

PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE NEW YORK STATE  
ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW LEGISLATION ON THE  
INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES OF NEW YORK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## **Abstract**

There is substantial research on school reform efforts focused on programs and curriculum. The same cannot be said with regard to the evaluation of teachers and principals. Current reform efforts are pointed in that direction. Through Race to the Top (RTTT), a competitive grant, the federal government offered funding to states willing to conduct statewide school improvement initiatives. The goal of Race to the Top is to improve student achievement through effective teachers and leaders. New York State applied for, and was granted RTTT money to work on the Regents Reform Agenda. This gave rise to the New York Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) mandate, which is focused on the evaluation of teachers and principals. This exploratory study surveyed public school principals across the state to determine the extent they perceived the new APPR would improve instructional practices in their schools. Results suggest that most principals believe APPR will have a positive impact on instructional practices to some extent. Demographic characteristics, past and present evaluation practices, teacher practice rubrics and professional development were investigated to examine associations with principals' perceptions. The data revealed that variables from each of the four areas were significantly associated with principals' perceptions. The ability to provide specific feedback to teachers and a focus on student performance data were identified as the strongest contributors to principals' perceptions. This research was conducted in the first year of full implementation of the APPR mandate which provides baseline data for subsequent research. The findings may be useful for district leaders and policy makers when reviewing the implementation process. The data may provide insight for systems leaders to investigate and identify needs for additional support in their districts.

Keywords: school reform, New York APPR, principal evaluation, teacher evaluation, Race to the Top, educational accountability, principals' perceptions

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to John, my husband, whose unwavering support and understanding enabled me to juggle the challenges of family, work and school.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Over the last three decades numerous school reform efforts have occurred at the state and federal levels. These efforts were often the result of declines in high school graduation rates and student achievement levels across the nation. Many states, including New York, are on a course to improve student achievement with the assistance of federal funding. This chapter will discuss the parameters of the New York State (NYS) initiative with a primary focus on the Annual Professional Performance Review mandate.

### **Problem Statement**

According to the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) (2012), “The United States' failure to educate its students leaves them unprepared to compete and threatens the country's ability to thrive in a global economy and maintain its leadership role” (Overview, para. 1). Declining performance levels of U.S. students when compared to other nations led to this concern.

As part of “The Learning Curve,” a study conducted by the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), data such as literacy rates, international test scores, and graduation rates of fifty countries were collected between 2006 and 2010. In an assessment of the education systems of those countries, the United States ranked 17th. Finland, South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore claimed the top five spots in that order (Gayathri, 2012).

In response to this national crisis, in February of 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 was signed into law. This legislation led to the federal government Race to the Top (RTTT) competitive grant, which offered federal funding to states willing to conduct statewide school improvement initiatives. NYS applied for, and was granted RTTT money to work on the Regents Reform Agenda which supports four pillars of reform. According to the New York State Education Department (NYSED), Prekindergarten through

Grade 12 Education (P12), Race to the Top (RTTT) (2011), the pillars or *Four Assurances* include: *Standards and Assessment*: adopting the Common Core, internationally –benchmarked standards and assessment that prepare students for success in college and the workplace; *Great Teachers and Leaders*: recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals; *Data Systems to Support Instruction*: building instructional data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practice; and *Turning around struggling schools*: identifying the lowest performing schools and focusing resources there.

School reform efforts aimed at improving student achievement are not new. The federal government has put forth a number of reports identifying problems and desired goals over the last thirty years. The list includes: A Nation at Risk (1983), Goals 2000 (1994), No Child Left Behind (2001), and Race to the Top (2009).

The majority of the literature discusses why these efforts have failed. Included in the challenges to success are: available resources, lack of instructional leadership, teacher preparation, competing high priority local concerns, and teacher buy-in (Garcia, 2009; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Mandinach, Honey, & Light, 2006; Stringfield & Yakimowski-Srebick, 2005).

When comparing the educational programs and achievement levels of high and low wealth districts the evidence of inequity suggests that poverty is the cause for poor performance. Strauss (2012) suggests that economic and social policies that provide jobs for poor families have the most potential to improve schools. However, economics is only one aspect of a very intricate problem and some high poverty schools exhibit high achievement (Tilley, Smith, & Claxton, 2012).



Darling-Hammond (2010) cites Finland's success in the realm of school reform as one that warrants attention. She suggests that forty years ago, student achievement levels in Finland mirrored socio-economic status, not unlike trends seen in the U.S.

The Finnish transformation is attributed to three decades of change, creating schools that demonstrate consistent and equitable results. Services provided at school include free health care, school supplies, a free meal daily, transportation and clinical counseling. School buildings are uniformly equipped with resources and skilled teachers (Sahlberg, 2011; Strauss, 2012).

Two additional practices credited for contributing to Finland's success include a national core curriculum that allows for school-based customization and a highly selective process for entrance to teacher preparation programs. Selected students are provided three years of graduate school and living expenses. Teacher preparation programs are designed to produce educators trained in research methods and skilled in best instructional practices (Buchberger & Buchberger, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Skeptics may say the U.S. is too large to replicate Finnish reform efforts. Finland is comparable in size to the state of Oklahoma, which suggests replication at the state level as a more feasible choice.

Slavin (2007) discusses the following as key elements of school reform: coordination of resources, research based methods, alignment of components, professional development, and goals and benchmarks (p.3). These components in addition to teacher evaluation and use of data to inform instruction are evident in New York's Regents Reform Agenda.

The use of standardized testing to assess student achievement in the U.S. is in stark contrast to nations that assess problem solving skills through high school exit exams only. In both instances, these skills are the essence of Common Core instruction.

Some research suggests, rather than looking abroad we should look within, at states that are showing success. During a ten-year study conducted on educational reform in Florida, significant gains were seen on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests. Between 1998 and 2007, fourth grade scores in Reading improved by 9%, exceeding the national average of 4%. Fourth grade gains in Math were 12% exceeding the national average of 7%. Increases as high as 12%, were demonstrated by Black and Hispanic students in reading and up to 16% in math (Lips and Ladner, 2008).

A report on international and state trends in student achievement, (Hanoushek, Woessman, & Peterson, 2012) provided estimates of learning gains in core subjects, between 1995 and 2009 for 49 countries and 41 states. U.S. data was collected from NAEP assessments and international exams.

On an international scale, the U.S. fell in the middle of the group. Although there were minor gains in math and reading, the U.S. was far outpaced by several other countries.

In state- to- state comparisons, Maryland demonstrated the most growth in these two academic areas with Florida as a close second. Florida appears to be sustaining levels of progress achieved in recent years. The researchers of this study contend, if all states could increase performance levels to that of the highest growth states, within two decades the U.S. would be competitive with leading nations.

Most school reform efforts in the past focused on school programs and curricula as the means to improve student performance. What sets the recent efforts apart is the pace of change, a multifaceted approach, and a focus on teacher accountability. The research indicates that children cannot overcome having an ineffective teacher for two years or more (Mangiante, 2011; Stronge, Ward, Tucker, & Hinman, 2007; Tucker & Stronge, 2005).

Two recent studies concur that teacher effectiveness is critical to student success. The Learning Curve Study conducted by Economist Intelligence Unit, (Pearson, 2011) and The New Teacher Project (2009) both emphasized its importance. Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) stated, “Having a high-quality teacher throughout school can substantially offset or even eliminate the disadvantage of low socio-economic background” (p. 419). Wong and Wong (2010) concur and add that the only way to improve student achievement is through well prepared teachers who deliver effective instruction. Teacher effectiveness is defined as the ability to produce student learning, growth and achievement (Wong & Wong, 2010). The goal of Race to the Top is to improve student achievement through effective teachers and leaders. These are also central priorities of the NYS APPR legislation.

Many states across the nation have mandated teacher evaluation initiatives in an effort to determine their effectiveness. Statistics suggest that this is warranted. According to (USED, 2011) the high school graduation rate in NYS in 2011 was 77%. Iowa had the highest at 88% and the District of Columbia had the lowest at 59%.

At the heart of the NYS initiative is teacher accountability, specifically the state mandated Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). The plan for the Assurance Area, *Great Teachers and Leaders*, includes: redesigning teacher and school leader preparation programs and implementation of a comprehensive teacher and principal evaluation system based on multiple measures of effectiveness including student achievement measures. Those measures will comprise 40% of teacher and principal evaluations and ratings. In addition, incentives will be created for highly effective teachers in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and math) and teachers of English language learners, and teachers of students with disabilities, to take assignments in high-need schools.

Discussion of the teacher evaluation component is central to this study, as it will be used to determine teacher effectiveness. The intent of APPR is to raise achievement levels in schools through quality instruction. Effective teaching and learning will be assessed through state and local assessments and data driven teacher evaluations

Two intentions of mandated teacher evaluations are to identify effective teachers and also to identify those who are not. Many states, including New York, have provisions that allow for expedited dismissal of poor performing teachers. This has led to public protests from teachers across the country who view mandated teacher evaluations as a “union busting” strategy (Miller, ABC News, 2011). The controversy raises questions about how well supported and successful school reform efforts will be.

Principal accountability is also part of the NYS mandate, putting building principals at the forefront of the initiative as the primary observers and evaluators of teacher performance. The research demonstrates that there is a substantial relationship between principal leadership and student achievement (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). In the NYS initiative, teachers are assigned a score based, in part, on scores of their students on state assessments. Principals are assigned a score based on the performance levels of their teachers collectively.

The purpose of this study is to identify which conditions lead to principal perceptions that are supportive of APPR as a potential tool to improve student instruction. The findings will be compared to those of previous reform efforts to investigate the existence of common links to success or failure.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this quantitative study is to examine principals’ perceptions about the potential impact of the new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) legislation on the

instructional practices of school districts in NYS, excluding New York City. This study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a difference in principals' perceptions about the impact APPR will have on instructional practices based on demographic characteristics?
2. What is the impact of teacher evaluation experiences before and after APPR on principals' perceptions about the effect APPR will have on instructional practices?
3. What is the extent of the relationship, if any, between principals' perceptions about the impact APPR will have on instructional practices and the approved teacher practice rubric they are utilizing to inform instruction?
4. What is the extent of the relationship, if any, between principals' perceptions about the impact APPR will have on instruction and professional development regarding APPR?

### **Significance of the Study**

Successful systemic change is a complex process that involves strategic planning on many levels (Bridges, 2009; Reeves, 2002). Common elements found in successful schools include: effective instructional leadership, adequate professional development, a viable rigorous curriculum, standards based instruction, authentic assessments, accountability, evaluation of data, and collaboration (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Elmore & City, 2007; Fullan, 2001; Silver, 2004).

This research study is timely as it is being conducted during the first year of APPR implementation. It will contribute to the body of literature regarding school improvement endeavors specific to NYS and may provide a basis for future longitudinal research. The data collected may assist those involved in the planning and implementation of APPR including:

superintendents, principals, and leaders of teacher and administrator preparation programs; state and local politicians; professional educational organizations, policy makers, in-service providers, BOCES leaders; and teachers.

The goal of school reform should include opportunities for all teachers to improve and hone their craft. This includes focusing on skills that lead to effective results and identifying areas of need for professional development. (Walsh & Snyder, 2004). In addition to school reform, the following components of APPR will be examined in the literature: teacher evaluation process, use of teacher evaluation rubrics, evaluative focus on instructional practice and utilization of professional development.

### **Key Terms and Definitions**

The list below defines terms and definitions that will be used throughout this dissertation.

*Approved Teacher Practice Rubrics*: refers to the list of rubrics approved by NYSED as measures of teacher effectiveness.

*Artifacts*: teacher or student work that provides evidence relevant to the specific criteria of the chosen teacher practice rubric.

*Common Core State Standards*: A U.S. education initiative that seeks to bring diverse state curricula into alignment with each other by following the principles of standards-based education reform. The initiative is sponsored by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

*Elements*: sub-categories within NYSED Teaching Standards.

*Evaluator*: an educator who is appropriately trained to observe and evaluate a class teacher.

*Evidence*: documentation by an evaluator that specific criteria of the teacher practice rubric have been demonstrated.

*First Order Change:* A logical extension of past and current practices intended to make incremental improvements in the current situation through utilization of current knowledge and skills (McNulty, 2004).

*NYS Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) mandate:* Based on Education Law §3012-c, which establishes a new statewide comprehensive evaluation system designed to measure teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance, including measures of student achievement and evidence of educator effectiveness in meeting NYS teacher or school leader standards.

*Performance Levels:* refers to one of four composite ratings for teachers and principals: Highly Effective, Effective, Developing and Ineffective, also known as HEDI.

*Race to the Top:* A federal competitive grant designed to reward states for school reform (USDE, 2009).

*Rubric:* descriptors of practice for criterion at each of the four performance levels: highly effective, effective, developing and ineffective.

*Second order change:* A fundamental or significant break with past and current practices intended to make dramatic differences in the current situation. New knowledge and skills are required for successful implementation (McNulty, 2004).

*Teaching Standards:* a framework of expectations for what teachers should know and demonstrate in their practice.

## **Delimitations**

All public school principals were required to implement the provisions of the new APPR legislation during the 2012-2013 school year, making them familiar with the components of the mandate. For this reason, all public school principals in New York State (K-12), excluding New

York City, were included in the sample for this study.

### **Limitations**

A number of unanticipated events limited this study. A database of 2809 public school elementary and secondary principals and their e-mail addresses were acquired from NYSED. Sixty-five principals' e-mail addresses were inaccurate in the database and their survey invitations were bounced back. An additional 36 were returned because the principals or their districts had opted out of any requests from Survey Monkey, the online site used for the survey.

Five districts indicated that Internal Review Boards had to approve employee participation in surveys. Only one district was able to complete the approval process during the time frame available for participation in the survey.

Superintendents were sent a courtesy letter describing the study and the invitation for principals to participate. Five responded that they would not allow the principals in their districts to participate in the study.

Some districts had filtering software that did not allow the invitations from Survey Monkey to reach principals' e-mail accounts. It is unknown how many potential participants were eliminated from the study due to this restriction.

### **Organization of the Study**

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study including the purpose of the study, the research questions posed, definitions of terminology, the significance of the study, and the organization of the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature relevant to school reform, the teacher evaluation process, the use of teacher evaluation rubrics, an evaluative focus on instructional practice, and utilization of professional development. Chapter 3 provides the methodology used in the study, including research design,



variables, target population, instrumentation, data collection, validity and reliability, statistical approaches used for data analysis and researcher bias. Chapter 4 discusses the results of the data analysis as it relates to each of the questions posed in this research. Chapter 5 is a summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Despite numerous school reform efforts over the last three decades, many schools across the nation are failing to meet achievement targets and more than a million students fail to graduate from high school each year (Alliance for Excellence in Education, 2012; Stonehill, Donner, Morgan, & Lasagna, 2010). In addition, among industrialized nations, student performance on international assessments has declined and the U.S. was last ranked seventeenth. This has caused great concern among financial experts and political leaders.

The current economic crisis coupled with a technologically equipped globe has created a sense of urgency for educational reform. There is a growing fear that the U.S. is losing ground on the international business front.

As a result, the federal government established Race to the Top (RTTT), a competitive grant which offered funding for states willing to implement multi-faceted school reform initiatives. NYS applied for, and was granted RTTT money to work on the Regents Reform Agenda, which supports four pillars of reforms. According to NYSED P12 RTTT (2011) the pillars or *Four Assurances* include: *Standards and Assessment*, *Great Teachers and Leaders*, *Data Systems to Support Instruction*, and *Turning around Struggling Schools*. A brief description of each pillar is discussed below.

*Standards and assessment* primarily consists of adopting the Common Core. The Common Core contains internationally –benchmarked standards and assessments that focus on problem solving strategies and application. The goal is to prepare students for success in college and the workplace.

*Great Teachers and Leaders* entails recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals. In some states this may include merit pay for high achievement

results.

*Data Systems to Support Instruction* involves building instructional data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practice. NYS has an approved list of third party benchmark assessments that can be taken online. Many data systems associated with the tests have the capability to generate numerous reports about a student's results.

*Turning around Struggling Schools* is intended to identify the lowest performing schools and focus resources where they are most needed.

Central to the New York initiative is teacher accountability, specifically the state mandated Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). The intent of APPR is to raise achievement levels in schools through quality instruction. Effective teaching and learning will be assessed through state and local assessments and data driven teacher evaluations.

The plan for the Assurance Area, *Great Teachers and Leaders* discusses redesigning preparation programs for teachers and school leaders. It requires the implementation of a comprehensive teacher and principal evaluation system based on multiple measures of effectiveness. Student achievement measures will contribute 40% to teacher and principal evaluations and ratings. To address teacher recruitment issues and induce highly effective teachers to accept assignments in high needs schools, incentives will be created for highly effective teachers in the following fields: STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), teachers of English language learners, and teachers of students with disabilities, to take assignments in needy districts.

The review of the literature was conducted in the following areas: school reform, teacher evaluation, teacher practice rubrics, instructional practice, professional development and

instructional leadership.

