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Teacher And Administrator Perspectives On New York State's Teacher Evaluation System

Mariah Fiona Kramer
University of New England

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TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR PERSPECTIVES ON NEW YORK STATE'S
TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM

Mariah Fiona Kramer

University of New England

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Affiliated Faculty

of the College of Graduate and Professional Studies at the University of New England

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for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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Abstract

TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR PERSPECTIVES ON NEW YORK STATE'S TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM

Teacher evaluation reform has been a movement in the United States since the release of the educational report, *A Nation at Risk*. Through government initiatives such as No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top, teacher evaluation reform has gained in popularity. States have either revamped or are currently revamping evaluation systems in order to provide better feedback to teachers, increase instructional practices and increase student achievement. New York State is no exception. During the 2011-2012 school year, New York State introduced its Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) teacher and principal evaluation system. This evaluation system became fully functional at the start of the 2012-2013 school year.

This qualitative study explores the perceptions of both teachers and administrators regarding the effectiveness of APPR legislation in regards to changes in instruction, the quality of instruction and increases in student learning. Ten teachers and ten administrators from various school districts across New York State participated in one-to-one interviews where they shared stories and their experiences with regard to APPR.

The data collected and analyzed during the study helped the research answer the following three research questions:

1. How do teachers perceive APPR has changed their teaching practices?
2. How do administrators perceive APPR has impacted the quality of instruction?

3. How do teachers and administrators perceive APPR legislation has affected student learning?

Data representing the perspectives of the teachers and from the perspective of the administrators was examined. Each group was analyzed separately and the compared to the other. Three significant themes emerged for the teachers: *Anxiety and Frustration*, *Inconsequence* and *Mixed Views*. Three themes emerged from the administrators' data: *Concerns with Testing*, *Acceptance* and *Value*. Most teachers interviewed do not believe APPR has changed their teaching practices, while most administrators do. Teachers believe they now teach more to the test, whereas administrators saw more student engagement and less teacher-centered practice. The majority of the teachers interviewed believed that their previous evaluation plans gave them better feedback while administrators felt the current APPR plans provided better feedback.

These findings allowed the researcher to develop several conclusions, including the need for legislators in New York State to work with teachers and administrators to develop regulations that are meaningful and relevant to educators in regards to teacher evaluation.

Recommendations from the study include: monitoring the amount of testing children participate in each year; and working within districts to ensure better communication about APPR perceptions; and encouraging legislators to consider the negative impacts of APPR along with the benefits.

University of New England

Doctor of Education

Educational Leadership

This dissertation was presented by

Mariah Fiona Kramer

It was presented on

June 29, 2016

and approved by:

Steven Moskowitz, Ed.D, Lead Committee Member

University of New England

Suzan Nelson, Ed.D, Secondary Committee Member

University of New England

Chris Yuen, Affiliated Committee Member

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Chapter One: Introduction

Over the last 20 years, P-K to 12 schooling in United States has undergone significant changes in education. Starting with *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 and continuing through to *No Child Left Behind* legislation in 2002, *Race to the Top* legislation and the *Every Student Succeeds Act* of 2015, educational reform has been a current topic of discussion among lawmakers, business owners and educators. Most recently, there is a call for better-prepared teachers to support our students' achievement around the United States. This shift in focus came because of a growing concern that U.S. students do not rank comparably with their counterparts from Europe and Asia since the end of World War II. The United States only has 7% of 8th grade students reaching advanced level math compared to 48% of 8th grade students in Singapore (Rich, 2012). One of the ways to help teachers become better educators is through more effective feedback during formal and informal teacher observations; in essence, better teacher evaluation. This feedback would provide teachers specific areas of growth and be targeted to individual teacher needs (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Educational experts such as Danielson and McGreal (2000), Darling-Hammond (2013), and Edwards (2011) agreed that the teacher evaluation model typically used across the United States needs to be remodeled. More often than not, classroom observations are conducted and feedback is given weeks or months later (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Edwards, 2011). Several different methods of feedback and evaluation have been proposed including student surveys, parent surveys, teacher observations and portfolios (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Mahar & Strobert, 2010).

The recent Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) system was created by state lawmakers in 2010 and enacted for all teachers during the 2012-2013 school year (New

York City Department of Education, 2015). This new teacher and principal evaluation system (APPR) required three different measures in order to determine a score for all Kindergarten through 12th grade teachers in New York State public schools. Under the plan that was developed in this model, teachers would need to be evaluated on a point scale. Twenty points of the scale included student growth, 20 points based on achievement and 60 points could be determined by each school district with at least 30 points based on classroom observation. Furthermore, any teacher who taught a subject that yielded a New York State Assessment or Regents Exam had to use those results as their growth score (New York City Department of Education, 2015).

Districts had until January of 2013 to negotiate with teacher and administrative unions and create a plan that would then be approved by the New York State Department of Education. School Districts were notified that if an approved plan was not in place by that time, they would potentially lose their increase in state aid. At the same time, New York State adopted the Common Core Learning Standards with new Common Core aligned 3rd through 8th grade assessments being introduced in the 2012-2013 school year. Under this plan, 3rd through 8th grade Math and English Language Arts teachers were required to be evaluated on these assessments (Bakeman, 2015). Each school district was able to develop their own plan, provided the guidelines above were followed. Because school districts had to negotiate plans with teacher and administrative unions in a short time frame, plans were often created without enough time to thoroughly work out and negotiate components. Unions often refused to agree to best practices looking, instead, to practices that would be most beneficial to its members. In one urban district, teachers were considered effective teachers if 45% of their students met their targeted growth (B. Axelson, personal communication, 4 October 2014). In another district, 65% of students needed

to meet their growth targets to be considered effective (M. Reidell, personal communication, 12 June 2015). As a result, plans varied across the over 700 school districts in New York State.

The purpose of the APPR legislation was to create more effective evaluation measurement system for teachers, thus improving pedagogical practice and increase student achievement on standardized state assessments. Before APPR, teachers were evaluated based on a specific model chosen by that school district. In one urban district in the western part of the state, teachers received one evaluation per year (B. Axelson, personal communication, 4 October 2014). In another district in the northeastern part of the state, teachers received two evaluations per year either done by a supervisor or a peer (M. Reidell, personal communication, 12 June 2015). There was no consistency from district to district within the state. In fact, one teacher stated that one year her principal forget to evaluate her. On the last day of school, she received a blank summary evaluation with a post-it note to fill it out for herself before she left for summer break, sign it and return to the office. This would count as her yearly evaluation (D. Administrator 3, personal communication, 9 November 2014).

Statement of the Problem

New York State's Annual Professional Performance Review evaluation system is only four years old. Because of this, there are few studies that address the perceptions of teacher evaluation systems, let alone the perceptions of the effectiveness of APPR. It is unclear if teachers and administrators believe APPR has led to improvements in teaching.

Purpose

In 2012, Donaldson conducted research at Studyville, a medium-sized urban school district located in the Northeastern part of the United States. Donaldson's (2012) results showed teachers were more positive towards evaluation reform but did not see such reform as having a

major effect on their instruction. First, teachers stated the implementation of the evaluation method was inconsistent during the first year. Information trickled down to teachers throughout the school year. Teachers would have preferred receiving information such as evaluation rubrics, from the start of the year. Second, many teachers felt that evaluators were inconsistent in their approaches to observing teachers. Some would meet with teachers to go over the observations, others would just assign low scores with no feedback. Most importantly, however, teachers in Studyville indicated that the new evaluation model did not change their teaching (Donaldson M. L., 2012). Breed Administrator 8 (2011) also looked at teacher perceptions of North Carolina's new teacher evaluation program. In this study, there was no significant difference in teacher perceptions of the evaluation process that affect classroom change.

This study will investigate how teachers and administrators perceive New York State's new teacher evaluation process has changed teaching practices, the quality of instruction and student learning through lived experiences of the participants.

Significance of the Study

Findings from this study will be important for educators in not only New York, but also findings may provide significant considerations for other states intending to implement evaluation reform. Knowing teachers and administrators' views on APPR will help other states changing their teacher evaluation models. Moreover, if the current evaluation model in New York State changes in the future, knowing how teachers and administrators perceive APPR will be vital. This study determined that perceptions were both positive and negative, and leadership in the State Department of Education and state legislatures may want to consider those responses should they examine different evaluation models.

Research Questions

How do teachers perceive APPR has changed their teaching practices?

How do administrators perceive APPR has impacted the quality of instruction?

How do teachers and administrators perceive APPR legislation has affected student learning?

Conceptual Framework

The *No Child Left Behind* and *Race to the Top* legislations called for schools, districts and states across America to look at teacher evaluations. Recent literature has shown that teacher evaluation reform is necessary and many studies, journal articles and books have discussed different ways to implement this reform (Attinello, Lare & Waters, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Youngs, 2013). Teacher evaluations, however, differ from state to state and, in some states, from school district to school district.

New York State is one state without a statewide teacher evaluation plan (New York State Education Department, 2011). Instead, certain aspects of the teacher evaluation plan were created by the New York State Department of Education and certain parts were negotiated between the school district and the teachers and administrators' union of that district as outlined above (New York State Education Department, 2011). As a result, teachers are evaluated with different measures from those in neighboring school districts across New York. Moreover, since its inception in 2012, New York State's legislation on acceptable teacher evaluation plans has changed three times. The first version of APPR is outlined above. In the second version, student growth scores counted for 50% of teacher scores with observations counting as the other 50%. In December 2015, the *Every Student Succeeds Act* was passed by the Federal Government. As a result, the current APPR legislation changed again. Growth scores were still to count 50%, but

growth scores that had been derived from the 3rd through 8th grade English Language Arts and Math state assessments could no longer be used (New York State Education Department, 2015).

One part of APPR legislation that was non-negotiable throughout all four legislative versions was that teachers would need to receive observations based on a rubric. New York State selected Danielson's (2007) Framework for Teaching as its preferred rubric for evaluation plans but did allow districts some flexibility (Teachscape, 2011). While the New York State Union of Teachers (NYSUT) and Marzano both have evaluation rubrics, many districts in New York are using Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* (Danielson, 2007). As a result, Danielson's 2007 *Framework for Teaching* is the conceptual framework used throughout this study. Danielson identified what good teaching looks like and how good teaching should be evaluated. For this reason, *The Framework for Teaching* is a good conceptual framework to use throughout the literature review.

This conceptual framework is important throughout the literature review and the research conducted for this study for two reasons. First, Danielson (2007) identifies what good teaching looks like and gives teachers examples of highly effective pedagogy. In order to determine if pedagogical practice is improving, a scale or rubric will be used by both the administrator and the teacher. Second, using this rubric will help inform the research. When teachers identify if their pedagogy has changed and how it has, the rubric will allow the researcher and the reader a way to categorize pedagogy, thus enabling a comparison of before APPR legislation and after APPR legislation.

Assumptions and Limitations

Some educators believe that the new evaluation plans are ineffective while others believe they are helping teachers become better practitioners. Furthermore, since there has been so much

controversy over APPR from educators and the public, there is a possibility that some of the interviews conducted may be biased. Moreover, many journal articles relevant to this topic were in union publications. Since these publications are biased in their dislike of APPR, it has been difficult finding relevant research.

Finally, New York State has over 700 school districts. It is not practical to conduct research in all 700 plus school districts. Instead, interviews with teachers and principals from across New York will be conducted in an effort to include districts representing a cross section of New York.

Method

A phenomenological study was selected as the best method to find answers to the research questions. Phenomenology looks at a person's experience with a particular topic (Creswell 2009). As such, phenomenology was the best match for the topic of teacher and administrator perceptions of teacher evaluation.

Definition of Terms

3012 Legislation – The legislation proposed by Governor Andrew Cuomo that proposed changes to teacher evaluation systems. A letter has followed each version of 3012 legislation. For example, the initial legislation proposed was call 3012a; New York is currently implementing 3012d legislation. Since 3012d is not required to be put into effect until September 1, 2016, many districts are still using 3012c. 3012c is the legislation that was mandated during the 2014-2015 school year and could be in place for the 2015-2016 school year if districts hadn't negotiated 3012d plans.

Achievement Score – part of 3012a-c legislation that requires school districts to provide a score to teachers based on how well their students achieve on state assessments, district tests or other standardized tests selected by the district.

Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) - legislation first proposed by Governor Andrew Cuomo in 2011 and approved by the New York State legislature. This legislation was required to be in effect for all teachers as of the 2012-2013 school year and is tied to school districts' abilities to receive an increase in state aid.

Evaluation – each year teachers receive a rating score based on principal (or other trained administrator) observation. This observation is then scored and discussed with teachers. This is considered an evaluation.

Framework for Teaching - rubric created by Charlotte Danielson to identify good teaching. The rubric has four domains, Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction and Professional Responsibilities, and is one of the approved teacher evaluation rubrics for New York State.

