics instruction?

What types of assessment are most useful for your classroom instruction?

What is the relationship between the curriculum and your use of assessments?

How do you use assessment to inform your English/Language Arts instruction?

What types of assessment are most useful for your classroom instruction?

What is the relationship between the curriculum and your use of assessments?

How is your practice impacted by external assessments (such as reform model, state and district assessments)?