### **School Reform**

School reform efforts are not new. The last 30 years have been rife with educational research, governmental reports and legislation: *A Nation at Risk*, (1983); Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1994); Goals 2000; and No Child Left Behind, (2001).

In the 1970s and 80s educational research on *effective schools* found that high performance schools shared a set of characteristics that contributed to their success. The list includes: instructional leadership; clear and focused mission; safe and orderly environment; climate of high expectations; frequent monitoring of student progress; positive home school relations; and an opportunity to learn, and student time on task (Kirk & Jones, 2004; Lezotte, 1991; Lezotte & Snyder, 2011). These correlates have withstood the test of time and are prevalent in the literature.

Past reform efforts often had a singular focus. Many elements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of the 1980s focused on program and curriculum. This was the precursor to standards based reform in the 1990s. Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1994 and No Child Left Behind shifted school accountability to include teachers and students.

As research on organizational change in the business sector emerged, (Bridges, 1991; Kotter, 1996) some researchers saw merit in applying the same principles to educational settings (Fullan, 1999; Hallinger & Heck, 1999; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). This was a catalyst for researchers to look at school change from a broader perspective (Fullan, 2007, 2011; Reeves, 2009).

Successful systemic change or reform is a complex process that involves strategic planning on many levels (Bridges, 2009; Reeves, 2002). Common elements found in successful schools include: effective instructional leadership, adequate professional development, a viable rigorous curriculum, standards based instruction, authentic assessments, accountability, evaluation of data, and collaboration (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Elmore & City, 2007; Fullan, 2001; Silver, 2004). The characteristics of effective schools are mirrored in these elements.

The majority of the research on school reform discusses why efforts have failed (Mandinach et al., 2006; Stringfield & Yakimowski-Srebick, 2005). Included in the challenges to success are: available resources, lack of instructional leadership, teacher preparedness, competing high priority local concerns, and teacher buy-in (Garcia, 2009; Louis et al., 2010).

In the last decade, success stories have begun to emerge. Some states such as Florida and Maryland have been cited for making significant progress in student achievement. Their success, not without obstacles, is attributed to a strategically planned systems approach (Lips & Ladner, 2008).

When comparing the educational programs and achievement levels in high and low wealth districts the evidence of inequity suggests that poverty is a cause for poor performance. Strauss (2012) suggests that economic and social policies that provide jobs for poor families have the most potential to improve schools. It would stand to reason that raising income levels of people who are struggling financially would have a positive impact on many aspects of their lives.

Ravitch (2011) contends that all school reform will fail until educational equity is found. Economics is only one aspect of a very complex problem and some schools in high poverty areas exhibit high achievement (Tilley et al., 2012). Some research suggests that students who have high quality teacher can overcome social and economic disadvantages (Gordon, Kane, & Staiger,

2006; Rivkin et al., 2005).

What sets recent reform efforts apart from those of the past is the pace of change and the focus on teacher accountability. The research indicates that children cannot overcome having an ineffective teacher for two years or more (Wong & Wong, 2010). The Measures of Effective Teaching project launched by Bill and Melinda Gates in 2009, states the following, “A teacher’s effectiveness has more impact on student learning than any other factor controlled by school systems, including class size, school size, and the quality of after-school programs-or even which school a student is attending” (Measures of Effective Teaching [MET], 2010, p. 1). Stronge et al. (2007) also found that effective teachers had the most impact on student learning and results.

Abundant research suggests that teacher evaluation practices have failed to identify ineffective teachers and that the system is in dire need of repair. Teacher evaluations are often viewed as perfunctory and without genuine purpose (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2013; Daley & Kim, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2012).

The disconnect between teacher evaluation systems and actual teacher performance is most strikingly illustrated by the wide gap between student outcomes and teacher ratings in many districts. Though thousands of teachers included in this report teach in schools where high percentages of students fail year after year to meet basic academic standards, less than one percent of surveyed teachers received a negative rating on their most recent evaluation (Weisberg et al., 2009, p. 10).

Effective teaching is a priority of Race to the Top and the NYS APPR. Clearly defined evaluation procedures including specific measurement criteria are required by states participating in the grant. Teachers and school leaders will be judged on results. Low ratings for two years

may result in job loss.

Accountability alone will not address the problem of poor student achievement. The goal of school reform should include opportunities for all teachers to improve and hone their craft. This includes focusing on skills that lead to effective results and identifying areas of need for professional development (Walsh & Snyder, 2012). To achieve this goal is no simple task and identification of needed skills is critical. The complexities of sound teacher evaluation are discussed in the following section.

### **Teacher Evaluation**

Accountability is the *buzz word* associated with current school reform efforts. Compared to other nations, scores of U. S. students are slipping. Public education is under tremendous scrutiny and local and political leaders are looking for solutions.

Stonehill et al. (2010) suggest that teacher evaluation has been perfunctory or nonexistent and that the field has focused more on teacher contracts than student learning. Policy makers are demanding that teachers be evaluated on effectiveness.

Concerns regarding past evaluation practices include: infrequency, limited or no focus, weak differentiation between ratings, not informative, inconsequential, and lack of follow through when needed. Infrequency of evaluations is cited as a main area of concern. As of 2009, only 15 states required annual evaluations of all teachers, with some states permitting teachers to go several years between evaluations (MET, 2009; Walsh & Snyder, 2011).

Research on comprehensive teacher evaluation has a limited history. Studies in the 1980s found that most evaluations were summative, focusing on a teacher's ability to complete tasks on a list. Information or strategies on improving instruction was not provided to teachers (Ellett & Garland, 1987; Wise, et al., 1984). Ten years later, the same results were found (Loup, Garland,

Ellett, & Rugutt, 1996).

In 2006, the Midwest Regional Educational Laboratory conducted a study of teacher evaluation procedures that included a variety of districts across seven mid-western states. Evaluation practices were found to be weak and ineffective for improving teaching and learning.

Although some districts may have been inactive regarding teacher evaluation during this time period, leaders in the field of education were not idle. Madeline Hunter and Carl Glickman highlighted the importance of teacher evaluation in the 1980's. Charlotte Danielson and Robert Marzano followed with similar work in the 1990's.

A decade later, some changes occurred. Supervision of teacher tasks shifted to evaluation of instructional delivery. The previous focus on student behavior shifted to student achievement.

*The Widget Effect* study (Weisberg et al., 2009) was highly critical of teacher evaluation practices and major revamping was recommended. Year two of the MET project (2010) also indicated that evaluation practices were not yielding the information necessary to improve teaching and raise achievement.

The purpose of an evaluation is to use data to inform instruction and to enable teachers to hone their skills (Peterson, 2004; Stronge, 2006). There is evidence that this approach has the ability to improve the instructional practices of marginal teachers and raise levels of student achievement, when implemented appropriately (Goe, 2011a; Myricks, 2009; Tucker & Stronge, 2005).

The goal of the NYS evaluation system is “to ensure that there is an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective leader in every school” (NYSED P12 RTTT, 2011). As part of the NYS APPR, teachers will receive scores based on student performance on state and local assessments. Those scores will lead to one of four rankings: Highly-Effective, Effective,



Developing or Ineffective, (HEDI). Administrators are expected to implement improvement plans for “ineffective teachers.” Principals will also receive a score and ranking based on the collective performance of their teachers. Lead evaluators at the district level will implement improvement plans for ineffective principals.

Components of teacher evaluation systems commonly referred to in the literature include: a basis in professional teaching standards; evidence of teacher practice and student learning; an annual process; well trained and knowledgeable evaluators; informative feedback to teachers; professional development opportunities provided for improvement; clearly articulated differentiation among ratings; documentation of student growth; multiple measures; evaluation of all teachers; transparency; resources available for implementation; collaboration with teachers; clear and rigorous expectations and goals (Baratz-Snowden, 2007; BCAC, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2012; Goe, 2011a, 2011b; Marzano, Toth, & Schooling, 2012; The New Teacher Project [TNTP], 2010).

The NYS Evaluation Plan incorporates many of the components on the list. There is a basis in professional learning standards and frameworks for teaching. Mandatory teacher practice rubrics are designed to collect evidence and allow for teacher feedback. Evaluators must be trained and certified. Differentiation exists among ratings on rubrics. Multiple measures and documentation of student growth are required. Professional growth opportunities are required for teachers who are rated developing or ineffective. All teachers must be evaluated on an annual basis. Allocating resources for implementation is a challenge for many school districts across the state due to the current fiscal climate.

Implementing a comprehensive teacher evaluation is a complex multi-faceted process. States are utilizing a variety of approaches and weighted formulas to assess teacher effectiveness.

The specific requirements of the NYS APPR include: selection of a state approved teacher practice rubric, a minimum of two teacher observations per year conducted by the principal or another trained administrator, one observation must be unannounced, annual assessment of teaching standards that are outside the realm of classroom observations, and use of third party assessments for all teachers who do not teach classes with state assessments.

In addition, teachers who have 50% or more of their students in a course measured by a NYS assessment will receive a student growth score from the State. This comprises 20% of total measures. This will increase to 25% after value-added scoring is implemented.

Teachers who do not teach courses with State assessments will receive scores based on a third party State approved assessment. This value will comprise 20% of overall measures. An additional 20% must be based on locally selected measures that are deemed rigorous. This will decrease to 15% after value-added scoring is implemented.

Measures of effectiveness such as classroom observations, surveys, local assessment data, and student learning objectives, may be used for 60% of a teacher's overall rating.

Of the requirements listed above, those that pertain to instructional practice are most relevant to evaluating teacher effectiveness. Teacher practice rubrics and instructional observation instruments are pivotal to the discussion and will be examined next.

**Rubrics.** The majority of the research on rubrics pertains to those used by teachers to assess student performance. Numerous books and articles have supported or negated the value of using rubrics. Turley and Gallagher (2008) contend that rubrics are not good or bad but must pass a set of four questions to assess their pedagogical value (p. 87). The questions posed are: What is the tool for? In what context is it used? Who decides? What ideological agenda drives these decisions?

The previous questions were written with classroom rubrics in mind but that does not limit their application to other types of rubrics. With regard to the NYS mandated teacher practice rubrics, the following responses seem appropriate. The rubrics are used to identify strengths and weaknesses in a teacher's instructional practice. Trained evaluators are using the rubrics in schools across the state. The district chooses the rubric from an approved list. The principal or other evaluator assesses teacher performance. The ideological agenda is to improve student achievement through effective teaching practices. It is too early in the process to determine whether or not the rubrics achieve their intended purpose.

A recent upsurge in the literature regarding teacher practice rubrics and observational instruments is likely due to national reform in the area of teacher evaluation. Teacher practice rubrics are not limited to classroom observations alone. Elements that occur outside the classroom such as professional collaboration and responsibilities may be included. Observational instruments are specifically designed for use in classroom observations.

Effective teacher practice rubrics exhibit the following characteristics: measures include guidance for observing, collecting and evaluating evidence to support decisions; measures are based on a clear set of standards; expectations are clear; allow for specific feedback on strengths, weaknesses, and strategies for improvement; and allow for the assessment of work based on consistent objective criteria. (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2012; Danielson, 2009; University of Minnesota, Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition [CARLA], 2012).

Currently, NYSED has a list of fourteen approved teacher practice rubrics from which school districts may choose. In order to use an unlisted rubric, districts were required to apply for a variance and acquire State approval. This was very infrequent.

The approved rubrics are intended to allow the evaluator to assess a teacher's performance

on a continuum from highly effective to ineffective. Rubrics set concrete criteria along a quality continuum to set expectations for the learner and provide evaluators a consistent tool of measurement (University of Minnesota, CARLA, 2012). When there are clear standards of practice, feedback against those standards may assist teachers with improving their instructional practices (Danielson, 2009). The rubrics approved by NYS have many common themes: equity, cultural competence, high expectations, developmental appropriateness, focus on individuals, appropriate use of technology, and student assumption of responsibility. There are three main priorities: Cognitive Engagement, Constructivist Learning, and 21st Century skills. The levels of teacher performance, often referred to as the *HEDI scale* are: Highly Effective, Effective, Developing and Ineffective.

For a Highly Effective rating, the classroom functions as a community of learners with student assumption of responsibility for learning. In an Effective classroom, teaching shows evidence of thorough knowledge of all aspects of the profession and students are engaged in learning. This is successful, accomplished, professional, and effective teaching. Developing teaching shows evidence of knowledge and skills related to teaching, but inconsistently. Ineffective teaching shows evidence of lack of understanding of the concepts underlying the components. An Ineffective rating requires intervention for correction.

The teacher evaluation rubrics also assess: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, professional responsibility, and whether or not evidence presented is aligned with the curricular framework.

Classroom observations are an important part of the evaluation process. If conducted effectively, observations can help teachers improve their craft and ultimately improve student achievement. It is critical that observations include useful and informative feedback. Feedback

should be provided within a reasonable period of time and provide concrete evidence and strategies for improvement (Goe, 2011b; MET, 2013).

It is also critical that tools, used by observers, reliably measure the right behaviors. In the MET project (2010), five observation instruments were tested for validity. Scores were aligned with student growth. Although the instruments varied in some areas of emphasis, results were quite consistent.

Researched based instructional strategies are a key component in the rubrics. The next section of this review discusses effective instructional practices.

### **Instructional Practice**

Prevalent in all discussions of instructional practice is the need for common, research-based standards. The Common Core has been chosen to fill that need on a national level. The following is the Mission Statement of the Common Core:

The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy. (Common Core State Standards Initiative [CCSSI], 2012, para. 1)

For years, states have exercised autonomy regarding when and what to teach. In a transient society, that presents problems of inconsistency. The intent of the Common Core is to ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are career and college ready. Having national standards allows for collaboration within and between states for the betterment of instruction.

Standards assist teachers with the task of assessing the knowledge and skills students currently have against those that are desired. Teachers can then implement appropriate strategies and interventions toward that goal. Standards alone cannot get the job done.

Stronge (2007) states, “The literature on instruction suggests that students whose teachers develop and regularly integrate inquiry-based, hands-on learning activities, critical thinking skills and assessments into daily lessons consistently out-perform their peers” (p.4).

What it is that effective teachers know and do? There are a number of characteristics and behaviors that pertain to effective teachers which include: knowledge of subject matter, attention to individuals, sound planning and preparation, assessment of student learning through use of data, knowledge of appropriate intervention strategies, ability to reflect, collaboration with colleagues and participation in ongoing professional development (Barry, 2010; Danielson, 2007; Marzano, 2007).

Effective schools provide the organizational structure and leadership that allow teachers to acquire these characteristics. The following is a compilation of best practices of effective teachers frequently listed in the literature: clear communication of learning objectives, activation of prior knowledge, vocabulary instruction, summarizing and note taking, frequent and specific feedback, use of cooperative learning, positive reinforcement, student opportunities for practice and application, and use of non-linguistic representations.

Marzano, (2007) indicates that effective pedagogy has three components: instructional strategies, management techniques and curriculum design. Each component must be viable to achieve a successful outcome.

An education should prepare students with knowledge and skills necessary to be competent, productive citizens. Teachers in turn must hone their skills to keep pace with the

world outside their classrooms. Quality professional development can provide teachers those opportunities. The characteristics of worthwhile professional development are addressed in the next section.

### **Professional Development**

With accountability and teacher evaluation at the forefront of educational reform, there is a growing body of research on the role of professional development in the process. Failure to provide proper training may result in a failed attempt to improve teaching and student learning (Cogshall, Rasmussen, Colton, Milton, & Jacques, 2012; Elmore, 2002; Goe, Biggers, & Croft, 2012).

The data generated from evaluations has the potential to provide administrators a valuable opportunity to customize professional development to meet the needs of their teachers. When implemented properly, professional development can provide all teachers the tools they need to approach instruction with confidence, and a learning community that can support their endeavors.

Allocation of necessary resources and organizational support are essential to achieve this goal. Given the current economic climate, school leaders must convey the importance of opportunities for collaboration.

Highly effective schools build professional development into the school calendar and the structure of the school day. Development is ongoing, relevant, collaborative, classroom-embedded, and tightly aligned with academic objectives (Wilcox, 2005).

The Partnership for 21st Century skills suggests that traditional listen and lecture teaching methods will not meet the needs of today's students. Teachers need to learn the best strategies for implementation of the Common Core curriculum. Students engaged in 21st century learning

must use high-level, critical thinking skills (Partnership for 21st Century Skills [P21], 2012).

Research supports professional development that does the following: provides teachers with increased depth of knowledge and appropriate instructional strategies, models hands-on learning, allows for practice, reflection and collaboration with colleagues, is aligned with all components of a comprehensive school improvement initiative and is ongoing (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

Other research indicates that to foster improvement in teaching, professional development needs to include a number of components. Duration, alignment, relevance, application, reflection, engagement, and collaboration are key elements for success (Elmore, 2002; Baratz-Snowden & Darling-Hammond, 2007; Wong, 2010).

Enhancing a teacher's tool set, through education, is likely to improve the learning experiences of his or her students (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001).