Growth Score – refers to the score given to teachers to show the amount of growth a student has made in a one-year time span. For 3rd through 8th grade English Language Arts and Math teachers, this score is given at the end of the school year by New York State and is based on State Assessments. For all other teachers, the score is generated through district level benchmarking tests.

HEDI Score – HEDI is an acronym used by New York State for the teacher rating scale. It stands for Highly Effective, Effective, Developing and Ineffective. Based on observations and standardized tests, teachers will receive a yearly score that then is translated into one of the above ratings: their HEDI score.

New York State Assessments – refers to state created assessments for English Language Arts and Math in 3rd through 8th grade.

Race to the Top – Federal legislation that called for better teacher evaluation systems to be put into place at the state and district level.

Regents Exams – Exams created by the New York State Education Department in different high school core subject areas at the end of the school year. Students are required to pass a certain number of exams in order to graduate high school.

Teacher Evaluation – the method used to evaluate teachers and provide feedback to improve pedagogy.

Walkthrough – a short (usually no more than 10 minutes), informal observation often looking for a few specific things in a classroom.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to determine how teacher and administrator perceptions of New York State's new teacher evaluation process and the possible effected APPR has had in the classroom. This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter One provides an introduction to the study including definitions of key terms and phrases important to the study, as well as the purpose and significance of the study. Chapter Two will examine the current literature in regards to why teacher evaluation change is necessary, what evaluation reform might look like and teacher and administrator perspective on the reform. Chapter Three will describe the methodology and analysis plan to be used in the study. This includes the method of collecting data and analysis that data. Chapter Four provides the results of the research conducted for each research question. Chapter Five will discuss findings and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Teacher evaluation reform has been occurring throughout the United States since the introduction of *No Child Left Behind* and *Race to the Top*. In some states, Delaware for example, the reform efforts have been successful and a teacher evaluation process has been developed and adopted by all school districts. In New York, however, the evaluation reform movement has sparked great controversy and has led to a major rift between the school stakeholders, the New York State Department of Education and Governor Andrew Cuomo. This research will examine teacher and administrator perceptions of New York State's new teacher evaluation reform.

Since the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was passed into law in 2002, school districts have looked at how they might increase student tests scores in order to comply with the law. This has continued through Obama's Race to the Top (RTT) educational initiative. One method school districts have identified to increase student achievement and they can control is to have better quality teachers in classrooms across America. As a result, there has been a push within the last 15 years to change how teachers are evaluated each school year. The literature discussed in this chapter will show the need for teacher reform, offer possible evaluation options, examine some of the nationwide results of current teacher reform and suggest what good teacher evaluation plans could look like. The literature reviewed showed that good teacher evaluation plans are possible and will help narrow the topic of study and focus research questions.

When conducting research on the topic of teacher evaluation, many resources were over 5 years old, making it challenging to find relevant literature. For this literature review, a search query was developed and used as the basis for the research. The search began with the phrase "teacher evaluation" with a date of publication after 2010. This brought up a number of articles

that follow in the review. While this research focuses specifically on New York State, other states' teacher evaluation systems that have shown positive results were additionally searched. Following these articles' reference lists; a search for "The Widget Effect", "teacher evaluation in New York", "New York State APPR" and "teacher evaluation" was also conducted. With these standards, PROQUEST, EBSCO Host, ebrary, google books and other internet sources were searched.

It is important to note that since this reform movement is largely political in nature, some of the research around it is politically driven. As a result, there may be some bias in the literature reviewed and presented. This anomaly was taken into account when reviewing the literature.

Why educators felt that teacher evaluation reform was necessary

Teacher evaluation reform is not a new topic. Reform came in the 80s with the *A Nation at Risk* report and again with *No Child Left Behind* legislation in 2002 (A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform: A report to the National and the Secretary of Education, United States Department of Education, 1983). At the end of the Cold War, Americans were worried that students were not competitive with students globally. As a result, a change initiative was enacted and school districts across the United States underwent drastic reforms. However, while reform efforts were made, American schools were still not competitive with most of their European and Asian counterparts (Rich, 2012). Several educational experts agreed with this movement for reform, citing that teacher evaluation would be one area of education that still needed to be overhauled. Danielson (2007) advocated for teacher evaluations to increase professional practices. Danielson (2007) argued that evaluation should be conducted throughout the school year, not just once or twice as in most school districts across the United States, so

good, specific feedback would be provided to teachers. This feedback should be specific to what the teacher is doing well and what areas the teacher could improve in. With most districts, Danielson believed, evaluations were being done for the sake of getting evaluations completed not to provide effective and specific guidance to teachers (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

In 2009, a report was published showing a correlation between the lack of student achievement and teacher effectiveness. *The Widget Effect*, as the report is known, suggested that better teacher evaluations were needed in order to produce more effective teachers in the classroom who would, in turn, increase student learning and make students more competitive with foreign counterparts (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009). Educational experts agreed with this finding, supporting the desire to overhaul the teacher evaluation system throughout American schools. In 2011, a new report upheld the findings in *The Widget Effect*. This report stated, “the most important thing a school can do to help students learn is to put them in a class with a highly effective teacher” (Edwards, 2011, p. 1), effectively solidifying what Danielson and others have said.

Looking specifically at California, Edwards described how districts across the state are revamping their teacher evaluation systems. Under Race to the Top (RTT), a federal program to increase the quality of education in the nation, California and its school districts would be awarded federal monies to restructure their evaluation systems. Edwards (2011) stated that all school stakeholders in California recognized the need for teacher evaluation change and were willing to come together to make it happen. This call for change was nationwide, not specific to the state of California. States across the country were, and currently are, applying for *Race to the Top* monies to improve their school districts. How to bring about this change, however, is a topic of which many educators have varying opinions.

Finally, educational expert Darling-Hammond (2013) offered advice detailing the need for teacher evaluation reform. Darling-Hammond (2013) argued that most teachers and principals find little or no value in their current evaluations and many teachers are unsure what they need to improve on or how to go about making improvements after receiving an evaluation. Darling-Hammond (2013) believed that if evaluations were done correctly, teachers would be provided feedback, with resources, that would allow them to better their practice. Administrators should have been able to give specific, timely feedback to teachers. Teachers were encouraged to begin collaborating with other teachers to improve their practice. Although the implementation of evaluation reform may vary from state to state and school district to school district, the end result would be the same: students across the country would increase their understanding of curricular content and would, eventually, be more successful in school, college and in the professional careers after their education ends.

Educators have agreed for many years that teacher evaluation reform is necessary and vital to improving student achievement in our country. The research also shows the many reasons why evaluation reform is urgently needed. Once schools, districts and states recognize the need to revamp their evaluation systems, what can that new evaluation plan look like?

What reform can look like

While most educators agree teacher reform is necessary, their beliefs about how this reform will look differs greatly. Danielson and McGreal (2000) suggested before good teacher evaluation reform can occur, educators must determine three things: a common definition of what teaching is, how to assess teaching and who will be trained to evaluate the teachers. Danielson and McGreal (2000) also believed teachers, administrators and teachers' unions leadership teams should be involved in this redesign on evaluation systems. What good teaching

is might be the most difficult to define and, therefore, should include perspectives from multiple stakeholders. States need to work with their school districts to define what good teaching looks like and create high standards for the teaching profession. Danielson (2007) divided teaching into four domains: planning and preparation, the classroom environment, instruction and professional responsibilities (p. 3). Within the domains, there are 22 components to help guide good teaching and improve teacher practice (p. 3). While using Danielson's domains is not necessary, establishing standards are. The important part, stated Danielson, is not which model to use for teacher evaluation, but to establish standards that show what good teaching looks like (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Marzano agrees with this thought as well Quinn, 2014).

Second, researchers address the question of how to assess teaching. Danielson believed there are several different ways to assess teachers, but districts will need to provide "intensive assistance" to teachers "who are struggling to perform adequately" (2000, chapter 3, section "The How", para 2). The *National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality* agreed with Danielson that teacher evaluation reform is necessary and offers different possibilities of teacher evaluations (Goe, Holdheide, & Miller, 2011). These authors offered several suggestions for evaluation that have proven successful: classroom observations, mentors and peer coaches, and peer reviews. When designing the process, Danielson, Goe, Holdheide and Miller (2011) urged districts to have all groups evaluated and conducting evaluations involved in the design of the process. The authors also urged districts to take the necessary time to create a good plan in order to assess fair and accurately. The first step in evaluation reform is setting clear goals for the actual evaluation. The school district needs to know what they want to get out of their teacher evaluation in order to create an effective program. If the district was simply doing an evaluation because states require it, their goal would be a quick evaluation process. However, if the district

created an evaluation plan that allowed teachers to receive quality feedback from evaluators in an effort to improve those teachers' skills and abilities, the plan would look very different.

Moreover, school districts will need to get all stakeholders support and involvement in the evaluation plan if it is to be a success. The third step in teacher evaluation reform, according to Goe, Holdheide and Miller (2011), is to select how to assess teachers and what the evaluation system structure would look like. Finally, districts will need evaluators who are highly trained in their evaluations systems and can provide evidence to support their evaluation and make good, evidence-based judgements about the teacher they are evaluating (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Goe, Holdheide & Miller, 2011). These evaluators, Danielson stated, need to recognize the evaluation criteria in use in the classroom. The training of evaluators will be a considerable investment for school districts. One principal, Bruce Axelson, stated his training in the Danielson model took over 30 hours (B. Axelson, personal communication, 9 October 2014). As a result, districts should develop plans with care and over time, in order to present a plan that is the most realistic for the district and the most beneficial increasing teachers' professional practice (Goe, Holdheide, & Miller, 2011).

In her book, Darling-Hammond (2013) dedicated several chapters to what effective teacher evaluation should look like. The information she provided corroborates what Danielson (2007) and Goe, Holdheide and Miller (2011) have already stated. Darling-Hammond recommended starting with student learning standards. Darling-Hammond said, "developing a shared vision of educational goals and supportive instruction is the foundation for a system that can support effective teaching" (Darling-Hammond, 2013, chapter 2, para 2). Once learning standards are in place, districts, schools and teachers would then need to align those standards to the pedagogical practice. Whatever learning standards are chosen, Darling-Hammond (2013)

argued, these standards should promote learning from the teachers so that teachers can grow and improve their practice.

Drawing on experiences from teachers, Darling-Hammond (2013) indicated different evaluation models that have worked well and models that have not. In all instances, teachers and administrators argue that a simple once or twice a year administrative observation is not effective. Instead, the observation process needs to be a year-long endeavor that provides teachers with specific feedback on how to grow, what works well in their classrooms and what does not work well. Darling-Hammond (2013) advocated that states involve their school districts in the process of creating a system and those school districts involve multiple school stakeholders in creating a plan. Darling-Hammond (2013) also urged states and schools to take their time in creating an evaluation plan so that all options can be weighed and the right choice can be made. Peterson (2004) also believed that multiple sources of data are necessary to evaluate teachers and urges school stakeholders to take this into consideration when creating evaluation plans.

The BEST portfolio in Connecticut, which “was found in a study to be the only one of several teacher qualifications to predict teacher’ effectiveness” is one way to evaluate teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2013, chapter 3, *Tier III; The Professional License* section, para 2). Darling-Hammond also suggested a three-tiered approach to teacher evaluation might be appropriate for districts: an evaluation for new teachers, a separate evaluation for veteran teachers and a third for struggling teachers. This system has been successful in several school districts in New Mexico. Finally, Darling-Hammond described teacher evaluation as a triangle with standards-based evaluation framework as the center (Darling-Hammond, 2013, section 4, figure 4.1). Each point of the triangle represents observation of practice and examination of

artifacts, evidence of professional contributions and measurement of student learning and outcomes. Though each point of the triangle might change, Darling-Hammond suggested these three points should not (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

While Danielson (2007) and Darling-Hammond (2013) provide guidelines for what teacher evaluations should look like, Attinello, Lare and Ware (2006) offered specifics. Through their research, Attinello, Lare and Waters (2006) pushed for authentic teacher assessment. They believed the educational change that has occurred since 2000 has not really changed teacher evaluations and teacher evaluation reform is necessary. As a result, they suggested a professional portfolio for educators. Educators should keep the portfolio throughout the school year to show growth as a professional. They argued that since pre-service teacher licensure programs across the nation are using portfolios, they are acceptable to use for teacher evaluations. Through their research, Attinello, Lare and Waters (2006) looked at a “large rural/suburban school district in the southeastern region of the United States” (p. 133). This school district has a certified teaching staff of 1,750. Moreover, the district was currently using a portfolio system for teacher evaluation. The research showed that “both teachers and administrators generally believed portfolios were an accurate and more comprehensive reflection of teacher performance” (p. 140). Both administrators and teachers believed portfolios would help teachers reflect upon their practice, in turn, making them better at their craft. However, it is important to note, the research also showed there were some concerns with the use of portfolios. Many participants worried that the portfolios were not always accurate compared to what actually happened in the classroom. Others felt that portfolios should not be the only way to evaluate staff since a portfolio cannot show all aspects of the teaching profession. As a result of

their research, Attinello, Lare and Waters (2006) suggested making a portfolio only part of the evaluation system.