In order to conduct effective teacher evaluations and act as instructional leaders, principals must be knowledgeable and skilled in best practices. The APPR mandate requires training for principals and other lead evaluators. The focus of Hunziker's (2012) study was principal readiness and professional development on conducting teacher evaluations that lead to improved student achievement. The principals included in the study were in various phases of implementation of the new APPR. The findings are relevant to this research conducted a year later.

His findings demonstrated that principals with experience of ten years or less regarded in-service trainings about teacher evaluation as an effective method to prepare them for the task. Those with 11 or more years experience preferred independent, informal activities such as online workshops and videos. Hunziker (2012) recommends that school leaders consider customizing



professional development to meet the needs of diversified groups.

The following section discusses the role of principals as instructional leaders.

### **Instructional Leadership**

The literature about principal leadership represents an evolution of changing responsibilities. For several decades, traditional business models, with top down decision-making, were prevalent and principals were viewed as building managers.

In the 1970s principals became more involved in teacher supervision and student achievement. Teacher behaviors in the classroom that enhance student learning were a primary focus. Principals were responsible for identifying areas for improvement, setting goals for improvement, and monitoring teacher progress (Clifford, Behrstock-Sherrat, & Fetters, 2012).

In the last two decades, the role of the principal has become that of instructional leader. Initially, the principals acted as a coach, working with individuals to improve certain skills. The principal unilaterally made decisions regarding changes that were needed.

Dufour (2002) suggests that the role of the principal is changing from instructional leader with a focus on teaching, to a leader of a professional community with a focus on learning. Cultivating teacher leaders and involving teachers in decision-making and problem solving are critical to creating a successful learning community.

An effective learning community uses data to inform instruction. Currently, great emphasis is placed on student growth and achievement. Reform efforts across the country include student scores as one measure of teacher and principal effectiveness. This is one of many sweeping changes that are occurring in the field of education. Principals are at the forefront of leading schools during the upheaval.

All school leaders need to initiate changes in a number of ways. Not all change is of the

same magnitude. *First order changes* are those which build on existing conditions, are focused and have support from experts. *Second order changes* break with the past, are more complex and may cause disruption (Waters et al., 2003).

The NYS APPR requires second order changes for most school districts. Waters and Cameron (2007) caution leaders who are planning implementation of large scale change, “It is important to remember that poorly managed personal transitions are likely to exacerbate the feeling of loss that people may experience when engaged in what they view as second order change” (p. 40). Kotter and Cohen (2002) believe successful large-scale change involves eight steps: increase urgency, build the guiding team, get the vision right, communicate for buy-in, empower action, create short-term wins, don’t let up and make change stick. The APPR legislation created the sense of urgency; every school is required to have an *Inquiry Team*. It is important that school leaders choose team members that have a variety of perspectives. The other six steps involve a collaborative effort focused on a shared vision. The focus of that vision is improved student achievement, an end goal that most educators embrace. Careful facilitation of this process is critical.

Waters et al. (2003) reviewed thirty years of research and the data demonstrated that there is a substantial relationship between leadership and student achievement.

The Wallace Foundation had similar findings in an examination of principal effectiveness over the last ten years. Principals are second only to teachers as the most influential factor in student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004). Principals are integral to a school’s ability to implement effective classroom instruction.

## **Summary**

The literature on school reform presents a historical perspective inundated with failed

attempts. However, research in the last two decades on successful implementation of large-scale changes in corporate and educational settings suggest the reform horizon is not totally bleak.

It appears that successful school change initiatives and the practices of effective school districts have many common elements: competent dedicated leadership, quality professional development, collaborative efforts on many levels, strategic planning and implementation of programs, research based standards aligned to a common curriculum and use of data to inform instruction and learning.

The substantial link between leadership and student achievement makes principals the logical population from whom to solicit feedback regarding the NYS APPR and its potential impact on instructional practices. The following chapter will describe the methodology that will be used to gather that information. It is the intent of this researcher to determine which threads of successful reform practices are present across the state and how the presence or absence of those variables are associated with principals' perceptions.

### **Chapter 3: Methods**

Approval to conduct this research was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at the Sage Colleges in Albany, New York. This quantitative study examined principals' perceptions about the potential impact of the new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) legislation on instructional practices of school districts in New York State. More specifically, this research looked at principals' perceptions regarding the use of teacher practice rubrics, and the existence or extent of relationships between principals' perceptions, and demographics, professional development, and past and present evaluation practices. This study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a difference in principals' perceptions about the impact APPR will have on instructional practices based on demographic characteristics?
2. What is the impact of teacher evaluation experiences before and after APPR on principals' perceptions about the effect APPR will have on instructional practices?
3. What is the extent of the relationship, if any, between principals' perceptions about the impact APPR will have on instructional practices and the approved teacher practice rubric they are utilizing to inform instruction?
4. What is the extent of the relationship, if any, between principals' perceptions about the impact APPR will have on instruction and professional development regarding APPR?

#### **Research Design**

A quantitative design was chosen as the methodology of this study to determine the relationship between teacher evaluation and instructional practices from the perspective of public school principals in New York State. Creswell (2009) describes quantitative research as "an

inquiry into a social or human problem based on testing theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analyzed with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the predictive generalizations of the theory hold true” (p. 2). The advantages of a quantitative study include: the ability to survey a large sample in a short period of time, increased objectivity, and potential to generalize results to a larger group.

### **Study Participants**

Potential participants for the study were selected from a list of public school principals in New York State, excluding New York City. A database of 2809 public school elementary and secondary principals, including their e-mail addresses was acquired from New York State Education Department (NYSED).

The literature regarding strong links between school leadership and student achievement (Waters et al., 2003) and principals’ key roles in evaluating teachers provided the rationale for the target population.

All public school principals were required to implement the provisions of the new APPR legislation during the 2012-2013 school year, making them familiar with the components of the mandate. All public school principals (K-12), excluding New York City, were included in the study sample. Participation was voluntary.

### **Survey Instrument**

The researcher-developed survey consisted of thirty-one questions (see Appendix A). The instrument was divided into the following sections: Section One: Demographic Information, Section Two: Teacher Evaluation Processes, Section Three: Professional Development, and Section Four: Principal Perceptions. Each section contains six to nine questions. Likert scales were used for questions that did not require a detailed response. The majority of the questions

provided structured choices.

The introduction to the survey provided background information about the new APPR, the purpose of the research, and the potential value for the field of education. Section One, Demographics, contained eight questions. The respondents were asked to share demographic information about their schools and districts. Questions about the school pertained to: size, socioeconomic status, type of district, and level of the school. Questions about the respondent included: years of experience as a principal and number of years evaluating teachers.

Section Two, Teacher Evaluation Processes, contained nine questions. The questions pertained to: rubric being utilized in the district's teacher evaluation process; frequency of evaluations; approved collective bargaining agreements; focus on data; and collection of evidence during observations.

Section Three, Professional Development, contained eight questions. Respondents were asked about: the amount of training provided for principals and teachers about the new APPR, the type of training, and plans for future training.

Section Four, Perceptions of Principals, contained six questions regarding the evaluation tool used, the degree of difference from previous evaluations, the depth of pre and or post-conferences, and the degree of potential impact the new APPR will have on instructional practices.

### **Data Collection**

Data was collected through a multi-measure survey instrument created by the researcher and sent to principals electronically. A survey was chosen for data collection for the following reasons: data will be best obtained directly from principals, data can be obtained through answers to structured questions, and the large sample size has the potential to generate large enough

return to be useful, (Vogt, Gardner, & Haeffle, 2012). Surveys are a versatile tool for collecting data about attitudes, beliefs and perceptions on a large scale in a short period of time (McMillan, 2012).

An initial e-mail, with the survey attached, was sent to all superintendents describing the study (see Appendix B). Superintendents' e-mail addresses were acquired from the New York State Education Department (NYSED). The purpose of this correspondence was to inform the superintendents what their principals would be asked to complete and why.

Following the letter to the superintendents, an introductory e-mail was sent to all public school principals, excluding New York City, (see Appendix C) with a link to the secure survey site, Survey Monkey. Principals' e-mail addresses were acquired from NYSED. The survey was sent to 2,809 recipients. Invalid e-mail addresses were bounced back, which immediately eliminated 65 respondents. Survey Monkey's *opt out* feature, which allows recipients to refuse all contact from their site, led to 36 additional non-respondents.

In the first week of data collection, 168 principals completed the survey. A reminder was sent a week later and the response rate climbed to 367. Seven days after that, an additional reminder was sent (see Appendix D) and the response rate rose to 413. An electronic thank you message was sent to all participants. Three weeks later, one last reminder was sent to all non-respondents indicating that the survey would be closed in one week. Four additional respondents completed the survey.

There were 417 respondents, which is a response rate of 15%. This researcher learned that some districts had filtering software that blocked e-mails from survey sites. The district received the e-mails; therefore, they appeared to be delivered. There is no way of knowing the number of principals who did not receive the e-mail.

The survey was anonymous and voluntary. Participants were assured that no identifying information pertinent to individuals or districts was available in the study.

### **Validity and Reliability**

To determine face validity of the instrument, the draft survey was reviewed by a five-member panel of experts prior to the implementation of the study. The panel was composed of a retired superintendent, an assistant superintendent in charge of instruction, an instructional in-service specialist from BOCES, and two college professors in the field of education. Each member of the panel had several years of experience as a building principal. Current principals were excluded from the panel to allow their participation in the study. The survey was revised based on the comments of the panel of experts. It was then field tested by three recently retired school administrators who provided input on completion time and quality of questions.

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the survey instrument. The following criteria (George & Mallery, 2003) were applied: score  $> .9$ , excellent;  $> .8$ , good;  $< .7$ , acceptable;  $> .6$ , questionable;  $> .5$ , poor;  $< .5$ , unacceptable. The score for all scaled variables was .670. The score indicates that internal consistency is questionable. However, some researchers suggest that scores  $> .6$  are acceptable for exploratory research (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). Cronbach's alpha is primarily utilized for scaled response items linked to one construct. Nunnally (1978) asserts that Cronbach's alpha is limited to average degrees of interrelatedness between test items, and two conditions must be present for measurement: negative covariances cannot exist and several scaled items are necessary for measurement. The specificity of individual survey questions across multiple categories, in addition to the use of yes or no logic for multiple response items confined the overall number of



items to be measured for internal consistency.

## Variables

Principals’ perceptions about the impact of APPR on instructional practices was the dependent variable for the four research questions. The survey item relevant to principals’ perceptions provided four Likert-scale responses. The responses defined the extent to which principal’s expect APPR to have a positive impact on instructional practices in their schools.

For question one, the independent variable was demographic characteristics of the principal and school districts. For question two, the independent variable was teacher evaluation processes past and present, used by the principals. The independent variable for research question three was the teacher practice rubric chosen by the district. Professional development was the independent variable for research question four. Table 1 demonstrates the connections between the four research questions, the variables of the study and the specific questions of the survey instrument.

Table 1

### *Cross Referencing Between Research Questions, Variables, and Survey Items*

Research question	Independent variable	Dependent variable	Survey questions
1. Is there a difference in principals’ perceptions about APPR based on demographics?	Demographic characteristics	Principals’ perceptions	1-8, 29
2. What is the impact of teacher evaluation experiences before and after APPR on principals’ perceptions about APPR?	Past and present evaluation practices	Principals’ perceptions	9-14, 26 - 31
3. What is the extent of the relationship between principals’ perceptions and the teacher practice rubric chosen?	Teacher practice rubrics	Principals’ perceptions	15, 16, 17 26, 27, 29
4. What is the extent of the relationship, between principals’ perceptions and professional development?	Professional development	Principals’ perceptions	18-25, 29

## **Data Analysis**

Survey data was downloaded from the survey site, Survey Monkey, directly to Statistical Package for Social Sciences, (SPSS) version 21, for analysis. Data analysis included descriptive and inferential statistics.

According to Vogt and Johnson (2011), descriptive statistics describe the basic features of the data of a study and provide summaries about the sample and the measures. Descriptive statistics were used to display item response frequencies, percentages, and mean for each variable. The mean, or average, is equal to the sum of all the values for the survey item data set divided by the number of values in the survey item data set.

Data was examined for irregularities and cleaned for analysis. Initially, multiple response questions presented a skewed data distribution. A negative effect was observed due to an excessive number of empty cells in the overall data set downloaded from Survey Monkey. The researcher added zeroes where blank cells existed and the issue was resolved.

Inferential statistics are used to extend beyond the immediate data to draw conclusions and to make judgments about whether or not an observation is probable or by chance. This approach was used to examine the relationships or associations between two or more variables and was applicable for all four of the research questions.

The following variables were examined to determine potential influence on principals' perceptions about the potential impact of APPR: demographic characteristics of the principal and the school district; past and present evaluation processes used by the principals; the rubric chosen for teacher evaluation; and professional development provided for teachers and principals.

The Independent-samples t-test (or Independent t-test, for short) compares the means between two unrelated groups on the same continuous, dependent variable. This test was appropriate for variables in research questions 1, 2, and 3.

A correlation is a single number that describes the degree of relationship between two variables. Pearson's correlation was used to examine the relationships between interval or ratio level variables, which are continuous in nature. This was applicable for some variables in research questions 3 and 4.

Chi-square is used to test whether a statistically significant relationship exists between two categorical variables, one independent and one dependent variable (Vogt & Johnson, 2011). This test was conducted for research questions 1, 2, and 4. The dependent variable, principals' perceptions, was cross-tabulated with each independent variable.

One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) compares a categorical variable with more than 2 categories to a continuous variable. This approach was appropriate for some independent variables in research questions 1, 2, and 3.

Linear multiple regression was used to determine which variables had an effect on the dependent variable and whether it was predictive in nature. For research question 2, a linear multiple regression analysis was conducted to explore how principals' perceptions about the positive impact of APPR on instruction differ based on variables relevant to teacher evaluation experiences, pre- and post-APPR.

Table 2 illustrates the type of data analysis used for each research question and the variables relevant to each question.

Table 2

*Research Questions, Variables, and Analysis Methods*

Research question	Variables	Analysis methods
1	Demographics, principal perceptions	Frequency, percentages, mean, one-way ANOVA, independent t-test, Chi-square
2	Teacher evaluation processes, principal perceptions	Frequency, percentages, one-way ANOVA, independent t-test, linear multiple regression, Chi-square
3	Teacher practice rubric, principal perceptions	Frequency, percentages, Chi-square, one-way ANOVA, Pearson's correlation
4	Professional development	Frequency, percentages, Pearson's correlation, Chi-square

**Researcher Bias**

Bias is a tendency to have a particular outcome in mind. This outcome may be influenced by the researcher's beliefs or experiences. Bias can occur at any phase of the research, including study design or data collection, as well as in the process of data analysis.

The researcher is a public school principal in New York State. It was important that my experiences with APPR did not influence the interpretation of the findings and conclusions of this study. An anonymous survey was used to prevent potential bias in the event the researcher was familiar with participants. The panel of experts provided feedback to assist with the elimination of any language in the survey instrument that might suggest researcher bias.

**Summary**

Chapter three discussed the background of the study and the questions central to the research. In addition, the following elements were described: research design, participant population, instrumentation, data collection, validity and reliability, testing conducted for data analysis, and researcher bias. Chapter four provides the details of test results and statistical data analysis for each of the four research questions.

## Chapter 4: Data Analysis

Chapter four provides background information about the research study and an analysis of the statistical testing conducted to interpret the results. The chapter states the research purpose statement, research questions, a description of study participants, an analysis of the data for each of the five research questions, and a chapter summary.

This quantitative study was designed to investigate perceptions of principals regarding the impact of the New York State Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) legislation on instructional practices. A total of 417 public school principals (K-12), completed an online survey designed to explore the following questions:

1. Is there a difference in principals' perceptions about the impact APPR will have on instructional practices based on demographic characteristics?
2. What is the impact of teacher evaluation experiences before and after APPR on principals' perceptions about the effect APPR will have on instructional practices?
3. What is the extent of the relationship, if any, between principals' perceptions about the impact APPR will have on instructional practices and the approved teacher practice rubric they are utilizing to inform instruction?
4. What is the extent of the relationship, if any, between principals' perceptions about the impact APPR will have on instruction and professional development regarding APPR?

Descriptive statistics were used to describe sample population, demographic characteristics of respondents, and demographic characteristics of participant school districts. Frequencies, and percentages of responses are included for each survey item. Inferential statistics were used to examine relationships between variables, which included the use of:

Pearson correlation, Pearson chi-square, one-way ANOVA, linear regression, independent t-test, and Tukey HSD multiple comparison tests.

The dependent variable for each of the four research questions was principal perceptions about the impact of APPR on instructional practices. The independent variables included: demographic characteristics, teacher evaluation processes, teacher practice rubrics, and professional development.

The thirty-one-item survey was researcher developed and included four sections: demographic characteristics, teacher evaluation processes including the use of rubrics, professional development, and principal perceptions. The survey items included nominal and scaled responses. Skip logic was utilized to allow participants to proceed past questions that were not applicable based on a prior response. Respondents were also allowed to skip questions of their own choosing.

### **Study Participants**

All public school principals in New York State are subject to the APPR legislation, which provided the rationale for the selection of the study sample. All public school principals excluding New York City were invited to participate. The survey link was distributed via Survey Monkey to 2809 principals' e-mail addresses acquired from the New York State Education Department. Immediately after sending the e-mail invitation, 67 were bounced back as invalid addresses. An additional 44 potential participants had previously opted out of all contact from Survey Monkey. From the remaining 2698 principals, 417 participated in the survey, providing a response rate of about 15%. Eight survey questions inquired about demographics. Five were school related; three pertained to principals. The five school related survey items included: the type of district, district size, the level of the school building, free and reduced lunch rate, and

building level enrollment. Table 3 shows the number of respondents, frequencies, and percentages for each variable.

Table 3

*Frequencies and Percentages for School Demographics*

Variable	Total	Frequency	Percentage
District type	413		
Suburban		218	<b>52.8</b>
Rural		152	36.8
Urban		43	10.4
District size	415		
< 1000		91	21.9
1001-2999		183	<b>44.1</b>
> 3000		141	34.0
Level of school	411		
Middle (6-8)		58	14.1
Junior/senior high (7-12)		59	14.4
Intermediate (5-8)		13	3.2
K-6		73	17.8
K-8		11	2.7
K-12		19	4.6
Other		178	<b>43.3</b>
Building enrollment	416		
< 300		47	11.3
301-500		165	<b>39.7</b>
501-1000		161	<b>38.7</b>
1001-1500		28	6.7
1501-2500		12	2.9
> 2500		3	0.7
Free and reduced lunch rate	410		
< 10%		68	16.6
10-19%		75	18.3
20-29%		54	13.2
30-39%		51	12.4
40-49%		56	13.7
50% or greater		106	<b>25.9</b>

The highest rate of participation based on type of district was suburban at 218 (53%). Rural was second (36.8%) and urban third at (10.4%). According to NYSED (2011-12), this does not reflect the distribution of district types across the state. They are as follows: rural (56%), suburban (36%), and urban (8%). Three hundred twenty-six respondents (78.1%) reported enrollments between 301 and 1000 students and indicated their districts were mid-sized. The response rates for level of school had a wide distribution. The highest, 178 (43%) chose *other*. Two hundred thirteen (52%) reported free and reduced lunch rates of 30% or greater. The average free and reduced lunch rate in New York State is 34.4% (NYSED, 2012).

The following demographic characteristics related to principals were explored: years of experience as a principal, years evaluating teachers and whether an assistant principal provides assistance with teacher evaluations. Table 4 shows the number of respondents, frequencies, and percentages for each variable.

Table 4

*Frequency and Percentages of Principal Demographic Characteristics*

Variable	<i>n</i>	Frequency	Percentage
Number of years as principal	416		
5 or less		171	<b>41.1</b>
6-10		119	28.6
11-15		70	16.8
16-20		33	7.9
> 20		23	5.5
Number of years evaluating teachers	416		
5 or less		69	16.6
6-10		135	<b>32.5</b>
11-15		128	30.8
16-20		43	10.3
> 20		41	9.8
AP assists with teacher evaluations	410		
Yes		180	43.9
No		230	<b>56.1</b>



The highest frequency of respondents (41.1%) included 171 principals with experience of 5 years or less. Sixty-nine principals, close to 17% had 5 years or less evaluating teachers. Three hundred sixty, close to 87% of the respondents, had up to 15 years of experience as a principal. Including experience as an assistant principal or department head, 332 about 80% had 15 years of experience evaluating teachers.

**Research Question One:** *Is there a difference in principals' perceptions about the impact APPR will have on instructional practices based on demographic characteristics?*

Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they feel the new APPR will have a positive impact on instructional practices in their schools. Table 5 shows the percentage and frequency of responses based on school related demographic variables.

As shown in Table 5, roughly 70%, of the respondents indicated that APPR will have a positive impact on instruction to some or a moderate extent. This result appeared to be consistent across the five demographic variables. The other responses in Table 5 shown to be consistent across the variables were 12% that chose to a great extent and 17% that chose to little or no extent.

To determine if school characteristics made a difference in principal perceptions about APPR, One-way analysis of variance, ANOVA, tests were conducted using each of the variables. Table 6 shows the results of the tests.

Table 5

*Frequency and Percentages of Principal Perceptions about AAPR Listed According to District Demographics*

Variable	<i>n</i>	Mean	To little or no extent	To some extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent
Type of district						
Urban	39	2.5	(6) 1.5%	(10) 2.5%	(17) 4.2%	(6) 1.5%
Rural	148	2.4	(22) 5.5%	(52) 13.0%	(56) 14.0%	(18) 4.5%
Suburban	210	2.3	(43) 10.7%	(76) 19.0%	(67) 16.7%	(24) 6.0%
Total	397	2.4	(71) 17.7%	<b>(138) 34.7%</b>	<b>(140) 35.4%</b>	(48) 12.2%
District category						
Small	87	2.4	(12) 3.0%	(29) 7.2%	(37) 9.2%	(9) 2.2%
Mid-sized	180	2.4	(35) 8.7%	(63) 15.7%	(55) 13.7%	(27) 6.7%
Large	132	2.3	(24) 6.0%	(46) 33.1%	(50) 35.2%	(12) 3.0%
Total	399	2.4	(71) 17.7%	<b>(139) 35%</b>	<b>(142) 36.0%</b>	(49) 12.2%
Level of School						
Jr./sr. high (7-12)	56	2.3	(14) 3.5%	(16) 4.0%	(17) 4.2%	(9) 2.2%
Middle (6-8)	57	2.5	(7) 1.7%	(21) 5.2%	(22) 5.5%	(7) 1.7%
Intermediate (5-8)	13	2.6	(2) 0.5%	(4) 1.0%	(4) 1.0%	(3) 0.7%
K-6	71	2.2	(15) 3.7%	(27) 6.7%	(25) 6.2%	(4) 1.0%
K-8	10	2.5	(1) 0.2%	(4) 1.0%	(4) 1.0%	(1) 0.2%
K-12	19	2.6	(0) 0.0%	(9) 2.2%	(8) 2.0%	(2) 0.5%
Other	169	2.4	(31) 7.7%	(55) 16.7%	(60) 15.0%	(23) 5.7%
Total	395	2.4	(71) 17.7%	<b>(139) 34.0%</b>	<b>(142) 35.4%</b>	(49) 12.2%
Enrollment						
< 300	46	2.5	(7) 1.7%	(13) 3.2%	(19) 04.7%	(7) 1.7%
301-500	163	2.3	(32) 8.0%	(57) 14.2%	(58) 14.5%	(16) 4.0%
501-1000	161	2.4	(21) 5.2%	(59) 14.7%	(51) 12.7%	(20) 5.0%
1001-1500	28	2.3	(7) 1.7%	(6) 1.5%	(11) 02.7%	(3) 0.7%
1501-2500	12	2.3	(4) 1.0%	(3) 0.7%	(2) 00.5%	(12) 3.0%
> 2500	3	3.0	(0) 0.0%	(0) 0.0%	(1) 00.2%	(0) 0.0%
Total	415	2.4	(71) 17.7%	<b>(139) 34.7%</b>	<b>(142) 35.4%</b>	(49) 12.2%
Free/reduced lunch						
< 10%	65	2.2	(19) 4.7%	(19) 4.7%	(21) 05.2%	(6) 1.5%
10-19%	73	2.2	(19) 4.7%	(25) 6.2%	(23) 05.7%	(6) 1.5%
20-29%	51	2.5	(6) 1.5%	(18) 4.5%	(19) 04.7%	(8) 2.0%
30-39%	49	2.5	(5) 1.2%	(17) 4.2%	(20) 05.0%	(7) 1.7%
40-49%	55	2.4	(6) 1.5%	(25) 6.2%	(20) 05.0%	(4) 1.0%
50% or greater	102	2.5	(16) 4.0%	(34) 8.5%	(35) 08.7%	(17) 4.2%
Total	401	2.4	(71) 17.7%	<b>(139) 34.7%</b>	<b>(142) 35.4%</b>	(49) 12.2%

Table 6

*Results of One-way ANOVA Tests Between Principal Perceptions and School Demographic Variables*

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i>
District type	3	1.60	2.4	.18
District category	3	.54	2.4	.65
School level	7	.74	2.4	.63
Enrollment	6	.50	2.4	.80
Free and reduced lunch rate	6	2.20	2.4	<b>.03*</b>

*Notes.* \*  $p < .05$ .

Free and reduced lunch rate showed a significant result on the test. The outcome suggests that there is a difference in principal positive perceptions based on this variable. The Tukey HSD multiple comparison test was conducted to determine if a specific percentage for free and reduced lunch rate was associated with the difference. No significant results were found. Descriptive statistics showed a minimal variation in the distribution of the means. A specific range was not revealed as a dominant contributor to the differences in principals.

To explore any difference in principal perceptions based on years of experience as a principal or number of years evaluating teachers, a cross tabulation was conducted. Table 7 shows 327 principals (82%) had perceptions that APPR will have a positive impact on instruction to some extent or greater. One hundred ninety-one respondents, 48%, chose to a moderate or great extent. Results were similar based on number of years evaluating teachers. As years of experience increased, it appears that positive perceptions about the impact of APPR decrease in frequency. This is apparent in the responses provided by the groups with more than 20 years as a principal and more than 20 years evaluating teachers. Within these two groups, the

combined percentages of those who chose to little or no extent and to some extent outweigh those who chose to a moderate extent or to a great extent.

Table 7

*Frequency and Percentages of Principal Perceptions About APPR Listed by Principal Demographics*

Variable	N	To little or no extent	To some extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent
Number of years as principal	400				
< 5		(19) 4.8%	(54) 13.5 %	(74) 18.6%	(20) 5.0%
6-10		(21) 5.3%	(43) 10.8%	(36) 9.0%	(13) 3.3%
11-15		(16) 4.0%	(23) 5.8%	(17) 4.3%	(9) 2.3%
16-20		(8) 2.0%	(11) 2.8%	(11) 2.8%	(2) 0.5%
>20		(7) 1.8%	(7) 1.8%	(4) 1.0%	(5) 1.3%
Total		(71) 17.8%	(136) <b>34.5%</b>	(142) <b>35.5%</b>	(49) <b>12.3%</b>
Number of years evaluating teachers	400				
< 5		(7) 1.8%	(17) 4.3%	(33) 8.3%	(10) 2.5%
6-10		(20) 5.0%	(49) 12.3%	(50) 12.5%	(12) 3.0%
11-15		(24) 6.0%	(41) 10.3%	(41) 10.3%	(17) 4.3%
16-20		(8) 2.0%	(20) 5.0%	(6) 1.5%	(5) 1.3%
>20		(12) 3.1%	(8) 2.0%	(10) 2.6%	(5) 1.3 %
Total		(71) 17.8%	(138) <b>34.5%</b>	(142) <b>35.5%</b>	(49) <b>12.3%</b>

Table 4 indicated that 230 principals (56%) reported that assistant principals do not help with the teacher evaluation process. An independent t-test was conducted to determine if having an assistant principal assist with teacher evaluations made a difference in principals' perceptions. Table 8 shows the mean and standard deviation of each variable along with the results of the independent t-test. The t-test failed to reveal a statistically significant difference in principals' perceptions about APPR based on whether or not an assistant principal assists them with the teacher evaluation process. As shown in Table 8, the *p* value of .172 was not < .05, which is not significant.

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics and Independent T-test: Differences in Principal Perceptions Based on Presence or Lack of An Assistant Principal to Conduct Teacher Evaluations*

Variable	Principal perceptions			Independent t-test				
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. 2 tailed*	Mean difference	Std. error difference
Assistant principal								
Yes	2.48	.939	169	1.36	393	.172	.126	.092
No	2.35	.889	226					

Note. \*  $p < .05$ .

A Chi-square test was conducted to determine if there was a difference in the distribution of principal perceptions about APPR based on years of experience as a principal or years of experience evaluating teachers. As shown in Table 9, statistically significant relationships were found between principals' perceptions about APPR and each of the two variables. Both  $p$  values were  $< .05$ , which is significant.

Table 9

*Chi-square Test: Principals Perceptions of APPR Based on Years of Experience as a Principal and Years of Experience Evaluating Teachers*

Variable	Chi-square		
	Value	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Years of experience as a principal	27.8	15	.022*
Years of experience evaluating teachers	31.0	15	.008*

Note. \*  $p < .05$ .

**Research Question Two:** *What is the impact of teacher evaluation experiences before and after APPR on principals' perceptions about the effect APPR will have on instructional practices?*

To explore this research question, ten survey items included variables about practices, procedures, and utilization of the teacher practice rubrics. Practices and procedures pertained to

New York State approval of the district’s APPR plan, frequency of teacher evaluations pre and post-APPR, and time allotments required for the evaluation process. Questions regarding utilization of the rubric focused on principal’s comfort level using the rubrics, differences in post-conference discussions, focus of post-conference discussions, and district focus on student performance data.

Principals were asked if their district had been granted NYS approval for their APPR plan. Four hundred-nine of 416 respondents, 96%, indicated that their district had been granted approval. Of the fifteen respondents, 4%, whose districts did not have approval at the time of the survey, 60% indicated it was due to lack of a collective bargaining agreement.

The frequency and percentages of the number of evaluations conducted for tenured and non-tenured teachers, before and after implementation of the new APPR are shown in Table 10. Ninety-nine of 414 respondents, 24%, indicated that tenured teachers were not evaluated annually, prior to the mandate. Two hundred fifty, 60%, reported that tenured teachers were evaluated one time per year and 65 about 16% indicated that tenured teachers were evaluated two times or more per year. After the mandate, 321, close to 80% reported tenured teachers are evaluated two times per year. Those who reported more than two times per year post-APPR increased from 11 at 2.7% to 85 at 21%.

Table 10

*Frequency and Percentages of Teacher Evaluations Pre- and Post-Implementation of APPR*

Teacher evaluations	<i>n</i>	0 times/year	1 time/year	2 times/year	> 2 times/year
<b>Pre-APPR</b>					
Tenured	414	(99) 23.9%	(250) <b>60.4%</b>	(54) 13.0%	(11) 2.7%
Non-tenured	413	0.0%	(18) 4.4%	(105) 25.4%	(290) <b>70.2%</b>
<b>Post-APPR</b>					
Tenured	406	0.0%	0.0%	(321) <b>79.1%</b>	(85) 20.9%
Non-tenured	411	0.0%	0.0%	(77) 18.7%	(334) <b>81.3%</b>

Prior to the mandate, all principals reported that non-tenured teachers were evaluated annually with the majority, 290 (70%) responding more than two times per year. An 11% increase from 70% to 81% was seen in the number of teachers evaluated more than two times per year after implementation of APPR.

A cross-tabulation was conducted between principals' perceptions about APPR and the number of tenured and non-tenured teacher evaluations completed pre and post-APPR. Table 11 shows that most principals (70%) believe APPR will have an impact on instructional practices in their schools to some extent or to a moderate extent regardless of the number of tenured and non-tenured teacher evaluations conducted before and after the APPR mandate. Closer inspection of the variables revealed that principals who evaluated tenured teachers once a year before APPR (22.7%) and twice a year after APPR (28.2%) most often chose to a moderate extent.

An even split between the responses to some extent (24.7%) and to a moderate extent (24.7%) was observed in the group that evaluated non-tenured teachers more than two times per year before APPR. After APPR, the response to some extent increased to (29.7%) for those evaluating non-tenured teachers more than two times per year. Percentages for the response to little or no extent were consistently 12% before and after APPR. Percentages for the response to a great extend were consistently 17% before and after APPR.

Principals were asked about their comfort level using rubrics and the extent to which rubrics have impacted post-conference discussions, focus on student performance data, and the number of hours allocated for the teacher evaluation process. Table 12 shows the frequency and percentages of responses for each variable.