Maher and Strobert (2010) suggested another type of evaluation system. They advocated for a 360-degree method of observation. This method requires evaluative information provided from several school stakeholders, such as administrators, parents and students. The idea behind the 360-degree method of teacher evaluation is that each stakeholder has a different perspective on the teacher and can offer unique feedback to teachers to help them improve. Administrators can comment on the lessons they observed while doing formal and informal observations but they are not in the classroom every day and, therefore, will only see a quick snapshot of the teacher's performance. Students, however, are. Their opinions should be taken into account and factor into the teacher evaluation process in this model. While perhaps not weighted as much as the administrator's observations, students can tell a teacher what they struggle to understand, what they did not like or what they really enjoyed about the class. This can also alleviate concerns that some teachers put on an act or, as often referred to, a "dog and pony show" when an observation is occurring but do not normally teach that way when not being evaluated. Parents can offer an even different perspective. They are able to discuss the teacher's communication with families, the ease of working with the teacher and the collaboration between the teacher and the home. According to Maher and Strobert (2010), teacher evaluation should take into account all school stakeholders to ensure a more thorough approach and offer a complete, 360-degree view of a teacher.

Everson, Feinauer and Sudweeks (2013) argued against the use of value-added models of teacher evaluation. In a value-added model of evaluation, teachers are graded based on student growth on state or national standardized tests. According to the authors, this type of grading

poses serious problems. One concern is that value-added scores will often vary from year to year or, even, across a particular test. This variation brings into question the reliability of such a model. Second, there is much concern among educators about teaching to a test instead of teaching content. In a value-added model, teachers are worrying about test scores and tend to teach the students information on a particular test, leaving out or skipping all together information that might not be asked on a test. Finally, one of the largest concerns with this model is that it does not take into account the student. Value-added models assume that all students are randomly assigned to a class and that each class will receive a heterogeneous mix of students with wide ranges of abilities. This is not always the case. High schools often group students into classes based on their academic level. Basic and advanced classes of the same subject would differ in student make-up. Special education teachers could suffer under this model of evaluation since special needs and gifted students do not always show as much growth as their general education peers from the beginning of the year to the end of the year (Everson, Feinauer, & Sudweeks, 2013). This approach to evaluation means that teachers in wealthy school districts might fare better than teachers in school districts with high poverty rates.

Instead, Everson, Feinauer & Sudweeks (2013) recommend a more global approach to evaluation. They argued that many things a teacher teaches a student cannot be measured by a test and that most teachers did not enter the profession to teach students a test. The authors stated, “Many teachers feel that they were hired to do something else entirely” (p. 367).

Everson, Feinauer & Sudweeks (2013) recommend that, if lawmakers insist on using test scores for teacher evaluation, the scores need to be looked at through the factors that make up a teacher’s classroom. Evaluators will need to take into account variables such as attendance,

student backgrounds, socio-economic factors, language barriers and a myriad of other factors that could prevent students from learning.

The Teacher Quality Center grouped the ways to evaluate teachers into eight units: “classroom observation, instructional artifacts, portfolios, teacher self-report measures, student surveys, value-added models, student performance measures and combination models of those above” (Edwards, 2011, p. 5). Edwards (2011) recommended using a combination approach to evaluate teachers. He argued the more types of evaluations used to determine teacher effectiveness, the more accurate the overall evaluation is. While using a portfolio is good, Edwards (2011) suggested a portfolio would be more effective when paired with teacher observation or with period “walkthroughs” of teachers’ classrooms or with any other evaluation method. Partee (2012) also argued for using several different ways to assess teachers.

Finally, New York State’s Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) document outlines the requirements for New York’s new teacher evaluation program. According to New York, each school district was required to complete a teacher evaluation program within an eight-month period (New York State Education Department, 2011). The APPR program is broken into three components. The first component, worth 20%, requires teachers to show growth over time. For those teachers whose students are assessed through New York State assessments, these assessments are used to show growth. The discrepancy in these state mandated tests compared to district level tests is one source of contention among educators.

Another concern with the state mandated tests as a teacher evaluation is the fact that the Common Core Learning Standards were introduced at the same time as the APPR program. As a result, teachers’ tests scores were being linked to the new Common Core exams that students were not prepared to take. The second part, also worth 20%, is student progress through a school

district measure. The method for measure growth was left up to each individual school district. Some districts are using a nationally based test as a grade for all teachers. Other districts are having teachers give individual post-tests and determining different success levels for students. Still further, other districts are using state exam results for Math, ELA and Science for all teachers within a building. Finally, the third component, worth 60% of a teacher's evaluation score, is negotiated by the school districts and the teacher's unions. Most unions use at least one observation, with some districts using up to three observations. Other districts do administrator walk-throughs, with specific criteria guiding the administrator's observations. All teachers and principals will receive an APPR score each year. A teacher who has received an ineffective or developing rating for two years or more may be removed from their position (New York State Education Department, 2011).

Results of reform efforts

Many states have implemented their new teacher evaluation processes for two to three years. The results of these reform efforts vary from state to state and from district to district. Eady and Zepada (2007) revealed opposing results in their article. According to their research of rural middle school principals, the evaluation reform movement has had a negative impact on the principals interviewed. Based on interviews with principals in Georgia, Eady and Zepada (2007) were able to determine that most principals felt that the new evaluation reforms were cumbersome and difficult to implement in small schools. In their findings, principals stated that reform efforts were often hindered by scheduling conflicts within the middle school model and lack of resources, both human and fiscal, in areas such as staff development to improve teaching. Typically, in a middle school model, students are placed on teams. While these teams help students by allowing the same group of teachers to discuss the same students, it can cause

scheduling conflicts. For small rural schools, teams are sometimes not an option because there are not enough students or teachers to schedule a team observation. Furthermore, since there is usually only one administrator in a rural school, Eady and Zepeda (2007) were concerned over the lack of time for one person to effectively complete all requirements in evaluation plans.

Benedict, Thomas, Kimerling and Leko (2013) cautioned special education teachers to be prepared for the new teacher evaluations. The authors felt using the same evaluation tool was unfair since special education teachers usually have more responsibilities than other teachers do. Typically, a special education teacher will have to perform the same duties as a general education teacher, as well as write Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for each student, contact parents and outside organizations about IEP plans and goals, progress monitor goals and IEPs and provide additional instruction for the students if needed. Benedict et al. (2013) cautioned special education teachers to be aware of their district's plans and to know what is expected of them. The authors cited that very little research has been conducted on teacher evaluation methods, so special education teachers will not always know what is best for their students or for themselves. Since most plans require teachers to be assessed based on student test scores, special education teachers will need to ensure their students can perform as well as a general education student, which, depending on the disability, is often inequitable.

Popham's (2013) article cited the drawbacks of using student's test scores for teacher evaluation. Under Race to the Top (RTT), districts are able to receive financial assistance if evaluation plans have teachers assessed through student test scores. As a result, most evaluation plans nationwide have this as a component of the plan. Most states require math and reading assessments for students in grades 3-8 and again one time in high school. Most classes, argued Popham (2013), do not have a state-based test for their students. Instead, teachers and schools

are creating their own assessments, often with very little training. This negates the validity of the tests, according to Popham (2013). Since these tests are not valid, it is inequitable to assess some teachers on invalid and unreliable tests while assessing others on valid tests. Furthermore, Popham (2013) stated that most tests are not “instructionally sensitive, that is, are actually able to distinguish between well taught and badly taught students” (p. 35). Until tests can do that, they are not actually measuring how a teacher has taught, but instead measuring the student. Popham (2013) argued that until these concerns are addressed, students’ test scores should not be used for teacher evaluation.

Taylor and Tyler (2012), however, showed readers the positives of teacher evaluations in connection with test scores. They believe that using students’ test scores from one year to the next can help teachers identify weaknesses in their own teaching. According to their research, results show that the year in which teachers were evaluated, their students’ test scores also increased. The authors suggested that teachers can use the students’ test scores to begin conversations with their peers and administrators about what changes can occur in their teaching. These changes will then increase students’ scores. The test scores are then used to drive evaluations. Taylor and Tyler (2012) urged district to continue using test scores for teacher evaluation. The cyclical process will have lasting positive impacts on both students and teachers.

The Donaldson and Papay (2012) article chronicled the success of one school district in Delaware with their teacher evaluation reform. According to Donaldson and Papay (2012), the district’s evaluation plan has gathered “support from key stakeholders, including teachers, school and district leaders, the teachers’ union, and the city school board” (p. 2). The authors believed there were several factors that allowed this evaluation reform plan to take root. First, several different economic, political and policy factors were able to support teacher evaluation reform at

the time the district was redoing their plan. Second, the district ensured that all relevant school stakeholders were involved in the process. Since the plan was created through the district's 2009 collective bargaining agreement, teachers were involved in the process and were onboard from the start. The creation of the plan was a process that took place over time. No one was pressured into making decisions that he or she was not ready to accept. Within the plan, there is a call for strong leadership among teachers and school building leaders, allowing these two groups to become the driving force behind the evaluation plan, not district level leaders. Studyville's plan is comprised of several parts: student performance towards goals (about 50% of the plan), observations based on a rubric and standards and professionalism. Teachers who score high on the plan's scale were offered leadership positions within the school or district. Through interviews with staff, Donaldson and Papay (2012) determined that most of the teachers, school and district leaders found the plan to be successful in its goals. Taylor and Tyler (2012) and Donaldson and Papay (2012) have shown how teacher evaluation reform can be successful.

Reform in New York State

When teacher evaluation began in New York, its call came not from educators but from Governor Andrew Cuomo. Governor Cuomo required all school districts to create teacher evaluation systems that would hold teachers more accountable. To ensure the over 700 districts in New York complied, the Governor tied the completion of a district plan to state funding for schools. When APPR was first mandated for all schools, principals across New York State began writing position papers, newsletters and editorials to have their opinions heard. In all instances, they argue against APPR and using test scores to evaluate teachers. Several position papers have been written encouraging different means of evaluation (Feeney & Burris, 2011).

The Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents is comprised of Superintendents from the 35 Lower Hudson River valley school districts in New York State. In 2013, the Council commissioned a study through Educational Analytics to “obtain a deeper understanding of value-added measures in general, and an understanding of the quality of measures the state is using as part of the equation to assess teachers and principals” (Educational Analytics Inc., 2013, p. 1). The research from this study showed five findings of significance. The first was teacher and principals working with higher performing students did better than those working with lower performing students did. Second, teacher’s scores may not be an accurate representation of performance. Third, data might not be consistent from year to year and a growth model might be more accurate. Fourth, developing linkage between teachers and students over time is time consuming and expensive. Finally, the current growth model does not specify any professional development needs. Several factors could contribute to lower performance including students’ background such as social, economic and cultural, learning disabilities, English Language Learners and poverty. Furthermore, the study showed that teachers with smaller class sizes did not usually score ineffective or highly effective, as represented by the lowest and highest scores, compared to those with larger class sizes. This finding indicates that small student numbers might yield inaccurate results. A push for a growth model system to track student performance over time might provide more accurate results than the current system that looks at only one year of a student’s life and one test score but such systems are expensive and small or poor districts in New York might not be able to afford such systems. Finally, the Council was concerned that current plans identify teachers who are considered ineffective or developing teachers but do not require professional development for these teachers. Just identifying poor teachers is not enough, they argued. Instead, these teachers

need to receive professional development and given the opportunity to grow and make improvements. Overall, the Council had reservations about the current teacher evaluation plans that have come about because of state mandates (Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents, 2013).

Moreover, concerns are growing by New York State teachers and administrators about the validity of plans. In a conversation with school principal, Bruce Axelson, spoke about Heather, a teacher within his high school. As the Teacher of the Year, Heather worked hard with her students and was able to help them grow and understand the information presented. Heather had a 100% passing rate on her state Regent's exam and most of the students scored at a proficiency level of 85% or better. However, under the new APPR system, she is currently beginning the process to be let go for being an ineffective teacher. Even though her observations were good, under the district's APPR plan, she was unable to show her students made adequate growth and, therefore, received an ineffective rating for two years in a row. The two years of 100% pass rate and the majority of her students at a proficient rate meant nothing (B. Axelson, personal communication, 9 October 2014).

Stories similar to this are heard in the news across New York State. In one school district, the principal stated that some teachers are refusing to take honors or advanced classes for fear their students will not show enough growth on state mandated exams (K. LaLone, personal interview, 12 October 2014). He went on to say that, when speaking with other principals in the region, they were experiencing the same problem. Teachers are starting to worry more about what types of students they are teaching and focusing on the students who "count" for their grade rather than on all the students mastering content.