Table 11

*Frequency and Percentages of Principals' Perceptions About APPR Based on the Number of Tenured and Non-tenured Teacher Evaluations Pre- and Post-APPR*

Variable	Principals' perceptions about the potential impact of APPR				Total
	Little or no extent	Some extent	Moderate extent	Great extent	
<b># Tenured teacher evaluations conducted pre-APPR</b>					
Not evaluated annually	11 (2.7%)	37 (9.2%)	31 (7.7%)	17 (4.2%)	96 (23.9%)
1x per year	47 (11.7%)	78 (19.5%)	<b>91 (22.7%)</b>	26 (6.5%)	242 (60.3%)
2x per year	12 (3.0%)	21 (5.2%)	13 (3.2%)	6 (1.5%)	53 (13%)
> 2x per year	1 (0.2%)	3 (0.7%)	6 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (2.5%)
Total	71 (17.7%)	<b>139 (34.7%)</b>	<b>141 (35.4%)</b>	49 (12.2%)	400 (100%)
<b># Non-tenured teacher evaluations conducted pre-APPR</b>					
Not evaluated annually	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
1x per year	1 (0.2%)	5 (1.2%)	7 (1.7%)	4 (1.0%)	17 (4.2%)
2x per year	17 (4.2%)	34 (8.5%)	37 (9.2%)	11 (2.7%)	99 (25.0%)
> 2x per year	53 (13.2%)	<b>98 (24.7%)</b>	<b>98 (24.7%)</b>	33 (8.2%)	283 (70.6%)
Total	71 (17.7%)	<b>139 (34.7%)</b>	<b>142 (35.4%)</b>	48 (12.2%)	399 (100%)
<b># Tenured teacher evaluations conducted post-APPR</b>					
Not evaluated annually	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
1x per year	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
2x per year	58 (14.5%)	105 (26.2%)	<b>113 (28.2%)</b>	36 (9.0%)	312 (78.0%)
> 2x per year	11 (2.7%)	33 (8.2%)	26 (6.5%)	13 (3.2%)	83 (21.0%)
Total	71 (17.7%)	<b>139 (34.7%)</b>	<b>142 (35.4%)</b>	49 (12.2%)	395 (100%)
<b># Non-tenured teacher evaluations conducted post-APPR</b>					
Not evaluated annually	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
1x per year	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
2x per year	14 (3.5%)	21 (5.2%)	30 (7.5%)	9 (2.2%)	74 (18.5%)
> 2x per year	56 (14.0%)	<b>118 (29.4%)</b>	111 (27.7%)	40 (10%)	325 (81%)
Total	70 (17.0%)	<b>139 (34.7%)</b>	<b>141 (35%)</b>	49 (12.2%)	399 (100%)



Table 12

*Frequency and Percentages for Variables Pertaining to Utilization of Teacher Practice Rubrics*

Variable	To little or no extent	To some extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	NA
Comfort level using rubric for the first time	(70) 17.5%	(160) <b>40.1%</b>	(137) <b>34.3%</b>	(32) 8.0%	
Post-conferences following use of the rubric focus on instructional practices	(15) 3.8%	(72) 18.1%	(164) <b>41%</b>	(148) <b>37.2%</b>	
Post-conferences differ since APPR	(48) 12.0%	(86) 21.4%	(142) <b>35.3%</b>	(105) <b>26.0 %</b>	(21) 5%
District has increased focus on student performance data	(50) 12.5%	(130) 32.6%	<b>(138) 34.3%</b>	<b>(82) 20.6%</b>	
APPR has increased hours allocated for the teacher evaluation process	(2) 0.5%	(9) 2.3%	<b>(47) 11.8%</b>	<b>(342) 85.5%</b>	

*Note.*  $n = 400$  to  $412$ .

The variable, “comfort level using teacher practice rubrics,” was explored using a slightly different range of responses: not comfortable, somewhat comfortable, moderately comfortable, and very comfortable. Close to 82% reported somewhat to very comfortable, with the majority falling in the somewhat and moderate range. Approximately 18% of the respondents indicated that they were not comfortable using the teacher practice rubric chosen by their district.

Two hundred forty-seven principals, 61.3%, reported a moderate to great difference in post-conference discussions since APPR. Seventy-eight percent indicated that the focus of post-conference discussions on instructional practices was moderate to great since the APPR mandate. More than half, 220 (54.8%), reported a moderate to great increase in district focus on student performance data. The majority of principals, 391 (97%), reported that APPR has increased the number of hours allocated for the teacher evaluation process to a “moderate or great extent,” with the majority, 86% choosing the latter.

An independent t-test was conducted to examine whether there was a significant

difference in principals' perceptions about APPR in relation to the presence or absence of New York State approval of their district's APPR plan. As shown in Table 13, no significant difference was found in principals' perceptions based on whether or not their district's APPR plan had acquired state approval.

Table 13

*Descriptive Statistics and Independent T-test: Differences in Principals' Positive Perceptions Based on Presence or Lack of NYS Approval of APPR Plan*

Variable	Principals' perceptions			Independent <i>t</i> -test				
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. 2 tailed*	Mean difference	Std. error difference
NYS approved APPR Plan								
Yes	2.41	.922	389	-1.12	398	.262	-.315	.281
No	2.72	.786	11					

Note. \*  $p < .05$ .

A linear multiple regression analysis was conducted to explore how principals' perceptions about the positive impact of APPR on instruction differ based on variables relevant to teacher evaluation experiences, pre- and post-APPR. The nine independent variables used in the test included the number of evaluations conducted for tenured and non-tenured teachers pre and post-APPR, principals' comfort levels using teacher practice rubrics, differences in post-conference discussions, focus of post-conference discussions on instructional practices, increased focus on student performance data, and increased hours allocated for the teacher evaluation process.

According to the Model summary in table 14, an  $R^2$  value of .371 and an adjusted  $R^2$  of .356 explained a 35.6% variance in principals' perceptions. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), also in Table 14, shows the following:  $F(9,382) = 25.02$ ,  $p = .000^{**}$  which is  $< .001$  and is statistically significant.

Table 14

*Multiple Regression: Principal Perceptions Based on Teacher Evaluation Experiences*

Model summary					ANOVA				
Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	Std. error of the estimate	Sum of squares	<i>df</i>	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
1	.609	.371	.356	.736	122.04	9	13.56	25.02	.000**

Note. \*\*  $p < .001$ .

An inspection of each independent variable was conducted. As shown in Table 15, the analysis revealed that principals' comfort level using teacher practice rubrics, differences in post-conference discussions since APPR, post-conference discussions focused on instructional practices, and an increased focus on student performance data were found to have a statistically significant relationship to the variance in principals' perceptions about the positive impact of APPR on instructional practices. Table 15 displays Beta coefficients, t values and levels of significance for each of the nine variables. As displayed in Table 15, four variables were found significant. Listed in descending order, the variables include: an increased focus on student performance data, post-conference discussions focused on instructional practices, differences in post-conference discussions since APPR, and principals' comfort level using the rubric. A beta coefficient of .508 indicates that an increased focus on student performance data is the strongest contributor to the model. The other three significant variables listed in descending order, based on beta coefficients, are post-conference discussions focused on instructional practice, beta = .145; differences in post-conference discussions since APPR, beta = .116 and principals' comfort level using the rubric, beta = .111.

The number of tenured and non-tenured teacher evaluations conducted before and after APPR and the increased number of hours allocated for the teacher evaluation process were not found to have a significant impact on principals' perceptions.

Table 15

*Multiple Regression Using Teacher Evaluation Variables*

Model 1	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	<i>b</i>	Std. error	<i>b</i> *		
Constant	.149	.446		.335	.738
# Tenured teacher evaluations pre-APPR	-.070	.055	-.053	-1.28	.201
# Non-tenured teacher evaluations pre-APPR	-.097	.066	-.062	-1.46	.144
# Tenured teacher evaluations post-APPR	-.001	.092	.000	-.009	.993
# Non-tenured teacher evaluations post-APPR	.072	.099	.032	.726	.468
Principals' comfort level using rubric	.118	.046	.111	2.56	.011*
Differences in post- conference discussions since APPR	.127	.048	.116	2.65	.008*
Post-conference discussions focused on instructional practices	.124	.036	.145	3.46	.001*
Increased focus on student performance data	.492	.041	.508	11.99	.000*
Increased hours allocated for teacher evaluation process	.054	.080	.028	.671	.502

Note. \*  $p < .05$ .

**Research Question 3:** *What is the extent of the relationship, if any, between principals' perceptions about the impact of the new APPR mandate and the teacher practice rubric as a tool to inform instruction?*

As part of the New York State APPR mandate, school districts were required to select a teacher practice rubric to use for the purposes of teacher evaluation and observation. The survey included six items specific to rubrics and their components.

To explore this research question, principals were asked which New York State approved teacher practice rubric was chosen by their districts and what their comfort level was using it for the first time. Regarding the components of the rubrics, principals were asked the extent to

which the rubric: enabled specific feedback to teachers about instruction, required collection of evidence of instructional components, and shifted the focus of post-conference discussions to instructional practice. Comfort levels using the rubrics and post-conference discussions also pertained to Research Question Two. Previous results will be included in this discussion and relationships with new variables will be explored.

**Rubrics.** At the time of the survey, New York State had a list of 10 approved teacher practice rubrics for the purposes of teacher observation and evaluation. Every school district was required to choose a rubric from the approved list or apply for a variance to use another. As shown in Table 16, of 412 respondents, the prevalent choice of rubrics was narrowed to four: Danielson, Danielson Revised, NYSUT 2011, and NYSUT 2012. Combining the statistics for the Danielson and NYSUT rubrics, 63.1% chose Danielson, and 25% chose NYSUT. Choices for the remainder included 8.3% spread across six additional rubrics. Having a variance approved for a rubric not offered was limited to 1.2%. The option “other” was included because new rubrics continued to be added to the list while the survey was open. Less than 3% of the participants chose that response. There are currently 14 teacher practice rubrics on the NYS approved list.

Table 16, which follows, shows the frequencies and percentages for rubrics chosen by school districts listed in descending order.

The limited scope of rubrics selected by school districts led to many data cells with values less than 5. For that reason, the data was transformed and a new variable limited to the four rubrics was created.

To analyze the association between the new variable, “teacher practice rubric,” and principal perceptions, an analysis of variance, one-way ANOVA, test was conducted. The

choice of teacher practice rubric was not found to be statistically significant in relation to principals' perceptions about APPR. Table 17 shows the results of the ANOVA test.

Table 16

*Frequency and Percentages of Teacher Practice Rubrics Chosen by School Districts*

Variable	Total	Frequency	Percentage
Teacher Practice Rubric Chosen by School District	412		
Danielson's Framework Revised		134	<b>32.5</b>
Danielson's Framework		126	<b>30.6</b>
NYSUT 2012		68	<b>16.5</b>
NYSUT 2011		35	<b>8.5</b>
Marshall Teacher Evaluation Rubric		14	3.4
Other		10	2.4
Thoughtful Classroom		8	1.9
Marzano's Causal Teacher Evaluation		5	1.2
Variance approved for another rubric		5	1.2
Marzano's Teacher Practice Rubric		4	1.0
NYSTCE Framework		2	0.5
Teacher and Learning Framework		1	0.2

Table 17

*One-way ANOVA Test of Principals' Perceptions about APPR and Teacher Practice Rubrics Selected by School Districts*

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.90	3	1.63	1.94	.122
Within Groups	293.13	350	.84		
Total	299.04	353			

Note. \*  $p < .05$ .

Scaled responses were provided to explore the extent to which: rubrics enabled specific feedback to teachers about instructional practices, rubrics required the observer to collect evidence of instructional components, principals were comfortable using the rubric, and post-conferences following use of the rubric focused on instructional practices. Responses ranged

from little or no extent, to some extent, to a moderate extent, and to a great extent. Table 18 shows the frequency and percentages of responses for the four variables.

As shown in Table 18, the majority of principals, 78%, reported that the rubrics they are using moderately or greatly enable the provision of feedback to teachers. Roughly 75% reported being somewhat to moderately comfortable using the rubric for the first time. Ninety-two percent reported the rubric requires the collection of evidence of instructional components, to a moderate or great extent. Seventy-eight percent responded that the first post-conference following implementation of the rubric focused on instructional practice from a moderate to great extent.

Table 18

*Frequency and Percentages of Variables Related to Use of Teacher Practice Rubrics*

Variable	N	To little or no extent	To some extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent
Rubric enables feedback about instructional practices	411	(18) 4.3%	(68) 16.3%	(150) <b>36%</b>	(175) <b>42%</b>
Rubric requires collection of evidence	411	(6) 1.4%	(28) 6.8%	(90) <b>21.9%</b>	(287) <b>69.8%</b>
Comfort level using rubric for the first time	401	(70) 17.5%	(160) <b>39.9%</b>	(139) <b>34.7%</b>	(32) 8%
Post-conferences following use of the rubric focus on instructional practices	400	(15) 38%	(72) 18.0%	(169) <b>41%</b>	(149) <b>37.3%</b>

To analyze the association between the variables for this research question, Pearson product-moment correlation was utilized to examine the strength of relationships. The correlation coefficients were interpreted through the application of Davis (1971) descriptors listed in Chapter 1.

Table 19 shows the correlation matrix between principals’ perceptions that APPR will have a positive impact on instructional practices in their schools and the components of the rubric they are utilizing to evaluate instruction.

Table 19

*Correlation Matrix Between Principals' Perceptions and the Rubric Being Utilized*

Variable	Item/scale				
	PP	Feedback	Evidence	Comfort Level	Post-conferences
Principals' Perceptions	1				
Rubric enables specific feedback about instructional practices	.434**	1			
Rubric requires collection of evidence of instructional practice components	.174**	.241**	1		
Comfort level using rubric	.138**	.206**	-.035	1	
Post-conferences after using rubric focus on instructional practices	.247**	.353**	.143**	.299**	1

*Note.* PP = principal perceptions that APPR will have a positive impact on instruction. \*\*  $p < .01$ , two-tailed.

Significant correlations were found between principals' perceptions and each of the component variables. A moderate positive correlation (.434) was found between principals' perceptions and the rubric enabling specific feedback to teachers about instructional practices. In descending order, post-conferences focused on instruction (.247); the rubric requires collection of evidence (.174) and comfort level using the rubric (.138) had significant positive correlations to principals' perceptions to a lesser degree.

**Research Question Four:** *What is the extent of the relationship, if any, between principals' perceptions about the impact of the new APPR and professional development regarding APPR?*

Eight survey items were used to explore this research question. Principals were asked to identify how many hours of professional development about APPR were provided for principals and teachers in their districts. Additional survey items inquired about the type of professional development that was provided and if there were plans to provide additional professional development for teachers and principals, and if so, the types of professional development that would be utilized.



The majority of respondents, 65.8 %, indicated that teachers were provided less than 10 hours of training. Most, 91%, received professional development for 20 hours or less. The training was primarily conducted through internal personnel. Fifty-nine percent of principals received 20 or more hours of training, primarily through BOCES. Table 20 shows the frequencies and percentages of responses relevant to professional development for teachers and principals.

Table 20

*Frequency and Percentages Regarding Professional Development Provided for Teachers and Principals*

Variable	Teachers			Principals		
	n	Frequency	Percentage	n	Frequency	Percentage
Hours of in-service provided?	407			407		
< 10		268	<b>65.8</b>		63	15.5
10-20		102	<b>25.1</b>		104	25.6
20-30		21	5.2		97	<b>23.8</b>
> than 30		16	3.9		143	<b>35.1</b>
Type of training?	407			407		
Through BOCES		139	34.2		293	<b>72.5</b>
Online		23	5.7		75	18.4
Internal		309	<b>75.9</b>		148	36.4
Outside consultant		83	20.4		124	30.5
Other		37	9.1		23	5.7
Plans for additional training?	409			408		
Yes		197	<b>48.2</b>		224	<b>54.9</b>
No		68	16.6		50	12.3
Unsure		144	35.2		134	32.8

The use of outside consultants was 10% higher for training of principals when compared to training of teachers. Forty-eight percent of the participants were sure their district was going to provide additional training for teachers and 54.9% were sure it would be provided for principals. Respondents who did not answer yes to the question about additional training were forced to skip the follow-up question about which type of training would be offered. For those who chose yes, the responses mirrored those regarding initial training for teachers and principals.

Internal personnel and BOCES, in descending order, were the most frequent choices for teacher training. BOCES, internal personnel, and outside consultants, in descending order, were the most frequent choices for principal training.

**Hours of professional development for teachers.** A cross tabulation was conducted to examine the association between principals’ perceptions and the number of hours of professional development provided for teachers about APPR. Table 21 displays the frequencies and percentages of principals’ perceptions about APPR based on the number of hours of professional development provided for teachers.

Table 21

*Cross-tabulation Between Principals’ Positive Perceptions About APPR and Hours of Professional Development Provided for Teachers*

Variable	Principals’ perceptions			
	To little or no extent	To some extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent
Hours of professional development for teachers				
< 10	(47) 11.7%	<b>(99) 24.7%</b>	<b>(89) 22.2%</b>	(28) 7.0%
10-20	(19) 4.7%	(24) 6.0%	(42) 10.5%	(15) 3.7%
20-30	(2) 0.5%	(11) 2.7%	(4) 1.0%	(3) 0.7%
> 30	(3) 0.7%	(4) 1.0%	(6) 1.5%	(3) 0.7%
Total	(71) 17.7%	<b>(139) 34.7%</b>	<b>(142) 35.4%</b>	(49) 12.2%

The cross-tabulation between principals’ perceptions and the number of hours of professional development provided for teachers revealed that 281 (70%) of principals responded that APPR will have a positive impact to some extent or to a moderate extent. Close to 47% of that group also indicated that their teachers received less than ten hours of training. As hours of professional development for teachers increased, there was not a corresponding increase in principals’ perceptions about the positive impact of APPR.

**Types of professional development provided for teachers.** To explore the association between principals’ perceptions and the types of professional development provided for teachers, a cross tabulation was conducted. Principals were allowed to choose more than one type of training, which is why the total percentages for response rates and types of training may add up to more than 100%. Table 22 shows the results of the cross-tabulation.

Table 22

*Cross-tabulation between Principals’ Perceptions about APPR and Types of Professional Development Provided for Teachers Regarding APPR*

Variable	Principals’ perceptions				Total
	To little or no extent	To some extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	
Types of PD for teachers					
BOCES	(28) 7%	(48) 12%	(46) 11.5%	(15) 3.7%	(137) 34.2%
Online	(5) 1.2%	(9) 2.2%	(6) 1.5%	(2) 0.5%	(22) 5.5%
Internal	(55) 13.7%	<b>(102) 25.4%</b>	<b>(111) 27.7%</b>	(37) 9.2%	(305) 76.1%
Consultant	(10) 2.5%	(30) 7.5%	(31) 7.7%	(11) 2.7%	(82) 20.4%
Other	(3) 0.7%	(11) 2.7%	(11) 2.7%	(8) 2.0%	(33) 8.2%
Total	(101) 25%	<b>(200) 49%</b>	<b>(205) 51%</b>	(73) 18.1%	

About 53% of principals whose teachers had professional development provided internally had the highest frequencies and percentages that suggest APPR will have a positive impact on instruction to some extent or to a moderate extent.

Pearson product-momentum was conducted to analyze the relationship between principals’ perceptions about APPR and the number of hours and types of professional development for teachers. Table 23 displays the correlation matrix.

The number of hours of professional development provided for teachers was not found to have a significant correlation to principals’ perceptions. The type of professional development categorized as “other” was found to have a low level correlation to principals’ perceptions. The

survey did not include written responses therefore this category is not defined. Who provided the training was also not found to have significant correlations to principals' perceptions.

Table 23

*Correlation Matrix Between Principals' Perceptions About APPR and Professional Development Provided for Teachers*

Variable	Item/scale						
	PP	Hours	BOCES	Online	Internal	Consultant	Other
Principals' perceptions	1						
PD hours for teachers	.058	1					
Types of PD							
BOCES	-.056	.253*	1				
Online	-.057	.199**	.097*	1			
Internal	.009	-.089	-.128**	-.025	1		
Consultant	.057	-.143**	.017	.116*	-.185**	1	
Other	.100*	.105*	-.060	-.075	-.316**	-.029	1

Notes. \*\*  $p < .01$ , two-tailed. \*  $p < .05$ , two-tailed.

**Hours of professional development provided for principals.** A cross tabulation was conducted to examine the association between principals' perceptions and the number of hours of professional development provided for principals about APPR as shown in Table 24.

Table 24

*Cross-tabulation Between Principals' Perceptions and the Number of Hours of Professional Development Provided for Principals*

Variable	Principals' perceptions			
	To little or no extent	To some extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent
Hours of PD provided for Principals				
< 10	(8) 2.0%	(26) 6.5%	(20) 5.0%	(4) 1.0%
10 – 20	(13) 3.3%	(46) 11.5%	(38) 9.5%	(7) 1.8%
20 – 30	(21) 5.3%	(27) 6.8%	(38) 9.5%	(10) 2.5%
> 30	(28) 7.0%	<b>(40) 28.8%</b>	<b>(46) 11.5%</b>	(28) 7.0%
Total	(70) 17.5%	<b>(139) 34.8%</b>	<b>(142) 35.5%</b>	(49) 12.3%

The cross-tabulation between the numbers of hours of professional development provided for principals and principals' perceptions about APPR showed that 86 (40%) of principals perceived that APPR will have a positive impact on instruction to some extent or to a moderate extent. The same group of principals also indicated that they had received more than 30 hours of professional development. The other 14 percent of that group had responses that were evenly divided between to little or no extent (7%) and to a great extent (7%).

As hours of in-service for principals increased, a corresponding increase in principals' perceptions about the positive impact of APPR was not consistently demonstrated. However, the groups that chose to some extent or to a moderate extent had the highest response rates regardless of the hours of professional development provided for principals.

**Types of professional development provided for principals.** A cross-tabulation was conducted to explore the association between principals' perceptions and the types of professional development provided for principals. Principals were allowed to choose more than one type of professional development, which is why the total percentages for response rates and training may add up to more than 100%. Table 25 shows the results of the cross-tabulation.

The majority of principals received professional development through BOCES. About 51% of this group believes that APPR will have a positive impact on instruction to some extent or to a moderate extent. About 26% total, for all types of professional development, chose to little or no extent. A similar result, 23%, was observed for those who chose to a great extent.

To determine the extent of the relationship between principals' perceptions about APPR and number of hours and types of professional development provided for principals, Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted. Table 26 shows the correlation

matrix between principals' perceptions and types of professional development provided for principals.

Table 25

*Frequencies and Percentages of Principal Perceptions Based on the Types of Professional Development Provided for Principals*

Variable	Principals' perceptions				Total
	To little or no extent	To some extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	
Types of PD provided for principals					
BOCES	(57) 14.2%	<b>(100) 24.9%</b>	<b>(106) 26.4%</b>	(30) 7.5%	(293) 73%
Online	(12) 3%	(18) 4.5%	(27) 6.7%	(16) 3.9%	(73) 18.2%
Internal	(22) 5.5%	(45) 11.2%	(54) 13.5%	(21) 5.2%	(142) 35.4%
Consultant	(15) 3.7%	(50) 12.5%	(37) 9.2%	(20) 5%	(122) 30.4%
Other	(< 5)	(< 5)	(13) 3.2%	(5) 1.2%	(22) 5.5%
Total	(106) 26.4%	<b>(213) 53.1%</b>	<b>(237) 59%</b>	(92) 22.8%	

Note. n = 401.

Table 26

*Correlation Matrix Between Principal Perceptions and Types of Professional Development Provided for Principals*

Variable	Item/scale						
	PP	Hours	BOCES	Online	Internal	Consultant	Other
PP	1						
Hours of PD	.071	1					
BOCES	.068	.068	1				
Online	.045	.133**	.206**	1			
Internal	.142**	.071	.380**	.163**	1		
Consultant	.085	.068	.304**	.214**	.268**	1	
Other	.077	.091	.150**	.314**	.111*	.197**	1

A statistically significant correlation of was revealed between principal perceptions and professional development provided by internal personnel. Using Davis descriptors, the strength

of the correlation is low. No significant correlations were found between principal perceptions and the other types of professional development.

**Additional professional development for teachers and principals.** Two hundred twenty-four principals, about 55%, indicated that additional professional development was planned for principals. One hundred ninety seven, 48%, indicated that additional professional development was planned for teachers.

Independent t-tests were conducted to determine if additional APPR training planned for teachers and principals made a difference in principals’ perceptions about the potential impact of APPR on instruction. As shown in Table 27 the independent t-tests failed to reveal statistically significant differences in principals’ perceptions about APPR based on whether or not additional professional development about APPR was planned for principals or teachers. Neither of the variables had a *p* value < .05.

Table 27

*Descriptive Statistics and Independent T-tests: Differences in Principals’ Perceptions Based on Plans for Additional Professional Development for Teachers and Principals*

Variable	Principal perceptions			Independent t-test				
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.2 tailed*	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Additional PD for teachers				1.94	393	.172	.126	.092
Yes	2.57	.944	196					
No	2.31	.987	67					
Additional PD for principals				1.82	269	.069	.272	.149
Yes	2.55	.943	222					
No	2.28	.935	49					

Note. \* *p* < .05.

A cross tabulation was conducted to explore the relationship between principals’ perceptions about APPR and plans for additional professional development for teachers and principals. Table 28 shows the results of the cross-tabulation.

Table 28

*Cross-tabulation Between Principals' Perceptions About APPR and Plans for Additional Professional Development for Teachers and Principals*

Variable	Principals' perceptions				Total
	To little or no extent	To some extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	
<b>Additional PD for teachers</b>					
Yes	(29) 7.2%	(59) 14.7%	<b>(74) 18.5%</b>	(34) 8.5%	(196) 48.9%
No	(17) 4.2%	(20) 5.0%	(22) 5.5%	(8) 2.0%	(67) 16.7%
Unsure	(25) 6.2%	(60) 15.0%	(46) 11.5%	(7) 1.7%	(138) 34.4%
Total	(71) 17.7%	<b>(139) 34.7%</b>	<b>(142) 35.4%</b>	(49) 12.2%	(401) 100%
<b>Additional PD for principals</b>					
Yes	(35) 8.7%	(65) 16.2%	<b>(85) 21.2%</b>	(37) 9.2%	(222) 55.4%
No	(12) 3.0%	(15) 3.7%	(18) 4.5%	(4) 1.0%	(49) 12.2%
Unsure	(24) 6.0%	(59) 14.7%	(39) 9.7%	(8) 2.0%	(130) 32.4%
Total	(71) 17.7%	<b>(139) 34.7%</b>	<b>(142) 35.4%</b>	(49) 12.2%	(401) 100%

The cross-tabulation revealed that 74 (18.5%) of principals who were certain that teachers would receive additional professional development also perceived that APPR will have a positive impact on instruction to a moderate extent. This was the highest percentage observed among individual responses. However, a close to even split was observed in the total number of responses between those who chose to a moderate extent, 142 (35.4%) and those who chose to some extent, 139 (34.7%). This included those who were unsure or did not believe that additional professional development would be provided for teachers.

A similar pattern was seen regarding additional professional development for principals. Eighty-five principals, about 21% who were certain additional professional development would be provided for them, perceived that APPR will have a positive impact on instruction to a



moderate extent. Regardless of plans for additional professional development, totals reveal that 142 (35.4%) of principals chose to a moderate extent and 139 (34.7%) chose to some extent.

A cross-tabulation was conducted to explore the relationship between principals' perceptions about APPR and the type of additional training that would be provided for teachers.

Table 29 shows the results of the cross-tabulation.

Table 29

*Cross-tabulation Between Principals' Perceptions About APPR and Type of Additional Professional Development Planned for Teachers*

Variable	Principals' perceptions				Total
	To little or no extent	To some extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	
Additional PD planned for teachers					
BOCES	(10) 2.5%	(23) 5.7%	(28) 7.0%	(11) 2.7%	(72) 18.0%
Online	(1) 0.2%	(7) 1.7%	(5) 1.2%	(3) 0.7%	(16) 4.0%
Internal	(26) 6.5%	<b>(50) 12.5%</b>	<b>(66) 16.5%</b>	(29) 7.2%	(171) 42.6%
Consultant	(4) 1.0%	(11) 2.7%	(11) 2.7%	(8) 2.0%	(34) 8.5%
Other	(1) 0.2%	(1) 0.2%	(5) 1.2%	(2) 0.5%	(9) 2.2%
Total	(71) 17.7%	<b>(139) 34.7%</b>	<b>(142) 35.4%</b>	(49) 12.2%	(401) 100%

The total percentages of responses mirror those seen regarding plans for additional professional development for teachers as seen in Table 28. A total of 70% of principals suggest that APPR will have a positive impact on instruction to some extent or to a moderate extent.

A closer inspection of the types of professional development conducted revealed that use of internal personnel had the highest frequency overall and also had the highest number of respondents who chose to some extent and to a moderate extent.

Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted to analyze the association between principals' perceptions about APPR and the type of additional professional development that will be provided. Table 30 shows the correlation matrix.

The use of internal personnel for professional development for teachers was found to have a significant correlation to principals' perceptions. Through the application of Davis descriptors this correlation was determined to be low indicating a weak relationship.

Table 30

*Correlation Matrix Between Principals Perceptions About APPR and the Type of Additional Professional Development Planned for Teachers*

Variable	PP	BOCES	Online	Internal	Consultant	Other
PP	1					
BOCES	.068	1				
Online	.045	.206**	1			
Internal	.142**	-.380**	.163**	1		
Consultant	.085	.304**	.214**	.268**	1	
Other	.077	.150**	.314**	.111*	.197**	1

Professional development conducted online, through BOCES, through an outside consultant or identified as “other” were not found to have significant correlations to principals' perceptions about APPR.

The survey item related to additional professional development for principals did not generate usable data because a significant number of respondents skipped the question.

This chapter discussed the statistical tests conducted and an analysis of the data. Chapter five provides a summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations for practice and future study.

## **Chapter 5: Summary of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

This chapter is divided into three sections: Summary of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations. Data for each research question is summarized and interpreted. Conclusions are supported through a review of the literature. Recommendations are discussed as they pertain to implications for school leaders, policy makers, and future studies.

There have been numerous school reform initiatives over the past several decades, however many schools are falling short on goals for achievement. Annually, more than one million students in the United States fail to graduate from high school on time. (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2012; Stonehill et al., 2010).

Research indicates that the single most important factor in determining student performance is often the quality of the teacher (Rockoff, 2004). The literature suggests that efforts to find or identify and remediate ineffective teachers have failed and that most teacher evaluation practices have been perfunctory (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2013; Daley & Kim, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Currently, teacher accountability is a central piece in many state initiatives including those of New York State. It is the belief of many reformers that these initiatives will help create a higher performing education system with a focus on learning rather than teachers. (Petrilli, 2010). Whether or not accountability initiatives will have an impact on student achievement remains to be seen.

The New York State APPR mandate centers on principal and teacher accountability and evaluation. The goal of APPR is to ensure that all students receive effective instruction that leads to college and career readiness.

The conceptual framework for the legislation is based on the *Four Assurances* or

*Four Pillars: Standards and Assessment, Great Teachers and Leaders, Data Systems to Support Instruction, and Turning around Struggling Schools.* Implementation of curriculum based on the Common Core standards, state assessments and local student performance data are integral to the accountability and evaluation component. Data is used to identify performance levels of students, teachers, principals, and the school as a whole. Remediation and improvement plans are required for teachers and principals who fall short of state expectations.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine principals' perceptions about the extent to which the new APPR will have a positive impact on the instructional practices in their schools.

This study was designed to answer the following research questions

1. Is there a difference in principals' perceptions about the impact APPR will have on instructional practices based on demographic characteristics?
2. What is the impact of teacher evaluation experiences before and after APPR on principals' perceptions about the effect APPR will have on instructional practices?
3. What is the extent of the relationship, if any, between principals' perceptions about the impact APPR will have on instructional practices and the approved teacher practice rubric they are utilizing to inform instruction?
4. What is the extent of the relationship, if any, between principals' perceptions about the impact APPR will have on instruction and professional development regarding APPR?

Data were collected through an internet-based survey created by the researcher. The thirty-one-item survey, explored four areas: demographics, teacher evaluation practices, use of teacher practice rubrics, and professional development.

All public school principals in New York State, excluding New York City were invited to participate. The survey link was distributed via Survey Monkey to 2809 principals' e-mail addresses acquired from NYSED. Immediately after sending the e-mail invitation, 67 were bounced back as invalid addresses. An additional 44 potential participants had previously opted out of all contact from Survey Monkey. From the remaining 2698 principals, 417 participated in the survey, providing a response rate of about 15%.

### **Summary of Findings**

**Descriptive statistics.** Demographic characteristics were collected about the school district, school building, the experience level of the principal and whether or not an assistant principal provides assistance with teacher evaluations.

School district and building level characteristics revealed the following. With regard to size of school, the most frequent responses were from mid-sized districts (44%). More than one-half of the respondents (53%) were from suburban districts. Seventy-eight percent had building level enrollments between 301 and 1000 students. Collectively, 28% of the participants were principals of grade levels (6-8) and (7-12). Elementary (K-6) comprised 17%. Forty-three percent of the respondents chose "other" for building level. The ability to write in an answer would have provided more accurate data for this survey item. Fifty-two percent of principals reported a free and reduced lunch rate of 30% or more. Of this group, 25% reported a free and reduced lunch rate of 50% or greater.

The majority of participants, 87% had 13 years or less experience as a principal. Fourteen percent were in their first year. The group with 6 to 10 years had the highest frequency at 29%. Years of experience evaluating teachers included evaluations conducted as a

department chair or assistant principal. Close to 80% indicated that they had less than 15 years experience evaluating teachers, when 87% had 15 years as a principal.

More than half of the principals 56% reported that they either do not have an assistant principal or their assistant principal does not conduct teacher evaluations. Principals were not asked if other personnel assist with the teacher evaluation process.

**Research question one.** The first research question sought to investigate if there was a difference in principals' perceptions about the impact of APPR on instructional practices based on demographic characteristics.

Results showed that 70% (281) principals perceive that APPR will have a positive impact on instructional practices in their schools. Within the 70%, an almost even split was observed between those that believed it would be to some extent and to a moderate extent. An additional 12% believed the impact will be to a great extent which means 82% of the participants had a positive perception about the potential impact of the mandate. These results were fairly consistent regardless of setting, district size, building level, and enrollment.

Based on free and reduced lunch only, it was revealed that principals with a free and reduced lunch rate of 50% or more had the most positive perceptions about the impact of APPR. Fourteen percent responded that the impact would be to a moderate or great extent.