Additionally, how New York's teacher evaluation system affects teachers and principals is constantly changing. In 2014, Governor Andrew Cuomo created a "safety net" for teachers whose APPR scores were low due to student performance on new Common Core state tests (Woodruff, 2014). However, in January 2015, Governor Cuomo changed that "safety net." In his budget proposal for the year, he again tied teacher APPR to school funding. In order for schools to receive state aid, the Board of Regents must adopt the Governor's teacher evaluation changes (Malatras, 2015). The constant changes in New York State's teacher evaluation and the Governor's actions have set off a maelstrom of activity by school stakeholders and have thrown the education system in New York into turmoil.

The Need for More Research

The current literature shows the necessity of teacher evaluation, but districts across the country are using different methods of teacher evaluation and the value of different evaluation systems vary. These reform efforts have had mixed results and mixed acceptance from the school districts implementing them and from stakeholder groups within the school districts. New York is one state that has mandated teacher evaluation reform as part of their *Race to the Top* initiative. New York, however, tied the completion of these evaluation plans to state aid, requiring districts to complete plans in less than one year. While New York State created a general outline plan for all 700 plus districts in the state, most decisions within the plan fell to individual school districts. School districts had to negotiate these evaluation plans with the teacher's unions. Most districts were unable to create a committee of all school stakeholders, as suggested in the literature, and were unable to take needed time creating the teacher evaluation plans. Moreover, there is a little research-based evidence on how the teacher evaluation reform has affected New York State's school districts, its administrators, its teachers and its students.

This case study will offer a small-scale in-depth look into the perceptions teachers and administrators have about New York's new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plans.

Conceptual Framework

No Child Left Behind and *Race to the Top* legislations have called for schools, districts and states across America to look at how teachers are being evaluated. Recent literature has shown that teacher evaluation reform is necessary and many studies, journal articles and books have discussed different ways to implement this reform (Attinello, Lare & Waters, 2006; Danielson, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2006). How teachers are being evaluated, however, differs state to state and, in some states, from school district to school district.

New York State is one state without a statewide teacher evaluation plan. Instead, certain aspects of the teacher evaluation plan were created by New York State Department of Education and certain parts were negotiated between the school district and the teacher's union of that district. As a result, teachers are being evaluated with different measures from those in neighboring school districts across New York. Moreover, since its inception in 2012, New York State's legislation on acceptable teacher evaluation plans has changed four times.

One part of the policy that was non-negotiable throughout all four legislative versions was that teachers would need to be observed and evaluated based on a rubric. New York State selected Danielson's Framework for Teaching as its preferred rubric of choice for evaluation plans but did allow districts some flexibility (Teachscape, 2011). While the New York State Union of Teachers (NYSUT) and Marzano both have evaluation rubrics, many districts in New York are using Danielson's Framework for Teaching (Danielson, 2007). As a result, Danielson's

Framework is the conceptual framework used throughout this study. Danielson identifies what good teaching looks like and how good teaching can be evaluated. For this reason as well, *The Framework for Teaching* is a good conceptual framework to use throughout the literature review.

Chapter Three: Methodology

As teacher evaluation reform is occurring across the nation, questions have arisen that show a need to look at New York State's teacher evaluation system. This study will examine teacher and administrative perspectives of New York State's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) legislation. It will examine how teachers and administrators believe APPR legislation has affected the pedagogy in the classroom. This chapter will focus on the conceptual design and methodology for this study, the study setting, the sampling, what data will be collected, how data will be collected and what limitations might exist in the research.

The following research questions guided the study:

4. How do teachers perceive APPR has changed their teaching practices?
5. How do administrators perceive APPR has impacted the quality of instruction?
6. How do teachers and administrators perceive APPR legislation has affected student learning?

To complete this study, a qualitative approach was chosen, which consisted of semi-structured interviews using phenomenological theory. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), phenomenology looks at a lived experience in an attempt to identify the meaning of human experience around a particular event. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 20 teachers and principals across New York State by telephone, in person or through electronic devices and applications. Interviewees were from public schools since these are the only systems where educators are required to follow APPR legislation.

Setting

This study will address the experiences and perspectives of educators who are teaching in a public school setting in New York State and have undergone teacher evaluation reform. In

order to accomplish this study, a detailed literature review was completed in an attempt to find previous research on this topic. Since the researcher is currently working as a supervisor in a school district in New York State and, therefore, evaluating teachers in the school district, the researcher did not interview any teachers from this district, reducing the possibility of any biased answers resulting from a teacher's fear of being interviewed by someone who evaluates them. This setting should also allow participants to give honest, accurate perspectives on how APPR effects the classroom.

Sampling

This study samples a purposeful cross-section of New York State public educators who have experienced teacher evaluation reform over the past four years. The goal of identifying the sample population was to find elementary and secondary educators from public urban, suburban and rural schools as well as large, medium and small schools. These educators were currently working with grades K-12 since those are the teachers and principals evaluated under APPR. The goal was to find public school teachers and administrators to represent many different views on the topic as required by phenomenological theory. When selecting administrators, the researcher only looked at administrators who conduct teacher evaluations under APPR. An introductory survey to determine eligibility was emailed to teachers and principals across New York State through professional learning groups the researcher belongs to, contacts in school districts and through various Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). The survey link was also available on social media such as Twitter and Facebook in order to obtain ten teachers and ten administrators willing to participate in the research project. Teachers were selected based on the following criteria: do they teach in K-12 public education, are they evaluated under APPR in New York State and are they willing to participate in an interview with

the researcher? Administrators were selected if they work in K-12 public education and are evaluators under APPR guidelines. If more than ten teachers and ten administrators respond to the initial survey and match the criteria, participants were purposefully selected to represent a mix of both elementary and secondary teachers, small, medium and large-sized school districts as well as rural, suburban and urban districts. While the sample is small compared to the total number of educators in New York State, it represents a cross-section of the education population. Furthermore, this small sample size will allow an in-depth look at the perceptions of APPR.

Data

Interviews were used to collect data on teacher and principal perspectives on APPR legislation implementation. According to van Manen (1990), interviews of participants give the researcher the ability to collect data about how a specific group sees events and well as how individuals see an event or phenomenon. The data collected addressed the research questions and determined how teachers' and administrators' experiences with the APPR have affected their perspectives on APPR. Their perceptions will in turn inform questions about whether real change has happened in their classrooms since the introduction of APPR legislation.

Information from the preliminary survey was used to determine student participation. Participants received information about what was expected of them throughout the interview process (Appendix B). This information let participants know about the interview process and an expected length of time for the interview. Participants were also notified of their right to leave the interview at any time.

Approximately ten teachers and ten administrators were interviewed once. The interviews were conducted to obtain information about their perceptions of APPR in regards to teaching practices, the quality of instruction, and student learning. As a semi-structured

interview, some questions were predetermined but the interviews follow up prompts were based on the answers provided by participants (Appendix C). After each interview was transcribed, a copy of the transcription was sent back to participants to review for accuracy and trustworthiness.

Selected participants were interviewed outside of the regular school day in a setting of their choosing. Depending on distance from the researcher, interviews were conducted face to face, over the phone, or through the internet technology.

Analysis

Interviews were recorded using both voice to text software and a voice recorder. These two methods of data collection helped ensure the reliability of each interview. Once interviews have been transcribed, data will be coded to show themes and trends within the interviews. According to Creswell (2009), coding allows a researcher to organize information into sections, making patterns easier to determine. Van Manen (1990) recommends reading through the information several times. These multiple readings will be holistic in nature, giving way to themes throughout the interviews. Then, future readings allow for narrowing down themes and subthemes. Identifying those themes that were common among participants indicated significant elements of teacher and administrator perceptions.

Using van Manen's (1990) and Morgan's (2011) work, an analysis was conducted using the following methods. First, interviews were a pre-read and re-read, taking place at the same time. These initial readings determined preliminary themes that emerge in participants' responses in regards to perceptions on learning (Morgan, 2011, p. 35). Second, information from the interviews was sorted based on how that information fit "the phenomenon or experienced being described" (van Manen, 1990, p. 93). Finally, themes were developed based on the

information discovered in the interviews that fit the above criteria for teachers. Applying the same principles, themes were developed based on administrator interviews. The themes between the two groups will be compared and contrasted in Chapter 4. Each theme will be presented as a different paragraph. Looking at each paragraph allowed the researcher to determine lived experiences of the 20 participants in relation to the topic studied (van Manen, 1990).

Participant Rights

The researcher made every attempt to remove bias and prejudice from the study. The goal was to accurately portray the experiences and perspectives of teachers and administrators in the study. (Appendix B). Responses will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used to protect participant identities. Participants' schools and school districts were not notified of their involvement and will not have access to what was shared during the interview process. Participants' answers to interviews were also encrypted in order to protect participants' privacy. Participants were able to remove themselves from this study at any time.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. First, there are over 700 public school districts in New York State; finding a sample from each district would be nearly impossible. Therefore, a more reasonable number of participants will be interviewed, representing a cross-section of educators. Second, since teacher evaluation plans differ within the 700 plus school districts, there may be vast differences in experiences and perspectives. Future teacher evaluation program implementation can be considered based on the information discovered during this study.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

This study examined teacher and administrative perspectives of New York State's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) legislation. It examined how teachers and administrators believed APPR legislation has affected the pedagogy in the classroom, has influenced the quality of instruction and has had an effect on student learning. The chapter is organized into three specific parts: the perceptions of the teachers, the perceptions of the administrators and a comparison of the two groups. Throughout all sections, the information presented will address the study's three research questions.

Review of Methodology

This study examined the perceptions of teachers and administrators in New York State regarding the teacher evaluation plan known as the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). Because this study looked at perceptions, a phenomenological methodology was used as a basis of the research.

At the start of the research, an eligibility survey was sent directly to administrators in surrounding school districts, posted on the researcher's Facebook page and emailed to former colleagues of the researcher who still worked in the education field. In her professional life, the researcher was also working with two professors from universities within New York State who agreed to share the eligibility survey with educators they knew. The initial eligibility survey was shared with these two professors as well. All who received the initial survey were asked to share with teachers and administrators they knew would be interested in participating in this research. From there, a snowball effect developed and 20 participants became research participants: 10 teachers and 10 administrators. Several participants filled out the initial survey but did not

respond to follow up emails. As a result, the researcher created the pool from the first 10 teachers and 10 administrators who responded after the initial survey.

Teachers and administrators in this study represented a cross-section of New York State. Ten teachers and ten administrators were interviewed over a one-month period in the spring of 2016. Teachers and administrators participated in a semi-structured interview that lasted about 20 to 50 minutes in length, depending on the teacher or administrator interviewed.

Teachers. The participants represented a wide selection of districts with less than 1000 students, districts with 1001 to 2000 students and districts with more than 2000 students, referred to hereafter as small, medium and large school districts. Participants work in rural, suburban and urban schools across New York State. Participants represent a wide range of grade levels and subject areas (Table 1). The only thing they have in common is that all teachers work in a New York State public school and are evaluated each year under the APPR legislation.

Table 1. *Demographics of Ten Teachers Who Participated in the Study*

Name	Grade Level	Subject Area	Size of District	Geography of District
Teacher 1	7-12 th	Physical Education & Health	Small	Rural
Teacher 2	PreK-5 th	Special Education	Large	Suburban
Teacher 3	2 nd	Elementary	Small	Rural
Teacher 4	7-12 th	French	Medium	Urban
Teacher 5	6-8 th	Science	Small	Rural
Teacher 6	4 th	Elementary	Large	Urban
Teacher 7	6-8 th	Latin	Large	Suburban
Teacher 8	6-8 th	Technology	Medium	Suburban
Teacher 9	6-12 th	Science & Technology	Small	Rural
Teacher 10	9-12 th	Math	Large	Urban

Administrators. Administrators also held a wide range of building level and district level positions (Table 2). In fact, the only thing administrators have in common is they all work in a New York State public school and evaluate teachers each year under the APPR legislation.

Table 2. *Demographics of Ten Administrators Who Participated in the Study*

Name	Grade Level	Job Title	Size of District	Geography of District
Administrator 1	K-12 th	Director of Special Education	Large	Urban
Administrator 2	Pre K-5 th	Principal	Small	Rural
Administrator 3	Pre K-3 rd	Principal	Large	Suburban
Administrator 4	Pre K-5 th	Principal	Medium	Rural
Administrator 5	6-12 th	Assistant Principal	Medium	Rural
Administrator 6	District	Director of Finance	Medium	Rural
Administrator 7	District	Superintendent	Small	Rural
Administrator 8	6-8 th	Principal	Small	Suburban
Administrator 9	6-8 th	Principal	Large	Suburban
Administrator 10	6-8 th	Principal	Large	Urban

Interviews were recorded using a voice recorder with the signed agreement of the participant. Interviews were then transcribed and sent to the participant for verification. Once transcripts were returned the researcher began compiling the data and coding. Each teacher and administrator participant transcript was given a number, resulting in Teachers 1 through 10 and Administrators 1 through 10. Once organized into the two groups, teachers and administrators, the first cycle of coding began. As recommend by van Manen (1990) each interview was read through several times for information. This first read through was chosen for two reasons. In order to stay true to phenomenological reasearch, van Manen’s approach was chosen. Second, a first reading would allow the researcher the opportunity to get a feel for the data. The initial reading allowed the researcher to read the experiences of the participants and begin forming an

understanding of the data presented. The first reading, referred to as a *pre-read* by van Manen (1990), was used to determine trends and themes. Using different colored highlighters, the researcher highlighted text and codes were created to pull out and organize significant responses of each participant in connection to the three research questions. Descriptive coding, the process of reading the data and summarizing it, was then used to represent that text as a whole. Since the study focused on the participants perceptions, lived experiences were taken into account in the coding process (van Manen, 1990). The coding process was aligned to the interview questions.

After several times reading through the data, the researcher felt the perceptions of the participants were found within all codes. These codes included testing, validity, value, and reliability. In other words, the researcher had a sense of what each participant was saying in their interview. Then, the initial coding was analyzed and similar ideas were linked together. Ideas were written on index cards. From here, a second round of coding began. The index cards were then grouped; similar codes were looked at and new broader themes were created. If coded information fell into two categories it was placed in both categories, instead of choosing just one. An example of this would be when an administrator stated they felt their current APPR plan was more valid and more reliable than previous plans. Instead of putting it into only reliability or validity, the data was placed in both codes. This allowed the researcher to see any cross-category codes within the data. Once final themes were selected, the researcher developed a hand-written chart, which created a visual of the patterns within the data.

These many readings and coding process occurred first for the teacher transcripts and then again for the administrator transcripts. Teacher transcripts were examined for themes with other teachers only and administrators with other administrators only. The themes of the two groups were then compared.

Results of Research Analysis

After coding the data, the following themes emerged. Anxiety and frustration, inconsequence and mixed views were significant themes among the teachers interviewed. Concerns regarding testing, acceptance and value were the significant themes that were identified from the interviews with the ten administrators.

Teacher data. When looking at the data from the teachers, several trends became evident. These trends led to three themes: anxiety and frustration, inconsequence and mixed views.

Anxiety and frustration. The first theme to emerge from the teachers' data is one of anxiety and frustration around the testing aspect of APPR. Multiple teachers expressed views that presented evidence to the researcher about the theme of anxiety and frustration.

Teacher 2 believed she does “a lot more teaching to the test”, to ensure her students do well, because of pressure from within the school district to do well. She stated “No matter what you do they have to make so much gain.” In fact, Teacher 2 believed that within her building, instruction has changed to the point they are doing a “cookie cutter” program in order to get students to pass the test instead of gearing instruction to students' needs and readiness levels. Teacher 6 agreed. He said, “I don't know if I am teaching in the grand sense of teaching. I'm getting these kids ready to pass this silly test so that I can preserve my job.” Teacher 10 stated she is “used to create really creative lesson plans with other teachers” but no longer has the time “because we spend so much time trying to collect evidence all year long.”

Teachers 2, 6 and 10 felt the quality of instruction had gone down because they are focused more on teaching to the test than on teaching to the child. Teacher 2 said in the past she was able to “give a kid more experiences to help them learn” and build up background

knowledge but is no longer able to do that “because we have to get this done or we have to get this done. The quality has gone down.” Teacher 6 said, “The quality of instruction is not as good because you’re so hellbent on getting the kids to pass the test.”

Teacher 10 said:

They want us teaching from bell to bell and factual. . . There’s so much curriculum with this new Common Core that we can’t cover it all. . . Once you get in the classroom, you’re so stuck on this curriculum that we’re leaving kids behind.

Multiple teachers shared this view. The six who agreed, all felt that student learning was decreasing due to stress, test anxiety or pressure from teachers, parents and the community to do well on assessments, specifically the 3rd through 8th grade ELA and Math State Assessments.

Teacher 1 said, “It makes the kids more stressed out and the teachers more stressed out.”

Teacher 2 believed, “It’s impacted them to the point where they aren’t gaining as much meaning out of their learning. They’re doing it to become a rote task instead of something where they’re making connections and soaking in learning.” Teacher 6 expressed “What I see is we’re teaching but they’re not retaining because we have so much to cover and so much to do that we’re not going deep. You don’t have time to go deep enough.” Teacher 7 stated, “to discuss the testing piece of it, that’s had a negative effect on it.” She went on to share that she has students who start their first day of 6th grade by taking a pre-test in every class. She said, “I’ve had kids cry, literally, when I’ve taken their test from them” because they have run out of time for state mandated tests. She finished by saying, “in the end the collegiality’s gone, the spontaneity’s gone but in the end the kids don’t understand. They shouldn’t have to but they’re the ones who suffer the most.” Teacher 9 felt that “because administration is pushing so much on the final results” of tests she will “push them [the students] more at times than I think I need

to which puts a lot of pressure on them.” Teacher 10 summed it up by saying, “We’re leaving a lot of kids behind. Kids aren’t learning. That’s really frustrating for kids.”

The data from the interviews showed evidence that teachers are worried about what effects the testing required by APPR legislation has had on students. Many students are exhibiting signs of test anxiety, according to the teachers in their interviews, and teachers felt they are being forced to teach to the test instead of teaching the child.

Inconsequence. The second theme to emerge from teacher transcripts was one of inconsequence. While some of the teachers being interviewed did have positive things to say about APPR’s influence on instruction and student learning, most did not perceive APPR as having an effect on either topic. When asked the question, “How has your teaching practice been impacted because of APPR?” Teachers 1, 4, 5, 8 and 9 indicated there was no change in their instruction. Teacher 1 said, “in terms of instruction, I don’t know if I’ve really changed a whole lot.”

Teacher 4 stated:

I don’t think I’m looking at the Danielson rubric or anything like that trying to see how I can change my lesson for the one day that someone comes in and watches me. I still think and plan the same way.

Teacher 5 agreed by saying, “I don’t think it has. . . I really don’t think it affected the way I was teaching at all.” Teacher 8 stated that he didn’t feel he has had “a positive evaluation under the current [system]” and teacher 9 succinctly put it, “not much except I am stressed more than I was in the past.” Teacher 3 stated that APPR makes her “more deliberate” when planning. According to Teacher 3, she referenced the Danielson rubric used by her district to strive to

make lessons more student-centered. However, upon further probing, she admitted that this only occurs “just for the evaluation” and she does not do this in her day-to-day lessons.

When asked the question if teachers saw a change in the quality of instruction within their building, the results were similar. Teachers 4, 5, 7, and 9 did not see any change in instruction within their buildings. Teacher 4 said, “I don’t know if it’s changing” while teacher 5 succinctly put it, “effective teachers are still just doing what they have done but I don’t think it’s changed either ineffective or effective teachers in the way that they teach.” Teacher 7 stated “I don’t see a difference” and teacher 9 responded with “Not at all.”

However, teachers 1 and 3 did see the quality of instruction improving within their district. Teacher 1 said, “I really feel like I haven’t changed anything in terms of PE” but she has “really gone for outside the box thinking, especially 21st century skills like integrating technology” when creating lesson plans for her Health classes. Both teachers indicated that within their building teachers are now following a district wide curriculum that had not been in place before. Teacher 3 stated, “you really have to teach to the standards and there has to be a valid reason why you are teaching it.”

Finally, when asked if teachers perceived APPR having any effect on student learning, the results were again mixed. Teachers 4 and 5 were unable to say if they saw APPR having any effect on student learning. Teacher 4 said, “I don’t know if it’s had any effect on student learning either” and teacher 5 said, “I really don’t think so because the way that teachers are teaching hasn’t changed that it’s really changing the way the students are learning.”

Teacher 3 saw benefits in the fact that teachers were being “more deliberate and more focused on the quality of instruction” with what they were teaching so “students are probably learning more.” Teacher 3, however, saw the testing aspect of APPR as a detriment to student

learning. She said, “[APPR] is really intimidating so, I think, in one sense it has, from the teacher’s perspective, stifled creativity.”

Teacher 8 did feel that there was a “positive effect for negative reasons” with regard to student learning. He believed that some of the teachers within his building “will show the administrators they will go out of their way to do things they would not normally do so they will receive a positive evaluation”, thereby increasing student learning. His concern, however, was that this is done for the wrong reasons. He said, “In many cases they’re going above and beyond their duties out of fear of reprisal from an administrator that uses fear and intimidation as his leadership methodology.”

Based on the data above, many of the teachers do not see value in the APPR plans of their district. They do not believe there has been a change in teaching and many feel the quality of their pedagogy has not changed.

Mixed views. The third theme that came out of the research with teachers was one of uncertainty and mixed views. The question asked was, “What does APPR mean to you?” Answered varied greatly. Teacher 2 said, “A lot of paperwork” while teacher 6 said, “Stress.” Teachers 3, 4, 5 and 9 all defined it as “an evaluation system.” Teacher 8 saw it as “an ineffective tool that administrators are required to use to evaluate a teacher on their teaching ability” while teacher 10 called it “A pain in the butt.” Teacher 1 explained it was an evaluation method that “at the end of the year gets put into a document and it spits out a score and we put that on a HEDI scale and it tells me how effective I am as a teacher.” Teacher 7 said the plans were “imposed by the state” to make evaluation plans “more equivalent across the state.”

Teacher 7 stated, “I feel like I have to do things now that are not normally part of my day that I sometimes don’t see a ton of merit in” such as “posting of goals.” This teacher believed

posting goals and referring to them at the lessons “feels contrived to them [the students] and if feels very contrived to me.” According to her, in regards to her teaching practice, APPR “had made me more aware of sometimes how contrived sometimes things can really seem.” She also felt, “it’s taken a lot of the spontaneity out of [teaching].”

Teacher 8 believed in his building, he has “an administrator that uses the APPR process as one of the many tools to manipulate faculty and staff members.” He goes on to describe how “it’s used for punitive reasons” as a way for administrators to “bully you.” He gave an example of how some teachers will complete only the formal staff development the district provides. “Those other teachers receive an effective grade or effective ranking by simply attending district sponsored and district provided staff development.” Other teachers, however, who took the same trainings, “That’s not enough. That gets a rating of *developing*.” This response suggests teacher 8 does not feel APPR is equitable for everyone, that it is subjective based on who is reviewing and that teacher 8 does not support APPR.

When asking teachers to compare the feedback and validity of their current APPR plans to their previous evaluations methods, results were mixed. Of the ten teachers interviewed, Teacher 5 had only been evaluated under APPR and was not able to give a comparison. Of the remaining nine teachers, Teachers 2, 6, 7, 8, and 10 felt that their previous plan gave them better feedback and was more valid. Teacher 6 said, “The old method, where you are actually sitting down and talking and discussing teaching, teaching method and teaching style. That’s much more effective than the new APPR with all this Danielson stuff.” Teacher 8 agreed by saying, “I felt like the feedback we got was better because it was designed to meet the needs of our students and our population.” She also added, “We talked in our departments more because we had more time. Our lessons weren’t geared towards the state tests.”

Teacher 1, 3 and 4 believed that the current APPR plan gave better feedback and was more valid. Teacher 1 cited the alignment to standards as the reason why she believed this plan has better feedback. She said:

Standards 4 and 5 are definitely geared towards your actual teaching. . . It's a broad standard and it really breaks it down so you can see where your deficiencies might be and where you need to work at to get better at them. The other one was way too open, you just got a check in the box.

Teacher 3, when referring to the Danielson rubric, agreed that a rubric helps teachers “know exactly why” they received the score they did.” She said, “You know basically why you got a D [developing], why you got an E [effective] or highly effective.”

Teacher 4 stated that the conversations that come out of the new APPR plan make the feedback more beneficial. She said:

Because of the conversation the parts about the self-reflection. I just think prior to this you were just observed and I can think of a bunch of times where I just got written comments with the check meets or exceeds expectations. The written comments were good but there was no dialogue, really, about what actually happened in the lesson; what the administrator or evaluator thought you did well with or hey did you ever think about doing it this way.

Teacher 9 stated, “Parts from each are better than others” but she feels the current plan gives her better feedback because “the feedback is more immediate.” She went on to say, “The way our principal is doing it now, he pretty much gets back to us the next day.”