A one-way ANOVA revealed that free and reduced lunch rate made a significant difference in principals' perceptions about APPR. Post-hoc testing was conducted and due to an even distribution of means among the variables, a specific percentage of free and reduced lunch was not revealed as a strong contributor to the result. District type, size, school level and enrollment were not significant.

A cross-tabulation was conducted between principals' perception about the positive

impact of APPR and years of experience as a principal and years of experience evaluating teachers. Total frequencies for both variables showed a 70% response rate that APPR's impact would be positive with 34.5% to some extent and 35.5% to a moderate extent. Further inspection of the variables revealed that principals with less than 5 years of experience had the most positive perceptions about APPR with 24% responding to a moderate or great extent. It was observed that as years of experience as a principal increased, responses less positive also increased. This pattern was also noted with years of experience evaluating teachers. Within the group of principals with 20 years or more experience evaluating teachers, the most frequent response indicated the impact of APPR would be little or none.

Chi-square testing showed significant associations between principals' perceptions' and years of experience as a principal and also years of experience evaluating teachers.

**Research question two.** The second research question examined how teacher evaluation experiences before and after the APPR mandate impacted principals' perceptions about the ability of the new evaluation process to improve instructional practices.

This research question explored the frequency of teacher evaluations pre and post-APPR, whether or not a district's APPR plan had approval from New York State, use of required teacher practice rubrics and changes in the evaluation process.

Twenty-four percent of principals reported that prior to the new APPR mandate, tenured teachers were not evaluated annually. Results showed that 79% of tenured teachers were evaluated two times per year after the mandate. This was anticipated, as it is a requirement of the legislation. It was also reported that the remaining 20% of tenured teachers are evaluated more than two times per year. The data demonstrated that participants' districts were 100% compliant with the regulation.

The data showed that 96% of non-tenured teachers were evaluated two times or more per year before APPR. The remaining 4% were evaluated one time per year. After the mandate, 100% were evaluated two times or more per year. This result was also anticipated since it is required by the legislation.

A cross-tabulation was conducted between principal's perceptions and frequency of tenured and non-tenured teacher evaluations before and after APPR. The results were similar to those seen in the previous research question. Seventy percent of principals believe that APPR will have an impact on instruction to some extent or to a moderate extent. This pattern was consistent for frequency of evaluations for tenured and non-tenured teachers both pre and post-APPR.

Close to 97% of principals reported that their district's APPR plans had state approval. An independent T-test revealed that having NYS approval for a district's APPR plan had no significant impact on principals' perceptions about the mandate.

Variables regarding changes found in the evaluation process included: principals' comfort level using teacher practice rubrics and the extent to which rubrics have impacted post-conference discussions, focus on student performance data, and the number of hours allocated for the teacher evaluation process.

Most principals, 74% indicated that they were somewhat to moderately comfortable using the teacher practice rubric chosen by their district. Seventy principals (18%) reported that they were not comfortable using the rubric. This has implications for system leaders.

Seventy-one percent suggested that post-conference discussions after APPR differed to a moderate or great extent. Seventy-eight percent reported that post-conference discussions after using the rubric focused on instructional practices to a moderate or great extent. Slightly more



than half, 55% responded that their district had increased its focus on student performance data to a moderate or great extent. Almost all, 97% of principals said the number of hours allocated for the teacher evaluation process had increased to a moderate or great extent; 85% chose the latter.

The data suggests that changes to the teacher evaluation process due to APPR are not minor. Large-scale changes warrant strategic planning. This is noteworthy for system leaders and policy makers.

To determine how the nine variables for this research question fit as a predictive model, a linear multiple regression test was conducted. The results explained a 35.6% variance in principals' perceptions, which was statistically significant.

Ad hoc testing revealed that principals' comfort level using teacher practice rubrics, differences in post-conference discussions since APPR, post-conference discussions focused on instructional practices, and an increased focus on student performance data, all had statistically significant relationships to the variance in principals' perceptions about the positive impact of APPR on instructional practices. It was determined that an increased focus on student performance data was the strongest contributor to the model.

The number of tenured and non-tenured teacher evaluations conducted pre and post-APPR and the increased number of hours allocated for the teacher evaluation process were not found to have a significant impact on principals' perceptions. An anticipated increase in negative perceptions due to increased hours for the evaluation process was not found.

**Research question three.** The third research question investigated the extent of the relationship between principals' perceptions about APPR and the approved teacher practice rubric utilized as a tool to inform instruction.

The data demonstrated that of the ten state approved teacher practice rubrics available during this research, four were the preferred choices. In descending order from highest to lowest the choices were: Danielson's Framework Revised (32%), Danielson's Framework (31%), NYSUT 2012 (16%) and NYSUT 2011 (8%). The low frequencies for the other rubrics created many empty data cells, which was detrimental to statistical analysis. A new variable was created utilizing the four preferred rubrics. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore the relationship between choice of rubric and principals perceptions about the positive impact of APPR on instruction. The results suggest that choice of rubric is not significantly associated with principals' perceptions about APPR.

Comfort levels using rubrics, differences in post-conference discussions and post-conference discussions focused on instructional practices were found significant in Research Question Two. For this research question, two additional variables were explored: the rubric enables the provision of specific feedback about instruction and the rubric requires collection of evidence of instructional practices.

The majority of principals, 78%, reported that the rubrics they are using moderately or greatly enable the provision of feedback to teachers. Ninety-two percent reported the rubric requires the collection of evidence of instructional components, to a moderate or great extent.

Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted to examine the strength of relationship between principal perceptions about the positive impact of APPR on instruction and aspects of the rubrics used to evaluate instruction.

A significant moderate relationship was found between principals' perceptions and the ability of the rubric to enable specific feedback to teachers about instructional practices.

Significant correlations to a lesser degree were found between principals' perceptions and three variables: the rubric requires collection of evidence of instructional component, comfort level using the rubric and post-conferences discussions focused on instructional practices. These results suggest that principals value rubrics as a tool to enhance post-conference discussions about instruction with teachers.

**Research question four.** The fourth research question investigated the extent of the relationship between principals' perceptions about the impact of APPR and professional development regarding APPR. It was revealed that 66% of teachers received less than 10 hours of professional development about the new APPR. It would seem that the magnitude of the changes due to APPR would warrant far more attention.

About 60% of principals had 20 to 30 hours of professional development or more. This was expected because the mandate requires evaluators to be trained and certified. Three quarters of the principals indicated that teachers were provided professional development through internal personnel. About 72% of principals received training through their regional BOCES and 37% through internal personnel.

Roughly 34% of the respondents were unsure if additional professional development was planned for teachers or principals. Forty-eight percent were sure teachers would receive additional training about APPR. About 55% were sure that additional training would be provided for principals. This seemed low since the mandate requires annual training for principals and lead evaluators.

Cross tabulations were conducted between principals' perceptions about APPR and the number of hours and type of professional development provided for teacher and principals. Results were consistently in the middle regardless of the number of hours. Based on hours of

professional development provided for both teachers and principals, frequencies of about 34% were observed for APPR's impact to some extent and 35% to a moderate extent. The same results were found with regard to the type of professional development provided for teachers and principals.

Pearson product momentum was conducted to determine the strength of relationships between hours and type of professional development provided for teachers and principals. A significant correlation was not found between the number of hours of professional development provided for teachers or for principals.

A weak correlation was found between principals' perceptions and "other" types of professional development provided for teachers. Since "other" is not defined, the result is ambiguous. A statistically significant weak correlation was revealed between principal perceptions and professional development provided by internal personnel. This result was interesting because the majority of principals had training through BOCES. It is not known who provided the training internally for the principals or how they viewed it.

Cross-tabulations were conducted between principals' perceptions about the positive impact of APPR and plans for additional professional development for principals and teachers.

The results mirrored those found regarding initial training. Thirty-five percent of the principals' perceptions were split between to some extent and to a moderate extent.

Pearson product-momentum correlation was conducted to analyze the relationship between principals' perceptions about the impact of APPR and plans for additional professional development for teachers and the type of training they would be provided. A significant weak negative correlation was found between principals' perceptions and plans to provide additional professional development for teachers. This was unexpected. Perhaps some principals are

responsible for providing the training. A significant low-level correlation was found between principals' perceptions and training provided internally. The two outcomes seem contradictory. There were no significant correlations between principals' perceptions and professional development provided through BOCES, outside consultants or online. The survey item related to additional professional development for principals did not generate usable data because a significant number of respondents skipped the question.

## **Conclusions**

The findings of this study reveal that many factors contribute to principals' perceptions about the extent to which the new APPR will have a positive impact on the instructional practices in their schools. Significant statistical outcomes were found in each of the four areas explored: demographics, evaluation practices, teacher practice rubrics, and professional development.

Most demographic variables did not make a significant difference in principals' perceptions about the positive impact of APPR. The results of cross-tabulations were consistently 35% to some extent, and 35%, to a moderate extent. It appears that principals were not overly positive or negative. This suggests that opinions were still in a formative stage.

A significant relationship was found between free and reduced lunch rates and principal perceptions. Of the six variables available, a specific level for free and reduced lunch was not identified as a substantial contributor to the result. However, it was noteworthy that principals with a free and reduced lunch rate of 50% or more had the highest percentage of responses indicating the positive impact of APPR will be to a great extent.

*Turning Around Struggling Schools* is one of the four pillars of APPR. The research suggests that schools in areas of poverty often have the least experienced and qualified teachers

along with high priority local concerns usurping available resources (Mandinach et al., 2006). Perhaps principals of schools with high levels of poverty feel they have more to gain through resources provided by the state.

Years of experience as a principal and years of experience evaluating teachers were found to have a significant association with principal perceptions. The statistics showed that based on these two variables, the majority of principals had positive perceptions about APPR to some extent or to a moderate extent.

A closer inspection of each variable revealed that the group with less than five years experience as a principal or evaluating teachers had the highest frequency of positive perceptions to a moderate or a great extent. It was also observed that as years of experience as a principal or years evaluating teachers increased, less positive responses also increased. For principals with more than twenty years experience evaluating teachers, the most frequent response was APPR will have little or no positive impact. Principals with vast experience may feel confident in their ability to evaluate teachers and instructional practices. Hunziker's (2012) results suggest that experienced principals feel ready and skilled in the area of teacher evaluation. This may or may not be the case.

It is also possible that experienced principals prefer practices they have been using for years. Change theorists have demonstrated that long-standing practices become embedded in the culture of an organization and resistance to transition is to be expected (Bridges, 2009; Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

Although no significant relationship was found between the frequency of evaluations and principal perceptions, there were some interesting findings. Close to 25% of the 417 respondents indicated that tenured teachers were not evaluated annually prior to the mandate. Infrequency of

teacher evaluations is often cited in the literature as a main area of concern. As of 2009, only 15 states required annual evaluations of all teachers with some states permitting lapses of several years. (MET, 2009; Walsh & Snyder, 2010).

If evaluated at all, most tenured teachers, 60% were observed once a year. Eighty-seven percent of the principals who participated in the survey had up to 15 years of experience as a principal. Only 80% of the same group reported that they had an equal amount of experience evaluating teachers. These results suggest that teacher evaluations were not conducted by 7% of the principals in this group at some point in their careers.

The literature suggests that teacher evaluations have not been an area of focus until recently. It has been contended that teacher evaluation practices in the past failed to identify ineffective teachers and that teacher evaluation process has often been viewed as a formality without real purpose (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2013; Daley & Kim, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Two primary goals of the New York State legislation are to “ensure there is an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective leader in every school” (NYSED P12 RTTT, 2011). As per the mandate, tenured teachers must be observed and evaluated at least two times per year. Post mandate responses suggest that all participants’ districts are in compliance with the law. All principals reported that non-tenured teachers were evaluated annually, at least once, prior to the mandate. The frequency of those evaluations increased by 11% after the mandate. The increased time allotment for completing the evaluation process was not found to have a significant bearing on principal perceptions.

The purpose of an evaluation is twofold: to use data to inform instruction and to enable teachers to hone their skills (Peterson, 2004; Stronge, 2006). The literature provides evidence that supports this approach as a way to improve teacher practices and raise student achievement

(Goe, 2011a; Myricks, 2009; Tucker & Stronge, 2005)

Three decades of research demonstrate a substantial relationship between leadership and student performance (Waters et al., 2003). Leithwood et al. (2004) found that principals are second only to teachers as the most influential factor in student achievement.

The data from this study revealed that 82% of the 417 principals surveyed felt that the new APPR mandate would have a positive impact on instructional practices in their school to some extent. Close to 48% believe that the extent of the impact will be moderate to great. The data suggests that many principals believe some components of the APPR legislation have the potential to improve teaching and learning in their schools.

As acknowledged in the literature, the role of the principal as an instructional leader is critical to effective school performance. Principals are responsible for identifying areas for improvement, setting goals for improvement, and monitoring teacher progress (Clifford et al., 2012).

It is possible to suggest that principals take their role as instructional leader seriously. In this study, positive perceptions about APPR increased with items related to assessing and evaluating instructional practices. Significant relationships were found between principal perceptions and the following variables after APPR: differences in post-conference discussions, post-conference discussions focused on instructional practices, an increased focus on student performance data, and collection of evidence of instructional components.

A moderate relationship was found between principal perceptions and an increased focus on student performance data. This result was not a surprise. One goal of APPR is to raise achievement levels in schools through quality instruction. Effective instruction is a priority of Race to the Top and the New York State APPR. Teachers and school leaders will be judged on



results. Effective teaching and learning will be assessed through state and local assessments and data driven teacher evaluations.

The state required all districts to adopt an approved teacher practice rubric to be used in the teacher evaluation process. The rubrics are used to identify strengths and weaknesses in a teacher's instructional practices. The data demonstrated that four teacher practice rubrics were the dominant choices: Danielson's Framework, Danielson's Framework Revised, NYSUT 2011, and NYSUT, 2012. Neither of these choices were a surprise. Danielson's expertise in the field is well known and the literature is rife with her longstanding contributions. It is also logical that many teachers would feel comfortable using a rubric from the teachers union, NYSUT. The data revealed that choice of rubric did not make a significant difference in perceptions.

The literature supports the use of rubrics as a tool to assess instruction. Effective teacher practice rubrics include the following components: collection and evaluation of evidence, clear standards and criteria, clear expectations, enable specific feedback on strengths, weaknesses and strategies for improvement (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2012; Danielson, 2009; University of Minnesota, CARLA, 2012).

The results of this study suggest that principals value the characteristics of effective rubrics. Provision of specific feedback to teachers was moderately correlated with principals' perceptions that APPR will have a moderate to great impact on instruction. Specific feedback is an integral part of post-conference discussions. Post-conference discussions focused on instructional practices were also significant with regard to principals' perceptions about APPR. Principals' comfort level using the teacher practice rubric had a low level relationship with principals' perceptions. This study was conducted in the first year of APPR and principals had

limited experience with new evaluation process. This result may also be connected to training provided about the use of teacher practice rubrics.

The data showed that two-thirds of teachers were provided less than ten hours of professional development about APPR. Professional development is a critical piece when implementing second order changes. The lack of appropriate professional development may result in failed attempts to improve teaching and student achievement (Coggshall et al., 2012; Elmore, 2002; Goe, Biggers, & Croft, 2012).

Significant relationships between professional development and principals' perceptions about APPR were limited. A negative correlation was found between principals perceptions and plans for additional training for teachers. Perhaps some principals were responsible for implementing professional development for teachers. Principals are required to participate in professional development as per the APPR mandate. The quality of the training offered was not explored which may have imposed a limitation in this area of questioning.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

The following recommendations are based on the findings of this study.

**Recommendation 1:** Systems leaders need to differentiate professional development regarding APPR to ensure principals demonstrate both the skills required for effective teacher observation and evaluation; as well as the disposition to use APPR for instructional improvement purposes.

The data demonstrated that as years of experience as a principal increased, negative perceptions increased. This pattern was also noted with years of experience evaluating teachers. Within the group of principals with 20 years or more experience evaluating teachers, the most frequent responses suggest that APPR will have little or no impact on improving instruction. It is likely that experienced principals feel equipped to effectively observe and evaluate teacher

performance and are used to doing things a certain way. The culture of their schools is built on practices and procedures they have established. Principals at this stage of their career may need assistance in implementing second order changes. That being said, negative perceptions about the inability of APPR to improve instructional practices may lead outcomes in that direction. Changes in practice are difficult and require strategic planning. System leaders are charged with addressing the concerns of all parties involved. Identifying their dispositions is a critical component in the process. Differentiated professional development may be warranted based on individual needs. System leaders may consider providing professional development relevant to leadership during times of transition for those who are struggling with change.

**Recommendation 2:** System leaders need to assess the evaluation and feedback skills of building principals and provide opportunities for growth where most needed.

The results of this study showed that years of experience as a principal and years of experience evaluating teachers were significant with regard to principals' perceptions about the positive impact of APPR.