One interesting thing to note is the lack of information teachers have about the APPR legislation. When asked if they were being evaluated under 3012c, the current plan for the 2015-

2016 school year, or 3012d, the plan that must be put in place for the 2016-2017 school year, Teachers 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10 were either unsure of or didn't know which plan they were being evaluated under. When prompted with information, Teachers 6 and 9 were able to identify which plan they fell under. When asked what they knew about the changes from 3012c to 3012d Teachers 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 and 10 stated they were unable to give any information on the new requirements. Teacher 2 indicated her "teacher's union negotiates the changes and will let her know when it's decided." Of the six who could share some information on the changes, Teacher 3 and Teacher 6 pointed out the change in state testing scores being used for teacher evaluation scores until the 2019-2020 school. Both teachers felt this was a good thing. Teacher 3 even put it as "a sigh of relief in our building". Teacher 6 knew about the removal of portfolios and disagreed with this. In her opinion, the portfolios were a good thing that came out of the APPR. Her district required artifacts to show seven different aspects of Marzano's 2011 rubric. According to her, "you could walk yourself through your year" with the portfolio and really reflect on what had taken place throughout the year. This reflection would then allow teachers the time to think about how they could improve. Teacher 4 was worried about the independent observer requirement in the 3012d legislation. This clause required teachers to receive one of the two mandated observations from a trained evaluator not in their building. When thinking about this part of the new legislation, the teacher was worried that "whomever came into the building to do the independent observations won't understand the unique problems we face as a city school." When prompted, Teacher 5 was able to remember the clause about the outside observer. Teacher 5 felt this might "add stress to teachers since an outside observer won't know us" but, "it might be beneficial in removing any bias on the observer's part."

Administrator data. As with the teachers, three themes emerged from the research with administrators: concerns, acceptance and value. While administrators shared teachers concerns over testing, the themes of acceptance and value are in direct contrast with the teachers' themes of inconsequence and mixed views. A subtheme of validity emerged from the research. Validity of the tests and validity of APPR plans as a whole.

Concerns with testing. Like the teachers, the first theme that emerged with administrators is one of concern. Of the ten administrators interviewed, Administrators 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 expressed concerns. These seven feel they often observed good teaching taking place that was not measurable per the rubric. Administrator 7 stated the fact the Danielson rubric his district is using “doesn’t touch on 21st century skills.” According to Administrator 7, “these skills are critical to my district but there is no measurable goal on the rubric. As a result, there’s a lack of teacher buy-in. Instead, they focus solely on what is written in the rubric.” Administrator 1 echoed similar misgivings.

She said:

My experience is that teachers have a huge anxiety in regards to the APPR rubric, to the Danielson rubric. They’re looking at what they’re doing every day. They don’t feel it’s aligned to way the rubric is describing that. What I’m finding in my experience using the rubric that the applicability to the classroom, I find that there’s so much more I would like to say on teacher’s evaluations than just what the rubric is asking for. I find the rubric to be very generalized when there are specific pieces of greatness happening but there is nowhere to record that if you are only using the rubric as it is in its authentic state.

Administrator 6 agreed and said:

The problem we've had with it is it doesn't fit a lot of circumstances that you find in a classroom because it's kind of an old model in terms of what the expectations for students and teachers to be doing in the classroom. So if somebody's off the norm, it has a tough time dealing with them.

Administrator 3 and 5 also pointed out that Special Education and special area teachers such as speech struggle with the rubric. Under the Danielson rubric, for teachers to score in the top category, highly effective, students must take control of their own learning. "Sometimes students are not cognitively ready to be the leaders" Administrator 3 put it. Administrator 5 pointed out, "Some classes, like speech or academic intervention services, might be one-on-one or two-on-one. This makes some components of the rubric more difficult to observe, such as discussions among peers."

Another area of some concern for the administrators is the amount of testing done under APPR and the type of testing conducted. Administrators 9 and 10 specifically listed concerns with the New York State Math and ELA Assessments in 3rd through 8th grade. These two expressed concern that the state assessments were the only test used to evaluate certain teachers. Administrator 9 went so far as to point out that value-added modeling, which the state assessments follow, "was debunked almost 10 years ago, thereby making the tests invalid as a single measure of growth." In addition to the concerns with the state assessment come concerns with the number of assessments students are taking. Administrator 1 saw the number of assessments in her district "increase as a result of APPR legislation." She believed "Students are taking many more assessments than previously before and I'm worried about how that impacts students." Administrator 8 was also worried about the effect assessments are having on children.

Administrator 8 spoke of an experience she had of an “8 years old vomiting in the middle of testing” as a concern. She did go on to say she believed “the pressure on these children is coming from adults and this is one case” but she expressed concerns about what over testing and high pressure testing is doing to students.

As with the teachers, administrators also shared concerns over the effect testing has had on students. Administrators, however, were worried this undue pressure is coming from parents and teachers. They believed the effects of testing could be detrimental to the overall learning environment and negatively affect the students.

Acceptance. Unlike the teachers, most administrators saw APPR as beneficial to teaching practice, quality of instruction and student learning when state testing was taken out of the equation. Administrators, when asked what APPR means to them, had much less negative answers. Administrator 1 saw it as a way to “find targeted places for improvement” while Administrator 3 sees it as an “evaluation system.” Administrators 9 and 10 think APPR is “an accountability system” to “judge the quality and effectiveness” of teachers. Administrator 2 believes the purpose is “to make sure that students are getting the best education possible” and Administrator 5 sees it as “comparing teachers next to a rubric.” Administrator 6 believed “its attempt is to improve teachers’ practice through evaluation and feedback.” Administrator 8 agreed by saying she uses it “to help my teachers improve their process.” Administrators 4 and 7 did find some faults with APPR. Administrator 4 stated, “There are better means to hold teachers accountable” while Administrator 7 believed “it was a contrived experiment gone wrong.” This shows that while many administrators are accepting of APPR, some still do not see it as a beneficial evaluation plan. Of the 10 administrators interviewed, however, only 2 did not

see APPR as a good thing. The other 8 stated they accepted APPR and found it beneficial to their schools or districts.

When asked the question, “How has teaching practice within your building or district been impacted as a result of APPR?” nine of the ten administrators perceived APPR as helping. Administrator 1 stated “that teachers are more conscious of different types of implementation of skills and strategies and content” while Administrator 2 stated this has “been a positive benefit” because “it is getting principals into the classroom more than they did before and it’s starting those [good] conversations.” Administrator 4 verbalized, “it did foster more of a feeling of a growth mindset” and Administrator 5 said, “teachers are definitely more aware of a rubric related to teaching and good teaching practices on the rubric.” Administrators 2, 6, 7, 8 and 10 all mentioned “having good conversations” as a benefit that came out of APPR. Administrator 9 saw teachers as “more on their game” and “more thoughtful about their practice” while Administrator 10 saw value in “the reflective piece within the observation.” Teachers are reflecting more on practice, thereby creating better lessons.

Administrator 5 and Administrator 8 saw the Danielson rubric as a positive that helped shape good teaching within their buildings. Administrator 5 said:

With the Danielson rubric, they at least have some core ideas or different targets to work towards that they could look up on the rubric, independently, and move towards so they could move from one level to the next level.

Administrator 8 saw, in her district, the rubric being “used by teachers in professional learning communities” as a way to better teaching practice.

Administrator 3 was the only administrator who saw no positives in APPR. She stated:

I think teachers are more anxious about the test. I feel as though they feel they need to do a lot more test prep. They feel they are limited in what they can do in the classroom. It cuts down their creativity.

When asked about the quality of instruction within their buildings or districts, eight administrators saw improvement within instruction. Administrator 1 saw “an increase in hands-on experiential learning” while Administrator 2 saw “teachers focused more on some [Danielson] domain 3, engagement of students, questioning and discussion” and Administrator 3 stated, “There’s different teaching strategies that teachers are trying to use.” Administrator 2 also felt that teachers “are getting students more engaged in sharing information and not necessarily leading the class but giving more student time to pair-share and share ideas.” Administrator 9 agreed with Administrator 2 stating, “instruction is more student driven.” Administrator 10 also believed instruction is more student-centered. Administrator 10 said it is, “Less sage on the stage, more stuff where kids can construct meaning over the long haul. Less teacher-directed stuff.” Administrator 4 stated, “It forced us to reexamine our curriculum” which he sees as positive. Administrator 5 saw the benefit to instruction in the form of “critical feedback” that encouraged teachers to strive for better pedagogy. Administrator 9 stated “teachers became more reflective” about their instruction, thereby increasing its quality. Citing more student-centered lessons, increase student engagement, a shift to a more rigorous, student-centered curriculum and more hands on authentic lessons, administrators reported good teaching happening since the introduction of APPR.

It is important to note, however, that both Administrator 1 and Administrator 10 expressed concerns of teachers being afraid to take risks in teaching since the adoption of the APPR legislation. Administrator 1 said, “I’m also seeing a decrease in some of the instruction in

some of those teachers who are struggling. They're not taking as many risks because they're worried about the negative impacts with the rubrics" while Administrator 10 said, "Risk taking is probably down. People are so afraid. . . What we're covering is not as deep." Administrator 3, as before, saw no change in the quality of instruction since APPR legislation began. She stated, "Quality? From what I've observed prior to APPR, not much." This is important to note so that in the future, when negotiating new plans or modifying existing plans, administrators and school districts are aware of what is working in current APPR legislation and what things the schools believe need to be change.

When asked about student learning, many administrators saw positives. Citing more rigorous standards, Administrator 10 believed APPR had helped the students within his building. He said the teachers are "changing the way kids are taught and what they learn to better prepare them for more college or career readiness." He also stated that teaching is "more rigorous and challenges some of the kids." Administrator 7 agreed with him and said, "Essentially, as teachers grow and reflect on their practices, that's going to be impacted in the classroom . . . Their growth and reflection transfer to different instructional practices." Administrator 2 and 5 have seen more student engagement in classrooms. Administrator 2 stated, "Teachers are now focused on doing activities that are much more student engaged than they did before as opposed to the teacher being what they used to call Ralph Waldo Emerson, the sage on the stage." Administrator 5 echoed this, "Students are more engaged in learning now more than they have been in the past. I would say that teachers are aware of what we are striving towards: students more engaged in class and involved in their learning." Administrator 4 believed APPR has forced his teachers to have more of a growth mindset than they had before. He said, "It's forced us to look at our instruction and find means of doing things that will help all kid."

Some of these same administrators, however, also saw negatives. Administrator 1 stated, “It has had a negative impact on student learning because teachers are more worried about their performance within those rubric guidelines and that trumps what the students need in the classroom as individuals.” Administrator 8 shared concerns over increase in student anxiety since the implementation of APPR. She stated her district had “horror stories of 8 year olds vomiting in the middle of testing” and she believed “the teachers let their own fears, and the parents, trickle down to the kids. And they [the students] internalize those things and the pressure they felt.” Administrator 9 isn’t sure if there was any impact on student learning. According to him, “It really depends on where you are; what kind of district you’re working in.” Administrator 9 goes on to say that he has many friends in a nearby city school district “who think that APPR has had no impact on student learning.” In his district, there might be an impact because teachers are “willing to change some of their practices and step out of their comfort zone”, but he isn’t sure. Administrator 3 thought that teachers might be “more aware of assessments and data” that comes from assessments but doesn’t see an impact on student learning.

The data suggested that administrators are accepting of the APPR plans. They believed these plans are better than previous plans and have forced change within their schools or districts. Since they perceived this change to be of a positive nature, they are more accepting of APPR legislation.

Value. Again, unlike the teachers, the majority of administrators in this study saw value in the new APPR process. Eight of the ten administrators, Administrators 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, believed that the new APPR process provided better feedback than their previous evaluation

plan Administrator 6 described a previous evaluation plan where, “teachers shared interests with one another but were not evaluated.” He went on to share the following story:

One of the teachers had read a book about coal and shared with us the book about coal.

And I was looking around, I was new. I was the Assistant Principal looking around and I was almost giggling because I was like, “What is this?” We allow the book of coal to be what we’re talking about. It was not a formal process before. It was completely teacher generated.

While this plan focused on what the teacher wanted, it did not focus on classroom practice. Under APPR, teachers are finally being observed and given feedback. According to Administrator 6, the teachers went “from no feedback to feedback almost overnight.” This, in his opinion, was a very good thing. Administrators 3, 5 and 8 saw the rubrics as a “concrete, research-based measure for teachers to use to guide their pedagogy.’ Administrator 2, 4 and 9 saw the new APPR as providing better feedback because they are able to “get into classrooms more often to see what is happening.” Administrator 2 said, “The conversations that are happening around these classroom observations are more numerous and allow for more dialogue between teacher and administrator.” As a result, Administrator 4 felt, “Feedback is more authentic and more robust.” Only Administrator 1 perceived “the previous evaluation plan gives my teachers better feedback” while Administrator 10 believed, “The amount of feedback I provide teachers hasn’t changed.”

When looking at the data, it is evident that administrators found value in the APPR plans of their district and in APPR legislation. Most administrators interviewed saw the new APPR evaluation system as creating opportunities for better, more relevant feedback for teachers and as a method for creating realistic conversations with teachers and between teachers. These

meaningful and authentic conversations are what is helping increase student learning within their schools or districts.

Summary of Findings

Comparison. When comparing the teachers' and the administrators' perceptions of APPR three things became evident. First, most of the teachers interviewed do not believe that APPR has changed their teaching practice while the administrators would disagree and say that APPR has changed teaching practice. Most of the teachers interviewed indicated the quality of instruction within their building had not changed or had gone down since the implementation of APPR. Teachers saw themselves teaching more to the test than engaging students in learning. Again, the majority of administrators disagreed. The administrators saw more student engagement, less teacher-centered classrooms and more best practice teaching within their buildings or districts. Teachers and administrators differed over their views on if APPR provides good feedback to teachers. The majority of the teachers interviewed believed that their previous evaluation plans gave them better feedback while administrators felt the current APPR plans provided better feedback. It is interesting to note that even within the same district, the Teacher 7 and Administrator 9 disagreed. When looking at the effect APPR has had on student learning, teachers and administrators again disagreed. The majority of teachers interviewed believed that APPR had and still has a negative effect on students, mostly because of anxiety over testing. Administrators, citing some of the same reasons mentioned above, disagreed. While they did agree that testing put pressure on students because of teacher and parent anxiety, they did not feel this outweighed the positives they were seeing in student learning.

In fact, there was only one thing that both teachers and administrators did agree upon. Almost everyone interviewed brought up concerns with the New York State Assessments being

used for teacher evaluation. Teachers and administrators alike felt that using the State Assessments for evaluation purposes was unfair and lacked validity. On the 3rd through 8th grade Math and English Language Arts State Assessments, cut off scores were creating delineating between students the state deemed proficient in Math or English Language Arts and students that state saw as below proficiency. For many years, the cut-off score remained the same. With the introduction on the Common Core the testing format changed. One of these changes was a change in the cut-off score. This happened to coincide with the implementation of APPR and teachers receiving growth scores based on State Assessments. Citing concerns with the implementation of Common Core, the arbitrary change in proficiency cut-off scores on the test and the constant change of the test itself, teachers and administrators agreed that APPR would be more valid if three things happened. First, these tests were not used until everyone had more training and experience with the Common Core Learning Standards. Second, the testing format stayed consistent and, finally, the cut-off scores remained the same from year to year.

When looking at the data presented in the interviews, it is clear that teachers and administrators have varying perceptions of APPR. With the exception of their thoughts on testing, administrators tend to see APPR as beneficial and as something that improved the quality of education and increased student learning. Teachers see APPR has something that has hurt students and caused either no change in pedagogy or has had a negative impact on teaching practice and the quality of instruction. Chapter 5 will discuss the implications of these findings and the next steps for those involved in teacher evaluation reform.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This study addressed teacher and administrator perceptions of New York State's Annual Professional Performance Review system. Conducting one on one interviews with 10 teachers and 10 administrators across New York State allowed the researcher to obtain a cross-section of experiences and perceptions from New York State educators. Consideration was made to obtain permission from each participant, invite participants and notify these participants of the researcher's plan for maintaining confidentiality, including the signing of consent forms and the identification of participants by assigning numerical identifiers.

Participants were comfortable sharing their experiences with the researcher. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded by the researcher for analysis. Three themes were identified for teachers and three themes were identified for administrators as significant during the analysis: *anxiety and frustration, inconsequence* and *mixed views* for teachers and *concerns, acceptance* and *value* for administrators. The next section will explain these themes in relation to the research questions.

Summary of Findings

Analysis of the data allowed the researcher to identify significant themes, each addressing the main research questions below:

Research question 1: How do teachers perceive APPR has changed their teaching practices? Two of the three teacher themes identified in this study, *inconsequence* and *mixed views*, impact teacher's perceptions of how APPR has changed their teaching practices. Each theme and how it applies to this research question is explained below.

Inconsequence. The evidence suggested that most teachers did not see APPR as changing their teaching practices. Many stated that they and their fellow teachers were not

changing teaching practice either because of APPR legislation. In their opinions, good teachers still did the best they could and worked hard to deliver lessons that mirrored pedagogy from the past. Those teachers who didn't put forth their best effort, referred to as "9 to 5ers" by one teacher and "mediocre at best" by another teacher were perceived as not even attempting to changing their teaching. The participants, who considered themselves effective teachers, saw these teachers as just getting by, doing the bare minimum or teaching the same lessons from previous year without bothering to adjust instruction to meet the needs of their students. APPR legislation had no effect on teaching practices. Because the teachers stated there was no change in teaching practice at their schools as a result of APPR, they saw very little consequence in the legislation. Many teachers stated their plans were written in a way that guaranteed an effective score for teachers, even if the teacher continued to teach how they had years before and never changed pedagogy or lesson plans.

Mixed Views. Participants also experienced mixed views regarding how APPR affected curriculum. While most felt there was no direct change of teaching practice, about half the teachers cited APPR as having a positive effect on curriculum. From their perspectives, APPR forced districts and schools to look at what was being taught and reevaluate it on several levels. Did the curriculum fit the standards? Was it rigorous enough? Did it prepare students for college and careers? If the answer was no to any of these questions, curriculums changed. This ensured all students were held to high standards and teachers were accountable to helping the students reach those expectations. Some of the teachers stated that APPR had a positive effect on their schools because now teachers were forced to teach to standards which hadn't happened in years past. The accountability from APPR forced teachers to work together to help all children be successful in their classrooms.

Some teachers, however, saw APPR as detrimental to the curriculum and how they were teaching. These teachers believed that APPR forced them to have a “cookie cutter” approach to pedagogy. Everyone was taught the same way in order to be successful on high-stakes state assessments. Many teachers stated they were no longer able to collaborate with fellow teachers, a direct contradiction to what other teachers had stated. The teachers who stated they couldn’t collaborate cited a lack of time to meet as one of the problems. Instead, time was needed to complete documentation needed for their specific APPR plan. Based on the research, it seemed as if the divide was more because of teachers specific APPR plans or the district’s implementation of that plan, rather than because of the APPR legislation from New York State. If teachers perceived their district was worried about how students scored on tests, the teachers within that district stated they felt more pressure to teach to the test in order to produce higher student scores. Teachers who stated they were able to collaborate more or really focus on the standards, perceived their school districts being less focused on test results but more on student learning and growth.

Research question 2: How do administrators perceive APPR has impacted the quality of instruction? All three themes relating to administrators identified in this study show how administrators perceive the impact on the quality of instruction APPR has had.

Concerns with testing: Some of the administrator interviewed were concerned that APPR is causing more and more teachers to teach to the test instead of focusing on best practices around pedagogy and meeting the needs of the students. This aligns with what the teachers stated regarding their perception that they have to teach to the test. It is interesting to note that teachers perceive they are being forced to teach to the test by administrators and school districts while administrators perceive that teachers are teaching to the test but administrators do not want

this to happen. Data suggested that administrators see teacher concerns over growth scores as one hindrance to improving the quality of instruction. Administrators stated they perceived teachers as focusing too much on their own individual growth score and that teachers will change instruction in an attempt to create higher growth scores, in other words, teaching to the test.

Moreover, the data indicated that some administrators are worried teachers are not willing to take risks for fear students won't learn as well and, as a result, not perform as well on high assessments that count towards APPR scores. Administrators stated they see more teacher reluctance to try new ideas in the classroom. The administrators believe that the teachers are worried the students might not perform as well if taught an idea in a new way. This might reflect in student's growth for the year or, if the new pedagogy was taking place during an observation, might negatively reflect on their observation and lower that score.

Acceptance. Despite some concerns over testing, the data shows that most administrators are accepting of APPR legislation and see it as having a positive impact on the quality of instruction. They see curriculum and lessons aligned with standards, which wasn't always the case before. According to administrators, instruction is more student-centered and engaging than before APPR. This engagement and student-centered learning starts a chain reaction. Why students are engaged they learn more. If instruction is centered on the student and what that student needs to be successful, learning will increase. Increased student learning will show an increase in student achievement on standardized tests and in the skills needed to be successful after school. Since student learning, growth and achievement is the goal of all school districts, administrators perceive APPR as providing the catalyst for making this happen.

Moreover, administrators believed that teachers are becoming more purposeful in their instruction as a result of APPR. No longer are teachers teaching what they want to teach,

whenever they want to teach it. Instead, instruction is based on curriculum that is aligned to rigorous standards. These standards can be measured and are meant to help students be more successful when they move on to college or careers.

Value. Administrators see value in the current APPR plans, more so than previous teacher evaluation plans. The data suggested most administrators see their APPR plans as a way to create dialogue between the teacher and the administrator about lessons. This dialogue is what creates good conversations about how teaching is meeting the students' needs, what can be improved in a lesson to ensure all students are learning and helps teachers and administrators collaboratively brainstorm ways to meet those needs. The feedback given to teachers is more focused, thanks to the required use of rubrics such as the Danielson or NYSUT rubric. The rubrics provide specifics of what good teaching looks like. The rubrics also offer teachers concrete examples of how teaching can be improved and how teachers can work to make lessons more student-centered. Feedback is also timely and relevant to teaching (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Most administrators interviewed stated that before APPR, feedback was either non-existent or often came weeks or months after the lesson. This gap between the lesson and the conversation meant that the feedback wasn't relevant to what the teachers were doing at the time. Now, however, feedback typically occurs within a week of the observation. Administrators stated this helped tremendously when trying to have collaborative conversations with teachers. The feedback now made sense and meant teachers could still modify instruction on a topic based on the feedback provided.

Most of the administrators saw the APPR plans has having more value than previous plans. Current plans are more focused on instruction than previous plans and often go into more depth regarding instruction than previous plans. Several of the administrators interviewed said

that evaluations were check boxes given back to teachers a few weeks after a lesson. There was very little value in these forms because there was very little discussion that happened after a teacher received their evaluation. Others administrators stated that evaluations weren't even occurring around teacher observation in their districts prior to APPR. Now, the APPR plans are focused more on instruction within the classroom and how to ensure all students are learning.

Research question 3: How do teachers and administrators perceive APPR legislation has affected student learning? All six themes suggested in the data analysis apply to this research question. The two teacher themes of *anxiety and frustration* and *inconsequence* as well as administrator themes of *concern*, and *value* can be identified in this research question.

Anxiety and frustration. Teachers are frustrated with the testing aspect of APPR and the effect, they perceive, it has had on student learning. The data showed that many of the teachers believed students are experiencing increased levels of anxiety at school because of the pressure put on them from school districts and parents to do well on tests. Teachers believed this prohibits student learning. If students are experiencing too much anxiety associated with school, they won't want to attend school and are less likely to be focused on what is being taught when they are in school.

Concerns with testing. The data indicated that like teachers, administrators have some concerns over the impact APPR has had on student learning. Some administrators were worried about the effect testing and the pressure on students. Administrators, however, felt this pressure is put onto students by the teachers and the parents. They also agreed that anxiety over school is not healthy for a child and will lead to a lack of increase of student learning.

Inconsequence. Just as teachers perceived APPR has had no impact on teaching practices, the data also showed that teachers believe APPR has not change student learning.

Because they do not believe teacher pedagogy has changed, they don't believe that student learning has changed. In fact, some would argue learning has not stayed stagnant but has, in fact, decreased because of the testing pressures mentioned above. The teachers did not perceive that APPR legislation has caused changes in how well students are learning.

Value. Most administrators, however, believed that the quality of instruction is increasing and students are learning more. Student engagement has increased, according to the administrators. Student-focused lessons are the norm now instead of the exception, again leading to an increase in student learning. Administrators also cited increases in scores on state assessments as one indication that students are learning. Administrators stated they felt this is a direct result of APPR legislation. The use of rubrics in teacher practice helped focus instruction more and led to more student-engagement. Teachers are trying to receive higher scores on the rubrics. These effective and highly effective categories require teachers to change their pedagogy to more student-centered classrooms where students take ownership of their own learning. When this happens, there is an increase, according to administrators, in the quality of instruction and the quantity students learn.

Recommendations

Based on the data presented above, several recommendations can be made to schools and districts currently negotiating 3012d agreements or looking to revise future teacher evaluation plans. First, teachers and administrators are concerned about over testing students. School districts must find a way to minimize testing while still getting valid, reliable data. During the transition from 3012c to 3012d, districts may consider looking at how they are assessing students, how much they are assessing students and what are they doing with the assessment data. Both teachers and administrators need to see the value of these assessments. Moreover,

teachers and administrators need to ensure their own fears and anxieties about these assessments are not transferred to the students.

Second, teachers do not perceive APPR as having a positive effect on teaching practice or student learning while administrators do. It is recommended that administrators share with teachers the data and the reasons why they believe APPR is making a difference. Often, teachers are only aware of what is happening within their own classroom. They are often focused solely on their classroom and, therefore, do not always see what is happening in the building around them. Building and district administrators can work to help teachers see the big picture. It is recommended administrators share with teachers specific examples of how they see APPR making a positive impact on the quality of instruction in buildings and districts. They also can specifically cite instances where they see APPR as having impacted student learning.

At the district level, teachers and administrators need to be cognizant of the different perceptions of APPR and work to create evaluation that hold value for both parties and for staff who do not easily fall into an evaluation plan such as librarians, speech teachers or special education teachers. Time should be taken, when given by New York State, to work to create these evaluation plans. This time will allow for thorough explanations of the process and decisions made by each group. A consensus or compromise can then be reached by both parties with much needed information and facts. It is recommended for districts to work on a communication plan to share with teachers the perceptions administrators share as to why APPR has been successful. Professional development around APPR, the district chosen rubric, and the value of APPR may be one avenue in this communication plan. Another option may be for administrators to sit down with teachers when writing the plan and take time to discuss each

other's perceptions and why they perceive things the way they do. This communication could be a start of dialogue needed to make APPR plans successful and meaningful to all parties involved.

Having reviewed the data, the researcher is able to draw conclusions based on the experiences shared by participants. The perceptions of teachers and administrators are diametrically opposed to each other with the exception of their views on testing. Since the study covered ten teachers and ten administrators from different school districts across New York State, the opposition does not seem to be a local problem, but a statewide concern. In other words, if teachers and administrators were from the same school district, the problem could lie with the specific plan of the school district. But since teachers and administrators came from 18 different school districts in New York State, representing a mix of small, medium, large, rural, suburban, and urban, the problem seems to be not on a local level but on a state level. While some work could be done on a district and school level to increase communication between teachers and administrators, New York State legislators should take this research into account when creating the next set of legislation around teacher evaluation. While districts negotiate actual plans with the teachers, they do so based on legislation set forth by the legislature. Knowing how teachers currently perceive the plan will better inform legislatures determine what can be kept in a new plan and what should be modified. While districts could be working on communication plans and professional development, legislators can recognize the oppositional nature of administrators and teachers.

As not enough time or training to implement was a factor cited by teachers, legislatures should account for this concern when working on the next evaluation laws. In the past, districts have had a short time frame in which to negotiate a plan with teachers' unions. Sometimes, creation of a plan was given a 7-month time frame. Completion of plans has always been tied to

increases in state aid. In other words, if a district didn't have a complete, state-approved APPR plan by the deadline, the school district would lose their increase in state aid for that school year. Districts need time to fully discuss and workout plans that both parties find meaningful and valuable.

It is suggested that school districts take this research into account as well. When negotiating with teachers new plans such as 3012d or changes to future regulations, school districts should recognize teachers concerns around testing and teaching to the test and factor these concerns into their discussions. Districts and administrators can also be cognizant of concerns around teacher observation and work to ensure observations are objective and the rubric used for these evaluation addresses all classrooms and teaching roles.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

At the beginning of the study, the researcher assumed that teachers and administrator perceptions would differ regarding APPR. The researcher believed that most teachers would not find value with APPR while most administrators would. However, the researcher did not anticipate the concern administrators had over testing and the reason for that concern. Most administrators were concerned about the effect testing had on students because of pressure put on them from teachers, parents and the public.

Future research could include conducting the study again once all districts in New York State have transitioned to emergency 3012d APPR regulations but before full 3012d regulations go into effect. The emergency transition regulations include a moratorium on the use of 3rd-8th grade ELA and Math State Assessments or teachers and administrators' growth scores until the 2019-2020 school year. This moratorium was put in place during the research phase of this study by the current Commissioner of Education as an attempt to address teacher and

administrator concerns regarding testing. Since testing is the area most teachers and administrators were concerned with; a moratorium on test scores might impact teacher and administrator perceptions of APPR.

Furthermore, the study could be recreated during the 2019-2020 school year or subsequent years after when the emergency transition guidelines are up and the full implementation of 3012d begins. At this point, teachers and administrators will again receive a growth score based on 3rd-8th grade State Assessments. For example, 4th graders would get a score based how much growth they showed from the 3rd grade Math assessment to the 4th grade Math assessment. Results from this study would then be compared to this study to determine if the findings could be replicated or not. These results would also help guide school districts and New York State legislators when revising future APPR legislation.

Moreover, the same study could be conducted with principals and those administrators who evaluate the principals around the principals' evaluation plan. Comparing those results to this study would show if principals' perceptions carried over to their own evaluation plans. Do they find these plans as valid as the teachers? Have their plans impacted student learning or effected the quality of instruction within their building?

Additional research might look into developing a theoretical model that measures perceptual gaps between people? The current research shows that perceptions of APPR did not differ in teacher and administrator categories based on what size district or what type of district a person taught in. While data was not collected on the socio-economic factors of each district, the research is familiar with most of the school districts represented in the study. Whether the district is considered poor, middle-class or affluent, teacher perceptions and administrator

perceptions did not vary. With this in mind, the research might then also what causes the perceptual gaps between people?

Future research might also include how the legislators write new laws and what factors go into the implementation of these new laws that might lead to the perceptions shown in the research.

Finally, future research might look into whether teachers' perceptions are influenced by a feeling of having empowerment in regards to APPR or if teachers feel like their hands are tied and they have no voice regarding APPR? Do administrators feel power or do they feel powerless in regards to APPR? Who has the power in this relationship around APPR?

Reflections

The purpose of this study was to give teachers and administrators a voice in sharing their perceptions of New York State's teacher evaluation plan. Teachers' perceived lack of the impact of APPR on pedagogy and student learning is significant. Many teachers do not find value in the APPR process and, therefore, are not changing their teaching practices. If practices are not changing, the quality of instruction is not changing and there cannot be an increase in student learning.

Administrators' perceptions differed from teachers. They do find value in APPR legislation. They believe teachers are changing teaching practice, leading to an increase in the quality of instruction and increased in student learning. However, without teacher buy-in that this is happening, real and substantial growth in student learning will not occur.

This study provided teachers and administrators the platform to share concerns and excitement about the influence APPR has or has not had on teaching practice, the quality of instruction and student learning. Since little research existed on perceptions of New York State's

teacher evaluation plans, this study filled a gap in the literature by providing insight from teachers and administrators who are immersed daily in teacher evaluations. These lived experiences and perceptions will help school districts across New York State in future teacher evaluation plan negotiations and creation.

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Appendix A: Demographic Survey Questions

This questionnaire is to determine eligibility for a doctoral study looking at teacher and administrator perspectives on New York State's Annual Professional Performance Review system. Please answer the questions as accurately as possible.

1. What is your first and last name?
2. Please indicate which of the following category you fit into:
 - a public school teacher in New York State
 - a public school administrator in New York State
 - neither of these options
3. Do you receive an evaluation each year under APPR legislation?
 - Yes
 - No
4. What grade level(s) do you teach or are an administrator for?
5. If you are a teacher, what subject do you teach?
6. If you are an administrator, do you evaluate teachers under APPR 3012-c or d?
 - Yes
 - No
7. Which of the following school districts do you work in?
 - Small (less than 1000 students)
 - Medium (between 1001 and 2000 students)
 - Large (more than 2000 students)
8. Which of the following school districts do you work in?
 - Rural
 - Suburban
 - Urban
9. If selected for the study you will be asked to participate in an interviews of approximately 60 minutes in length. You will then be asked to review the transcript of the interview for accuracy. Are you willing to do that?
 - Yes
 - No

Appendix B: Consent for Participation

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Project Title: *Teacher and Administrator Perspectives on New York State's Teacher Evaluation System*

Principal Investigator(s): *Mariah Kramer, Student at the University of New England, 716-912-3758 or mkramer@une.edu*

Introduction:

- Please read this form, you may also request that the form is read to you. The purpose of this form is to provide you with information about this research study, and if you choose to participate, document your decision.
- You are encouraged to ask any questions that you may have about this study, now, during or after the project is complete. You can take as much time as you need to decide whether or not you want to participate. Your participation is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

- This study will examine teacher and administrator perspectives of APPR on instruction.
- This research is being conducted solely for the purpose of a doctoral study.

Who will be in this study?

- You have been identified because you meet the criteria for the study and have indicated that you would be willing to participate in an interview of about 60 minutes in length.
- You must be at least 18 years of age to participate.
- There will be approximately 20 participants in this study: 10 teachers and 10 administrators.

What will I be asked to do?

- Participate in 1 interview of about 60 minutes in length.
- Review transcripts of your interview and make necessary changes.
- Interviews may be conducted in person, by phone or through the internet depending on participant choice.
- All participants will be asked to choose a pseudonym. If you do not choose one, one will be chosen for you.

What are the possible risks of taking part in this study?

- There is no risk associated with taking part in this study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?

- This study may benefit educators across New York State as the New York State Department of Education continues to change its APPR legislation.

What will it cost me?

- There will be no direct costs to the participant. Indirect costs might include gas and mileage to a mutually agreed upon meeting place if the interviews do not take place by phone or Internet.

How will my privacy be protected?

- Privacy will be protected at all costs.
- All information will be protected from employers and the public. Participants will choose pseudonyms for the study. Only the researcher and the participant will know their real name.

How will my data be kept confidential?

- This study is designed to be confidential. This means that no one besides the researcher, can link the data you provide to you, or identify you as a participant in this study.
- Data will be stored on a password protected file on a password protected computer.
- Once the study is complete, data will be destroyed.
- Data will be coded.
- During the interviews, no individually identifiable information will be collected.
- A copy of your signed consent form will be maintained by the principal investigator for at least 3 years after the project is complete before it is destroyed. The consent forms will be stored in a secure location that only the research team will have access to and will not be affiliated with any data obtained during the project.
- Only the researcher and the participant will have access to audio recordings. There recordings will be destroyed upon completion of the project.
- An initial online survey will be used to collect demographic information on participants. This data will remain secure and coded. After completion of the study, this data will be destroyed.
- Participants may request findings of the research by emailing the researcher or asking at the time of the interviews.

What are my rights as a research participant?

- Your participation is voluntary. Your decision to participate will have no impact on your current or future relations with the University.
- You may skip or refuse to answer any question for any reason.
- If you choose not to participate, there is no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive. You are free to withdraw from this research study at any time, for any reason. If you choose to withdraw from the research there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.

What other options do I have?

- You may choose not to participate and may leave this study at any time.

Whom may I contact with questions?

- The researcher conducting this study is Mariah Kramer. For questions or more information concerning this research you may contact her at 716-912-3758 or through email at mkramer@une.edu. You may also contact Steven Moskowitz, EdD., faculty advisor, at smoskowitz@une.edu.
- If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may call Olgun Guvench, M.D. Ph.D., Chair of the UNE Institutional Review Board at (207) 221-4171 or irb@une.edu.

Will I receive a copy of this consent form?

- You will be given a copy of this consent form.

Participant's Statement

I understand the above description of this research and the risks and benefits associated with my participation as a research subject. I agree to take part in the research and do so voluntarily.

Participant's signature or
Legally authorized representative

Date

Printed name

Researcher's Statement

The participant named above had sufficient time to consider the information, had an opportunity to ask questions, and voluntarily agreed to be in this study.

Researcher's signature

Date

Printed name

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Semi-structured interview questions for teachers.

1. What does APPR mean to you? (Q1,2,3)
2. Please share with me your experiences to date with APPR. (Q1,2,3)
3. What evaluation rubric is your APPR plan using? What are your thoughts on this rubric?
(Q1,Q2)
4. How has your teaching practice been impacted as a result of APPR? (Q1)
5. What change in the quality of instruction do you see happening because of APPR? (Q2)
6. What effect do you perceive APPR has had on student learning? (Q3)
7. What assessments, if any, have changed in your building because of APPR? (Q3)
8. Compare your evaluation process now to your evaluation process before. Which do you feel gives you better feedback and why? Which do you feel is more valid and why? (Q1)
9. Tell me your experience with teacher evaluations before and after APPR. (Q1,2)
10. Are you currently being evaluated under 3012-c or 3012d? What do you know about the changes from 3012-c to 3012d? How do you feel about these changes? (Q1)

Semi-structured interview questions for administrators.

1. What does APPR mean to you? (Q1,2,3)
2. Please share with me your experiences to date with APPR. (Q1,2,3)
3. What evaluation rubric is your APPR plan using? What are your thoughts on this rubric?
(Q1,Q2)
4. How has teaching practice within your building or district been impacted as a result of APPR? (Q1)

5. What change in the quality of instruction do you see happening because of APPR? (Q2)
6. What effect do you perceive APPR has had on student learning? (Q3)
7. What assessments, if any, have changed in your building because of APPR? (Q3)
8. Tell me your experience with teacher evaluations before and after APPR. (Q1,2)
9. Compare the teacher evaluation process now to the teacher evaluation process before.
Which do you feel gives teachers better feedback and why? Which do you feel is more valid and why? (Q1)
10. Are you currently evaluating under 3012-c or 3012d? What do you know about the changes from 3012-c to 3012d? How do you feel about these changes? (Q1)