The data revealed that principals with less than five years experience had the most positive perceptions about APPR. The limited experience of this group may make them better suited for adapting to change. Leaders in the early years of their careers may benefit from having a mentor, professional development, and opportunities to practice and enhance their skills. These efforts may also make them viable choices for conducting professional development for others earlier than later in their careers.

**Recommendation 3:** System leaders and principals need to provide teachers with opportunities to learn about the requirements and expectations of the APPR mandate.

The data showed that 66% of teachers were provided less than ten hours of professional

development about APPR. Given the complexity of second order changes, this does not seem adequate. Lack of teacher buy-in has been cited as one of many reasons school reform efforts in the past have failed.

Most teachers who received training acquired it through internal personnel. “Internal personnel” was not defined and may or may not include building principals. If so, system leaders need to consider that principals are in the throes of implementing the changes that resulted from the legislation. Time for added responsibilities may be limited.

The majority of professional development for principals was provided through regional BOCES. Forty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that additional professional development was planned for teachers. Perhaps system leaders could also utilize BOCES to provide professional development for teachers.

The data revealed that prior to APPR, 24% of tenured teachers were not evaluated annually and 60% were evaluated once a year. The mandate requires that teachers be observed a minimum of two times per year. Principals are expected to collect evidence of instructional practice and use teacher practice rubrics to assess the teacher’s level of performance. These evaluative practices may be foreign to many teachers. This emphasizes the need for professional development about APPR for teachers.

**Recommendation 4:** System leaders need to promote a culture that embraces data-driven instruction.

This study showed that a relationship of moderate strength exists between principal’s perceptions about APPR and a district’s increased focus on student performance data. System leaders who make decisions based on research and data demonstrate that they value this approach. To embed this in the culture of an organization, these practices must be conducted at

all levels including district, building, grade level, and teacher. Having principals conduct regular grade level meetings with teachers and service providers to discuss student performance data establishes that this is a district priority. Over time it will be seen as the way business is conducted.

**Recommendation 5:** System leaders and principals need to collaborate to address the dramatic increase in time required for the teacher evaluation process due to APPR.

Ninety-seven percent of principals indicated that time allotted for teacher evaluations increased to a great extent. Given that 84% of tenured teachers were evaluated once per year or not at all prior to APPR, it stands to reason that principals' time spent on this task has increased exponentially. This increases time spent on classroom observations, post-conferences, record keeping, and the use of state and local student performance data.

More than one-half of principals indicated that an assistant principal does not help with teacher evaluations. Being cognizant of this fact, system leaders should work with principals to assess the most critical uses of their time and determine if there are any options for shifting some responsibilities.

**Recommendation 6:** System leaders need to ensure that principals are comfortable and well versed in the use of the teacher practice rubric chosen by the district.

Only one third of principals responded that they were moderately comfortable using the teacher practice rubric. Roughly 58% were somewhat comfortable or uncomfortable. It is important that system leaders provide principals with the training and resources they need to be confident evaluating the instructional practices of their teachers.

The variables in this study found to have the most relevant significant relationships to principals' perceptions that APPR will have a positive impact on instruction pertained to use of

teacher practice rubrics, and post-conference discussions. Principals' perceptions about APPR were highly positive if the rubric enabled specific feedback about instruction. The rubric requires collection of evidence about instructional components, differences in post-conference discussions since APPR, and post-conference discussions focused on instruction were also shown to have significant correlations to principals' perceptions.

System leaders need to collaborate with principals to determine what is needed to improve their level of expertise using teacher practice rubrics. Allowing principals to observe the same lesson and share their output provides both a learning opportunity and a chance to view inter-rater reliability. Consideration should also be given to providing principals with additional professional development about the use of rubrics as an instructional tool.

**Recommendation 7:** System leaders need to collaborate with principals to determine what resources are needed to make teaching and learning as effective as possible.

This recommendation is suitable for all district leaders, but is especially true for struggling schools in areas of poverty. This study revealed that principals of schools with higher levels of poverty had the most positive perceptions about the potential impact of APPR on instruction. Those with free and reduced lunch rates of 50% had the most frequent responses that the positive impact of APPR will be to a great extent. Their expectations imply that guidance and direction is not unwelcome. Schools in poverty-ridden areas often have the least experienced teachers and limited resources for mentoring and professional development. Identifying and remediating ineffective teachers is a critical piece of the APPR legislation.

As a result of the APPR legislation and adoption of the Common Core State Standards, all schools have a consistent standards-based curriculum. A plethora of resources and materials

are available from the state to support instruction. District leaders can capitalize on this as an opportunity for large-scale improvement.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

**Recommendation 1:** Further study to examine the quality of professional development provided for teachers and principals about APPR and the teacher evaluation process.

Results of this study suggest that the amount or type of professional development provided for teachers and principals did not have a significant impact on principals' perceptions about APPR. The survey for this study did not investigate principals' assessments of the value or quality of the training they received.

The literature emphasizes the importance of professional development that is well planned and implemented. Effective professional development includes adequate time for learning, practice, collaboration and reflection (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). The data from this study show that 66% of teacher received less than ten hours of professional development about APPR. It is possible, but seems unlikely that high quality in-service could be conducted in such a limited time frame.

**Recommendation 2:** Further studies on principals' perceptions about the impact of APPR with a specific focus on one aspect.

This study collected data on principals' perceptions about APPR in four areas: demographics, pre and post-APPR teacher evaluation practices, teacher practice rubrics, and professional development. The wider scope limited the amount of data collected for each section. Future studies could narrow the focus.

The APPR mandate is complex and has a multitude of components. Other areas of interest for future study might include APPR's impact on student achievement, building level leadership, teacher effectiveness, instructional practices, and state mandated school reform. Longitudinal studies would provide a valuable retrospective on statewide school reform.

**Recommendation 3:** Examine teacher's perceptions about the impact of APPR on instructional practices in their classrooms.

Using the same four areas of this study would provide a basis to draw comparisons between principals' perceptions and teachers' perceptions about APPR. The information gathered would be useful for system leaders, building level leaders and state policy makers. A key element of second order change is stakeholder buy-in. Collecting data from all groups gives leaders important insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the system.

### **Closing Remarks**

The purpose of this study was to investigate principals' perceptions about the potential impact of the NYS APPR on instructional practices in their schools.

The ultimate goal of the legislation is to raise student performance levels through effective instructional practices. Implementation of Common Core Standards and teacher and principal accountability are at the forefront of this school reform initiative. Identifying effective principals and teachers is paramount to the task.

Principals are now required to observe all teachers at least twice a year and use a state approved teacher practice rubric chosen by their districts to assess teacher performance. Student performance data from state and local assessments are also part of the equation.

The depth and pace of this reform effort are unprecedented which has created a good deal of controversy. This was evident to the researcher in e-mails from some superintendents who



expressed their displeasure regarding this research. In addition, it was conveyed that they did not principals from their districts contacted. Initially, this was disappointing. However, the number of subsequent communications in support of the research outweighed those opposed and provided some reassurance that the study might yield useful data.

This study was conducted to investigate which factors influence principals' perceptions that APPR will have a positive impact on instructional practices. The survey used in this study targeted four areas: demographics; teacher evaluation practices before and after APPR; use of teacher practice rubrics; and professional development.

Significant variables were found in each of the areas explored. In a cross comparison, the utilization of teacher practice rubrics as a tool to inform instruction had the most frequent positive perceptions in the moderate and great range. The findings for the other three areas showed the majority of principals' perceive that APPR will have a positive impact on instruction to some or a moderate extent.

The data from this study suggests that many factors are associated with principals' perceptions about APPR. The two variables that appeared to be the best predictors of principals' perceptions were the ability to provide specific feedback to teachers about instruction and a district focus on student performance data.

The conclusions and recommendations of this study are intended to provide system leaders with information to consider as this reform effort continues to unfold. Principals and teachers will need ongoing support to meet the challenges before them.

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## *Appendix A*

### Survey Instrument

#### **Introduction to Survey**

As part of a statewide school reform effort, New York mandated a new Annual Professional Performance Review Plan (APPR) for teachers and principals.

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about the impact of the new APPR on instructional practices from the perspective of public school principals across the state.

The name of your school district will not be identified in the study. All information is strictly confidential. Only aggregated data will be used for analysis.

Thank you for your help with this study. Your input is valued and essential to add to the body of research on educational reform.

Maureen Futscher  
Doctoral Student

**Please complete all questions to the best of your ability.**

#### **Section One: Demographic Information**

##### **1. What type is your district?**

- 1. Urban
- 2. Rural
- 3. Suburban

##### **2. How is your school district categorized?**

- 1. Small (less than 1000)
- 2. Mid-sized (1001-2999)
- 3. Large (3000+)

##### **3. What level is your school?**

- 1. Middle School (6-8)
- 2. Junior/Senior High (7-12)
- 3. Intermediate (5-8)
- 4. K-6
- 5. K-8
- 6. K-12
- 7. Other

**4. What is the free and reduced lunch rate of your school?**

- 1. Less than 10%
- 2. 10-19%
- 3. 20-29%
- 4. 30-39%
- 5. 40-49%
- 6. 50% or greater

**5. What is the enrollment in your school building?**

- 1. Less than 300 students
- 2. 301-500 students
- 3. 501-1000 students
- 4. 1001-1500 students
- 5. 1501-2500 students
- 6. more than 2500 students

**6. How many years have you been a principal?**

- 1. 1 year
- 2. 2-5 years
- 3. 6-10 years
- 4. 10-14 years
- 5. 15-20 years
- 6. 20 or more years

**7. Including previous experience as an assistant principal or department head, how many years have you been evaluating teachers?**

- 1. Less than 5
- 2. 6-10 years
- 3. 11-15 years
- 4. 16-20 years
- 5. 21-25 years
- 6. more than 25 years

**8. Do you have an assistant principal that assists with completing teacher evaluations?**

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

## Section Two: Teacher Evaluation Process

**9. Has your district's Annual Professional Performance Review Plan (APPR), been approved by New York State?**

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

**10. If your answer to question 9 is no, is the primary reason due to lack of a collective bargaining agreement?**

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

**11. How many times per year were tenured teachers evaluated prior to the new APPR?**

- 1. Not evaluated yearly
- 2. 1 time per year
- 3. 2 times per year
- 4. more than 2 times per year

**12. How often were non-tenured teachers evaluated prior to the new APPR?**

- 1. 1 time per year
- 2. 2 times per year
- 3. more than 2 times per year

**13. How often are tenured teachers evaluated as indicated in your current APPR plan?**

- 1. 2 times per year
- 2. more than 2 times per year

**14. How often are non-tenured teachers evaluated as indicated by your current APPR plan?**

- 1. 2x per year
- 2. more than 2x per year



**15. What teacher evaluation rubric did your district choose from the New York State approved list?**

- 1. Danielson's Framework
- 2. Danielson's Framework Revised
- 3. Marshall's Teacher Evaluation Rubric
- 4. Marzano's Causal Teacher Evaluation
- 5. Marzano's Teacher Practice Rubric
- 6. NYSUT 2011
- 7. NYSUT 2012
- 8. NYSTCE Framework
- 9. Teaching and Learning Framework
- 10. Thoughtful Classroom
- 11. The district acquired a variance for another rubric
- 12. Other

**16. To what extent does your rubric enable you to provide specific feedback to your teachers about instructional practices?**

- 1. little or no extent
- 2. some extent
- 3. moderate extent
- 4. great extent

**17. To what extent does the current rubric require the observer to collect evidence of instructional components?**

- 1. little or no extent
- 2. some extent
- 3. moderate extent
- 4. great extent

### **Section Three: Professional Development**

**18. How many hours of in-service training regarding the new APPR was provided for teachers in your school?**

- 1. less than 10 hours
- 2. 10-20 hours
- 3. 20-30 hours
- 4. more than 30 hours

**19. How was the in-service training provided for teachers? Please check all that apply.**

- 1. Through BOCES
- 2. Online
- 3. Training within the district by internal personnel
- 4. Outside consultant brought in to train staff
- 5. Other

**20. Is your district planning to provide additional training regarding APPR for teachers?**

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Unsure

**21. If so, how will training be conducted for teachers? Please check all that apply.**

- 1. Internally
- 2. BOCES
- 3. Through an outside consultant
- 4. Online
- 5. Other
- 6. Not applicable

**22. How many hours of in-service training regarding the new APPR was provided to principals?**

- 1. Less than 10 hours
- 2. 10-20 hours
- 3. 20-30 hours
- 4. more than 30 hours

**23. How was the in-service training provided for principals? Please check all that apply.**

- 1. Through BOCES
- 2. Online
- 3. Training within the district by internal personnel
- 4. Outside consultant brought in to train staff
- 5. Other

**24. Is your district planning to provide additional training regarding APPR for principals?**

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Unsure

**25. If so, how will training be conducted for principals ? Please check all that apply.**

- 1. Internally
- 2. BOCES
- 3. Through an outside consultant
- 4. Online
- 5. Other
- 6. Not applicable

#### **Section Four: Perceptions**

**26. In your first experience using the new approved rubric, what was your comfort level?**

- 1. Not comfortable
- 2. Somewhat comfortable
- 3. Moderately comfortable
- 4. Very comfortable

**27. To what extent did your first post- observation conference, following implementation of the new rubric, focus on instructional practices?**

- 1. To little extent
- 2. To some extent
- 3. To a moderate extent
- 4. To a great extent

**28. If your previous teacher evaluation plan included post-conferences, to what extent do you feel that post-conference discussions differ since implementation of the new APPR?**

- 1. To little or no extent
- 2. To some extent
- 3. To a moderate extent
- 4. To a great extent
- 5. Not applicable

**29. To what extent do you feel the new APPR will have a positive impact on instructional practices in your school?**

- 1. To little or no extent
- 2. To some extent
- 3. To a moderate extent
- 4. To a great extent

**30. To what extent do you believe the new APPR will increase your district's focus on student performance data?**

- 1. To little or no extent
- 2. To some extent
- 3. To a moderate extent
- 4. To a great extent

**31. To what extent has the new APPR increased the number of hours you will allocate for the teacher evaluation process this year?**

- 1. To little or no extent
- 2. To some extent
- 3. To a moderate extent
- 4. To a great extent

**Thank you for your participation!**

*Appendix B*

Survey Introduction to Superintendents

Dear Superintendent,

My name is Maureen Futscher. I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership program at the Sage Colleges. I am writing to inform you that I will be contacting your principals through e-mail to invite them to participate in my doctoral research study.

As you know, New York State's school reform effort includes a mandated Annual Professional Performance Review Plan (APPR) for teachers and principals. My doctoral research is focused on the new evaluation process. Specifically, the purpose of the study is to gather information about the potential impact of the new APPR on instructional practices from the perspective of public school principals across the state with the exception of New York City.

The data from this study, collected from principals, via survey, may help district and state leaders make informed decisions about teacher evaluation and instruction. Principal participation in the survey is voluntary. You can preview the survey from the link below.

The name of your school district will not be identified in the study. All information is strictly confidential. Only aggregated data will be used for analysis. Study results will be presented at the Sage College Doctoral Colloquium in the fall of 2013.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at xxxxxx@sage.edu, or Dr. Daniel Alemu, chair of the study, at xxxxxx@sage.edu. You may also contact the office of Dr. Susan C. Cloniger, the chair of the Sage Institutional Review Board, at (518) xxx-xxxx.

The input of your administrators is valued and essential to add to the body of research on educational reform.

Thank you for all of your efforts as an educational leader.

Sincerely,  
Maureen Futscher  
Doctoral Candidate

Link to survey monkey:

*Appendix C*

Survey Invitation to Principals

Dear Colleague,

I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership program at the Sage Colleges. I am inviting you to participate in an online survey designed to gather information about the potential impact of the new APPR on instructional practices from the perspective of public school principals across the state with the exception of New York City.

The information gathered from this study will contribute to the body of research on school reform efforts and may assist leaders, from school districts to governmental agencies, as they make decisions about future initiatives.

Your name or that of your school district will not be identified in the study. All information is strictly confidential. Only aggregated data will be used for analysis. Study results will be presented at the Sage College Doctoral Colloquium in the fall of 2013

Participation is voluntary. You may stop the survey at any time or choose not to answer questions with which you are not comfortable. If you choose to participate that will constitute informed consent.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at xxxxxx@sage.edu or the doctoral chair of the study, Dr. Daniel Alemu, at xxxxxx@sage.edu.

Your input is highly valued and your participation will add to the strength of the data. Please click on the link below to participate in the survey. It should take no more than seven minutes to complete.

Thank you for your help with this study.

Maureen Futscher  
Doctoral Student

Please click on the link below:

*Appendix D*

Survey Reminder E-mail to Principals

Dear Colleague,

Two weeks ago you received an invitation to participate in a survey regarding the new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) mandated by New York State.

If you have already completed the survey, thank you very much. Your input as a school leader is highly valued. If you have not yet completed the survey, please take 6-8 minutes to complete the survey by clicking on the link below.

Thank you.

Maureen Futscher  
Doctoral Student

Survey link: