

Principals' Responses to the Teacher Quality Provision of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

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THESIS

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SUMMARY

This study examines the way in which principals responded to the call for teacher quality under the Teacher Quality provision of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Under the legislation, all teachers must have attained a college degree, have received specific certification for the positions they occupied and also must have demonstrated competency in their practice. In the study, twelve principals were interviewed. Six of the principals were at the helm of schools that had not met the teacher quality mandate, while the remaining six had successfully fulfilled the dictates prescribed by the Teacher Quality provision. In non-compliant schools principals were queried as to what strategies they employed in attempting to meet the mandate. In those schools that had already achieved compliance, principals were asked what strategies were successful in attaining compliance. In addition, principals of compliant schools were asked what strategies they employed to remain in compliance once the mandate had been met.

In addition to principal reporting, the context in which principals made decisions was documented. Factors impacting the decision-making of principals included the level of student poverty, working conditions for teachers, student academic achievement, rates of teacher compensation, the timing of hiring and funding, collective bargaining agreements with teachers' unions and teacher mobility rates.

The study demonstrated that those principals whose student bodies were more affluent, whose teachers were better compensated that had more resources and a stable staff were much more likely to have met the teacher quality mandate than their counterparts in less affluent areas, in which teachers were poorly compensated, did not receive timely and adequate funding, had fewer resources and experienced a high degree of teacher mobility. In addition to the aforementioned factors, impinging upon the level of success in meeting the mandate, principal experience and acumen in dealing with external threats also appeared to have influenced the degree to which compliance was/was not achieved.

The study also demonstrated that a vicious cycle appeared to exist in which the very best of teachers had a negative incentive to seek out and remain in positions at schools that were most in need of their expertise. Some of the negative incentives had to do with working conditions and compensation. However, the chief negative incentive for teachers to ply their trade at underachieving schools had to do with another component of the NCLB legislation having to do with adequate yearly progress, a measure of student academic achievement. In punishing schools that failed to achieve AYP with a host of sanctions, from being placed on probationary status to reconstitution and even closure, the NCLB legislation may have discouraged the best of teachers from seeking out positions at schools that were in danger of failing to make AYP as the accompanying sanctions could ultimately negatively impact their careers, despite their credentials, years of experience and levels of expertise.

Chapter I

Introduction

Students of low socioeconomic status in many schools have been disproportionately exposed to teachers of lesser quality than their counterparts in more affluent schools. The dearth of quality teachers in such schools and school districts has been well-documented (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008; Berry et. al., 2006; *Education Week*, 2003; Hill, Rowan, & Ball, 2005; Ingersoll, 1999; Moore-Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Shen, 1997; The Teaching Commission, 2004). Identifying the reasons behind why such inequities have existed and what remedies might be available remains a subject of considerable debate for school districts, federal education officials and legislators who continue to struggle with the issue of equity for all of our nation's students (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2001; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002; Mezzacappa, 2004).

The Teacher Quality provision of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 sought to reduce this disparity between schools operating in affluent, high-achieving districts that have been better able to attract and retain teachers of high quality and their counterparts in low income, low-achieving districts by mandating that teachers in all public schools become "highly qualified" (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). To be deemed a "highly qualified" teacher under the legislation, educators were required to meet three basic requirements: (a) they must have obtained a bachelor's degree, (b) they must have obtained state licenses to teach, and (c) they must have demonstrated competency (as defined by their states) in the subjects they teach (NCLB, 2002).

Inherent in the logic of the Teacher Quality provision is the supposition that if all classrooms are staffed by certified “highly qualified” teachers, then all students will eventually be able to obtain at least a minimal level of academic proficiency (Darling-Hammond, 2000a; Wilson, Floden & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). This minimal level of proficiency is addressed in another component of the NCLB legislation requiring that all our nation’s students score at prescribed levels on standardized tests by 2014 (Kober, McMerrer & Silva, 2011; NCLB, 2002).

A History of Inequality

The notion that segments of the nation’s population have been shortchanged with regard to teacher quality is not in dispute. It has been well-documented, for example, that minority and low-income students are less likely to have a “highly qualified” teacher who is better prepared and more knowledgeable placed before them in classrooms than non-minority students attending schools with more affluent student bodies (Berry, et. al., 2006; Hill, Rowan, & Ball, 2005). Research has uncovered persistent trends that each year schools containing more than 35% of low-income students lose 27% of their teachers to another school or a different profession entirely (NCES, 2007). Research has also demonstrated that students living in poverty have experienced a teacher attrition rate 50% higher than their more affluent counterparts (Baber, 2007).

This level of teacher turnover in some schools may in turn, have the effect of creating a shortage of “highly qualified” teachers where they are needed most. In Michigan, for example, students living in poverty were three times more likely to have had teachers who did not meet the NCLB certification requirements when compared to teachers working in schools with more affluent student populations at the time of its passage (Harris & Ray, 2003). In Illinois, 25% of teachers in low-performing schools failed to meet the requirements outlined in the Teacher

Quality provision of NCLB when it was introduced (Gewertz, 2002). At-risk students in the Chicago school system were five times more likely at that time to be taught by teachers who had failed at least one licensure exam (Druffin, 2006; Peske & Haycock, 2006). When the NCLB legislation was passed, 31% of teachers in the Baltimore city schools were unqualified under the law (Walsh, 2001).

As a result of this inability of schools serving low-income, low-achieving students to attract and retain “highly qualified” teachers, such students were 40% more likely to be taught by a teacher who had been given a waiver to teach pending certification (US Department of Education, 2003). Some areas such as Special Education, Bi-lingual Education, Math and Science were particularly difficult to staff with “highly qualified” individuals, presenting even more pronounced shortages in some schools (Brownell et al., 2002; Samuels, 2005). Additionally, evidence has demonstrated that within schools themselves lower achieving students are likely to be assigned to the least qualified teachers on staff (Babu & Mendro, 2003) creating environments in which the detrimental effects of student-level tracking may be compounded by teacher-level tracking (Achinstein, Ogawa, & Speiglmán, 2004; Hill, 2007).

Why Quality Matters

Cohen and Ball (1999) tell us that improving teacher quality is the most likely place to start in seeking to improve instruction and subsequently student achievement because “teachers mediate all relationships within instruction” (p. 10). There is a bounty of evidence supporting this notion. It has been well documented that even children in the worst of schools are significantly better served when taught by quality instructors (Betts, Rueben, & Danenberg, 2000; Nye, Konstantopoulos & Hedges, 2004; Suh & Fore, 2002). One study suggested that a single

teacher, one standard deviation above the mean effectiveness could increase a single student's average lifetime earnings by \$400,000 (Hanushek, 2011).

Teachers of high quality are particularly important in schools containing concentrations of students living in poverty. Research suggests that the influence of teachers is the single most important factor in determining academic achievement, even more so than class size and economic status (Collias, Pajak & Rigden, 2000; Sanders & Horn, 1994; Sanders, Saxton & Horn, 1997; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). One study attributed a minimum of 7% of total variance in annual test score gains to the difference in teachers (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2001) while another study by Sanders and Rivers (1996) determined that the difference between attending classes taught by high-quality teachers and attending classes taught by low-quality teachers for three years in a row was substantial, accounting for 50 percentage points in the distribution of student achievement, with positive and negative residual effects impacting students in subsequent grades.

Problem Statement

My study addressed a particular problem with the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB, specifically its implementation. By implementation, I refer to the manner in which individual school principals, addressing the Teacher Quality mandate and adhering to guidelines set forth by district administrators and state and federal education officials, attempt to comply with the policy.

My purpose in conducting the study was to understand how a number of factors including a lack or surplus of available teachers, levels of teacher mobility and attrition, competing and conflicting policy issues within the entire NCLB legislation along with funding levels enhanced or impeded the ability of principals to achieve the policy goals laid out in the legislation. Having

established these factors as primary influences upon principal decision-making through a thorough review of the literature, I wanted to understand how principals responded to these factors and subsequently developed and implemented strategy in response to the demand that all teachers in their schools be “highly qualified.” In short, my study sought to answer the following research question: How did school principals respond to the demand for teacher quality as outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001?

As a result of the study, how principals view the Teacher Quality provision and how they define teacher quality will be ameliorated. In documenting the impediments and enhancements faced by principals as they respond to the legislation, a greater understanding of the myriad of factors that influence decision-making in public schools and other organizations may be gained. Subsequently, future policy development, in the area of improving teacher quality may be informed by an understanding of how the initial legislation was received, interpreted and implemented by principals. With reauthorization of the NCLB legislation on the horizon, an understanding of its Teacher Quality component may serve to provide clarity to lawmakers regarding how we as a nation ensure that the quality level of instruction is bolstered in all our classrooms.

Principals as Decision-Makers

As the locus of control in schools, principals hold more authority than any other single member of their staffs. Principals make long-term and short-term decisions that affect each member of these staffs. As a result of the decisions they make, principals also assume primary responsibility for the day to day operation of their schools. In the decision-making process, how principals define problems and how they seek solutions, based on their own experiences and the experiences of others in similar circumstances dictates courses of action to be taken. How an

administrator interprets a problem is important in that problems often serve to evoke organizational goals (Bellamy, Fulmer & Muth, 2007; Brubaker & Coble, 2007; Greenlee & Brown, 2009; Houle, 2006; Kelley, Thornton & Daugherty, 2005). How well principals understand and deliver means by which organizational goals may be achieved contributes substantially to the success/failure of individual schools (Portin, 2004).

Traditionally referred to as the gatekeepers of change (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991), principals play a central role in the implementation of policy mandates. In their role as decision-makers, principals may often find themselves taking a series of calculated risks, for there is much that principals do that is at least somewhat ambiguous (Zimmerman, 2006). This is the case because it may be likely that principals are swimming in uncharted waters with regard to specific reform policies such as the Teacher Quality provision.

Principals also serve as a bridge between reform initiatives like the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB and their staffs (Leithwood, et al., 2004). In making decisions, principals must also be cognizant of a larger picture in terms of addressing long term goals (Duke, 2004). It is this tension between what a principal may desire for his/her school in the long run and the internal and external demands that necessitate action in the short run that may determine their effectiveness as a decision-maker (Garcia, 2005; Gardiner, Canfield-Davis, & Anderson, 2009).

What the Teacher Quality Provision Asks of Principals

To meet the Teacher Quality mandate, principals were charged with finding a way to recruit and retain “highly qualified” teachers in their buildings despite long histories of inequity in teacher quality between affluent, high-achieving schools and those with large concentrations of student poverty (Ingersoll, 1999; Moore-Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Shen, 1997). In essence, principals were given a filter to use in evaluating prospective teacher candidates that was more

stringent and specific than those available to them prior to the legislation's enactment. This filter was supposed to provide principals with a roadmap by which they would be able to distinguish between the best and worst of teacher candidates. Additionally, principals were also told what steps would need to be taken in order to develop their current staff members, who as a result of the Teacher Quality provision were not "highly qualified."

However, as principals go about staffing their buildings, they may find the standards prescribed in the Teacher Quality provision to be both too high and too low. They may be too high for principals heading schools that have a large concentration of poverty-level students who fail to achieve at prescribed levels on standardized tests. At the same time, the Teacher Quality provision standards may be too low, in that demanding simple certification of teachers may do little to provide principals with an assurance of quality. As a result, some principals may be forced to sacrifice what they believe to be best for their schools in the long run in order to meet the mandates of the Teacher Quality provision in the short run.

The Teacher Quality provision may be anathema to quality in the minds of some principals. There is evidence that innumerable qualities, not outlined in the Teacher Quality provision are indicative of effective instruction (Darling-Hammond, Berry & Thoreson, 2001; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004; Youngs, Odden & Porter, 2003). These traits may include resiliency, content knowledge, verbal ability, high expectations for students, and the ability to recognize the source of and solution to problems (Bernshausen & Cunningham, 2001; Ferguson, 1991; Frome, Lasater & Cooney, 2005; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Greenwald, Hedges & Laine, 1996; Lesgold, 1984; Monk, 1994; Monk & King, 1994; Rice, 2003; Rowan, 2002; Rowan, Chiang & Miller, 1997; Rutledge, Harris & Ingle, 2010; Sternberg, 1981; Torff & Sessions, 2009).

Unfortunately, these qualities are difficult to ascertain in a direct manner. As a result, proxy indicators such as performance on certification exams and majoring in a specific subject may be employed by administrators, following the dictates of the Teacher Quality provision for the purpose of labeling a teacher “highly qualified” (Hill, H.C., 2007). As a consequence, principals may find themselves being forced to hire a teacher who lacks the above traits, who nevertheless has secured the credentials enabling them to be labeled “highly qualified.”

To a significant degree, how principals define “highly qualified” teachers may or may not be in sync with standards for determining quality contained in the legislation. As a result, principals may find themselves in ideological and pragmatic conflicts with the law, wanting to hire one teacher, but being forced to accept another because of specific credentials that teachers must obtain before they may be assigned to a particular classroom. However, with the pressure of having to meet the accountability provisions of the NCLB legislation, time-strapped principals may find it difficult to staff their buildings with teachers who are not only properly credentialed, but also in possession of qualities they covet, outlined in the literature that are absent from the legislation.

Meeting Demands of the Law

In attempting to fulfill the Teacher Quality provision, response options available to principals may be limited or expanded by forces out of their control. As an example, teacher attrition fueled by job dissatisfaction continues to plague public education. A recent study found that 40% or 2 out of every 5 teachers in the nation’s public schools described themselves as “disheartened” (Yarrow, 2009). In the same study, only 37% of the teachers surveyed said they viewed their teaching practice as a “lifelong career” Nevertheless, with the exception of high need areas such as Special Education, Mathematics, Science, and Bi-lingual Education there

remains a surplus of “highly qualified” teachers if one accepts the NCLB triumvirate of a bachelor’s degree, state licensure and competency in subject matter as the benchmarks of quality (Darling-Hammond, 2001).

Under the Teacher Quality provision, principals are unlikely to face a supply problem in terms of hiring “highly qualified” individuals. Instead, some principals in struggling schools may be more likely to encounter a quality of supply problem. This quality of supply problem may have more to do with teachers currently employed who choose to exit some schools. Commonly, teacher migration occurs in the worst of schools that have the fewest resources available to attract and retain quality individuals. Such schools may be forced to replace their best teachers on a perennial basis. Teachers migrating from such schools commonly leave after gaining experience and tenure, after four years for more desirable schools that offer better working conditions, higher rates of pay and student bodies that are more affluent and higher achieving on standardized tests (Boyd et. al., 2009; Ingersoll, 1999; SCTQ, 2004a). Conversely, their replacements are often found among neophyte teachers with little or no experience, matriculating from the university or teachers who have been dismissed from higher achieving, more affluent schools. As a result, a cycle in which students of low socioeconomic status are routinely subjected to those teachers least in demand is perpetuated (Fuhrman, 1994; O’Day & Smith, 1993; Smith & O’Day, 1991).

An additional group of factors influencing principal decision-making regarding the Teacher Quality provision may have to do with competing and conflicting mandates within the NCLB legislation itself. If it is true that the best of teachers migrate to the best of schools (Hardy, 1999; Ingersoll, 2001b; Lai Horng, 2009), other components of the NCLB legislation, specifically those dealing with adequate yearly progress, also known as AYP, may serve to diminish

individual principals' ability to meet the Teacher Quality mandate. The literature demonstrates that federal accountability demands and sanctions regarding the achievement of AYP have facilitated the exodus of teachers from such schools that failed to meet federal goals set by the Department of Education. AYP in each public school is determined principally as a result of whether or not schools have increased the number of students who have obtained prescribed proficiency levels on annual exams. Schools may also fail to obtain adequate yearly progress if any subgroup of students numbering more than 45 fails to obtain proficiency rates that have been pre-determined by the federal government (NCLB, 2002). As a result, many quality teachers may avoid actively pursuing positions in schools that have historically underachieved on standardized exams.

In order to obtain AYP in the State of Illinois at the conclusion of the 2010-2011 school year, 85% of students in schools receiving Title I funding from the federal government, aimed at leveling the playing field for poverty-level students were to have demonstrated proficiency in both Reading and Math. In the 2011-2012 school year, the bar for having made adequate yearly progress was raised to 92.5% in Reading and Math (ISBE, 2011).

Under NCLB, all schools have been mandated to achieve 100% proficiency in both Reading and Math by 2013-2014. Schools that fail to attain AYP may have sanctions imposed upon them from having to offer alternative attendance opportunities for their students to closure of the school (ISBE, 2010).

The aforementioned sanctions may have made schools with high poverty rates and low achievement levels particularly unattractive to many teachers of high quality in turn, limiting options available to principals attempting to meet the Teacher Quality mandate (Berry, Rasberry & Williams, 2005). As a result, principals in low-achieving schools with high concentrations of

poverty may have had a more arduous task in attracting and, more specifically retaining teachers of high quality than their counterparts in more affluent schools. The ensuing mobility and attrition among teachers at such schools may have a negative effect on student achievement. Lack of student achievement, in turn, may serve to perpetuate a vicious cycle wherein the best of teachers, in their own self-interest routinely avoid seeking employment or a long term commitment in such schools as they perennially fail to meet goals set by the federal government, thus triggering sanctions (Guarino, Santibanez & Daley, 2006; Ingersoll, 2011).

Organization of the Study

In this study of principals' responses to the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB, I chose to focus on how 12 principals perceived what was being asked of them, how they went about meeting the mandate and their views regarding the relative importance and efficacy of the legislation itself. I explored the various ways in which these 12 principals addressed the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB. As of 2009, the schools of six of these principals had achieved compliance with the mandate while schools of the remaining six had not. All schools were located in the Chicago suburbs. The suburbs of Chicago provided fertile ground for my study as there existed a wide array of students in myriad economic and social circumstances enrolled in such schools. This wide spectrum of students in differing circumstances provided my study with the contrast necessary to understand how principals operating in a variety of circumstances achieved or failed to achieve compliance.

Conducting my study in suburban Chicago schools allowed me to recognize that the degree of compliance with the Teacher Quality provision that principals were able to achieve may have been dependent upon many variables over which they had significant, little or no control. The selection of suburban Chicago schools, while allowing me to develop patterns in policy response

by principals also held the additional benefit of uncovering exceptions to patterns across both affluent and economically disadvantaged schools.

Primarily, I was interested in how school principals in varying degrees of compliance with the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB and in various circumstances interpreted and addressed the call to adequately staff their classrooms with “highly qualified” teachers. I was interested in uncovering similarities and differences in principal responses among schools in like circumstances. Likewise, I sought to understand the similarities and differences in responses among principals in differing circumstances. By circumstances, I refer to the aforementioned factors such as the socio-economic status of the students, the percentage of “highly qualified” teachers on staff, the mobility rate of both the students and staff members and the number of years of experience among teachers and administrators in individual schools. Additionally, I wished to understand how principals conceptualized the problem of fulfilling the mandate of the Teacher Quality provision and subsequently the degree to which they thought about going beyond simple compliance, and moved toward truly elevating the level of teaching and learning in their schools.

I sought to juxtapose the qualities principals valued in teachers against the immediate requirement that they were to gain compliance with the Teacher Quality provision. In the end, a balance may have been struck whereby principals in both compliant and non-compliant schools embarked upon a variety of courses in meeting the mandate. The nature of this balance between what was required by law and what might have been desired by principals in their heart of hearts, and how these sometimes contradictory ideologies were reconciled is what I strove to document. My study examined the aspects of the Teacher Quality provision that were in concurrence with what principals, legislators and many researchers agreed promoted, while not detracting from

high quality teaching – a college degree, state licensure, demonstrated competency, professional development.

What I also attempted to do was to understand how principals implemented the Teacher Quality provision, forwarding their individual notions on what constituted quality even when that notion was either absent from the policy or in opposition to it. Examples of how principals adhered to the letter of the law to shed undesirable staff members while at the same time loosely interpreting the mandate for just a long enough period of time to hire teachers who had yet to meet the legislation's criteria for "highly qualified" status will be outlined in detail in my findings.

Current Status of the Teacher Quality Provision

The entire NCLB legislation, including the Teacher Quality provision is currently up for renewal. There are numerous viewpoints as to how this may be accomplished (Jennings, 2010-2011; Klein 2011a; Klein, 2011b). While the Teacher Quality provision is but one component of the legislation to be considered for reauthorization, it is among the most important. It has been one of the least effective. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan speaking as recently as January of 2011 has said as much pointing out: "Almost no one believes the teacher quality provisions of NCLB are helping elevate the teaching profession, or ensuring that the most challenged students get their fair share of the best teachers. More and more, teachers, parents, and union and business leaders want a real definition of teacher effectiveness based on multiple measures, including student growth, principal observation and peer review" (Duncan, 2011).

Furthermore, the Obama administration has signaled its intent to continue focusing on teacher quality in the reauthorization. Moving forward, it is anticipated that schools and districts will be asked to reform the manner in which they measure teacher quality and effectiveness as a

prerequisite to receiving Title II funding (Brown & Haycock, 2011). Additionally, the Obama administration has said it plans to award \$185 million in grants to states that promote the development of accountability systems that better distinguish between exemplary and lackluster teacher preparation programs (Sawchuck, 2011).

Importance of the Study

The Teacher Quality provision of NCLB was an attempt by the federal government to improve the level of quality among teachers in all of our nations' schools. Through the use of specification and regulation, policymakers hoped to implement policy levers that when implemented would facilitate this goal being realized.

While this study focused on the Teacher Quality provision specifically, it addresses a larger issue having to do with how policies aimed at improving organizations are interpreted and responded to by those in direct proximity to the problem. What is true regarding how principals respond to the Teacher Quality provision is likely to be true of private firms, public university football teams, non-profit charities or condo associations. Across organizations, there are likely to be response patterns that are dependent upon how problems are interpreted, the number of resources available to address the problem, and the relative capacity of members to respond. As a result of this transferability, this study may promote a greater understanding of response patterns, not just of schools and their principals but of organizations in general.

Chapter II

Literature Review

There are many different ways that principals may think about policy implementation, indeed the implementation of mandates at the school level. As an example, a mandate such as the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB might be viewed as an unwelcome nuisance by some principals who feel that their autonomy regarding who is able to be hired and/or retained is being usurped (Birman et. al. 2009). Principals may also feel that they have limited control over how some components of the policy may best be implemented (Sawchuck, 2008). In such cases, implementation of the policy might be viewed as a burdensome chore that detracts from more pressing concerns that nevertheless must be addressed (Roellke & Rice, 2008; Sunderman, Orfield & Kim, 2006).

On the other hand, principals may view the legislation as a positive first step in elevating the quality of teachers in their buildings (Mintrop & Trujillo, 2005). In such a case, implementation may dovetail with the principal's existing ideology and not impede his/her vision for the school. A principal may also view a policy mandate as both an opportunity for organizational growth that is welcome on one hand, but extremely problematic to implement in its entirety on the other, due to a lack of necessary resources and other factors (Borkowski & Sneed, 2006).

This particular study attempts to understand the implementation of the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB as a function of principals' decision-making and their choices of particular strategies to respond to the mandate that every classroom be staffed with a "highly qualified" teacher. This study also seeks to understand whether principals simply choose to address the letter of the law by meeting the Teacher Quality mandate or if they also attempt to address its spirit once the letter of the law has been achieved. By the letter of the law, I refer to simply

staffing a school with teachers who have attained “highly qualified” status. In referring to the “spirit” of the law I refer to principals seeking out and developing teachers who are not simply fully credentialed, but who are also in possession of qualities that may be coveted by principals (verbal ability, class management skills, tenacity, a good rapport with students) that not all “highly qualified” teachers necessarily possess.

Examining the manner in which principals respond to the Teacher Quality provision as a decision-making process allows me to understand how schools in similar and dissimilar circumstances may stagnate, fall behind, or make progress regarding the percentage of “highly qualified” teachers on their staffs. How well principals respond to external mandates such as the Teacher Quality provision is linked to the decisions they make as they address the policy. Conducting my study through the lens of principal decision-making is appropriate in that it has been demonstrated that the degree to which principals, are adept at making good decisions in response to policy mandates results in positive/negative effects upon their schools and whether or not policies are implemented as their authors intend (Giles et. al., 2005; The Wallace Foundation, 2010).

The call to staff schools with “highly qualified” teachers mirrors reform efforts in other public and private enterprises. Like most public and some private enterprises, elementary schools and the districts that encapsulate them operate as open systems (Weick, 1976), engaging in interchanges with both their internal and external environments. Such open systems are characterized by their dependence on external forces while at the same time exhibiting a fair amount of autonomy. Resulting from the tension between the autonomy sought by such systems and their inability to survive detached from their environments are organizations whose boundaries are somewhat ambiguous and established in a largely arbitrary fashion (Scott, 1981).

Still, within school organizations, like other private and public institutions, there is a need for hierarchy with clear lines of authority, a sense of direction from management, predictability and cohesiveness. Theories outlining how such organizations might behave in dealing with external mandates abound (Beckhard & Pritchard, 1992; Cyert & March, 1963; Hoy & Miskell, 1996; Lipsky, 1980; March & Simon, 1993; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Senge, 1990).

Keeping in mind that there may be many approaches a principal may embark upon in addressing the Teacher Quality provision, a framework may now be established that facilitates an examination of the decision-making process of principals while concurrently allowing us to understand both the internal and external factors they must consider as they shape their responses.

Theoretical Framework

The study is framed using Cyert and March's *Behavioral Theory of the Firm* (1963) as a model of organizational decision-making. In selecting the *Behavioral Theory of the Firm* I have provided a way to investigate and understand the problem of how principals respond to the Teacher Quality provision of the NCLB legislation as one of decision-making. The *Behavioral Theory of the Firm* was created to explain the behavior of private firms; however, its strength lies in its versatility. It is this versatility, perhaps owing to its simplicity, that makes it tailor-made for this study.

The *Behavioral Theory of the Firm* is both broad and wide in scope in explaining the behavior of private firms. As a result of this expansive scope, it is more accommodating of this study than perhaps other frameworks might be. The *Behavioral Theory of the Firm* allows me to focus simply on principal response and to exclude other elements that could be part of a larger and differently framed study such as: the social justice of the decisions that were made by principals,

the ramifications of meeting/not meeting the mandate and the effect one outcome or another might have on student achievement or perhaps a strictly political take on the call for teacher quality.

As Gouldner (1979) has suggested: “Clarity is always dependent not on good but on poor vision; on blurring complex details in order to sight the main structure.” It is this clarity that I attempt to attain by framing my study simply, implementing a theory that, as a result of its clarity and precision provides the best possible fit in an effort to explain the complex issue of how principals, as the de facto CEOs of their schools respond in a manner that is focused, concise and accurate.

In defending my choice of a framework that was originally constructed to explain the behavior of private firms, I point out that any framework dealing with response to policy would be an approximation. A conceptual study of this kind is necessarily as (Thompson, 2001, p. 461) notes: “More abstract and more logical than the diversity of the reality.” Understanding that any framework for this study would be less than perfect, I have chosen what I feel is the best fit possible that contains the most utility for understanding principal response to the Teacher Quality provision.

Cyert and March’s Behavioral Theory of the Firm Model

In Cyert and March’s *Behavioral Theory of the Firm* model, choices are made by organizations. Within the model, the process of search, whereby organizations look to the internal and external environments to find solutions to problems, is outlined. Additionally, the organizational goals of the firm which determine how problems are interpreted and how solutions to those problems are developed and ultimately how decisions are made are also included.

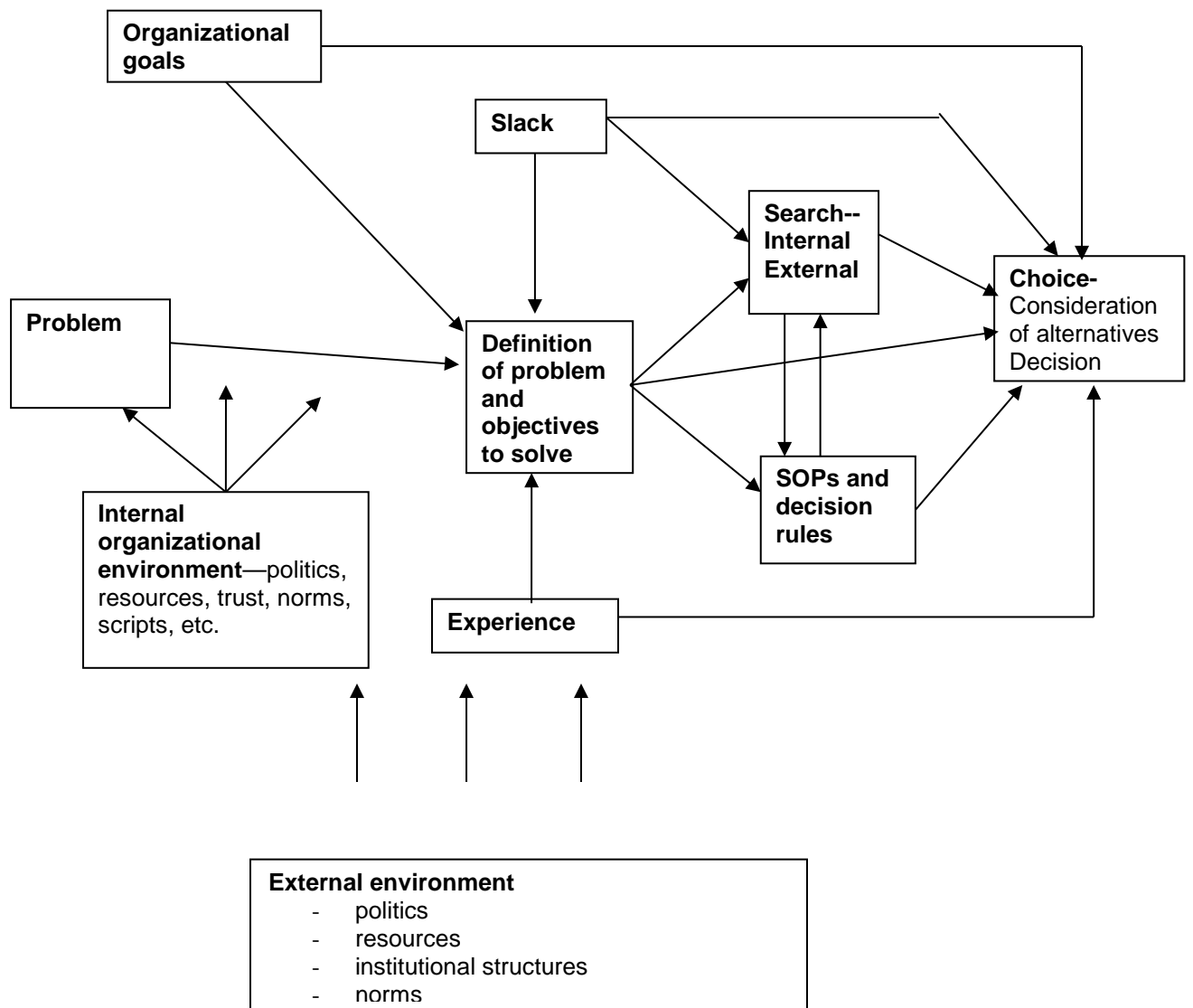
In looking for solutions to problems, the organization takes into consideration both its standard operating procedures and its experience in dealing with similar problems. In anticipation of disturbances, the firm builds up resources in excess of what it needs to function. These excess resources create organizational slack which, in turn promotes innovation and a means by which some members of the firm may be rewarded. How the most valued members of the organization are compensated, both monetarily and otherwise, via the allocation of limited resources determines the stability and eventual success level of the organization in meeting policy demands from the external environment.

An understanding regarding which abilities and work practices are coveted by the organization is conveyed by who receives what manner of compensation. As the organization makes clear what is most valued, consensus in the form of standard operating procedures is achieved, defining the organization which, in turn allows it to establish parameters with regard to its minimal and maximum proficiency and inherently producing consistency in its ideology and output. Once the composition and general terms of the organization's coalitions are fixed, its objectives are stabilized and elaborated.

The firm's internal environment, which may include, the politics inside the organization, its available resources to address the problem, its level of trust among actors and its norms, in turn influence where the search for solutions is conducted and how organizational goals may be met.

Influencing all of the above is the external environment which may include resources available to solve the problem from outside the firm, the politics of the problem and overriding institutional structures. At the center of this decision-making model is the manner in which organizations define problems and subsequently develop objectives whereby they may be solved.

Figure I: Cyert and March's Behavioral Theory of the Firm



How Organizations Interpret Problems

In the *Behavioral Theory of the Firm*, Cyert and March assert that response to external change by the firm is dependent upon how it defines a problem. Definition of a problem is informed by overall organizational goals and how the firm has dealt with similar problems in the past. Similarly, the firm searches for solutions to problems near where solutions to previous problems have been found in the past. The firm also recalls and utilizes what it has learned in attempting to solve similar problems. In locating solutions to problems, the firm must also consider both the internal organizational environment and the external environment along with the standard operating procedures of the organization, as they are all likely to impact the decision-making process. The internal/external environments, along with the standard operating procedures of the firm serve as limiting factors that in turn, dictate the number and types of responses to particular problems available in a specific instance. The firm must negotiate the internal environment skillfully, using those employees whose talents are most apropos to solving the problem. Additionally, the firm rewards individual employees whose abilities contribute to the prosperity of the organization via the use of side-payments, to ensure that the most valued individuals remain with the firm in both good times and bad.

In addition to utilizing the *Behavioral Theory of the Firm*, I also examined the broader education literature for the purpose of considering responses, strategies and influence factors within the Cyert and March framework that might explain principals' decision-making related to the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB. I also utilized the literature-based discussion for the purpose of demonstrating how Cyert and March's *Behavioral Theory of the Firm* might be applied to schools, and more specifically to principal decision-making around the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB.

Organizational Decision-Making

Firms engage in organizational decision-making. In making decisions, organizations consider only a limited number of decision alternatives. The choices made by an organization are heavily conditioned by the existing rules within such decisions are made. Additionally, organizations resolve conflict among many goals by addressing different goals at different times. The task before the individual leaders at the head of organizations is to consider the limited number of decision alternatives given them and choose the course of action they deem most beneficial to the overall goals of the firm at a specific time.

Organizational choice is a direct function of six factors: (1) internal and external search; (2) organizational standard operating procedures and decision rules (3) the definition of the problem and objectives to solve; (4) organizational slack and (5) experience in dealing with similar problems in the past. The sixth factor, the organization's overall goals interacting with its internal and external environments, influences all other factors.

Problemistic Search in Organizations

The firm's search for solutions to problems is motivated, simple-minded, and biased. A motivated search is one that is ongoing until a solution is found. In defining a simple-minded search we refer to one that proceeds on the basis of a simple model of causality until it is driven to a more complex one. A biased search is characterized by one in which the firm relies upon those having the most ability to address a specific problem and is navigated by the prior experiences and goals of the managers driving it.

Firms searching for solutions to problems also engage in the quasi-resolution of conflict, in which it distinguishes between essential and non-essential goals. The quasi-resolution of conflict allows the solving of problems to be achieved via local rationality, acceptable-level decision

rules, and sequential attention to goals. The quasi-resolution of conflict is also characterized by the firm breaking problems down, delegating elements to different parts of the organization and arriving at solutions that are not necessarily optimal, but nevertheless life-sustaining to the firm.

Organizations searching for solutions to problems emphasize short-run reaction to short-run feedback rather than anticipate long-run uncertain events. Additionally, organizations arrange a negotiated environment, imposing plans and procedures based on long-held industry tradition. In this manner, a reasonably manageable situation is achieved by avoiding wasting resources on events that cannot be predicted and emphasizing planning where future events may be controlled via preemptory actions of the firm.

Standard Operating Procedures

Standard operating procedures in the firm are part of the formal structure of organizations (Cyert & March, 1963). In short, standard operating procedures are the routines of an organization. Via standard operating procedures, the division of labor and the manner in which problems may be addressed is defined and limited (March, 1994). The standard operating procedures of the firm allow individuals to gather and process information more effectively and inform decision-making (March & Simon, 1993). However, standard operating procedures should not be too rigid as they are a guideline for decision-making and are not always set in stone. Standard operating procedures result from the accumulation of experience by the firm dealing with problems in a trial and error fashion (Nelson & Winter, 1982; Simon, 1976). As such, these patterned sequences of learned behavior among multiple actors linked through communication and authority become the default term for all the regular and predictable behavior of the firm (Cohen & Bacdayan, 1994). Understanding the firm's standard operating procedures provides clues not only about the firm itself, but also the environment in which it

functions and the manner by which the decision-making process is undertaken and how decisions are made (Prietula & Watson, 2000).

Organizational Slack

As outlined in Cyert and March's theory, firms allow "organizational slack" – resources held by the organization in excess of what is required to maintain it. Organizational slack provides a buffer against an uncertain external environment. In challenging economic times this slack lessens the blow to organizations, allowing them to maintain their levels of employees and resources available to staff members so that they may be productive in their jobs (Cheng & Kesner, 1997). In this manner, the firm may perpetuate the culture of the organization, promote loyalty among employees and increase flexibility in decision-making. The amount of slack available to an organization informs decision-making in that the firm must consider the number of resources available to address specific problems. Generally speaking, the more slack an organization has available, the larger its capacity to address problems overall is likely to be. However, the type of slack available to address problems matters as well because excess resources are only of use if they are meaningful in solving specific problems at specific times.

In prosperous economic times organizational slack discourages employees from seeking other employment that may be more lucrative in the short run, but perhaps not so in the long run. Additionally, slack provides a catalyst for innovation as surplus resources are available to accommodate experimentation, innovation and change that may benefit the firm in the long run as such behavior anticipates and attempts to address shifts in the external environment before they occur (Smith et. al. 1991).

Side-Payments

The term “side payments” is used to describe how organizational slack, or excess resources of the firm are transformed into varying types of rewards for members of the firm (Cyert & March, 1963). In essence, side-payments are incentives provided to the most valued members of the firm. Side-payments are inducements that attempt to secure the loyalty of select members to the organization. In organizations, monetary side-payments are considered essential. However, side-payments such as employment contracts, promotion structures and the like which involve policy commitments to employees are thought to be of more benefit to the firm than simple enhanced monetary compensation. Typically, side-payments are made by the firm to members of management. However, other personnel en masse may be provided side-payments for achieving production targets as an example (Curwen, 1963).

In the decision-making process, “side-payments” may be used to influence which individuals remain part of the firm and those that exit. That is, in rewarding some members of the organization and not rewarding others, those most favored by the firm are more likely to remain while those not rewarded become more likely to leave. Through the effective use of inducements in the form of “side-payments,” leaders of the firm seek to retain those whose abilities are more likely to yield solutions to external disturbances faced by the firm and, at the same time rid themselves of those whose abilities are not aligned with problems most frequently encountered by the organization.

Organizational Learning

Organizational learning in the firm results when an organization revises its procedures for search as a function of its experience. Such adaptation is the result of individuals in the organization responding to changes in both the internal and external environments. This

adaptation is principally fueled by three functions 1) organizational goals of a previous time frame 2) organizational experience in attempting to address the previous goal and 3) the experience of comparable organizations in dealing with the same goal in the same time period.

Organizational Goals

Cyert and March (1963) propose that organizational goals are chiefly established among members of dominant coalitions pursuing their own specific interests. Over time, the dominant coalitions shift in terms of both their size and composition. Some of the factors affecting the influence of dominant coalitions within the firm are ownership, the ability to handle uncertainty, and ideological centrality within the organization. Organizational goals emerge from the dominant coalitions through negotiation. In establishing overall organizational goals, different goals may be attended to at different times. Often, demands upon the organization are inconsistent, with one being satisfied at the expense of another. In making decisions, organizational goals influence the leaders of the organization in the manner they decide which goals are to be addressed in a given time frame.

Internal Environment

A firm's internal environment may consist of the politics of the organization along with the resources available to address problems. Politics within the firm may be characterized as individuals making decisions and taking actions that are designed to benefit specific individuals or groups rather than the organization itself. Often, politics within the firm are unsanctioned, running counter to accepted organizational ideology and not necessarily based on practitioner expertise (Mintzberg, 1979).

In referring to the internal environment of the firm we are also talking about relationships within the organization, composition of coalitions and levels of trust. Additionally, the internal

environment of the firm refers to its norms and institutional structures and the manner in which they affect its ability to effectively address problems. Depending upon the type of firm and the type of problem before it, internal environments may have a profound impact upon the manner in which it addresses problems (Jones, 1985). The problems facing the firm in the present may be well aligned with the abilities of its members and the amount of slack available to solve a specific external disturbance. In such a case the solving of the problem would be rather clear cut. However, if it were the case that the external disturbances did not match up well with the abilities of current staff members or the amount of organizational slack available to respond to the problem, remedies would be much more difficult to obtain. As a result, the relative availability of solutions informs both strategies to be undertaken and decision-making.

In understanding the internal environment of the firm, one may understand its strengths and weaknesses in dealing with specific problems. Essentially, by studying the internal environment, firms gain an understanding of what they can do.

External Environment

The external environment of the firm also consists of politics, resources available to solve the problem, institutional structures and norms in the marketplace. The firm constantly scans the external environment looking for threats, in the form of competition, the imposition of new regulatory measures and changes in the level of available resources. As a result, an understanding of the external environment by the firm, in turn will likely lead to an understanding of the opportunities and threats impacting it from outside the organization. As outlined previously, by studying the internal environment, firms gain an understanding of what they can do. In studying the external environment, firms are able to identify what they might choose to do in solving disturbances. In some respects, knowledge of the external environment

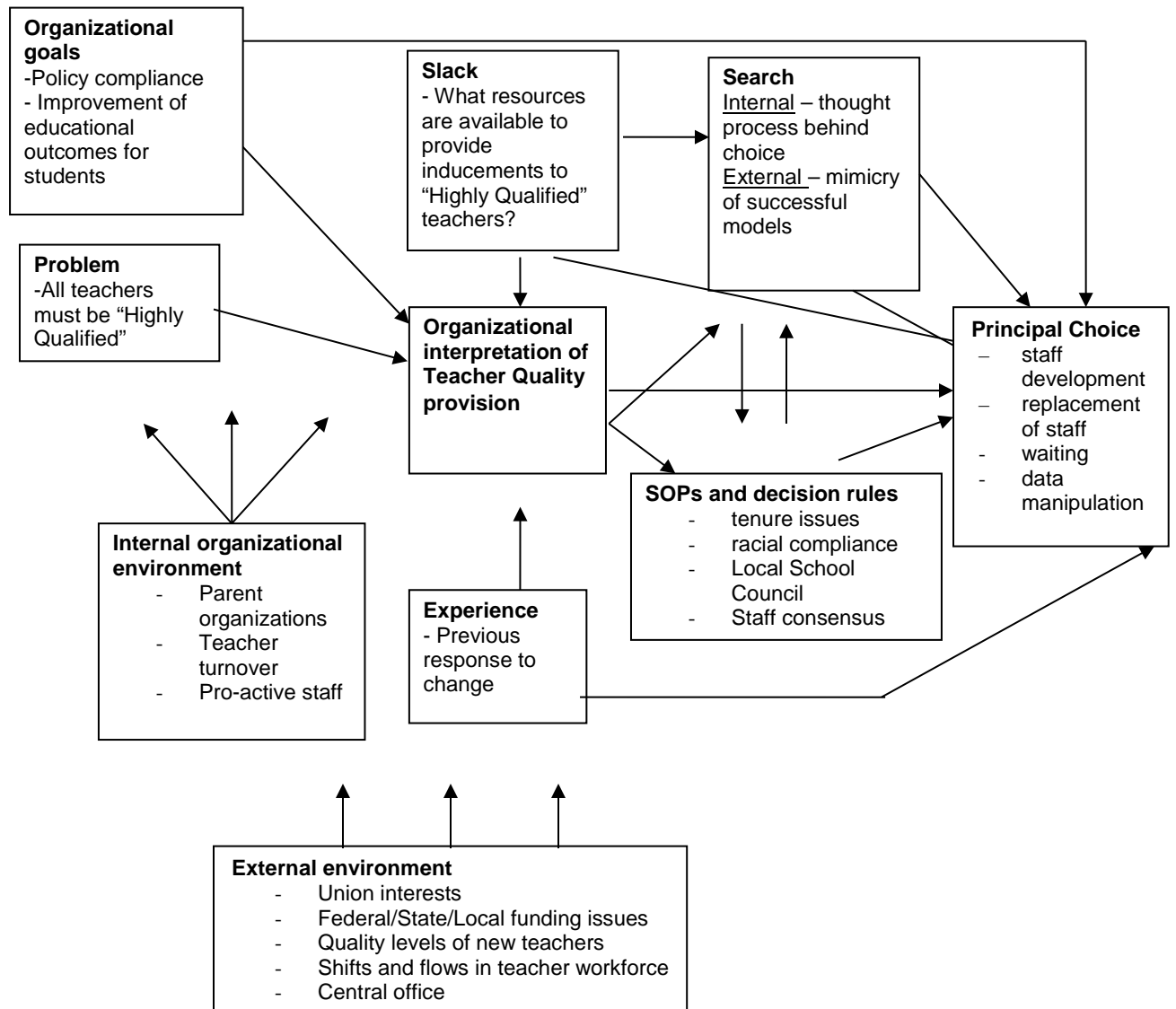
produces strategy while an understanding of the internal environment determines capacity levels for the purpose of embarking upon strategies. In essence, the external environment informs the internal environment while the internal environment acts as a filter for information gathered from the external environment.

Application of the Theory to This Study

The *Behavioral Theory of the Firm* may be applied to an investigation of public entities such as schools as it posits that management will behave in predictable fashion when faced with external change – much like principals who must contend with the implementation of the NCLB legislation – and, more specifically the Teacher Quality provision. The theory is elegant in its simplicity, but at the same time rich enough to provide sufficient complexity for the purpose of understanding how decisions are made across many different types of organizations, including a public school.

In applying Cyert and March's theory to the study of decision-making as a response to the Teacher Quality provision of the No Child Left Behind legislation, a frame is provided for the study that allows an understanding of principal response to external mandates. Inserting the factors influencing principal choice, per the literature, into the model I am able to frame the manner in which principals may go about addressing the problem of staffing schools with “highly qualified” teachers.

Figure II: Cyert and March's Behavioral Theory of the Firm Applied Model



In applying Cyert and March's *Behavioral Theory of the Firm* to the problem of how principals responded to the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB, I inserted factors into the model as appropriate. As with the original model, used to describe the behavior of private firms, the solving of the problem begins with how it is interpreted by a school organization. Internal

environmental factors such as parent organizations, the level of teacher turnover and the abilities of those on staff to meet the Teacher Quality mandate influence how the problem is interpreted. Standard operating procedures having to do with the norms of the school organization, influence the amount of slack available to address the problem and determine whether or not a solution is located from either an internal or external source. A combination of internal and external sources may also be invoked in meeting the problem. Experience in dealing with similar problems in the past informs how the problem of installing a “highly qualified” teacher in every classroom is interpreted by the school organization and what steps are likely to be taken by the principal and others to meet the mandate. The external environment, including union interests, funding issues, and central office policies as well as the level of teacher supply, influences every other aspect of the model. To the extreme right of the model are those choices made by principals in attempting to meet the Teacher Quality provision mandate.

Types of Organizational Search by Principals

The search process as outlined by Cyert and March is characterized by its being motivated, simple-minded and biased. Recalling, a motivated search is one that continues until a solution to a problem has been found. A simple-minded search is one that is conducted near where solutions to similar problems have been found in the past. In addressing a problem in a simple-minded fashion, organizations stretch old rules for the purpose of solving new problems and, in so doing limit alternative approaches (Shulz, 1998). Finally, a biased search is one in which the strongest abilities of the organization’s members are utilized.

Principals and Motivated Search

Principals have little choice but to engage in motivated search for a solution to the problem of meeting the Teacher Quality provision. Like the firm, principals will continue in their attempts

to meet the mandate until a solution, or an approximate solution is found. Unlike firms however, principals, in this case, are mandated by law to be engaged in motivated search while private entities are not always compelled to do so. As Cyert and March say, the firm engages in motivated search toward the end of maximizing productivity, while the public school principal, in this case is mandated by law to address the Teacher Quality provision. However, both the firm and principals in public schools engage in motivated search as a means by which they may respond to a changing external environment.

Principals and Simple-Minded Search

Like the firm, public school principals are likely to engage in simple-minded search whereby the problem is addressed assuming a simple model of causality until a more complex one emerges. In attempting to meet the Teacher Quality mandate, principals are initially likely to assume the simple causality of the problem of not having a staff that is composed of “highly qualified” teachers is related to a personnel supply problem. This is likely to be part of the problem, especially in some subjects, but principals may also be forced to address other issues that impact the problem of supply. Such influences may include teacher retention, union restraints, district policy and budgetary constraints.

Principals and Biased Search

Principals, like the firm may engage in biased search. In solving problems, both the firm and schools have staffs that play significant roles in helping to address them. The roles played by individuals in both the firm and schools are dependent upon the nature of the problem, the abilities of those on staff, and the degree to which each staff member is regarded by the upper level of management. How much weight is given to the opinions of individual members and coalitions of the organization may depend upon many factors. Paramount among these

numerous factors is an individual's or coalition's level of expertise in dealing with the problem at hand. In addition, an individual's or coalition's rank within the school organization as well as the length of their tenure may factor in as well.

As an example of biased search, the firm may respond to globalization and the need for new markets in the same manner it responded to the need to bolster its market share domestically in years past. If the firm finds itself out of compliance with recently passed environmental impact legislation, it will rely on its legal team to negotiate a response. If the firm seeks to change its image in response to negative publicity, it may turn to its marketing or public relations departments.

Public schools function in much the same way. As an example, schools may respond to the tenants of NCLB and the Teacher Quality provision in much the same way they responded to previous reform efforts like the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in the 1960's, which served as the precursor to NCLB.

In searching for solutions to problems, principals, like the firm may engage in what Cyert and March (1963) term the "quasi-resolution" of conflict. In the "quasi-resolution" of conflict organizations break problems into pieces, attempting to arrive at an approximate solution that may not be optimal, but sufficient enough to retain its functionality and legitimacy. Principals seeking solutions to the Teacher Quality mandate may be likely to respond in a fashion that merely serves to perpetuate the school organization. They may seek to emulate successful schools, modeling themselves after those that have already achieved compliance, mimicking success while not necessarily achieving it (March & Olsen, 1976).

This type of mimicking known as "institutional isomorphism" occurs in both public institutions and private firms. In institutional isomorphism, a threshold is reached whereby

organizations respond to change in manners that provide legitimacy, but do not necessarily improve performance (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). And, while responding in such a manner may prevent organizations from becoming successful, the adoption of plans that have been successfully implemented by others may well provide legitimacy to some schools, while not necessarily improving their performance (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). In doing so, schools and their principals, may gain efficacy if they appear to be following widely-held procedural norms, whether or not such norms prove effective in addressing problems (Scott, 2004).

Principals and Uncertainty Avoidance

Cyert and March outline how certainty and uncertainty influences the search process and decision-making in organizations. In using the term “certainty” I refer to those internal and external variables that remain constant, predictable and understood by leaders of organizations such as principals.

As an example, in attempting to meet the Teacher Quality mandate, principals may be certain of what is being asked of them by the federal government via individual states. Essentially, they are told to staff each classroom with a teacher who has been licensed by their states to teach the grades/subjects for which they are being hired. As a result, principals are able to act with a level of certainty as to what is required as they address the mandate in that they are given minimal requirements that assure them of compliance if they are met.

In defining “uncertainty,” I refer to those variables that are either not understood by leaders of organizations or internal or external circumstances that change in an unforeseeable manner. The level of uncertainty differs from organization to organization in that some have more resources available to respond to problems and thus have diminished uncertainty compared with similar organizations. As an example, principals of schools with high levels of poverty may experience

significantly more ambiguity with respect to the number of teachers available to fill vacancies in their buildings than principals at the helm of more affluent schools. They may also have more financial restraints. As a result, such uncertainty, or ambiguity may influence decision-making.

It is likely that principals may choose to limit the most basic of uncertainties - not having a properly credentialed teacher in a classroom, and achieving compliance with the Teacher Quality provision for the purpose of addressing short-term concerns to the exclusion of long term ideals.

Limiting Uncertainty in Public Schools

In the search process, principals in their schools, like Cyert and March's firm, may consider a limited number of decision alternatives in attempting to staff their buildings with "highly qualified" teachers. Principals may attempt to minimize uncertainty by making stability amongst their staff a priority. However, it must be noted that some principals, due to limited capacity may find themselves unable to achieve this stability by retaining valued staff. In such cases principals may then choose to focus on ensuring a steady supply of applicants, fresh from the university who are "highly qualified" under NCLB, but who possess little or no experience in a classroom. In effect, some principals may try to ensure stability in their buildings, not by retaining staff, but rather by insuring that a steady stream of applicants, that are fully credentialed and of the highest quality obtainable are readily available when veteran teachers inevitably exit for greener pastures (Ingersoll, 2001b). Embarking upon such a strategy, principals may seek to distinguish between the essential, fulfilling the requirements of the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB, while relegating to the back burner the non-essential goal of actually placing a truly excellent teacher in every classroom. And, while such a strategy may not be optimal, it is likely that in some cases this is a principal's best available option. As Cyert

and March tell us, organizations often arrive at approximate solutions, not because they are best, but because they are available.

Standard Operating Procedures in Schools

Principal choice may be limited and shaped to some degree by the standard operating procedures of school organizations. Such standard operating procedures may include the manner in which tenure and seniority of teachers is determined by collective bargaining agreements negotiated with teacher unions. In many instances, specifically when budget shortfalls require cutbacks in teaching staff, union agreements dictate that teachers with tenure and the most total years in a system be retained regardless of their level of effectiveness. Such agreements may not only directly influence the level of teacher quality in a school, but also may also impede the ability of principals to effectively address the problem in the long-term. In some cases, collective bargaining agreements also prescribe maximum class sizes and determine student/teacher ratios.

The State of Illinois, as an example, has some of the most crowded classrooms in the nation with an average of 22 students per class making it one of the ten most crowded (NCES, 2004a). Having such a density of students in classrooms may serve to diminish the ability of even high quality teachers to be effective. This, in turn, may lead to some high quality teachers migrating to more affluent districts or schools in their own districts located in more affluent areas which tend to have lower class sizes, thus exacerbating principals' ability to fulfill the Teacher Quality mandate (Baker, 2010). However, such policies are routinely insisted upon by districts that require flexibility regarding class size, given uncertain economic times which may precipitate an influx and exodus of students in specific schools and districts (Ashby, 2010).

Standard operating procedures of this sort are typically the result of the give and take process that districts and teacher unions engage in when contracts are being negotiated. Many standard operating procedures directly influence how principals address policy mandates. The number of students placed in each classroom is a prime example of a policy that benefits unions and their teachers as well as districts and their administrators. It is also illustrative of how standard operating procedures inform principal decision-making.

Other standard operating procedures may include the timing of hiring in a district. As an example, compliant schools largely located in more affluent districts tend to hire earlier in the year, often completing the process by spring (Liu & Johnson, 2006). Non-compliant schools, typically located in less affluent districts tend to hire later, leaving principals at the helm of schools in such districts with fewer options regarding who may be hired (Levin, Mulhern & Schunck, 2005; Samuels, 2011b). Standard operating procedures having to do with the timing of hiring may typically be linked to affluent districts having enough local funding to cover the cost of new hires, and the inability of less affluent districts, who must wait on state funding that is often held up in budgetary battles to do so as a result of a lack of available funding. In some cases, by the time funding from the state arrives, few “highly qualified” teachers remain available, particularly in high need areas such as Special Education, Science, Math and Bi-Lingual Education (Costrell & Podgursky, 2010). Such limitations, placed on principals, typically in non-compliant schools may influence who principals may hire and when as they attempt to fulfill the Teacher Quality mandate.

Additional standard operating procedures may have to do with how professional development is implemented in districts. Principals in some schools may have more discretion than others with respect to what type of professional development is chosen, its duration and how it is tied to

overall organizational goals. As an example, schools in districts that have failed to achieve AYP and are more likely to have a larger percentage of their teaching staffs out of compliance are often mandated to spend their profession development dollars on activities demonstrated to improve student test scores in the short run rather than focusing on specific subject matter (Scot et. al., 2009; Viadero, 2005). Principals in schools that have achieved AYP, largely located in more affluent areas commonly have more leeway regarding the type of professional development chosen for their schools. They also typically have more money overall for professional development (Linn et. al., 2010). Such standard operating procedures are likely to influence the manner in which principals attempt to gain certification for their staff members who are out of compliance.

Other standard operating procedures may prescribe how parental governing bodies such as parent organizations are comprised, how their meetings take place and rules for determining their level of influence upon school matters. Additional standard operating procedures may address how hiring is conducted and the level of influence in determining which subjects, outside those required by local and state laws are to be taught and what personnel are to be hired to teach those subjects. Such standard operating procedures outline expectations and processes for stakeholder participation in personnel decisions. These standard operating procedures may, in turn influence principals regarding where the search for a solution to the problem of staffing their schools with “highly qualified” teachers takes place and to what degree the search is internal, external or a combination of both.

Definition of Problem by Principals

How principals interpret the problem of staffing their schools with “highly qualified” teachers is informed by a number of factors. Like the firm, overall organizational goals may influence

how principals address external mandates. Principals, like the firm, may respond to the mandate by seeking solutions near where solutions to similar problems have been found in the past. Like the firm, principals are likely to be influenced by actions taken in the past to address similar problems that proved unsuccessful and make adjustments. They, like private firms, must also consider the internal and external environments impacting the school along with standard operating procedures that may serve as limiting factors in decision-making. Principals may take advantage of slack within the school organization for the purpose of meeting the mandate and may also use side-payments as inducements that may serve to facilitate compliance with the mandate.

Principals and Organizational Slack

Organizational slack is practiced in schools when principals maintain resources in excess of what is absolutely necessary to perpetuate the organization. Organizational slack in schools may provide a lever by which individual teachers or coalitions of teachers are given resources to implement practices that have uncertain outcomes. And, because such practices may or may not improve school performance, the holding of organizational slack provides a manner by which principals may support innovation without risking damage to the organization. Furthermore, organizational slack may provide a means by which overall school performance may be more readily achieved (Nelson & Winter, 1982).

Slack may take many forms in schools. As an example, a principal may use discretionary funding to invest in curricular materials favored by individuals or groups of teachers in the school. As a result, such teachers may feel more comfortable in their practice, instruct at a higher level and provide positive outcomes for the school organization. Principals may also use organizational slack to purchase professional development aligned with methodologies favored

by teachers as an example. Additionally, staffing a building with more teachers than required by law via use of discretionary funds, thus lowering class size, may also be a form of slack. All of the aforementioned actions may impact the ability of principals to recruit and retain “highly qualified” teachers. This is the case because it is likely that teachers who are provided curricular materials of their choosing, exposed to sought after professional development, teaching in classrooms with reduced class sizes may be more likely to be recruited and retained in schools maintaining such organizational slack.

Principals may also practice organizational slack by establishing a “rainy day” fund for the purpose of maintaining the level of staffing when cuts are made in external funding. Creating a buffer using discretionary funding in such a manner, may allow principals, in some instances to retain teachers whose positions are cut as a result of funding shortfalls at the local and state levels (Borman, 2005; Farkas & Hall, 2000). In this manner, principals may also practice uncertainty avoidance and maintain a desirable status quo.

In attempting to retain the most valued of teachers, principals are also typically assisted by their districts. As an example, organizational slack is built into school organizations by the over-arching policies of the state and district central offices. The slack that results from these policies, which evolve via collective bargaining with teacher unions, permeate entire school systems (Firestone & Corbett, 1987). As an example of this type of slack, teachers typically receive twelve annual sick days and three personal days in addition to ten paid holidays throughout the school year. They also receive full health coverage for less than \$1,000 per year in premiums, far below the national average (Armour & Appleby, 2003; IDOCMS, 2010). Additionally, teachers commonly receive full pensions when they retire after a minimum of thirty years service that provides them with 75% of their annual earnings based on the average salaries they receive

in their last four years of service, typically years when they receive the highest compensation of their careers (Chicago Teachers Union, 2007; IFT, 2009).

Such pension plans provide an incentive for teachers to remain in their states and may also serve to inhibit others from moving out of a particular district. And, while none of the aforementioned incentives will prevent teachers from seeking out more attractive positions within a district, they do serve, to a small degree to limit mobility to other districts, and to a large degree to other states.

Side-Payments

Some teachers may choose to remain in a less than optimal school if they feel they are provided “side payments” in the form of prime classroom assignments, additional opportunities to pad their salaries via participation in after school programs and a large degree of autonomy in their classrooms. Teachers are also more likely to remain in schools where they feel they are appreciated. Principals may be able to demonstrate their appreciation for teachers via small tokens of appreciation – a note of thanks, a small gift card or curricular materials as examples. Furthermore, the public presentation of side-payments to some teachers, while withholding them from others may send a clear message as to what practices are most coveted by the principal. Concurrently, a principal may be able to keep those teachers that are most valued while encouraging others to exit. In some cases, the absence of side-payments to individual teachers may speak louder than the rewarding of them to others.

In order to promote stability amongst staff, principals may reward “side payments” to both individuals and coalitions. As one example, principals may reward their most valued teachers with opportunities to pad their salaries via after school and summer school assignments. They may make capital improvements to their physical plants that benefit some individuals more than

others (Buckley, Schneider, & Shang, 2003). Principals may also reward their most-valued teachers with the best students in the most aesthetically pleasing classrooms. Additionally, principals may provide some teachers with more preparation periods than others.

“Side payments,” over which individual principals have great discretion, may help to retain the most valued of teachers, bolster the level of teacher quality in an individual school and concurrently facilitate compliance with the Teacher Quality provision. Side-payments may also bolster recruitment and help to motivate teachers currently on staff. The degree of skill with which a principal doles out “side payments” to the highest performing teachers in their buildings in a fair and equitable manner, may go a long way towards determining whether or not quality teachers provide the organization with stability and perennial achievement, or exit in search of more desirable conditions and compensation elsewhere (Diamantes, 2004; Jacob & Walsh, 2011).

Schools and Organizational Learning

Much like the firm, schools engage in organizational learning. The phenomenon of organizational learning as outlined by Cyert and March in which the firm adapts to changes in its internal and external environments, considering previous goals, experience in addressing those goals and the experience of similar organizations may be particularly germane to principals and their schools as they attempt to respond to the mandate. Since its inception in 2002 the legislation has seen a rapid evolution (Ed Policy Update, 2005). A vast majority of states have lowered their standards for declaring a teacher “highly qualified” This has been done, in large measure because the standards outlined in the legislation proved too rigorous and, in many cases only served to exacerbate teacher shortages in some areas (Rado, 2004).

Additionally, principals are aware that numerous waivers were granted by the Education Department when 80% of states were unable to meet the 2006 deadline for having a “highly qualified” teacher at the head of every classroom Keller, 2005; Keller, 2007a).

As a result of increased flexibility in the law, concurrent with schools, districts and states demonstrating that they are unable to fully meet the mandate emerge; principal decision-making and their relative sense of urgency is likely be affected.

Organizational Goals in Schools

In schools, like the firm, organizational goals are established among members of dominant coalitions pursuing their own specific interests. These coalitions may include teachers, administrators and parent groups among others. Alliances around issues such as the hiring and retainment, as well as the dismissal of teachers may develop among these coalitions. Members of coalitions may change as issues and the interests of their members evolve. As a result, the compositions and size of coalitions may shift. In public schools, factors affecting the influence of coalitions may include individual groups’ ability to address the problem, and the ability to handle uncertainty along with ideological centrality among the school organization’s members. Organizational goals emerge in public schools from the dominant coalitions through negotiation. As organizational goals are established through negotiation, different goals may be attended to at different times. Many times, demands upon the organization are inconsistent, with one being satisfied at the expense of another. In this study as an example, the demand for schools to achieve AYP may relegate the problem of staffing a building with “highly qualified” teachers to secondary status as more immediate sanctions are attached to a school’s failure to attain AYP .

Internal Environment of Schools

The internal environments of schools consist of the politics of the individual building, the resources available to the principal to solve problems within the organization, the levels of trust and harmony among staff and longstanding norms which are accepted by a majority of employees. The politics of individual schools may include parent organizations which contribute input into principal decision-making including, but not limited to personnel decisions. Additionally, politics of individual schools may also include power structures that are not officially sanctioned but nevertheless have a profound influence on how decisions are made. Principals may rely on several staff members for input regarding how problems are met and resolved. These favored staff members gain influence as a result of their experience or expertise as it relates to the problem at hand. The principal may seek out some staff members he/she perceives may be trusted to provide sound advice, exercise discretion and remain loyal. Other politics within a school may emanate from union leadership within the building, as they must typically be included in the decision-making process.

The number of resources available to individual principals for the purpose of solving problems may have a significant impact on the manner in which problems are addressed in schools. The amount of resources available to address specific issues such as the hiring of “highly qualified” teachers will likely influence response. The level of resources available to principals may also be problem specific. As an example, principals may have an excess amount of funding to purchase curricular material while concurrently having little or no funding to lure “highly qualified” teachers to individual schools. The number of resources available to principals in the form of not only funding, but human capital to address problems may spell the

difference between whether a problem is completely solved or an approximate solution is all that is available.

The norms of a specific school influence decision-making on the part of the principal as well. Such norms may be either formal or informal in nature with formal norms having precedent over informal norms. Formal norms may include rules for principals to abide by when dealing with parent groups, unions, teachers and students. Informal norms may include school specific ways of handling conflict, weight given to individuals in addressing problems and the establishment of unspoken, but fully recognized rules of conduct.

External Environments of Schools

As public entities, schools must respond to numerous disturbances emanating from their external environment. External politics in particular are likely the most profound influence upon policy. As an example, the Teacher Quality provision and the entire NCLB legislation was enacted largely as the result of an ongoing, bi-partisan political narrative that children in the nation's schools were falling behind those of other developed countries. The manner in which federal NCLB policy is implemented is influenced by its interpretation at the state and local levels. As an example, there is evidence that the manner in which NCLB legislation is interpreted at the state level may be influenced by the predominate party in individual states (Loveless, 2006).

External environments may also provide resources by which schools may better address the problem of staffing each classroom with a "highly qualified" teacher. As an example, several states have received grants for the purpose of improving the quality level of teachers under the Race to the Top initiative via the creation of new evaluation systems as well as increasing pay for educators who demonstrate an ability to increase student achievement in underachieving

schools (Green, 2011). Additionally, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the federal government has provided \$100 billion dollars to stave off teacher layoffs as the result of an economic downturn of 2008, likely allowing individual states, districts and schools to retain “highly qualified” teachers that would otherwise have been terminated (USDE,2009b).

The external environment also establishes rules and norms that address the manner in which various levels of government contribute to the funding of schools, how individual states and districts determine standards for obtaining a teaching license and how much teachers are to be paid.

Teacher unions, though largely an internal function are present in the external environment as well in that such unions have affiliations negotiating on their behalf at the state and national level. Most Illinois teachers belonging to a local union for instance, are also represented by the Illinois Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers, which itself is an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor (AFT, 2011; IFT, 2010).

Like Cyert and March’s firm, the school principal may survey the external environment for the purpose of determining relative levels of threat and opportunity. After gaining an understanding of variables likely to impact schools, principals may then use what they have learned about the external environment to develop strategies to address problems.

Limitations of the Framework

There are limitations in utilizing Cyert and March’s *Behavioral Theory of the Firm* that were anticipated. As public institutions, schools must concurrently deal with not only a changing marketplace, but also public perception along with moral and social issues. Cyert and March’s firm by contrast has at its core only a singular goal which, to a large degree dictates actions to be taken, namely the maximization of output and inherently profits. Still, while not identical, both

the CEOs of Cyert and March's firm, and public school principals as decision-makers may deal with similar external factors, be they unions, political changes which may alter the overall economic climate or resources available to respond to a call for change.

Additionally, while political considerations may differ between the public school and a private firm, one might successfully argue that the external environment has a large influence on both organizations. The firm may be subject to political pressures such as tax increases, environmental controls, ethics laws, safety standards and increases in the minimum wage for example. Similarly, the public school principal must also respond to alterations in education standards, increases/decreases in budgets and changes in who may/may not be hired as the result of policy directives regarding what constitutes teacher quality.

An overriding interest for both the firm and the elementary school is monetary. The manner in which the firm responds to changes in the external environment may determine its short-term viability and its long term success as a money-making entity. Similarly, public schools and the principals at their helm, like the firm, also have an indirect monetary interest in complying with external mandates as well. If schools fail to adequately comply with mandates for change like NCLB Act of 2001, they risk losing funding – the lifeblood of both the firm and all educational institutions.

Summary of Applied Theoretical Framework

The firm and public schools are similar in that they both must deal with an external environment that is never completely stabilized. Given this reality, both the firm and elementary school principals must react swiftly to constant changes in the external environment. Both institutions must be adaptable in order to remain viable. This has always been true for the firm.

Recently, with the advent of NCLB and its numerous mandates, principals may have had to recalibrate the norm for their schools as well.

Both the private firm and elementary schools must deal with attracting and retaining the very best people. Both organizations have their own sets of micro-politics in play wherein members of the organization vie for influence (Ball, 1987). Both the public school and the private firm are able to provide valued employees “side payments” in the form of health plan benefits, paid vacations, holiday pay and pension plans. As the economic climate continues to remain uncertain, the public school’s standing as an institution that will not be going away may also provide a carrot with which it may attract and retain employees, though that is currently changing as well as tenure and collective bargaining rights are currently being dismantled in some states (Nichols, 2011).

The standard operating procedures in Cyert and March’s firm are similar to those in public schools as well. Organizations such as Cyert and March’s firm learn by memorizing disturbances and reactions to those disturbances – what worked, and perhaps more importantly what did not (Dierks et. al, 2001). Private firms recall past successes and failures. They also create their everyday norms or standard operating procedures. Public schools operate in much the same way. They also recall past struggles with reform, immediately eliminate courses of action that failed and embrace strategies that address the compliance aspect of reform initially and, perhaps eventually embrace the reform itself.

Responses to the No Child Left Behind legislation, like other reforms, are likely to be influenced by context (McLaughlin, 1987). This coupled with an inherent theory of action implied by the NCLB legislation that emphasizes the threat of sanctions as an incentive (Finnigan, O’Day & Wakelyn, 2003), may find principals responding to the mandate by relying

on the aforementioned familiar strategies. And, given that the policy being addressed “Is every teacher in a given school highly qualified: yes/no?” is a binary choice, principals are pre-disposed to arriving at an approximate solution as there is bound to be some measure of non-compliance given the absolutism of the policy demand (Sproull, 1981).

How the problem of fulfilling the Teacher Quality provision of the NCLB Act is addressed in individual schools may reflect the manner in which principals are adept at identifying goals for the school and subsequently juxtaposing those goals against the mandates of the policy. Principals may benefit from their relative ability to understand the number of resources at their disposal and then use them prudently. They may also become adept at identifying members of their staffs who, as a result of their expertise could be of assistance in meeting external policy demands such as the Teacher Quality provision. Principals also may need to become skillful at identifying how both the internal and external environments may dictate courses of action more likely to be successful than others.

In short, principals may be forced to address the realities of the NCLB policy against their reality, a reality that, which in many instances has, at its core, scarce resources and limited ability to achieve the policy mandate. Ultimately, the degree of relative success individual schools may have in meeting the demands of the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB is dependent upon the decision-making abilities of their principals.

Types of Responses/Strategies

In responding to the call for teacher quality principals may choose from several strategies. They may also combine strategies for the purpose of meeting the mandate. Strategies may include, providing professional development for teachers on staff who are out of compliance, removing teachers who are out of compliance and replacing them, recruiting “highly qualified”

teachers from the university and other elementary schools, mentoring and increasing supports for new teachers, retaining valued teachers who have been fully certified, or simply waiting for the policy to be modified.

In some cases, principals may be limited by district or state policies regarding the manner in which they go about gaining “highly qualified” status for all of their teachers. Districts and states may have guidelines within principals must maneuver as they attempt to meet the mandate,

Professional Development

Given the financial and political pressures placed upon schools, principals may find themselves choosing from a short list of remedies in attempting to meet the mandate of the Teacher Quality provision. One such remedy is to provide staff development for teachers in their buildings who are not yet certified, so that they may become fully credentialed and achieve “highly qualified” status. Improving the quality of teachers via professional development is not a new concept. Professional development has long been considered a primary component in achieving various school reforms (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; Hall & Loucks, 1978; Smylie, 1995).

Staff development for teachers may include workshops, conferences or training, regular collaboration with other teachers, individual or collaborative research, mentoring or peer observation and coaching, observational visits to other schools, university courses taken for recertification or advanced certification, teacher networks, university courses other than those taken for recertification or advanced certification and acting as a presenter at a workshop, conference or training (U.S. Department of Education, 1999-2000).

High Quality Professional Development

Professional development may be a quick fix for some principals seeking to attain “highly qualified” status for their teachers who are out of compliance. However, depending upon how they interpret the Teacher Quality provision, principals may be hesitant to embark upon this strategy if others are more readily available. This may be due in part to the reality that not all professional development is equal in its ability to transform or even improve practice. Consequently, some principals may be reluctant to invest scarce resources in low-quality professional development even if doing so would facilitate achieving compliance with the Teacher Quality provision. Studies have found that professional development must be of high intensity over an extended period of time before classroom practice will be significantly affected (Borko, 2004; Hawley & Valli, 1999; Richardson & Placier, 2001; Smylie, Bilcer, Greenberg & Harris, 1998, Supovitz & Zief, 2000). Typically, teachers must be exposed to a teaching practice for a minimum of 80 hours before they even use methodology learned in professional development frequently, while an additional 80 hours is required before teachers report significant changes in their practice (Supovitz & Turner, 2000). However, a limiting factor regarding the use of professional development, for the purpose of obtaining immediate certification or improving practice in the long run is the reality that some principals may or may not have the available funds to secure additional professional development that is not prescribed by their districts..

As accountability demands have increased under NCLB, the vast majority of professional development funding in the nation’s schools is now directed toward increasing standardized test scores so that schools may increase their prospects of achieving AYP (Scot et. al., 2009). This is

particularly true of schools that have low test scores and inherently, for reasons outlined previously, tend to be out of compliance with the Teacher Quality provision (Linn et. al., 2010).

In the past, steps have been taken to increase the quality and frequency of professional development aimed at both certification issues and improving content knowledge and methodology. In 2005, the National Staff Development Council set a goal of providing every teacher in every classroom one hour of high-quality professional development a day for teacher learning. This initiative was undertaken in response to research indicating that a mere 18% of teachers said they participated in 33 hours or more of professional development that could be characterized as an in-depth study of content in their main fields in a twelve month period. Additionally, 41% of all teachers in one study did not participate in staff development that was focused on specific subject matter (Viadero, 2005).

Remove, Recruit, Hire/Replace Teachers

It may not be the case that principals attempt first to meet the letter of the Teacher Quality provision by gaining compliance with the mandate and then attempt to address the spirit of the law by seeking out teachers to hire who are of great quality beyond licensure. However, it may be a fair assumption that all principals in all schools want to do all they can to find teachers they feel possess great talents and abilities to staff their buildings. In most cases, even if compliance is problematic, principals are likely to be thinking of ways in which they may truly better their staffs independent of the Teacher Quality provision.

In attempting to both comply with the Teacher Quality provision and perhaps concurrently elevate the level of quality among their teachers; principals may seek to remove some teachers from their staffs. They might then recruit “highly qualified” teachers from universities and veteran teachers from other schools. However, there may be limiting factors in this strategy as

well. One possible limiting factor is the omnipresent reality that Teacher Tenure Acts in many states protect public school employees, and make it extremely difficult for principals to fire incompetent teachers, whether they are “highly qualified” or not. Under the tenure laws, principals are required to jump through numerous hoops before a teacher can be terminated (Joyce, 2000; Poston & Manatt, 1993; Tucker, 1997). On average in the state of Illinois for example, which has a teacher population of roughly 100,000 in 876 districts only two teachers per year are fired for incompetence, while an additional five are terminated for misconduct (Chicago Tribune Online, 2005).

Currently, lawmakers working on the reauthorization of the NCLB Act at the federal level and those at the state level have begun to focus how teachers are trained in colleges of education (Klein, 2011c; TSBE, 2009). If the goal of the NCLB legislation is not merely to assure that all teachers are fully certified, but also to place the best teachers in traditionally underserved environments, how teachers are trained matters greatly.

In attempting to elevate the level of teacher quality in their schools, principals may benefit from gaining an understanding as to the relative quality of teacher training programs at local universities which provide the majority of teacher candidates to their surrounding areas. Taking this into account, principals may consider forming partnerships with local colleges of education, as teacher quality among those new to the profession may be likely to emanate from university programs that train perspective teachers well.

Not all colleges and universities are equal in quality and neither are prospective educators who graduate from their programs. Some education programs are clearly better than others (Dean, Lauer & Urquhart, 2005). With this in mind, principals in buildings where turnover is perennially high may be able to ensure a steady pipeline of new teachers fresh from quality

education programs. Given that principals in some schools may be limited to inexperienced, novice teachers, such recruitment efforts, initiated by principals working with local universities most successful in providing high quality teachers would only make sense. As research indicates that prospective teachers, fresh from the university, value working conditions over salary (Bacolod, 2007), principals at the helm of hard-to-staff schools may be able to entice coveted university graduates with favorable working conditions in lieu of less than appealing monetary considerations in an effort to elevate quality levels among their teachers while concurrently gaining compliance with the Teacher Quality provision mandate.

As a result of principals building a closer relationship with local universities for the purpose of teacher recruitment, university faculty may be able to make local, elementary school staffs more aware of current research that is oftentimes inaccessible to them (Johnson, 1989). Concurrently, university faculty may also be able to provide useful professional development on a host of issues. Such partnerships between elementary schools and universities and an exchange of resources may serve to enhance the quality level of teachers and, inherently the education of their students, be they remedial, handicapped or even gifted via university reading clinics, access to university health care systems and a multitude of programs aimed at diversifying pedagogy in schools (Case et. al., 1993).

Additionally, universities and colleges also stand to gain via this exchange in that they will be provided real world settings for faculty members to conduct research. Access to the very settings into which they may be placing their students down the line, may prove beneficial to pre-service teachers, the communities they potentially serve and ultimately the reputations of the universities and colleges themselves (Beaumont & Hall-Mark, 1998).

Furthermore, there are additional benefits in principals establishing a relationship with local universities. In building what Goodlad (1993) identifies as a “symbiotic connection” between their elementary schools and colleges of education, principals may create an avenue whereby they have input regarding the types of training most likely to be of value to pre-service teachers about to enter an elementary school (Cavello, Ferreira & Roberts, 2005). In a de facto sense then, principals employing this strategy may see to it that staff development, via curricula at the university level is provided for their new hires before they become members of their staff, thus promoting some degree of consistency and quality among freshmen teachers. In reaching out to universities, principals might also develop what Coleman (1990) called “social capital,” making connections within the community, and exploiting the resources of such a partnership for the overall benefit of the school.

In attempting to staff their schools with “highly qualified” teachers, principals must not only focus on new hires and professional development for those on their staffs that require additional certification, but must also retain staff members who are “highly qualified” who may seek employment elsewhere when greener pastures present themselves.

As outlined herein, the inability of principals to adequately staff their buildings with “highly qualified” teachers is less about the raw numbers of individuals entering and exiting the profession and more about retaining those already in elementary schools who seek improved working conditions either outside the district, or more commonly at a different school within it (Ingersoll, 1999; Ingersoll, 2001b).

There is much that principals can do in order to entice teachers to remain at their positions in schools, when seemingly more attractive options are available. Research informs us that the top two reasons given by teachers for departing a specific school are dissatisfaction with their

administrators, and dissatisfaction with workplace conditions or both (NCES, 2007). Each of these complaints is typically within the purview of the principal to mitigate in some fashion via side-payments as outlined in the applied model of the framework.

Principals may promote teacher retention in their schools by granting their most favored staff members influence over school policy and thereby promoting a sense of teacher efficacy. They may also provide favored staff members side-payments in the form of desirable class assignments, aesthetically pleasing classrooms, additional preparation period and opportunities to pad their salaries. It may also be possible that “highly qualified” veteran teachers could be lured from other schools if a principal develops a reputation as an administrator who empowers teachers. However, while it must be acknowledged that promoting teacher influence and efficacy may be a principal’s best chance at attracting and retaining high quality teachers, it is by no means a blueprint for success in staffing schools that have little else to offer, as each situation is unique, requiring a host of remedies (Clark, Lotto & Astuto, 1984; Firestone & Corbett, 1987; Fullan, 1985).

In addition to dissatisfaction with administrators and workplace conditions, teachers who choose to leave one school for another, exit buildings they believe have chaotic environments and lack order and predictability (Moore-Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). In Illinois 70% of beginning teachers said they avoided schools they perceived as lacking the resources necessary to support their teaching with 59% citing undesirable student behavior as barriers to accepting positions at understaffed schools (DeAngelis et. al., 2002). Another study found that teachers identify working conditions over student characteristics as their primary consideration when selecting a school in which they would choose to work (Lai Horng, 2009). Still another study

determined that accountability policies such as the NCLB Act may lead to increased mobility at low-performing schools (Guarino, Santibanez & Daley, 2006).

Other factors contributing to teacher mobility include a lack of input on decision-making, a lack of resources and supplies and bloated class sizes (Darling-Hammond, 2000b; Ingersoll, 2001b, 2002). In one study, nationwide 46% of teachers surveyed, reported that student disrespect was a moderate to serious problem, while 64% said that students coming to school unprepared to learn was a moderate to serious problem (US Dept. of Education, 2004a). Still others have suggested that the physical plants in which schools are housed, with an average age of 40 years old, are falling apart and contribute to teacher mobility (Buckley, Schneider & Shang, 2003). In essence, independent of their background and years of experience, teachers view working conditions as a paramount consideration in their practice. In many instances, principals may have great influence over whether or not teachers in their buildings choose to stay or migrate elsewhere when opportunities are presented to them.

In some instances, principals with higher degrees of fiscal discretion may seek to reward their most valued teachers monetarily via after school or summer school assignments. However, simply increasing compensation would appear to be of limited value in enticing the best of teachers to work in the worst of schools (Bacolod, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006). As an example of the limited power of increased compensation as a side-payment, one empirical study found that teachers would have to be paid 50% more to work in hard to staff schools (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2001). Other studies have demonstrated that money alone is not a deciding factor regarding where teachers choose to teach. As an example, the state of South Carolina offered teachers an \$18,000 bonus to relocate to challenging schools and attracted only 20% of the workforce necessary to fill the positions (Southeast Center for Teaching Quality,

2003). In Massachusetts, a similar bonus of \$20,000 failed to attract anywhere near the number of teachers necessary to staff the worst of schools (Fowler, 2003).

Given that monetary compensation alone may not help principals attract and retain valued teachers they must look beyond external incentives that may apply in other workforces. In addition or perhaps in lieu of monetary compensation, teachers might be enticed into remaining in positions they might otherwise leave if conditions at schools such as the improvement of student behavior, the expansion of teacher autonomy and the promotion of shared ideology among staff are effectively addressed by a strong leader.

How administrators are able to retain quality staff despite the lure of employment at other schools both inside and outside their districts, may also be predicated upon how successful they are at establishing a school culture that promotes collegiality and stability among staff and loyalty between teachers and the administration (Schein, 1992). There is ample evidence in the literature suggesting that the establishment of mature school cultures in which members share assumptions about the nature of the work before them, work collaboratively, are amenable to change when external realities conflict with group norms and have a high degree of trust simultaneously are more stable than their counterparts (Schein, 1988). Furthermore, under reforms such as NCLB, it is the principal's task to promote cultural stability while concurrently ushering in change (Firestone & Louis, 1999).

Developing a school culture in which loyalty and teacher, student and principal efficacy is promoted may provide elementary school principals their best available option in stemming the flow of valued teachers exiting the building. As outlined earlier, many of the reasons teachers present for leaving schools are within the authority of principals to remedy. Still, in order for remedies to work, principals must be able to effectively gauge how teachers perceive their

working environment as teacher and principal perceptions of the workplace environment may differ appreciably, with principals often painting a rosier picture of school conditions than teachers (Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2004b). Principals must be able to look outside themselves effectively if they are to understand the collective pulse of the communities they lead.

Support of New Teachers

The degree to which a principal invests time in thoroughly reviewing all resumes received, enlists other administrators, teachers and parents in the selection process and reaches out to universities for promising teaching candidates may determine the degree to which the best candidates for a school are found (Harris et. al., 2010; Mason & Schroeder, 2010; Rutledge et. al., 2008). Once hired, the resources provided by the principal and other members of the organization in developing the quality level of these teachers in the form of mentoring and staff development may serve to facilitate staff retention down the road, continued compliance with the Teacher Quality provision and ultimately organizational success.

Who a principal hires is likely to significantly affect whether or not their schools not only achieve compliance with the Teacher Quality mandate immediately, but in the long run as well. Typically, the moment a principal hires a teacher the job of developing and retaining them begins. The degree to which principals are effective at hiring the right people to fill appropriate teaching positions may improve the odds that such hires will promote long-term stability in individual schools. From the outset of employment in a school there are things a principal can do that may increase the probability that new teachers will grow, prosper, and remain loyal to the organization. As an example, it has been demonstrated that the more robustly new teachers are mentored by fellow staff members and informed of day to day standard operating procedures by

administrators in their first position after they leave the university, the more likely they are to survive and flourish as teachers (Heneman & Milanowski, 2004).

Principal Decision-Making and Retention of Quality Teachers in Underserved Schools

A majority of Illinois' public schools have large numbers of low income students. In 2009, the State of Illinois reported that 42.9% of its students were low income (ISBE, 2009). And, while the literature demonstrates that teachers are exponentially more likely to leave such schools when given the opportunity (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009) these schools receive additional funding to combat educational inequalities under Chapter I legislation for each child living in poverty. The funding a specific school receives depends upon both the number of low-income students in the school along with its level of concentrated poverty. When NCLB was enacted, per-pupil amounts ranged from \$281 to \$995 depending upon the concentration of poverty in an individual school (Russo, 2002).

Using this funding wisely, principals may improve working conditions in several ways – reducing class size, renovating the physical plant, purchasing supplies that teachers commonly secure themselves and providing “side payments” in the form of overtime, plum teaching assignments and well-equipped classrooms to those staff members most likely to seek employment elsewhere. In providing “side payments” to selected members of their staffs, a principal may achieve two goals simultaneously. First, those rewarded with “side payments” may feel an increased sense of loyalty toward the school and their principal and choose to remain in a less-than optimal teaching situation. Secondly, by not rewarding staff members who are unproductive, principals may encourage those they least value to seek employment elsewhere. In this manner, principals might oversee a positive mobility trend among their staffs with the best teachers choosing to remain and those they can afford to lose going elsewhere. Assuming this

trend can be kept in place for several years it is foreseeable that a positive school culture and inherently, organizational stability will develop. Once a school has built a reputation for staff quality in this manner it may be likely that increased numbers of both veteran and rookie teachers will seek it out, thus, perhaps increasing the numbers of “highly qualified” teachers willing to consider working there.

Principal Discretion in Interpreting How “Highly Qualified” Status is Achieved

A strategy that may be employed by principals in response to the Teacher Quality provision is the utilization of data in a manner that will more readily facilitate as many teachers as possible achieving “highly qualified” status. In loosely and oftentimes creatively interpreting requirements having to do with teacher certification and competence, schools may provide the appearance of having addressed the letter of the law when they are, in fact, out of compliance. Data emanating from local or state school officials regarding the reporting of out-of-field teaching assignments and the percentage of fully certified teachers in systems and buildings is often interpreted in a manner that provides the appearance of compliance with external policy mandates, though it may not have been achieved (Haggstrom, Darling-Hammond & Grissmer, 1988; Robinson, 1985).

There is ample room for mischief built into the legislation as it is written. As a former member of the Department of Education has pointed out, “NCLB orders schools to do things they may not want to do, and allows local agencies to measure success in carrying out the tasks to be done. In so doing NCLB, as written virtually guarantees evasiveness on the part of those entrusted with its implementation.” The same official also noted that on three aspects of the law: school violence, highly qualified teachers and graduation rates, reporting from local schools has been demonstrated to be dishonest in too many cases (Uzzell, 2005).

HOUSSE Provision

In measuring teacher competence, states have been allowed to provide teachers numerous paths toward achieving compliance under the HOUSSE provision. The HOUSSE (High, Objective, Uniform State Standard of Evaluation) provision of NCLB allows teachers to demonstrate competence via a potpourri of professional development, teaching experience, self-compiled portfolios and supervisor evaluation. Under the dictates of the Teacher Quality component of NCLB, the HOUSSE provision may be designed autonomously by each state (NCLB, 2002), and as a result vary widely in its rigor. Consequently, there is a negative incentive for states to design a HOUSSE provision that is difficult for its teachers to meet. It is possible then that states may lower the difficulty of their HOUSSE provision because by doing so they may more easily fulfill the letter, if not the spirit of the law (Moe, 2004). How the HOUSSE provision is applied and interpreted is largely up to individual districts and principals.

As an example of the differing ways the HOUSSE provision has been interpreted, Massachusetts teachers met the standard simply by attending a prescribed number of professional development courses, while in Arkansas teachers with a minimum of five years experience automatically satisfied the competence component of the law. In New Hampshire, teachers could demonstrate competence under the HOUSSE provision by engaging in a self-assessment with a supervisor and a fellow teacher. Other states such as Oklahoma have allowed teachers to earn HOUSSE credits if their students did well in academic competitions.

In essence, the HOUSSE provision provides principals a backdoor by which they may get their teachers certified. In some cases, a principal may simply provide a few in-services, wait for an individual teacher to earn five years of consecutive service or have their teachers take a single test.

As a result of the inconsistent rigor regarding the HOUSSE route to certification, the most compliant five states, (Wisconsin, Montana, Oklahoma, Connecticut and Washington) were able to report that 99% of their core classes were taught by “highly qualified” teachers while the four least compliant states along with the District of Columbia (Alaska, Utah, Nevada, Washington DC and Alaska) were only able to achieve between 34.3% and 74.0% adherence to the Teacher Quality mandate after the law was passed (Casey, 2006; Walsh & Snyder, 2004). Teachers unions as well have been complicit in seeking low HOUSSE standards. In promoting the HOUSSE provisions as a means toward attaining “highly qualified” status, the American Federation of Teachers, since the dawn of NCLB has recommended that all states be obligated by law to set HOUSSE standards for veteran teachers that do not include a test to demonstrate competence (AFT, 2004).

The degree to which principals are aware of the HOUSSE provision and successfully navigate it to the benefit of their teachers in seeking certification may have much to do with individual principals achieving “highly qualified” status for their staffs.

Principal Acumen and Using Bureaucratic Structures in Advantageous Ways

In being mandated to comply with NCLB, principals are being held accountable in a tight-loose-tight fashion (Fiske & Ladd, 2000). Under this arrangement, the federal government has tightly specified the mission and the outcome standards, loosely allowed administrators at the local school level to do whatever may be necessary to achieve the standards and tightly held them accountable for results. Such an arrangement may encourage creative interpretation of standards and data so that the federal government appears to have held local principals accountable and principals appear to have been successful in improving teacher quality.

Under this tight-loose-tight model of policy implementation both the federal government, which has issued the mandate and building principals, who must respond to the mandate may have an incentive to make as many teachers as possible “highly qualified” as quickly and effortlessly as possible within the boundaries of the law.

In September 2003 when all states were mandated to provide data on teacher quality as part of their consolidated applications for federal aid under NCLB to the Department of Education, some “interesting” numbers were compiled (Blank, 2003). Upon examination, the data reveals that several states experienced a surge in the number of “highly qualified” teachers in just two short years after the enactment of the legislation. Also, more than half the states reported that their high-poverty schools faced no greater challenge than others in providing “highly qualified” teachers in their classrooms. Additionally, only eight states showed a variance of more than five percentage points between the number of “highly qualified” teachers practicing in affluent schools and those practicing in high poverty settings. While impressive, such numbers were in opposition to a substantial amount of research regarding the presence of high quality teachers in impoverished schools (Howard, 2003; Travis, 2004).

Examining the data more closely, it is would appear probable that principals and district officials may have inflated the number of teachers in their schools who were “highly qualified” via the reinterpretation of data. The state of Kansas for instance, counted middle school teachers who had a degree in elementary education as “highly qualified” even though the Teacher Quality provision clearly stated that such teachers were to have a degree in the subject they taught if their practice was departmentalized – teaching one subject for the entire day. Utah chose to count teachers who had yet to demonstrate subject-matter competence as “highly qualified.”

Subsequently, when new data collecting guidelines were instituted, the percentage of “highly qualified” teachers actually dropped five percentage points. (Blank, 2003).

Conversely, California which established rigorous standards for subject-matter competence and credentialing had only 48% of its classrooms staffed with “highly qualified” teachers. The percentage was even more alarming in California’s high-poverty schools, with only 35% of those teachers having been deemed “highly qualified” (Keller, 2003). In December 2003, 7 states (Louisiana, Maine, Montana, New Jersey, New York, South Carolina and Tennessee) reported no data whatsoever to the federal government regarding teacher quality in their schools. Another 7 states (Idaho, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming) did not have basic test requirements for teachers tied to certification. Still others, (Alabama, Alaska, Delaware, Kansas, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, New York, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin) did not test subject matter as part of certification. In Illinois, the state reported that 76% of its classrooms were taught by "highly qualified" teachers, but failed to report the percentage of "highly qualified" teachers in high-poverty schools (Education Trust, 2003). Additionally, the Chicago district chose to report the number of certified teachers it had rather than what percentage of classes were taught by “highly qualified” teachers (Grossman, 2003).

As pressure upon principals has increased with the passage of time, the decrease in the number of teachers deemed “not highly qualified” has accelerated, far exceeding the dent made in the first five years of the Teacher Quality provision. In the state of Illinois, as an example the percentage of “not highly qualified” teachers dropped from 3.2% in 2007 to 0.7% in 2008. In the Chicago district alone, the “not highly qualified” rate dropped from 23.5% in 2007 to 1.5% in 2008. (ISBE, 2009).

There is evidence that just such a strategy, whereby the ability of principals to meet mandates was made as easy as possible by states did, in fact occur. As an example, in response to federal demands that all students make constant improvement on standardized tests from year to year under NCLB, administrators at the state and local levels, informed by principals in individual schools developed less rigorous testing instruments for the purpose of boosting the percentage of students in individual schools who met or exceeded proficiency levels (Sunderman, Kim & Orfield, 2005).

In addition to lowering the difficulty level of the tests used to determine AYP, cut scores were lowered in many schools. Cut scores are defined as the percentage of correct answers a student must receive in order to meet state determined proficiency standards on a specific test (Rotherham, 2006). As a result, many schools saw the percentage of students meeting state proficiency levels rise dramatically, when in fact, the improvement was largely achieved by manipulation of testing instruments and the measurement of those instruments (Christie, 2005; Field, 2005; Usher, 2011). Illinois, for example saw a large increase in proficiency levels in both Reading and Math, but only after it lowered the cut scores to less than 30% in Reading and under 20% in Math (Cronin, et. al. 2009).

It may be possible that principals, following the lead of states and districts, may implement the same types of strategies used, in some cases, to address AYP to facilitate compliance with the Teacher Quality provision. That is, principals who find they have no other way to comply with the Teacher Quality mandate may resort to the reinterpretation of data as the only means at their disposal for the purpose of achieving “highly qualified” status for their teachers.

Wait It Out

Principals in some schools may simply choose to feign compliance in the hope that the federal government will further amend the policy – relaxing the demands of the provision when it becomes apparent that the law as written is not entirely enforceable.

There is reason for principals to anticipate a scenario in which they may not ultimately be held accountable for maintaining a teaching staff that is entirely composed of “highly qualified” teachers, as a watering down of requirements regarding other aspects of the NCLB legislation has already occurred. As an example, the US Department of Education has previously modified other components of the law pertaining to AYP requirements. As a result of the changes, schools have been allowed to use “value added” data which focuses on student academic growth rather than their academic achievement for the purpose of demonstrating AYP (Lewis, 2006).

Additionally, the federal government has already changed some of the tenets of the Teacher Quality provision, allowing a host of states to relax their rules for teachers emigrating from another state. Given this latitude, many states subsequently eased their requirements regarding what was necessary to receive licensure. As an example, after the changes Illinois no longer required out-of-state teachers to pass a mandatory exam before teaching. Virginia, Maryland and New Hampshire kept their basic skills tests for out-of-state teachers, but made them easier to pass. Additionally, the state of Pennsylvania no longer required that out-of-state middle school teachers pass a basic skills test after too many of them failed the exam (Rado, 2004).

With respect to the Teacher Quality provision, in October of 2005 the Education Department announced that states that had yet to achieve 100% compliance, but had demonstrated to federal authorities evidence that they had reordered their priorities and were taking necessary steps to improve the quality of their teaching force were given additional time to achieve full compliance.

As a result of such policy tweaking, every state except Hawaii and the territory of Puerto Rico that applied for an extension waiver received it providing them with at least an extra year to fulfill the mandate. In offering the extension, the federal government was able to avoid having to punish 40 of 50 states who failed to achieve full compliance (Ed Policy Update, 2005; Keller, 2005; Keller, 2007b). At the conclusion of the 2005-2006 academic year when all states were to have met the mandate, none had managed to achieve full compliance with the Teacher Quality provision (NBPTS, 2006; USDE, 2007). Even as recently as 2009 the State of Illinois still had an out of compliance rate of 1.2% (ISBE, 2009).

The Department of Education also backed away from its initial demand that all Science teachers possess college degrees in specific subjects such as Chemistry, Biology or Physics, instead allowing them to attain “highly qualified” status by simply passing a “broad field” exam that contained items related to General Science. Similarly, the US Department of Education allowed states and principals to streamline the “highly qualified” teacher process so that those teachers who instructed students in more than one discipline might demonstrate they were “highly qualified” in each of the subjects they taught in one process (USDE, 2004b).

Impetus for Relaxation of “Highly Qualified” Standards

The likelihood that more elements of the Teacher Quality provision could be watered down may have been increased as a result of an ongoing backlash directed toward the federal government by governors and state education officials in every state, on a bi-partisan basis who originally lauded the legislation, but lamented an unachievable mandate (Klein, 2007).

This backlash has already precipitated early changes in the policy. Under Section 9401 of the NCLB legislation, the Secretary of Education may grant waivers of elements of the law. This statute of the legislation has already been invoked by former U.S. Department of Education

Secretary Spellings in Virginia in 2005, where low performing schools were allowed to provide students with free tutoring before offering them the choice of transferring to a higher performing school as outlined in the legislation (Olsen, 2005). Additionally, 20 states passed resolutions critical of the law (Fusarelli, 2005). Furthermore, at least 40 state education agencies have attempted to negotiate more flexibility into the law (Kelderman, 2004).

There also remains the possibility that unforeseen events will lead to a scaling back of elements of the NCLB legislation and the Teacher Quality provision. As an example, in autumn of 2005 federal education officials faced a quagmire regarding how the New Orleans city schools (and other Gulf state districts) should be required to fulfill the AYP mandate in the aftermath of the destruction wrought by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In response, the U.S. Department of Education decided to allow the states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas to place students adversely affected by the disasters in subgroups that were to be exempt from sanctions for at least a full academic year (Hoff, 2005; Olsen & Davis, 2005). Such policy changes in the aftermath of unforeseen events may embolden principals who choose to wager that the Teacher Quality mandate will be altered before their schools suffer punitive sanctions.

It is foreseeable that Katrina will not be the last cataclysmic event to devastate a state and its school systems. Such events may serve to make the policy more malleable. Changes already made regarding the implementation of the law are unlikely to be the last. For every disastrous hurricane in the Gulf Coast there may be one on the eastern seaboard. There may also be earthquakes in California, tornadoes in the Midwest, floods in river communities and a terrorist strike in a major metropolitan area. Such doomsday scenarios are perhaps not likely, but possible. And, if and when such unforeseen events occur, states, municipalities and the schools

within them will reasonably demand that they be entitled to the same flexibility granted communities affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

In setting a precedent in the Gulf Coast, the Department of Education may have increased the likelihood that prevailing circumstances in other states and districts will cause the federal government to amend the policy at some point in the future due to unforeseen events. Such circumstances need not arise as the result of a natural disaster, but might also include economic crises brought about by local, state and federal overspending in areas that may be deemed more pressing than education such as homeland security, infrastructure and safety concerns, protecting the nation's borders and bail outs for corporations essential to the overall economy such as the housing market and the automobile industry.

The current global economic crisis, which began in 2008, may also precipitate less funding for education including teacher salaries, thus providing a negative incentive for the best and the brightest to enter the field, perhaps further eroding the level of teacher quality (World Bank Human Development Network, 2009). It might also be reasonable to anticipate that budgets for the oversight of NCLB and the Teacher Quality provision may be slashed out of necessity, making monitoring of the legislation even more problematic. If any of the above scenarios were to play out, the entire notion of teacher quality standards may perhaps have to be adjusted, thus benefitting principals who choose to wait for the policy to change.

Moving From Compliance Toward Quality

The NCLB Act of 2001 is a sweeping piece of legislation. The Teacher Quality provision in and of itself is ambitious. History has demonstrated that with such grand scale reforms, those charged with its implementation will focus on one aspect of the law at a time to the degree that this strategy is possible (Kimbrough & Hill, 1981). Like Cyert and March's firm, principals and

districts will likely focus on the essential, perhaps to the detriment of the non-essential. It is logical then that the Teacher Quality provision should perhaps be the first aspect of the legislation addressed by administrators in local schools. With a target date of 2006, the provision was the first component of the law that was to be fulfilled in its entirety. Installing “highly qualified” teachers in all classrooms before insisting that all students achieve at high levels of competency makes sense. The degree to which the Teacher Quality provision has been successful or not seemingly impacts the ultimate goal of the legislation – the improvement of learning opportunities for all students “regardless of their zip code” (Paige, 2003).

Summary of Principal Response Strategies

There are a variety of strategies available to principals as they attempt to comply with the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB. In some instances where principals may have a number of teachers that need to become certified they may choose to employ a professional development program which would get teachers properly credentialed as quickly as possible. This response may be limited by financial constraints regarding professional development dollars within districts, many of which are currently experiencing large operating deficits. As a result, professional development used in this manner, if it is used at all, is likely to allow teachers to become “highly qualified” while not necessarily increasing their understanding of curriculum, content knowledge or methodology.

A second strategy that principals may employ is the removal of ineffective teachers from their classrooms. This strategy may be accomplished in numerous ways. The most common manner in which ineffective teachers are removed from their classrooms involves principals employing tactics in dealing with specific teachers that will facilitate their wanting to exit the school. Such tactics may include assigning teachers to a grade level or room they find undesirable, providing

them with unsatisfactory evaluations that may impact their careers and constant observation by the principal (Hess, 2009). This strategy may commonly be implemented by principals when they are seeking to persuade older teachers who are eligible for full pensions to leave teaching. If such a strategy is successful, the principal might retire the teacher, assure them that they will be receiving their pensions and subsequently hire someone they feel is more effective to assume the position. In such cases, this strategy may serve to benefit the school and the level of quality of teachers in the overall talent pool.

Such strategies are likely to be pursued by principals before or perhaps instead of their embarking upon termination proceedings. This may be the case because terminating tenured teachers, while somewhat easier than in the past remains a difficult and arduous undertaking that may monopolize a principal's time. However, this strategy, when implemented in addressing an ineffective teacher who has yet to become eligible for pension benefits does little to improve the overall level of quality among teachers in all schools. This may be a result of the reality that the vast majority of those forced out of one building transfer to another school as the result of agreements between districts and teacher unions allowing such mobility (SCTQ, 2004b). Consequently, principals with the acumen to both rid themselves of their ineffective teachers, while concurrently barring entrance to their building by ineffective teachers from other schools, sometimes invoking the letter of the Teacher Quality provision, may be those most likely to effectively address both the spirit and the letter of the mandate.

An additional strategy invoked by some principals involves retaining those teachers who are most valued by the administration. This strategy, over which principals have substantial discretion, involves providing teachers "side payments" such as populating the individual teacher's rooms with the brightest students, assigning them to a grade level favored by the

teacher, granting them influence over how curriculum and policy are developed and providing them the opportunity to pad their salaries via afterschool and weekend programs.

Still another strategy involves the principal using discretion to expertly navigate the Teacher Quality provision in a manner whereby teachers become “highly qualified” as quickly as possible. Principals who make a point of becoming well-versed in the innumerable ways “highly qualified” status might be attained for their teachers via HOUSSE standards, professional development and creating programs with local colleges of education that are tailor-made to fit the needs of their staffs may bolster their ability to meet the mandate. Principals most attuned to the intricacies of the law, who also possess a keen understanding of federal, state and local policies around teacher certification may be more successful in hiring and retaining teachers who are “highly qualified” according to both the letter and the spirit of the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB.

Finally, principals may also choose to simply wait for the law to change. This strategy may prove highly effective in many cases where principals have little choice but to anticipate some relaxation in guidelines for achieving “highly qualified” status as prescribed in the legislation when enacted in 2002. Already, as some principals may have waited, 40 of 50 states that failed to meet the mandate by the 2006 deadline, regarding the attainment of “highly qualified” status for all of the nation’s school teachers, were given waivers when they were able to demonstrate they were making a good faith effort at moving toward compliance. Additionally, in some high need areas such as Chemistry, Biology and Physics in which teachers were originally mandated to have subject specific certification, the legislation was watered down so that teachers could be deemed “highly qualified” simply by taking a General Science exam.

Having gained an understanding of how principals might respond to the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB, I will now focus on several internal factors that may influence their responses. These internal factors include the influence of school-level bodies and teacher mobility from underachieving schools with high levels of poverty to more affluent schools and districts that traditionally have higher levels of achievement on standardized tests than their less affluent counterparts.

Subsequently, I will examine how external factors such as district policies, workforce dynamics, union rules and funding constraints may also serve to influence the manner in which principals address the problem of meeting the Teacher Quality mandate.

Internal Factors Influencing Principal Response

Using the Cyert and March model as a framework, there is much to be considered in the literature regarding the different factors that may influence principals' decision-making and choice of response strategies regarding the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB. As Cyert and March note, the firm, in responding to problems is influenced by numerous internal and external factors. Likewise, principals may encounter a number of factors that will influence their decision-making in response to the Teacher Quality provision. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the manner in which principals respond to the Teacher Quality mandate may have much to do with how they interpret the problem of staffing their buildings with "highly qualified" teachers.

In turn, the manner in which principals define and interpret the problem of staffing their schools with "highly qualified" teachers is influenced by their priorities for the organization and what they have experienced in the past regarding policy mandates. The manner in which

principals respond may also have a great deal to do with both internal and external factors that influence their decisions.

Due to a host of factors outlined previously (e.g. affluent, high-achieving student bodies, attractive campuses, a slew of applicants for open positions) some principals may have more capacity than others to address the mandate. Where capacity is high, principals may choose to not only meet the mandate, but to also go beyond simple compliance. Where capacity is limited by factors outside the principal's control (e.g. poverty-level, low achieving student bodies, crumbling and unsafe facilities along with a shortage of applicants in some positions) a short-term response may be all that is available.

Principals as Street-Level Bureaucrats in Open Systems

Sweeping federal programs such as the No Child Left Behind Act are necessarily implemented by what Lipsky (1980) termed “street-level bureaucrats”— in the case of schools, principals who exercise a great deal of discretion in loosely-coupled systems (Weick, 1976), influenced by local interests. As street-level bureaucrats, principals are the “sergeants” of our education system, interpreting external mandates in such a way as to create a de facto policy that is tolerated if not completely accepted by policymakers who haven't the capacity to fully monitor the implementation of the policy. To a significant degree, street-level bureaucrats attempt to do whatever is in their power to provide either a solution, or if one is not available, the approximation of a solution to a problem at hand. In this way, solutions get attached to problems in a serendipitous fashion. These “solutions” become solutions, not because they are best, but because they are available (March and Olsen, 1976).

As previously identified, the notion of loosely-coupled systems refers to organizations (a public elementary school being a prime example) in which individuals are connected to each

other, but still retain identities and separateness (Bidwell, 1965; Meyer and Rowan, 1983; Weick, 1976). In loosely-coupled systems such as these, the type of uniformity and degree of quality control the authors of the NCLB Act might have hoped to achieve may be problematic. The manner in which principals, in their role as street-level bureaucrats are able to navigate around the barriers to full implementation of the policy in their schools may determine whether or not the mandate is met.

Principal Development of Strategy

Initially, principals in schools that are out of compliance must determine which aspect of the “highly qualified” issue is most important and perhaps most achievable as they draft their plan for battle. As an example, principals must decide on the degree to which they wish to focus on either the recruitment or retention of teachers. In some instances there may be few, if any highly-valued staff members that are capable of doing a better job than highly recommended university recruits. In other schools, the staff may be the strength of the institution. In such cases, the principal may choose to focus on providing those staff members with more resources, tweaking the student population, eliminating chronic underachievers and morale problems when possible for the purpose of creating an environment more conducive to learning, and adeptly doling out “side payments” to the most valued of teachers. Whether or not a principal chooses to focus on recruitment or retention may be dependent upon a variety of factors including: the quality level of their current staffs, the availability of nascent teachers from the university that may potentially prove more effective than existing staff members, the availability of professional development necessary to get current staff members fully certified and the overall cohesiveness and effectiveness of the staff as a unit with numerous interchangeable parts.

Interpretation of Problem and Principal Decision-Making

The decisions principals make are influenced by what Cyert & March refer to as internal and external environments. Internal factors such as teacher ability levels, mobility rates of teachers and input as well as influence from local parent groups may also inform principal decision-making. External environmental factors such as funding levels, union requirements, workforce shifts and competing policy demands inform the decisions principals make in attempting to address the mandate.

Additionally, how the internal and external environments interact may influence the manner in which the principal seeks to balance immediate compliance with the Teacher Quality provision against what they believe to be in the best long-term interests of the school. Similarly, how a principal chooses to address the policy may evolve as both the internal and external environments change.

The degree to which principals find they are allowed by internal and external factors to pursue strategies such as increasing the quality of their teaching staffs via professional development, pressuring ineffective teachers to leave the organization, and providing side-payments to retain valued teachers may serve to influence the extent to which they opt for quick fixes. That is, if principals are able to attract and retain a sufficient number of quality teachers they may then have the luxury of implementing strategies that hold long-term benefits for their schools in addition to immediately meeting the Teacher Quality provision mandate..

Principals in schools that do not have the ability to attract and retain quality teachers and may not have the luxury of thinking about long-term benefits for their organizations, due to the pressing concern of immediate compliance under the threat of sanctions, may embark upon

strategies that facilitate compliance with the policy mandate, but do little to enhance the quality of teaching in their buildings.

Principal Experience Influencing Decision-Making

A principal's experience level in dealing with similar problems in the past may inform where solutions to the problem of staffing individual schools with "highly qualified" teachers are found. As Cyert and March inform us, via biased search a principal may use his/her ability to locate and harness the talents of individuals emanating from both internal and external quarters who may be able to assist them in meeting the mandate. The principal's ability to locate and harness the abilities both internally and externally may determine how effective they are in fulfilling the policy demands of the Teacher Quality provision.

Cyert and March tell us that factors internal to the organization are among the first to be considered in decision-making. Identifying factors internal to schools, such as their standard operating procedures, rules, the influence of parents and the ability to attract and retain teachers of high quality is essential to understanding the principals' decision-making process. And, while internal factors may not necessarily be the deepest area of influence upon a principal, they are likely to be the first. Gaining some knowledge of the internal presses upon principals may yield some understanding of how they initially choose to respond to the Teacher Quality provision.

School-Level Bodies

In attempting to both meet the mandate posed by the Teacher Quality provision and perhaps truly improve the level of instruction in schools via teacher hiring/retention and removal, principals may have to contend with forces that may hasten or restrict their actions regarding teacher quality. One such factor is the presence of school level bodies such as PTOs (Parent Teacher Organizations) that hold an advisory role in schools included in the study. Such

organizations may influence how money is spent on curricular materials, programming decisions, professional development, capital improvements, and which teachers are hired, and subsequently retained or let go prior to achieving tenure (Wanat & Zieglofsky, 2010).

Such organizations may also hold influence over all other parents in the school community. A principal must be cognizant of the recommendations made by such organizations as they may need their support in order to effectively address an external mandate such as the Teacher Quality provision. Principals ignoring such input from Parent Teacher organizations may do so at their peril as the sway of such groups may extend from influencing other parents at the school level all the way up to district superintendents and legislators.

Principals may have to somehow walk a fine line between acquiescing to the desires of sometimes highly fluid parent organizations and pursuing policies, perhaps contrary to the wishes of such groups, that they nevertheless believe to be in the best interests of their schools (Gordon & Seashore-Louis, 2009; Murphy et. al., 2009; Williams, 2009). This is especially relevant with regard to the hiring and retaining of teachers. In some schools parent organizations may prefer to hire teachers in areas that may not necessarily contribute to the fulfillment of federal mandates. As an example, some parent organizations may value fine arts and recommend that the principal hire music, art and dance teachers using discretionary funds. However, principals seeking to fulfill all of the NCLB mandates, including the attainment of AYP on standardized tests and the Teacher Quality provision may feel compelled to hire three general education teachers for the purpose of reducing class size. Principals may choose to proceed in this manner as the lowering of class size in some instances may lead to increased achievement on standardized tests, thus bolstering an individual school's prospects of attaining AYP (Chatterji, 2005; Jepsen & Rivkin, 2009; Shin & Raudenbush, 2011). Such conflict may be

skillfully mediated by the principal, but his/her decisions must be informed and they must prove accurate a majority of the time if he/she hopes to retain the principalship.

The degree to which principals are able to establish a culture of trust among themselves, their teachers and their parent organizations may also serve to build the capacity necessary to enact the reforms championed by the Teacher Quality provision and the entire NCLB legislation (Cosner, 2009). It may be imperative that those principals seeking to address both the spirit and the letter of the Teacher Quality provision work closely and collaboratively with parent/teacher organizations. In so doing, principals may ensure that such entities maintain a positive view of their administration, as they advocate for hiring policies that fulfill all federal mandates and increase school capacity for overall academic achievement and the attainment of adequate yearly progress (Louis et. al., 2010).

Teacher Mobility

An additional internal factor with which principals may grapple as they address the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB is the reality of teacher mobility from their schools. This factor may be problematic for some principals as they make decisions regarding personnel, as it may have a significant impact on how they set about meeting the mandate. The degree to which principals are faced with constant turnover within their buildings may influence the manner in which they interpret the Teacher Quality provision in addition to informing the actions they take in attempting to meet its mandate.

All principals must deal with the ever-present reality of mobility in their schools. The teaching profession experiences a significant amount of churn among its members. As an example, more than 40% of new teachers in our nation's schools do not see their fifth year of teaching, choosing to leave the profession entirely (Colbert and Wolff, 1992; DeAngelis, Presley

& White, 2005; Hardy, 1999; Joerger & Bremer, 2001; Odell and Ferraro, 1992). Additionally, those who survive their first five years typically move to greener pastures either within their districts or adjacent districts (Ingersoll, 1999; 2001a). Successful teaching careers have a predictable arc with educators teaching at-risk students in underachieving schools, taking such positions with little knowledge of the task before them. These jobs are available as the result of more experienced teachers migrating from at-risk schools to schools that come highly recommended, either by their peers or their personal knowledge of the school or district.

Teachers research these schools, noting the socio-economic status of the students, the reputation and tenure of the administration in addition to test score achievement and trends (Moore-Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Teachers take stock of these schools during the interview process before accepting a teaching position. And, after these teachers have finished their careers at a high-performing school, their retirement begets a new herd of teachers with several years of experience under their belts serving impoverished, low-performing children, to take their place at affluent schools, thus continuing the cycle (Shen, 1997).

Given such realities, with respect to teacher mobility, it is a reasonable assumption that principals heading schools where students emanate from poverty-level households and underperform on standardized tests may likely have a more difficult task in attracting and retaining teachers of high quality in their buildings than their counterparts at the helm of high performing schools with low levels of poverty among students.

Impetus for Teacher Mobility

Research suggests the most often cited reasons for teacher mobility include: a desire to work in environments that contain a minimum of strife and conflict, run by administrators who encourage teacher input regarding policy, (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Ingersoll, 2001b; Miskel,

1977), that have high-quality school facilities (Buckley, Schneider and Shang, 2003; Schneider, 2002), and offer higher monetary compensation than other districts (Boe, Cook, Bobbitt & Weber, 1996). Examining these motivating factors regarding teacher mobility, we find that principals have little control in addressing most of them in a significant way. Teacher pay is fixed via collective bargaining (Hoxby & Leigh, 2003) while the physical condition of schools is predicated on financing from the state, local taxation and ultimately the district office.

Acknowledging such realities, principals, even if they have become adept at hiring the very best teacher candidates, may know it is likely they will lose their services sooner rather than later. Even something as obvious as hiring the highest quality teacher available may be a mere stopgap for some principals operating in extremely fluid environments and experiencing high turnover. It may not be beyond the realm of possibility that a besieged principal, seeking to establish a stable school environment may avoid hiring the best available candidate knowing they will be leaving their underperforming school as soon as they achieve tenure.

In some schools it may be to the principal's advantage to hire serviceable and stable candidates instead of the upwardly mobile. Such a strategy may result in perennial compliance with the Teacher Quality provision. Toward this end, it may also be in the long term interests of the school for the principal to consider hiring teacher candidates who reflect the culture and norms of the both the students and teachers on staff (Rutledge et. al., 2008). However, even this strategy may prove problematic in that a significant number of public school students are African-American, Hispanic, Asian-American or members of ethnic groups that are not European-American in heritage. Conversely, the pool of teachers who have historically entered the profession have been largely European-American, female and monolingual (Murtadha-Watts, 1998).

Benefits of Teacher Mobility

While teacher mobility is often perceived in negative terms by principals who lose teachers they may prefer to keep, in some instances a mass exodus of teachers in some schools may prove beneficial. High rates of teacher mobility may provide principals with a fresh opportunity to meet and sustain the mandate. Encouragingly, in response to the Teacher Quality provision, colleges of education, addressing increased demand in specific subjects and in some schools have made adjustments in the manner in which their students are prepared for the workforce. Increased numbers of novice teachers now exit the university armed not only with the typical certification allowing them to teach in elementary school, but also in possession of multiple endorsements in the four core subjects of Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies. As a result, principals who are forced to rely upon new teachers fresh from the university are virtually assured of receiving resumes from job applicants who not only meet the “highly qualified” threshold, but who oftentimes exceed it (Keller, 2005; Kersten, 2008). Unfortunately, as noted previously, simple licensure may not be a guarantee of quality. Additionally, increased marketability may even increase the likelihood that such teachers may migrate elsewhere after achieving tenure. However, for principals who are simply seeking to address the letter of the law, the recent university focus on maximizing the number of first-year teacher credentials at the university level may provide them with more options relative to years past.

Summary of Internal Factors Influencing Principal Decision-Making

As principals set about complying with the Teacher Quality mandate they must consider several influencing factors internal to their school organizations. Among the most predominate factors is the influence of parent organizations upon programming, curriculum and hiring and firing decisions.

Additionally, principals have to consider the rate of teacher mobility in their buildings and determine how many new teachers must be hired, in what subjects, in a given year and where those teachers might be found. High rates of mobility in some schools could be a mixed blessing for some principals as they may constantly have to seek replacements for departing teachers. However, this constant churn may also provide an opportunity for principals to seek out teachers who have attained “highly qualified” status they feel may prove highly effective in the short run and perhaps on a long-term basis. Additionally, teachers fresh from the university also commonly have more specific subject area expertise as the result of recent efforts at the university level to promote the attainment of endorsements in individual disciplines for the purpose of making their students more marketable to schools. As a result, principals may actually have more applicants from which to choose than in the past.

Having outlined the internal factors that may impact strategies embarked upon by individual principals, including the influence of parent teacher organizations, and teacher mobility, I will now focus upon several external factors that are likely to influence a principal’s decision-making process as they attempt to meet the Teacher Quality mandate.

External Factors Influencing Principal Decision-Making

In attempting to address the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB, principals are likely faced with a number of external factors that influence the strategic choices they make in responding to the mandate. Among these external factors are district policies that either limit or enhance their ability to meet the mandate, the ebb and flow of workforce dynamics that expand or constrict the teacher talent pool, union rules that provide guidelines for hiring/firing of teachers and the adequacy/inadequacy of available funding to sufficiently staff one’s building. In many cases, how well a principal is able to understand and negotiate these factors so that they are not a

detriment to ensuring compliance, may influence the degree of success individual schools have in meeting the mandate.

District Policies

Cyert and March profess that in addition to the internal factors influencing organizations, there are also external forces that frame interpretation of problems and influence decision-making. Principals grapple with several external factors that may limit or expand the number of quality individuals available to them for the purpose of staffing their buildings with “highly qualified” teachers in both the short and the long run.

Many districts have enacted longstanding policies that may limit a principal’s ability to implement reforms such as the Teacher Quality provision as well as the entire NCLB legislation. Some districts, for example, insist that its teachers, with some exceptions in high need areas live in the district in which they are employed (Chicago Public Schools Policy Manual, 2010; Duncan, 2009; WPRIR, 2006). This residency requirement may serve to diminish the pool of applicants available to some principals, specifically those teachers who prefer living outside the district in which they are employed. Such residency requirements may also provide an incentive for veteran teachers who wish to move outside their district to seek employment elsewhere. This policy is especially counterproductive considering that one of the goals of the Teacher Quality provision is to facilitate the best of teachers serving students in areas that have been historically underserved (NCLB, 2002). Such policies may also discourage out of state applicants who may be leery of living in a particular area from applying in some districts.

Attempts to Change Policy Impediments

Recognizing this impediment, some districts have taken steps to lift archaic residency requirements that are misaligned with the demands made by the Teacher Quality provision and

the rest of the NCLB legislation. As an example, districts in California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio, have abolished the practice within the past decade so that they might be better able to address the calls for teacher quality as outlined in NCLB by attracting the best candidates from an expanded talent pool (Dell’Angela, 2004).

Some districts have additional policies that limit the number of “highly qualified” teachers available to some schools. As an example, in Baltimore, school officials limit teacher mobility by refusing to allow “highly qualified” teachers to transfer out of a school after two years (per the union contract) unless there is a “highly qualified” replacement waiting to assume their position (Neufeld, 2004). And, while officials in Baltimore defend the policy by invoking the NCLB mandate and insisting that stability in hard-to-staff schools is necessary if the district is to comply with the law, such measures may merely serve to place numerous teachers at the heads of classrooms where they would rather not be.

Such a policy also discourages “highly qualified” applicants from outside the system who may be reluctant to assume a position in a low-achieving, high poverty school with little hope of ever migrating to greener pastures within the system. Additionally, coercive policies such as these may actually encourage teacher mobility from less affluent districts with high concentrations of poverty throughout its system to more affluent districts.

Hiring Windows for Principals

There are additional district policies that may either limit or enhance the number of “highly qualified” teachers available to principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools. The timetable by which teachers are hired in districts may act as an impediment or a catalyst for principals attempting to secure the services of highly motivated and “highly qualified” applicants. In some schools, typically those in more affluent districts, principals are able to

complete their hiring in the spring, some four to five months prior to the opening of school in the fall.

However, in other districts, specifically those in less affluent districts, principals are often required to make last minute hires, in some cases days before the opening of school (Levin & Quinn, 2003). Unlike their counterparts in mostly affluent, high-achieving compliant schools, principals in out-of-compliance schools are often unable to make job offers to candidates until the summer recess at the earliest due to the tenuous nature of financing from their states and districts (Samuels, 2011a).

In many cases, compliant schools are located in districts that have more reserve cash with which to hire teachers (CEPR, 2010). Such districts are able to replenish the cash outlay made for teachers when funding does not become available until later in the year. Non-compliant schools, located in poorer districts may not have the luxury of hiring a teacher in anticipation of state funding becoming available later in the year that may not materialize.

Appropriate funding for teaching positions is typically allocated to even the poorest of districts before the beginning of the school year. However, this funding routinely arrives at the eleventh hour (Costrell & Podgursky, 2010) causing individual schools in some districts to lose opportunities to hire the best of teachers relative to those situated in affluent areas. As a result of their superior financial resources, affluent districts and the schools within them are often able to skim the cream off the top of the teacher talent pool months before less affluent districts even consider hiring (Liu & Johnson, 2006). As a result, the best applicants may be swallowed up by principals heading the most economically advantaged schools to the detriment of those that serve a less affluent population. One study demonstrated that candidates who were hired earliest in a given year had higher undergraduate GPA's, were 40% more likely to have a degree in their

respective teaching fields and were significantly more likely to have had coursework in the field of education (Levin & Quinn, 2003).

Another study of five districts reported that with only one month to go before the start of school, districts had yet to hire between 67% and 93% of their new teachers (Levin, Mulhern, & Schunck, 2005). As the result of teachers' unions insisting that their members be allowed to resign or retire with little or no notice (Chicago Teachers Union, 2007), principals in charge of staffing some schools do not necessarily know which staff members are returning until just before the school year begins. In some districts teachers do not resign until the end of summer vacation so that they may retain health insurance benefits for as long as possible (Toppo, 2006).

Oftentimes, some principals face not only a limited talent pool from which to choose, but are also burdened with a limited time frame in which to hire teachers compared to their counterparts in more affluent districts. Such time constraints may often serve to further limit the response options available to some principals attempting to staff their buildings with "highly qualified" teachers.

When education funding from the state is delayed, schools with the most vacancies to fill, typically populated by underachieving poverty-level students, with high rates of teacher turnover, are likely the most negatively impacted as they must hire teachers from a depleted talent pool.

District Policies That Facilitate Compliance

District policies may also serve as a support to principals attempting to meet the Teacher Quality mandate and staff their building with "highly qualified" teachers who will improve the level of instruction in the short run, and potentially in the long run. In some instances, policy remedies provide principals with the tools they need to staff their buildings adequately. Some of

these remedies include, providing funding for teaching positions in prompt fashion, the relaxing of certification requirements for both new and veteran teachers, and the elimination of subject-specific exams (Rado, 2004; USDE, 2004; USDE, 2007). Additionally, districts in some states are provided additional money to recruit and retain teachers of high quality in schools where they are most needed (Fowler, 2003; SCTQ, 2003). Furthermore, some districts facilitate the creation of partnerships between individual schools and districts with universities for the purpose of elevating the number and quality level of teachers available to local schools (Calabrese, 2006; Cavallo, Ferreira & Roberts, 2005; Gilles, Wilson & Elias, 2009; Lefever-Davis, Johnson & Pearman, 2007).

Workforce Dynamics

An additional external factor that may influence principals as they go about attempting to meet the Teacher Quality provision has to do with changes in the overall workforce that may have diminished the number of quality teachers overall. Arguments have been made that the teaching profession in the 21st century has fallen victim to a “push-pull” effect (Hoxby & Leigh, 2003) whereby those possessing the highest aptitude are pulled away from the relatively low-paying field of education toward more lucrative careers (Dolton & van der Klaauw, 1999) and those with relatively low aptitude being pushed into the teaching profession.

In particular, this “push-pull” effect may have served to disproportionately increase the percentage of women who avoid teaching as a career as professions more lucrative and rewarding became accessible to them. This trend has seen the percentage of women from the top of their high school class who chose teaching as a vocation drop from 20% in 1964 to 4% when the Teacher Quality provision was enacted (Corcoran, Evans & Schwab, 2002). As a consequence, the relative college grade point averages of teacher candidates at universities have

dropped as well (D'Agostino & Powers, 2009.) This is particularly true of those holding degrees in Math and Science where some of the most pronounced shortages exist in education (Liu, et. al, 2008; Tai, Liu & Fan, 2007). The United States General Accounting Office claims that between 1994 and 2001 the employment of teachers obtaining Math and Science degrees increased by 28% while rising 77% in the private sector. This may have been due, in part to the fact that workers employed in Mathematical and Computer Sciences at the dawn of NCLB and the Teacher Quality provision averaged weekly earnings of \$1,074.00 while teachers took home a comparatively paltry \$730.00 (Shaul, 2003).

Economists have now come to recognize that with the exponential growth of technology in the overall workplace, demand for skilled workers outside of teaching has increased as new job titles and abilities have arisen to meet technological demand. And, as these new positions in cutting-edge fields, demanding never before seen levels of skill emerge, worker compensation has increased. However, while practices outside the field of education have been constantly changing, the practice and skills inherent in quality teaching (verbal ability, commitment to children, communication skills) have changed little, thus providing no impetus for the overall market system to justify large increases in average teacher salary. It is because of this economic reality that the problem of underachievement in our nation's schools has typically not been addressed by raising the quality of teachers via substantial pay increases for existing educators but rather, by increasing the quantity (Lakdawalla, 2002).

These overall workforce changes may compound the manner in which different schools are affected. As noted previously, teacher shortages, when they exist, tend to be in schools with high levels of students living in poverty who underachieve on standardized tests. Additionally, shortages tend to cluster around the same areas in most of these schools. Frequently, non-

compliant schools have few, if any applicants for openings in Middle School Science and Mathematics. Special Education and Bi-lingual Education positions are also among the most difficult to fill. As noted earlier, such shortages are likely the result of not enough new teachers emerging to fill positions vacated by veteran teachers who routinely migrate to more affluent, higher achieving schools after achieving tenure at poverty-level schools. In effect, teacher migration has a pronounced impact upon the ability of non-compliant schools to retain staff in key positions that are, from time to time difficult for even principals at the best of schools to fill on a long-term basis. Concurrently, overall workforce dynamics having to do with pay and the emergence of women in fields with lucrative compensation packages have affected all schools to some degree. However, the inability of principals of non-compliant schools to retain teachers in key subject areas remains the single most imposing impediment to principals in such schools regarding staffing their buildings with “highly qualified” staff (Ingersoll, 2001b; Ingersoll, 2011).

There is also the recent issue of newly certified, “highly qualified” teachers emerging from alternative certification programs such as Teach for America who, in exchange for college tuition provided by the federal government must spend their first two years teaching in schools with a high number of poverty-level students. However, in some respects Teach for America and similar alternative paths to certification may have only served to exacerbate the problem of staffing schools over the long term for principals. As an example, one recent study found that only 14.8% of Teach for America teachers remain in the same schools they began their careers after five years (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011). Furthermore, Teach for America may actually siphon away some of the best potential teachers from traditional university education programs only to later place them in schools from which they have an 85% chance of migrating or leaving

the profession entirely five years into their practice (Labaree, 2010). As a result of such alternative certification programs more “highly qualified” teachers may be available to principals, but such teachers are likely to be even more transient than those gaining licensure following a traditional path.

Given this reality, and the new reality of No Child Left Behind, principal decision-making must be informed. Principals attempting to fill teaching positions in their schools must possess a sense of the talent level in the workforce as a whole, while concurrently making a good estimate of the talent pool available to their buildings. If individual principals either underestimate or overestimate the number and quality of prospective teachers available to them, they risk making poor choices regarding who they hire and who they choose to dismiss. In some cases, the mediocre teacher principals have on staff in a particular position may, due to the aforementioned workforce factors, be the best available.

Union Rules

An additional influencing factor principals must consider as they strive to meet the Teacher Quality mandate is the presence of teacher’s unions. As the result of collective bargaining agreements, unions are often able to restrict the ability of principals to terminate ineffective teachers by making the dismissal process so burdensome that most principals do not even attempt to remove an incompetent teacher, knowing that such an action may require years of paperwork, documentation and litigation that more often than not results in the teacher being retained (Bridges, 1996; Cooper, Ehrensall, & Bromme, 2005; Toch et al, 1996).

Unions, which represent well over 80% of all teachers in the nation (Kaboolian, 2006), have been perpetuated by their ability to keep teachers employed via a wide array of protections secured via contract negotiations (Koppich, 2005a; Menuet, 2005). In all schools included in

the study, unions operate on a seniority system in which the junior most teachers, regardless of ability or accomplishments, are the first to be laid off when budgets are slashed.

This “last hired-first fired” policy impacts principal decision-making considerably. As an example, principals are forced to consider the omnipresence of unions if they chose to hire neophyte teachers from the university because such teachers have limited union protections as a result of their not having attained tenure. When budget cuts loom, as they often do, such teachers are typically the first on the chopping block. Ultimately, if principals fail to consider a large number of contingencies in their hiring practices they risk exposing new teachers, many of them highly-valued to possible layoff/dismissal. In essence, the “last hired-first fired” policy creates a constant churn of many teachers, “highly qualified” and valued by principals who have no choice but to let them go, regardless of their value to the school.

As an example of how “last hired-first fired” union policies might influence principal decision-making, one might consider a scenario wherein a principal, seeking to elevate the quality level of their staffs while adhering to the guidelines set forth in the Teacher Quality provision, decides to hire veteran teachers who have achieved tenure and have long histories of exemplary performance at other schools either inside or outside the district. Should a principal make the decision to hire such teachers they would, in turn, put all the other teachers on staff at increased risk of being dismissed. This could happen because if the newly hired teacher has more overall years of service in the district than other teachers on staff, they would, upon being hired, automatically be granted building seniority relative to their years of service. In this scenario such a teacher might be the last to be let go in the school when budget cuts occur due to a decrease in enrollment or district, state, or even federal inability to maintain funding for all positions even if they are new to the school. In such a case, veteran teachers on staff, whether

effective or ineffective, are protected before non-tenured teachers, regardless of their abilities or achievements in their relatively short time at the school.

The presence of unions impacts principals and their schools in both the short run and the long run. In the short run, unions make certain that tenured teachers remain in their positions. If the teachers in question are of high quality, both according to the letter and spirit of the Teacher Quality provision, it may be a reasonable assumption that improvement in student achievement will occur. As a result of this perennial improvement, more total teachers from the available workforce might be attracted to the school, increasing competition among applicants and allowing principals more options from which to choose when a position became available. Constant improvement might also facilitate stability amongst staff members as well. In such a school, long-term quality amongst staff members and inherently long-term stability might likely occur.

However, if the tenured teachers that are being protected by unions in a given school are not of high quality it may be reasonable to assume that such a school will struggle to improve and that the best of teachers will avoid seeking employment there, providing the principal with fewer options for hiring and more vacancies to fill on a perennial basis. Additionally, as research has demonstrated, the best of teachers in such a school are likely to migrate elsewhere when options become available to them (Ingersoll, 2001b).

How quality individuals are hired, how momentum in striving toward quality and subsequent achievement is built and maintained, and the degree to which excellent teachers are retained within union guidelines are all within the principal's purview, and are likely to be a determinant factor in whether or not the Teacher Quality provision is met and subsequently sustained in individual schools.

Evolving Union/School Relationships

Despite the limiting nature of unions upon principal decision-making, there is some evidence that relationships between unions and education systems are evolving in a way that may provide more flexibility in the hiring and dismissal of teachers by principals. In some states and districts, unions have worked together with education officials to improve the process by which teachers may achieve tenure and how teachers may be evaluated (Koppich, 2005b). In Illinois and many other states, unions have worked together with education officials and others to craft legislation that would streamline the termination process with respect to tenured teachers and allow teacher effectiveness to be a determinant regarding which teachers are let go when lay-offs are necessary, thus altering to some degree the “last hired-first fired” policy in many districts (McKinney, 2011). Additionally, unions, in and of themselves may not be an altogether bad thing for school systems and the wider society. As an example, one study of education finance demonstrated that teacher unions actually have a more positive effect on state productivity, and thus economic health and viability than teaching forces in states where collective bargaining and inherently, union influence is limited (Pantuosco & Ullrich, 2010).

Furthermore, unions may contribute to retention in that, as a result of their obtaining better working conditions overall through collective bargaining, some “highly qualified” teachers may be more likely to remain in states and districts with a strong union presence than migrate elsewhere (Cooper & Sereau, 2008).

Federal Funding of the Teacher Quality Provision

An additional factor that may influence how the Teacher Quality provision is addressed by principals has to do with funding. The degree to which teaching positions in schools are/are not

adequately funded may limit the manner in which principals in individual schools respond to the call for teacher quality mandated by NCLB.

In an effort to improve the ability of non-compliant schools, which typically serve student bodies with high levels of poverty to attract and retain “highly qualified” teachers, the federal government appropriated funds to assist such schools when the legislation was crafted in 2001. In making additional funding available to schools, it was anticipated by principals and their districts that they would have more money available to comply with the mandate and additionally to elevate the quality level of teachers in their buildings. This financial assistance was to be used for professional development for the purpose of gaining certification for some teachers in high-need areas, along with grants to universities to enhance teacher preparation programs in addition to alternative certification programs. However, shortly after the law’s inception the federal government failed to fund the Teacher Quality provision adequately so that such enhancements regarding the training, recruitment and retaining of teachers might be fulfilled. According to a National Education Association (2004) report, the Teacher Quality provision was under funded by \$336 million dollars, while the entire law was, from its inception underfunded in excess of \$32 billion dollars as early on as fiscal 2003. Additionally, the money appropriated for all aspects of NCLB was initially appropriated to schools, but then diminished. In fact, after 100% of the money authorized for NCLB was appropriated in 2001, funding levels plummeted to an average of 63% between 2002 and 2008 (FEBP, 2010).

This inability to properly fund the legislation overall, and more specifically with regard to the Teacher Quality provision, may serve to limit the number of teachers available to principals. As an example, lack of funding may limit the availability of professional development in schools and their districts for the purpose of enabling principals to offer free or reduced coursework to

teachers so that licensure can be gained by teaching candidates in a specific discipline such as Special Education, Bi-lingual Education, Science or Math. In effect, principals are asked to do more in making certain that all their teachers are “highly qualified” without benefit of funding that had been promised for the express purpose of meeting the mandate (Ramaswami, 2008; Spohn, 2008; Welner & Weitzman, 2005).

This lack of funding has a ripple effect with respect to local municipalities’ ability to provide necessary dollars for education (Weiner, 2007). At the end of the policy chain, principals may not always be able to make the hires they need to make in order to fulfill the Teacher Quality provision and inherently the need for academic improvement leading to AYP. They may not be able to provide adequate professional development for the purpose of certifying and inducting new teachers. At the local school level, such financial restraints can only serve to limit the options available to local school principals as they seek to attract and retain teachers of high quality. Lack of funding also disproportionately affects poorer schools and districts. This may be the case, in that such schools and districts may not have other compensatory funding available to provide enhancements to teacher quality in the form of professional development and the like when federal dollars become unavailable (Borkowski & Sneed, 2006).

Funding Reform Initiatives

Some progress has been made recently with respect to funding programs designed to provide professional development that hold the promise of enhancing teacher quality overall and promoting full licensure and “highly qualified” status in schools and districts that remain out of compliance with the Teacher Quality provision. Some states have funded programs designed to address the issue of teacher quality (Trott, 2009). Additionally, the federal government has made competitive grants available through the Obama administration’s *Race to the Top* initiative.

Under the program, states that submit winning proposals demonstrating plans for improving teacher quality via improved teacher preparation, teacher professional development, merit pay and teacher retention in hard to staff schools are awarded millions of dollars to improve the effectiveness of their teaching forces (Toppo, 2009). Whether or not this specific initiative will assist or impede principals in their attempts to staff their buildings with the very best of teachers remains to be seen.

Summary of External Factors Influencing Principal Decision-Making

There are several external factors that may influence principal decision-making regarding the fulfillment of the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB. In essence, each of the external factors concerns rules for hiring, the amount of money supplied to principals to fill positions and the time frame available to principals for hiring.

Rules for hiring are set by district policies. Typically, district policies regarding hiring are intertwined with rules negotiated with teacher unions. In most districts, and in every school examined in this study, principals are compelled by collective bargaining agreements to dismiss the most recently hired teacher when budgets are cut or enrollment dropped. There are some exceptions in areas where a specific certification is required for some positions such as Special Education or Bi-lingual Education, but generally speaking, tenure and seniority dictate who is subject to being cut (Strunk & Grissom, 2010).

The timing of teacher hires influences principal decision-making as well. As an example, principals may not always be able to hire who they want to fill an anticipated vacancy because of the ambiguous nature of funding for teaching positions in some districts. Some principals complete their hiring in the Spring while many are forced to make last minute hires because they have yet to receive funding for a position and are often reluctant to hire a teacher without having

been assured that the position has been paid for in its entirety. Lack of timely funding affects principals in low-income districts disproportionately compared to their counterparts in more affluent areas as they typically have money held in reserve just in case state funding and district funding for positions is cut or eliminated entirely, while poorer districts haven't the luxury of doing so.

An additional external influence upon principals has to do with who is available for hire. It has long been documented that the best of teachers, who are fully credentialed and have obtained "highly qualified" status often start their careers at non-compliant schools populated by poverty-level students. However, once they achieve tenure they tend to move on to more desirable positions in the same district or in more affluent districts (Ingersoll, 1999; 2001b; SCTQ, 2004a).

Furthermore, financial resources available to implement some principal strategies, whether they involve professional development, hiring new personnel, or forming university partnerships may either be limited or unavailable (Cavanagh, 2011; Kober & Rentner, 2011).

Additionally, it has also been argued that overall quality in the workforce has suffered over the past several decades as women have moved away from the teaching profession and toward more lucrative careers that have become available to them (Corcoran, Evans & Schwab, 2002; Dolton & van der Klaauw, 1999). And, while there may be little principals can do about such workforce dynamics, gaining an informed understanding of the level of the talent pool available to their schools may assist some principals in not only meeting the letter of the law, but its spirit as well – if that in fact is their strategy. Correctly gauging workforce dynamics may also aid principals in understanding the advantageousness of granting tenure to an average teacher after four years of service knowing that an upgrade in the form of a replacement was likely

unavailable. In such cases, it may have been that the proverbial bird in the hand was better than two in the bush.

Traditionally, teachers unions have had a profound influence upon the staffing of schools. Unions, via collective bargaining represent both tenured and untenured teachers. Principals may experience a great deal of difficulty in dismissing tenured teachers they find to be ineffective as a result of a union presence in their schools. Tenured teachers, protected by unions are rarely fired because of poor performance. Union protection of ineffective tenured teachers also causes a ripple effect whereby potentially excellent neophyte teachers are dismissed when schools experience reductions in enrollment or funding. As a result, the manner in which principals understand and work within union guidelines for hiring and terminating teachers may likely be a determining factor in whether or not the Teacher Quality provision mandate is met in both letter and spirit in individual schools.

There have been recent initiatives in which unions, states and districts have worked together to ensure that the most qualified teachers are at the helm of classrooms. Recently, laws that protect the most senior of teachers, regardless of their performance, have been altered in several states. As an example, state legislatures in several states have placed limits on collective bargaining, streamlined the process for dismissing ineffective teachers and altered typical “last hired-first fired” policies so that teacher effectiveness, measured using principal ratings and student test scores are factored in when lay-offs become necessary (Gabriel & Dillon, 2011).

Having outlined both the internal and external factors considered by principals as they attempt to meet the Teacher Quality provision, the methodology used in the study may now be addressed.

Chapter III

Methodology

The purpose of my study was to document and explain the manner in which principals of public schools with varying levels of compliance and differing rates of affluence and poverty among their student bodies responded to the call for “highly qualified” teachers in every classroom. After reviewing the relevant literature and having acquired an understanding as to how principals might respond to the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB, I sought an understanding as to why principals responded in specific ways. I was interested in whether or not their responses met the mandate and whether they felt those responses positively or negatively impacted the level of quality among their teaching staffs. I was particularly interested in how principals in a variety of circumstances perceived their ability to attract and retain teachers of high quality. I was also interested in the number of choices available to each principal as they initially sought to gain compliance with the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB and subsequently, perhaps improve the level of quality among teachers in their schools. Additionally, I wanted to examine the degree of variation in the number of options available to principals operating in differing circumstances.

In order to understand how and why principals responded to the Teacher Quality provision in specific ways, I sought to understand how the problem of adequately staffing schools, along with compliance with the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB was perceived by principals and to then document the strategies used by them in seeking solutions. I wanted to know if principals felt they needed merely to address the letter of the NCLB legislation or the legislation’s spirit as well. Did they have the capability of accomplishing both? Did they wish to accomplish both? I also sought to understand what internal/external supports and obstacles, both real and perceived

might have affected the strategies they undertook in order to fulfill the Teacher Quality provision mandate. Which obstacles did they view as being their most significant impediments? What supports were available to them? And, perhaps more importantly how did these obstacles and supports influence the actions of principals as they addressed the policy?

In order to determine the processes principals used to make decisions as they strove to meet the mandate of the Teacher Quality provision, I sought to uncover patterns of behavior regarding how these administrators addressed the problem of staffing their schools. Conducting in-depth interviews with principals, I wanted to look at the strategies they most often employed in meeting the demand for teacher quality. I was also interested in uncovering strategies that were used less frequently. I then examined the context in which particular strategies were chosen over others and attempted to determine whether or not a consistent pattern of reasoning and decision-making was apparent in the actions of individual principals and across the group of principals. I also considered the broader context which included student/teacher mobility, student poverty rates, student academic achievement etc. in which individual decisions were made. More specifically, I wanted to be able to connect the decisions made by principals to the resources available to them in meeting the Teacher Quality mandate as well as additional internal and external factors that may have influenced their courses of action.

Theoretical Framework

Using Cyert and March's *Behavioral Theory of the Firm*, I sought to answer the following research questions: How did school principals respond to the demand for teacher quality as outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001? How did these principals define quality teaching? Additionally, if there were differences in perceptions of what constituted teacher quality between the principals I interviewed and the provision itself, how did principals reconcile

and balance such differences? Finally, I examined the degree to which a host of internal and external factors may have influenced principals as they sought to gain compliance with the law and perhaps elevate the level of teacher quality in their buildings. In constructing a framework for my study, I used Cyert and March's *Behavioral Theory of the Firm* as it provided a means by which organizational decision-making can be understood. As outlined previously, Cyert and March's *Behavioral Theory of the Firm*, demonstrates how organizations arrive at decisions.

I modified Cyert and March's *Behavioral Theory of the Firm* so that the decision-making model would provide a more effective frame with which to answer my questions regarding how principals might respond to external policy demands such as the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB. I amended Cyert and March's model after a review of the relevant literature on how principals in public schools might respond to external mandates, how they perceived teacher quality, were aware of the prospective internal/external factors, and considered the typical standard operating procedures in place in public schools.

The applied version of Cyert and March's *Behavioral Theory of the Firm* provided a frame by which principal decision-making could be understood. As the literature suggests, similarities abound between the decision-making process of Cyert and March's firm and principals. As an example, both the firm and principals engage in internal and external search (Beckhard & Pritchard, 1992; Cyert & March, 1963; Hoy & Miskell, 1996; March & Simon, 1993; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The firm and principals both engage in problemistic search in which finding solutions to problems is motivated, simple-minded and biased (Daft & Weick, 1984). Like the firm, principals engage in simple-minded search, recalling past successes and failures in responding to external pressure (Dierks et. al., 2001; Shulz, 1998). The firm and principals both seek to mimic successful organizations, engaging in "institutional isomorphism" (DiMaggio &

Powell, 1983) for the purpose of appearing successful in responding to an external mandate (March & Olsen, 1976). In the quasi-resolution of conflict, the firm and principals also distinguish between the essential and the non-essential and seek to maximize uncertainty avoidance (Haberman, 2002). Both the principal and private firms provide slack to their employees in similar fashion, (Cheng & Kesner, 1997; Smith et. al. 1991) as well as “side-payments” to the most favored of employees (Cyert & March, 1963).

Principal Interpretation of Problems

There exist a number of internal and external factors, along with factors pertaining to individual principals that may influence thinking and choice. Some individual principals may have more overall experience in their positions while others may have more experience in dealing with external mandates. Some may have both. What principals bring to the table in terms of experience and acumen in dealing with external mandates may be a large influence in how they form strategy and whether or not the problem is successfully addressed (Fullan, 1991; Glickman, 1993; Senge, 2000). Principals may apply their experience and acumen to interpret factors that may serve as impediments and supports as they grapple with how best to meet the Teacher Quality provision. These impediments and supports include, but may not be limited to, internal factors such as the presence of parent/teacher organizations, along with the level of teacher turnover, which is higher than many other professions (Guarino, Santibanez & Daley, 2006, Ingersoll, 2001a; Krieg, 2006) and the achievement level of the student body which may or may not increase or decrease the number of teachers in the workforce who would accept a position in a particular school. Additionally external factors that serve as impediments and enhancements to achieving compliance that principals may consider include district policies, overall teacher workforce dynamics, union rules and federal/state/local funding issues.

Internal Factors Likely to Influence Principal Decision-Making

I chose to focus on the internal and external factors discussed in chapter two because they were the most likely to impact principal decision-making regarding the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB. As an example, one of the functions of parent organizations may be to make recommendations to the principal regarding who is to be hired and who is to be dismissed. And, while recommendations by parent organizations are not binding, such groups do influence personnel decisions made by principals in public schools (Cosner, 2009; Wanat & Zieglowsky, 2010). Secondly, the level of turnover among teachers in specific schools may have a profound influence upon how principals choose strategy in attempting to meet the mandate. The issue of achievement levels among student bodies in turn may be intertwined with the teacher turnover issue (Ingersoll, 2001b).

External Factors Likely to Influence Principal Decision-Making

The external factors I chose to focus on were district policies, workforce dynamics, union rules and funding. I chose to focus on these external factors because they were the ones most likely to impact principal decision-making. As an example, in responding to problems, principals had to be aware of district policies regarding hiring, tenure and lay-off/dismissal procedures. A thorough understanding of district policies by principals would likely provide them with the most latitude possible when they were staffing their schools. The degree to which principals fully understood district policies may have dictated how they went about obtaining waivers for teachers yet to attain compliance and how they may have obtained professional development for those teachers who had yet to be fully credentialed.

The degree to which principals are aware of the overall workforce dynamics may inform the decisions he/she makes regarding whether or not to keep a mediocre teacher or roll the dice,

hoping that an upgrade might be found (Corcoran, Evans & Schwab, 2002; D'Agostino & Powers, 2009; Liu, et. al, 2008; Tai, Liu & Fan, 2007). An understanding of the workforce dynamics also informs principal decision-making regarding who to invest in longitudinally and who to cut before they have completed four years of service and achieve tenure.

Union rules impact much of what principals do, including addressing the Teacher Quality provision (Koppich, 2005a; Menuet, 2005). As a result of union rules, established through collective bargaining agreements, principals may not always be able to immediately remove teachers simply because they have not achieved “highly qualified” status. Furthermore, should a principal choose to move beyond simple compliance, union rules may force teachers upon them who are ineffective. And, as the literature demonstrates, ineffective teachers may contribute to a negative perception of an individual school, thus keeping “highly qualified” teachers from seeking positions there and subsequently inflating its percentage of not “highly qualified” staff members.

Finally, funding issues may also permeate principal decision-making. Principals must know how much money is available for the purpose of providing professional development for those teachers out of compliance. Money available may figure greatly into the hiring process as well as principals in poorer districts, which have a more pronounced problem in attracting and retaining “highly qualified” teachers, (Ingersoll, 2002) commonly receive funding for positions later than their counterparts in more affluent districts. As a result, many “highly qualified” teachers may have already been hired by the time principals in some schools have received their personnel budget.

Thus, the resulting framework, previously presented on page 31, adapted from Cyert and March (1963) and informed by my review of the relevant literature provides a way to understand

the internal and external factors most likely to be considered by principals as they attempt to address the Teacher Quality mandate of NCLB.

Design of the Study

The study was conducted utilizing a qualitative survey design in which subjects were interviewed at length. By qualitative survey, I refer to a design in which the differences among a population, in this case school principals could be effectively analyzed via the questioning of subjects in one-on-one interviews conducted in their offices (Jansen, 2010; Mertens, 1998).

The qualitative survey design allowed for free interaction between myself and the subjects, provided a forum for subjects to answer questions in an elaborate manner as opposed to a multiple choice instrument and provided me the opportunity to ask relevant follow-up questions in response to statements made by the subject (Reinharz, 1992). Furthermore, interviewing principals held the added benefit of having face to face interactions with subjects in their offices where I was able to gain some understanding of the work environment, the physical plant and staff members who interacted with the principal, sometimes even as the interviews were being conducted.

An additional benefit of conducting interviews via a qualitative survey, as opposed to other methodologies was that I was assured of receiving responses from principals themselves as opposed to secretaries or other employees who might be given the task of completing a multiple choice survey sent via mail as an example (Jaeger, 1997). Also, it was likely that my preparation prior to the interviews would elevate the quality of responses from subjects. This may not have been the case had I chosen to conduct paper and pencil surveys that did not involve face to face interaction between myself and my subjects (Patton, 2002). Principals selected for inclusion in the study signed informed letters of consent stating they were aware of the nature of the study

and the inherent risks which were minimal. The informed consent document signed by each principal in the study can be found in Appendix C.

Study Sites

My research was conducted in 12 elementary schools in the Chicago suburbs. Six of the schools had achieved compliance with the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB while the other six had not. I chose to examine schools in suburban Chicago because they provided a wide array of institutions with differing economic and achievement levels. I chose to look at schools that were both in and out of compliance for the purpose of understanding how internal and external factors, as defined by Cyert and March dictated possible courses of action for principals. For the sake of continuity, I limited myself to schools containing the following characteristics in choosing which schools to study.

1. enrollment no less than 200 and no more than 1,000 students
2. serving students in grades K-8
3. non-selective enrollment
4. non-specialty schools (military academies, alternative schools, charter schools)

In establishing the above parameters, I attempted to limit some of the variables (military, specialty, alternative school status, selective enrollment, very large and very small student population) that might impact principal decision-making. As a result, the schools included in my study were moderately sized, suburban elementary schools that were obligated to serve students within their immediate attendance area. At the completion of my study I sought only to draw conclusions about a particular type of school (average sized, non-selective, non-specialty, instructing students in grades K-8) in a well-defined (specifically suburban Chicago) setting.

Having controlled for several factors that might influence decision-making (military, specialty, alternative school status, selective enrollment, very large and very small student population) I was able to investigate the primary variables that remained (compliance/non-compliance, academic achievement on standardized tests, mobility rates, poverty levels) that might limit/enhance principal response to the Teacher Quality mandate. I was able to understand how principal decision-making differed between schools that were out of compliance and those that had already achieved it. In addition to understanding differing responses, I also wanted to understand those that were universal among principals be they in/out of compliance. I was able to gain some insight regarding whether or not similar actions taken by principals of compliant schools and non-compliant schools achieved the same or differing results.

Principals at my study sites encountered a range of dilemmas and opportunities as they strove to comply with the Teacher Quality provision. In some cases, factors such as high levels of poverty, high mobility amongst staff and students, the resulting inability to attract veteran and promising new teachers, lack of academic achievement, and lack of funding may have limited principals' ability to address the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB. In other cases, the numerous resources available to principals in more affluent schools, such as higher teacher salaries, low teacher and student mobility, high academic achievement and lower levels of concentrated poverty may have better equipped them to address the mandate. Additionally, principals had varying levels of experience in their positions ranging from three years on the job at their current school to 14 with an average time on the job of between six and seven years. Seven of the twelve principals were female while the remaining five were male. The ages of principals ranged from 41 to 60. The particulars are found in the table below. Pseudonyms have been used for both the names of schools and their principals.

Table I: Principal Characteristics

Schools Out of Compliance	Years as Principal	Age	Gender
Diaz	4	56	F
Fink	3	50	F
Finney	5	53	F
Gibbons	9	51	M
Keppler	6	55	F
Moore	11	60	F
Schools In Compliance	Years as Principal	Age	Gender
Keslik	4	57	F
Lynch	8	41	M
McCaughtry	6	55	M
Morrissey	14	55	M
O'Mara	4	51	M
Sims	3	53	F

Selection of Districts

The study was conducted in the Chicago suburbs in nine separate districts. Five of the schools were traditional elementary schools serving students in grades K-8. The remaining 7 schools were middle schools serving students in grades 6-8. In soliciting subjects for interviews, approximately two hundred emails were sent requesting participation in the study. Additionally, phone calls were made to each of the potential study sites as well.

Essentially, three types of districts were represented in this study. The first type of district was predominantly white, with high levels of achievement on standardized tests and relatively low levels of poverty. There were six schools in this category. The second type of district consisted of mostly minority students, had moderate to high levels of poverty and average to above average achievement on standardized tests. There were three schools in this category. The third type of district consisted of nearly all minority students with high levels of poverty and low to average achievement on standardized tests. The remaining three schools were in this category.

All of the predominantly white schools with high achievement had attained compliance with the Teacher Quality provision while none of the second type of district with high minority enrollment and average to above average achievement nor the third type of district with almost all minority students, high poverty and low to average achievement on standardized tests had done so.

In total, the nine districts included in the study had an average per pupil expenditure of \$6,473.11. Schools in predominantly white districts with high achievement and those in mostly minority average achieving districts had more funding available to them than their counterparts in predominantly minority districts with low achievement. Per pupil expenditures in the first

type of district were \$6,721.83 and \$6,632.33 in the second. By contrast the predominantly minority districts with low achievement had per pupil expenditures of \$5,922.

In the Chicago suburbs, students generally attend K-5 and then move on to a middle school in the same district for grades 6-8. Given this reality, every effort was made to strike a balance between elementary schools and middle schools. Schools were selected based on my ability to gain an appointment for a two hour interview with the principal and whether or not they would fit into either the “compliant” or “non-compliant” category. In this regard my sample was selected with an eye toward convenience assuming they fit into my previously established parameters (enrollment between 200-1,000 students, serving students in the K-8 grade range, non-selective enrollment, non-specialty school). Additionally, I sought to include schools located in districts to the north, south and west of Chicago so as to gather information from places that were geographically diverse. Of course, no eastern suburbs were included as Chicago is bordered on the east by the state of Indiana and Lake Michigan. As such, while there are some Chicago suburbs that may identify themselves as being located southeast of the city, there are no suburbs that are located farther east than south. As a result, five of the schools chosen were located in the northern suburbs, four in the western suburbs and three in the southern suburbs. I also sought to gain some measure of variety regarding districts, wanting to sample those with varying numbers of students. I did this in order to gain perspective on different school environments hoping to expose myself to as many factors influencing the implementation of policy mandates as possible.

Small, Medium and Large District Classification

The Illinois State Board of Education classifies districts from large (the largest 25%), medium (the middle 50%), and small (the smallest 25%). Whether or not a district is large, medium or

small is determined by the overall number of students in the district rather than the number of schools (Durflinger & Haefffele, 2011). As the vast majority of the smallest districts are located in the rural areas of the state, I was unable to include any schools belonging to districts designated as “small” by the state. Of the twelve schools selected, seven were located in large districts with the remaining five belonging to medium-sized districts.

Pseudonyms were given to each of the schools in the study so as to protect the anonymity of the principals interviewed. The five schools located in northern suburban districts included Diaz Middle, Fink Elementary, Finney Middle, Gibbons Elementary, and Morrissey Middle.

Fink Elementary and Gibbons Elementary are located in a large north suburban district that has a predominantly Hispanic student population in over twenty schools. This district has a large percentage of poverty level students. Both schools have a relatively low level of achievement on standardized tests compared with all schools included in the study. The average teacher salary is the second lowest of the nine districts.

Diaz Middle and Finney Middle are also located in another large northern suburban district. This district has a relatively moderate level of poverty in a student population that is nearly equal parts Hispanic and White with Black and Asian populations both between five and ten percent. Schools in this district have average levels of achievement on standardized tests. The average teacher salary falls in the middle of the nine districts included in the study.

Morrissey Middle School, the final school located in a medium-sized northern suburban district is a school comprised of a majority White student body with an additional third being Hispanic. It also contains significant Asian and Black student populations numbering between 10-15%. It has the third lowest average teacher salary of the nine districts surveyed. The

district's performance on standardized tests is slightly above the state average. Additionally, it has a slightly below average rate of poverty as measured by the state.

The four schools located in the western suburban districts include Keslik Middle, Lynch Elementary, Moore Elementary and Sims Middle. Keslik Middle is located in a medium-sized district whose population is largely White with small percentages of Hispanic, African-American and Asian students with low levels of poverty. Teacher salaries in this district average just below the median for all schools included in the study. This district performs well above the state average on standardized tests.

Another of the western suburban schools included in the study, Lynch Elementary is located in a medium-sized district which has a student population that is nearly two-thirds White with another third being Hispanic. This district scores slightly above the state average on standardized tests, has a high level of poverty and has a low average teacher salary.

Moore Elementary is also located in the western suburbs in a large district that has a student body that is three-quarters Hispanic with the vast majority of the remaining population being White. This district is characterized by having an above average teacher salary, high levels of poverty and slightly less than average performance on standardized tests.

The last of the western suburban schools, Sims Middle School, is located in a medium-sized district whose student body is three-quarters White with Asian and Hispanic populations of approximately 10% each. This district provides teachers an average salary, has very low levels of poverty and has high levels of student achievement on standardized tests.

Schools located in the southern suburbs include Keppler Middle, O'Mara Middle and McCaughtry Elementary. Keppler Middle School is located in medium-sized south suburban district that has high level of poverty. Three quarters of its students are African-American. The

vast majority of the balance of the student population is Hispanic. This district scores well below the state average on standardized tests, has high levels of poverty and has the lowest average teacher salary of all the schools included in the study.

Also located in the southern suburbs, McCaughtry Elementary and O'Mara Middle School are part of the same large district that has a predominantly White population with a significant Asian population and small percentages of African-American and Hispanic students. This district provides its teachers with salaries that are the highest of all schools included in the study and it achieves well above average on standardized tests.

Documentary Sources of Data

In the study, I wished to examine schools in a single state so that the data gleaned from State Report Cards would be consistent across schools. That is, they were all being measured by the same agency – in this case the Illinois State Board of Education. There was also the factor of convenience as I was able to drive to each of the sites, conduct an interview and return in a single day.

In selecting schools for inclusion in the study, I used Illinois State Report Cards from each school for the years 2002-2008 to determine the degree to which they were in/out of compliance with the Teacher Quality provision, and then determined the progress schools had made in reducing the number and percentage of teachers yet to be deemed “highly qualified.” In cases where compliance had been achieved and maintained over a long period of time, I was able to demonstrate that as well. In addition to providing data regarding the number of “highly qualified” teachers, State Report Cards held the added benefit of providing information regarding poverty levels, test score data, student mobility rates and other school characteristics that allowed me to construct a context in which principals made decisions. Via the State Report Cards, I

collected 7 years of data regarding the number of teachers deemed unqualified according to the federal government. I was then able to determine fluctuations in levels of compliance. Subsequently, I was able to use the interview responses to draw conclusions regarding principal response strategies.

Including seven years of data regarding the percentage of teachers in each school who were not “highly qualified,” I was able to uncover patterns regarding the ebb and flow of “highly qualified” teachers in and out of specific schools. Subsequently, I was able to use the data, juxtaposing it against what principals said in interviews, to draw some conclusions about response patterns. I was then able construct patterns of how principals in both compliant and non-compliant schools responded to the mandate. Subsequently, I could document how decisions made by principals in schools that were able to achieve compliance sometimes differed from those who were not. In documenting how these decisions were made, I could consider how the ability of principals to address the problem of meeting the mandate correlated positively to the number of options available to principals in different schools.

The following two pages contain two charts outlining the characteristics of each school. The first chart contains data pertaining to the six schools that had already achieved compliance. The second chart contains data pertaining to the remaining six that had yet to achieve compliance. This data illustrates characteristics of each of the schools headed by principals surveyed for the study. These characteristics include: student mobility rate, average class size, average daily student attendance, enrollment, percentage of minority students, percentage of low-income students, average student score on state tests, the rate of teacher mobility from the school, the percentage of teachers at the school that had yet to receive “highly qualified” status and the percentage of teachers holding provisional certification

Table II: Compliant School Characteristics

Indicator	M	CS	A	E	MS	L	T	NQ '02	P '02	NQ '03	P '03	NQ '04	P '04	NQ '05	P '05	NQ '06	P '06	NQ '07	P '07	NQ '08	P '08
Keslik	9.1	19.7	95.1	236	24.6	11.9	88.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lynch	16.2	24.2	95.8	357	32.5	66.7	87.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
McCaugh- try	6.7	23.8	96.8	500	25.6	11.8	93.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Morrissey	13.6	17.3	95.6	540	52.2	31.3	77.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
O'Mara	3.6	21.8	95.6	592	17.7	10.3	95.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sims	11.5	18.6	96.0	503	21.9	3.8	92.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

M = Student Mobility Rate MS = Percentage of Minority Students L = Percentage of Low-Income Students NQ = Percentage of Teachers not “Highly Qualified” T = Average Score on State Tests CS = Average Class Size A = Average Daily Attendance
E = Enrollment P = Teachers Holding Provisional Certification

Table III: Non-Compliant School Characteristics

Indicator	M	CS	A	E	MS	L	T	NQ '02	P '02	NQ '03	P '03	NQ '04	P '04	NQ '05	P '05	NQ '06	P '06	NQ '07	P '07	NQ '08	P '08
Diaz	8.9	25.6	95.4	529	71.1	57.1	82.4	2.1	2.0	2.8	0.0	2.1	0.0	5.6	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.8	2.0	2.2	0.0
Fink	15.0	20.0	94.6	483	97.1	50.7	59.9	0.0	15.4	26.1	11.9	20.8	14.2	0.0	11.0	12.5	3.7	12.0	10.7	12.5	10.7
Finney	7.4	25.6	95.6	976	39.3	23.0	87.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.9	0.0
Gibbons	13.0	20.4	95.2	637	97.8	50.1	69.5	50.0	25.1	50.0	22.3	43.5	35.9	36.4	26.8	4.3	18.6	13.3	13.8	19.4	14.2
Keppler	19.7	17.6	93.9	328	96.6	80.8	69.4	0.0	4.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	6.7	4.2	5.9	4.0	13.0	0.0	4.5	0.0
Moore	12.9	27.3	95.5	793	70.1	45.4	78.0	0.0	3.6	0.0	3.4	0.0	1.8	0.0	1.8	0.0	3.6	0.0	3.7	2.7	0.0

M = Student Mobility Rate MS = Percentage of Minority Students L = Percentage of Low-Income Students NQ = Percentage of Teachers not “Highly Qualified” T = Average Score on State Tests CS = Average Class Size A = Average Daily Attendance E = Enrollment P = Teachers Holding Provisional Certification

The charts provide a way in which an understanding of the context in which principals addressed the Teacher Quality provision might be gained. The only characteristic contained in the chart that was not obtained via the annual State Report Card was the teacher mobility rate which is not reported to the state. As a result, this information was obtained via principal interviews. Based on principal reporting, I indicated whether or not schools experienced low, average or high levels of teacher turnover. Again, these were estimates reported by principals who typically did not keep such data on file. And, though an estimate, this piece of data is important in that it provides context regarding the extent to which principals feel they must be looking for new teachers. This was an important part of the study because it is a reasonable assumption that if schools experienced a great deal of flux with regard to the teaching staff, a principal would be likely to spend a more significant amount of time plugging holes on their faculty than his/her counterparts in more stable schools. As a result of time constraints colliding with the numerous other functions a principal must perform, he/she may have felt compelled to consider lesser applicants who might have been in need of assistance in obtaining the necessary credentials to begin or remain in specific teaching positions within the school.

Simply by glancing over the data in a tertiary manner, one can see some patterns among schools that had yet to achieve compliance and those that had already done so. As an example, we find that overall; schools that had yet to achieve compliance generally had higher rates of poverty, higher enrollments, higher rates of student and teacher mobility, higher percentages of minority students, and lower average achievement levels on all annual tests. Also, with regard to out of compliance schools one can see that there is an ebb and flow of not “highly qualified”

rates along with the percentage of teachers operating on provisional certificates.

State Specific Context

In order to understand the actions taken by principals it was important to become familiar with the manner in which individual states interpreted policy regarding teacher quality emanating from the federal government. In 2002-2003 when the Teacher Quality provision was first enacted 5.6% of teachers were teaching on a waiver or provisional basis. However, while that is an average, state by state rates varied widely. As an example, while Nevada had no teachers operating on a provisional basis, meaning they had yet to attain proper certification, but were teaching in a classroom, 16% of North Carolina's teachers had received waivers. In Illinois where this study was conducted, the rate of teachers operating on provisional certificates was approximately 3.5% (USDE, 2004a)

As the deadline for fulfilling the Teacher Quality provision approached in the Fall of 2005, 40 out of 50 states received waivers that allowed them additional time to meet the legislation when it became apparent they would be unable to realize complete compliance by 2006 as outlined in the law (Ed Policy Update, 2005; Keller, 2005; Keller, 2007b). In Illinois, at this juncture, 1.8% of all teachers were still out of compliance, with another 1.9% teaching on a provisional certificate. Additionally, 7% of all Illinois teachers in high poverty schools had yet to achieve "highly qualified" status, with another 4.4% teaching on a provisional certificate (ISBE, 2005).

The relative success with which individual states met the mandate, though none were in complete compliance by the 2006 deadline (NBPTS, 2006; USDE, 2007), was likely to have influenced principals' decision-making process and the importance they placed on meeting it relative to all other concerns they faced.

Provisional Teachers

Teachers employed at a school on a provisional certificate were those who had not attained a specific credential such as a subject-specific endorsement in Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies and were teaching those subjects in their classrooms on a regular basis. Additionally, teachers could also be employed on a provisional certificate if they taught pre-kindergarten, Special Education, or Bi-lingual Education.

As a result of shortages in these areas in some schools and districts, principals were allowed, via a waiver issued by the state to hire a teacher who had an Education degree, but had yet to obtain a subject-specific endorsement. Such teachers were hired by principals and then typically given two years to complete the endorsement, usually via college coursework, but occasionally through alternative programs sponsored by the district.

It is important to consider the percentage of teachers in particular schools who were teaching on provisional certificates because not all of them necessarily went on to complete the necessary coursework in order to retain their positions. In such cases, the principal may have been forced to dismiss the provisional teacher and hire a replacement. In some cases, if shortages continued in subject specific subject areas, the principal may subsequently have been forced to hire a replacement who would also be teaching on a provisionary certificate. As noted above, schools having the largest percentage of not “highly qualified” teachers on staff quite often had the largest percentage of teachers operating on a provisional certificate as well, perhaps adding to the perception, if not the reality that a sizeable number of teachers in specific schools were not legally qualified to be in front of the classrooms to which they were assigned.

It must be noted that the degree of difficulty in bringing a school into compliance may not necessarily be accurately reflected by the percentage rate of teachers in specific schools who had

yet to achieve “highly qualified” status. There existed a variety of factors which contributed to a school’s not “highly qualified” percentage including the sheer size of the staff and the number of teachers in the overall supply pool that were willing to work at a particular building. As an example, in a school with 1,000 students and 70 teachers that had 10% of its teachers yet to achieve “highly qualified” status, its principal had to focus on attaining certification for seven teachers. By contrast, a principal heading a smaller school with 20 teachers serving 300 students with 10% of its faculty not yet “highly qualified” needed only to focus on 2. This spoke to the very core of my study. That is: How did the internal/external environments in which a principal operated influence their decision-making? Also, was it possible that the same successful decisions made in one school proved less than optimal in other schools with different and perhaps more challenging sets of problems with which principals had to contend?

The Interviews

I conducted in-depth interviews with each principal, in each school, recording the conversations digitally and taking copious notes. Interviews were between 1 ½ - 2 ½ hours in length. During the course of my interviews with principals at the selected sites they were questioned as to how they had responded to the call for teacher quality in each of their classrooms. I was particularly interested in how they interpreted the policy to fit the needs of their schools. Additionally, I attempted to become aware of the resources and supports available to these principals as well as the many limitations they did/did not encounter as they attempted to implement the policy.

Interview questions were developed from Cyert and March’s model. The protocol of the interview questions can be found in Appendix A. Via the interview questions, I attempted to uncover how principals viewed the Teacher Quality provision and what the legislation meant to

them. I sought to understand the organizational goals principals held for their buildings and how the mandate for teacher quality impacted those goals. Additionally, I asked principals about their current rate of compliance/non-compliance and what factors they believe contributed to the fluctuations in the rates over the previous seven years.

Documenting Principal Strategy

Having come to an understanding as to how principals interpreted the legislation, I turned my questioning to the matter of how principals formed a plan of action and made decisions regarding the Teacher Quality provision. I wanted to know which decisions were made for the purpose of achieving simple short-term compliance, independent of whether or not the level of teacher quality in the school would be elevated. Conversely, I wanted to know when principals made decisions about teacher quality for the purpose of developing a building staffed with teachers of the highest quality who would remain in their positions for the foreseeable future who also had obtained proper certification. Having differentiated between the two types of strategies, the context in which they were made and the reasons why they were chosen, I then wanted to know what teacher qualities were coveted by principals as they sought to elevate the level of instruction in their buildings. I also wanted to know what options were considered by principals and why one option was chosen over others.

Documenting Resources Available to Principals to Address the Teacher Quality Provision

After establishing how principals viewed and subsequently acted upon the problem of meeting the legislation's mandate, I attempted to understand the resources they drew upon in making their decisions and where they searched in order to find them. I wanted to know the degree to which previous experiences at both their current school and previous assignments contributed to their response to the policy. Also, I wanted to know if there were individuals

either inside or outside the school that contributed to the decision-making process. What the principal read in journals or elsewhere that contributed to his/her knowledge regarding the problem was also of interest as it may have informed decision-making. Additionally, I wanted to know the degree to which the search for solutions was either internal or external in nature. In many instances it may have been both. Furthermore, I wanted to know how the principals and their organizations had responded to previous calls for change.

The ability of principals to provide “side-payments” to the most valued of teachers was of interest to me in that it allowed me to understand the degree to which resources were allocated as the principal strove to meet the Teacher Quality mandate. In some instances, a lack of resources available to principals facilitated my understanding as to why some principals had fewer options than others and why they subsequently made the choices they did from a limited menu.

After fleshing out the principal’s organizational goals, I wanted to understand the internal organizational environment of the school. I wanted to understand the ways of doing and the norms in the building. I also sought to understand how parent organizations, other administrators and teachers had impacted the principal’s ability to address the policy. I wanted to know which personnel the principal inherited from the previous administration and which teachers were hired on his/her watch. I also wanted to know the level of turnover among teachers and whether or not such a level was deemed acceptable by the principal. If it was not, I wanted to know what the principal had done to limit turnover.

Turning to the external environmental factors, I asked principals the degree to which union contracts affected their ability to staff their schools with teachers that were both desirable and fully certified. I also wanted to know how other parts of the legislation, such as the call for AYP, might either persuade or discourage “highly qualified” teachers from seeking out their school

when considering employment options. Furthermore, I asked whether or not principals felt they had an adequate supply of quality teachers to choose from when filling a position. I also asked whether or not principals found that the Teacher Quality provision was adequately funded both system-wide and in their buildings.

Before concluding the interviews, I wanted to know how the principals, in a general sense, believed the Teacher Quality provision had/would impact elementary schools. I also wanted to know if the principal truly believed the legislation had/would improve educational opportunities for students in their schools. Finally, I asked principals if there were any issues of paramount importance that I had failed to address in the interview.

Other Sources of Data

Constructing the study, I examined data from the following sources: principal interviews, school report cards, data outlining the number and percentage of teachers out of compliance over a seven year span, principal testimony regarding teacher mobility rates at the school, teacher mobility rates at the state and federal level, and school improvement plans. These documentary sources of evidence are listed in Appendix B.

As a result of including seven years of data regarding the percentage of teachers in each school who were not “highly qualified,” I was able to uncover patterns regarding the ebb and flow of “highly qualified” teachers in and out of specific schools. Subsequently, I was able to use these data, and juxtapose it against what principals said in interviews. I was then able to construct patterns of how and why principals responded in the ways they did as the highly fluid environments in which they operated changed. I could then document how decisions made in schools that were able to achieve compliance differed from those that were unable to do so. In documenting how decisions were made, I was then able to consider how the capacity to address

the problem of meeting the mandate contributed to the number of options available in different schools.

Methods of Analysis

To analyze the data I collected from interviews, I first looked at the schools that were out of compliance and identified the most frequent commonalities in responses around issues such as the interpretation of the problem of staffing schools with “highly qualified” teachers, the priority level of the problem in the minds of principals, factors assisting or impeding the solving of the problem, and specific steps taken by principals to address the problem. I then did the same for the compliant schools. Having developed my interview questions from the relevant literature and juxtaposing what the literature had to say against the applied version of Cyert and March’s framework, I was able to anticipate four relevant categories that were likely to be common to all/most schools. Guided by my framework, I was then able to anticipate what principals would most commonly say in the interviews based on the literature and what Cyert and March say regarding organizational response to external threats. Having anticipated the four most frequent areas of concern, I was then able to disaggregate all responses by principals, and subsequently place them in one of the four established categories so that the data could then be analyzed in an organized fashion.

After placing responses from principals in non-compliant schools in one of the four categories I then did the same for the principals of compliant schools. I then established the most frequently occurring types of responses among principals in non-compliant schools and compliant schools for the purpose of establishing predominant patterns. Having assembled these patterns, I was then able to present them in the findings and compare them. Subsequently, I was

able to determine similarities and differences in patterns of response between principals of non-compliant and compliant schools.

In seeking to find out how principals in varying suburban elementary school environments sought to fulfill the Teacher Quality provision of the No Child Left Behind Act, I examined my interviews searching for patterns of thinking and behavior by principals. To what degree did the specific context in which principals operated dictate what strategies were chosen to meet the mandate? Which strategies had proven most effective in meeting the letter of the law? Did principals choose strategies aimed at simple compliance or did they favor those that held the added benefit of addressing the spirit of the law? Perhaps principals achieved simple compliance and then sought to concern themselves with the law's spirit – to truly increase educational outcomes for students by providing them with “highly qualified” teachers. Had principals heading compliant schools approached the problem in similar/dissimilar ways than those at the helm of non-compliant buildings still struggling to meet the mandate?

The interviews were transcribed within one week after they had taken place. I reviewed the transcripts while concurrently listening to recordings of the interviews. Upon completing my review of the recording and transcripts, predominant themes across all interviews were identified as they emerged from the interviews. After identifying the most prominent of themes, I organized them by grouping reoccurring ideas into coherent categories (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). When this was completed, four emergent themes were identified: 1) principal perspective on the Teacher Quality mandate and how they defined the problem of teacher quality, 2) teacher quality in relation to other priorities, 3) enhancements and barriers to achieving compliance, and 4) decisions made and strategies employed by principals to achieve compliance and to enhance teacher quality. I chose to limit myself to the four themes as they were the most frequently

occurring and encompassed the most predominant issues with regard to the manner in which principals made decisions in response to the Teacher Quality provision. The four themes were selected in an attempt to create a chronological map of how principals interpreted the problem of meeting the Teacher Quality mandate, where the issue of teacher quality fit amongst a myriad of concerns, then examining the limiting and enhancing factors they encountered and finally, learning what they did to respond. Additionally, the four emergent themes could be tied back to my framework, in that they explained how an organization may have interpreted problems, searched for solutions, responded to its internal and external environments and defined the importance of the problem through the lens of the organization's overall goals and its standard operating procedures, thus mirroring the behaviors of Cyert and March's firm.

Revisiting the school report card data after conducting the principal interviews provided context about individual schools and the environment in which they made decisions. The data also allowed me to measure factors such as student mobility and student poverty levels that may have affected test scores which may have negatively impacted teacher recruitment and retention (Ingersoll, 1999; 2001a; Moore-Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Shen, 1997) thus limiting the number of "highly qualified" personnel potentially available to some principals.

In those schools that had achieved full compliance, I documented, via principal interviews, how compliance was achieved and maintained as the result of resources available to administrators and how those resources were effectively allocated. I was then able to refer back to their State Report Cards and find how factors such as student mobility and poverty levels that may have influenced achievement subsequently may have, in turn aided teacher recruitment and retention.

Principal Perspective on Teacher Quality

In the first section dealing with principals' perspective on the problem of meeting the Teacher Quality mandate I detailed the degree to which administrators charged with the implementation of the legislation thought it worthwhile, or in some cases even necessary in their school. I also gained principals' perspective on the qualities they valued in teachers that might not have been included in the legislation, but were valued nonetheless by administrators. I felt it was important to further explore this aspect of principals' perspective as all of them indicated that the litmus test regarding quality as outlined by the federal government; college degree, state certification and demonstrated proficiency, while a good baseline, did little, if anything to facilitate the elevation of teacher quality in their schools. Establishing what teacher attributes were most coveted by principals informed my understanding of the actions principals took in staffing their buildings.

In establishing the difference between quality as outlined by the law and quality as defined by principals, I was able, as an example to understand instances where principals may have kept teachers who were less than stellar or intentionally left positions vacant, choosing to fill them with substitutes rather than hire someone who was "highly qualified" who he/she felt lacked several intangible yet essential qualities. Documenting the teacher qualities most prized by principals allowed me to understand why principals of compliant schools might bring known commodities out of retirement, send them back to school to obtain subject-specific certification and then place them in a classroom rather than hire from a long list of "highly qualified" candidates that were fully certified under the law but were unknown quantities. Understanding principals' perspective of what constituted quality teaching independent of the mandate, allowed

me to better understand their perspective on the law itself and how they chose their response strategies.

Teacher Quality in Relation to All Other Priorities

In the second component of my findings, I looked at larger issues such as: poverty, student and teacher mobility and lack of funding that may or may not have affected the amount of time and energy with which the principal chose address the issue of teacher quality.

In analyzing the perceived priority level of fulfilling the mandate by principals, I was then able to understand how time and resource limitations may have influenced the degree of focus they placed on meeting the mandate. I looked to see how other problems of varying importance in individual schools and across schools may or may not have diluted principals' response to the legislation. In essence, I looked for reasons to explain the relative tenacity with which principals met the problem of staffing each of their classrooms with "highly qualified" teachers.

Along with the first category, dealing with principal perspective this one was macro in nature while the other two focusing on enhancements and barriers to achieving compliance and actions taken and were of a micro nature much more specific in scope. In looking at principal perspective and how that perspective played out at the building level when other priorities had to be considered, I attempted to understand principals' views regarding how important an issue staffing buildings with "highly qualified" teachers was in the day- to- day reality of schools.

Enhancements and Barriers to Achieving Compliance

In the third component of my findings, I examined the internal/external factors influencing principals in more detail and how such factors either positively or negatively affected their ability to meet the mandate. Again, I was able to establish patterns of response in compliant and non-compliant schools that could then be linked to how principals perceived their ability to

address the mandate in its entirety. I was also able to demonstrate that principals' perceptions of the enhancements and barriers before them, in turn influenced the actions they took or chose not to take in response to the legislation.

Documenting Decisions Made and Strategies Employed by Principals

Having detailed principals' perspective, the importance of teacher quality in relation to all other priorities and enhancements/barriers faced by principals as they endeavored to meet the mandate, I used the fourth component of my findings to investigate the strategies principals implemented in seeking to meet the Teacher Quality mandate. I looked at how principals of compliant and non-compliant schools responded to the legislation and the internal/external factors which shaped their responses. I then examined how strategies implemented by principals were dependent upon not only how they viewed the law, but also by their capacity to address it. I then looked for emergent patterns of response by principals of compliant and non-compliant schools. Subsequently, I was able to demonstrate how principals' perceptions of their capacity to address the Teacher Quality provision significantly influenced the actions they took in response to the mandate.

Summary

In attempting to understand how principals responded to the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB, I interviewed 12 principals in schools located in the Chicago suburbs. Of these 12 schools, six had achieved compliance with the Teacher Quality provision, while the remaining six had not. I framed my study using an applied version of Cyert and March's *Behavioral Theory of the Firm* a model that was used to demonstrate the behavior of private firms. I amended Cyert and March's model so that it became a better fit for the internal and external factors faced by principals as they interpreted problems and set about solving them. And,

ultimately while the *Behavioral Theory of the Firm* was originally created to demonstrate how private firms respond to their external environments, it was also useful in understanding how public school principals interpret external mandates such as the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB.

The applied model allowed a number of parallels in the manner that private firms and principals in public schools responded to external problems to be explained. As examples, the private firm and public school principals distinguish between the essential and the non-essential as they set about solving problems. They both provide organizational slack (Cheng & Kesner, 1997; Smith et. al. 1991). Additionally, both the firm and the public school principal engage in internal and external searches (Beckhard & Pritchard, 1992; Hoy & Miskell, 1996; March & Simon, 1993; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) that are motivated, simple-minded and biased. In the search process, both recall past successes and failures in responding to external pressure (Daft & Weick, 1984; Dierks et. al., 2001; Shulz, 1998). They both mimic the actions of successful peers for the purpose of attempting to have solved the problem (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; March & Olsen, 1976). Furthermore, the private firm and the public school principal dole out “side payments” to their most favored employees for the purpose of retaining them and perpetuating the organization (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Cyert & March, 1963).

Thus, the adaptation of Cyert & March’s *Behavioral Theory of the Firm* as a framework allowed me a means by which I could answer questions regarding how principals interpreted the problem of staffing their classrooms with “highly qualified” individuals and how they chose to respond to the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB. The model was also integral to the development of questions later used to interview principals at length. In the following chapter I will present findings based on responses given by principals during interviews in addition to the

documentary sources of evidence gleaned from State Report Cards having to do with student mobility and achievement, income status of students, racial makeup of student bodies, attendance rates and the percentage of teachers either out of compliance or employed on a provisional certificate that will demonstrate how principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools responded to the Teacher Quality provision.

Chapter IV

The Research Findings

In this chapter the research findings of my study around how principals responded to the call for teacher quality in each of their schools as prescribed by the NCLB Act of 2001 will be presented. In the study I interviewed 12 principals. Six of these principals presided over schools which were out of compliance with regard to the Teacher Quality provision as of 2009, while the remaining six had maintained full compliance since the law's inception in 2002.

The findings are divided in four categories: 1) How principals defined the problem of meeting the Teacher Quality mandate and their perspective on its effectiveness; 2) Teacher quality in relation to all other priorities 3) Barriers and enhancements encountered by principals as they strove to meet the mandate; and 4) Decisions made by principals attempting to meet the Teacher Quality provision. As previously noted, the four categories were developed from emergent patterns of response gleaned from interviews, interpreted via my applied version of Cyert and March's *Behavioral Theory of the Firm* framework.

The first of these categories, dealing with how principals interpreted the mandate, echoes the manner in which Cyert and March's firm interprets disturbances emanating from its external environment. It is important to understand how principals interpreted the Teacher Quality provision as the manner in which problems were interpreted by schools framed the steps that were subsequently taken to meet the mandate.

The second category deals with the degree to which the problem of staffing schools with "highly qualified" teachers was a priority for principals when measured against all other issues. The degree of importance placed upon the issue of teacher quality by principals paralleled the manner in which Cyert and March's firm distinguishes between the essential and the non-

essential, sequencing its goals in order of importance, assigning priority status to problems relative to their effect upon overall organizational goals. Understanding how the Teacher Quality provision was prioritized by principals made it possible to determine whether or not sufficient resources were available to principals to meet the mandate. Understanding the degree to which sufficient resources were available to principals to comply with the Teacher Quality provision subsequently informed whether a solution to the problem could be found by principals or, as was the case in some schools, approximate solutions had to be arrived at instead.

In the third category, factors that served to either enhance or limit the ability of principals in fulfilling the Teacher Quality mandate were examined. The way in which principals dealt with such factors was similar to the way in which Cyert and March's firm negotiates both limiting and assistive factors in responding to change, taking into consideration such internal factors as its standard operating procedures, examining previous responses to similar problems, the experience level in dealing with like problems of its members, and the amount of slack necessary for the organization to retain both its level of efficiency and its identity.

Like the firm, principals also considered external factors such as union rules, the availability of funding to adequately address the problem, district policies, and shifts and flows in the teacher workforce that may have served to both limit and enhance their ability to meet the mandate.

The fourth category documents the types of responses to the Teacher Quality provision by principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools. Like Cyert and March's firm, principals responding to the mandate were likely to search for solutions in both their internal and external environments. Also, like the firm, their responses were likely to be influenced by their previous experiences in dealing with similar problems, taking into account such internal factors as the ability of staff members to assist with the problem, the availability of professional

development to facilitate compliance and an individual principal's ability to attract and retain quality individuals.

How Principals Interpreted the Problem

The ultimate responsibility for staffing schools with "highly qualified" teachers rests with principals. Like the CEO's of Cyert and March's private firm, principals are held accountable for accurately measuring the threat level of external disturbances such as the Teacher Quality mandate, devising plans to address them proportional to their importance, and making certain that a solution or an approximate solution may be achieved so that the overall goals of the organization may be met.

The principals I interviewed were acutely aware that they bore responsibility for policy implementation at their schools. Commenting on what it meant to hold such responsibility, they conveyed that they felt their job was to hold the ultimate authority in their schools. Largely, principals felt this way for it was they who would ultimately be judged regarding whether or not policy goals and organizational goals were to be realized. As one principal noted, *"I saw a flow chart one time for a school organization that had the principal in the middle with every arrow pointing at him."*

Principal Discretion

Both principals of compliant and non-compliant schools may have had limited amounts of discretion regarding how the Teacher Quality provision was addressed in their schools. The amount of discretion may have been dependent upon many factors. As an example, the level of discretion enjoyed by principals may have been dictated by the standard operating procedures of the district, the degree to which external policies such as the Teacher Quality provision were

loosely or strictly enforced by the district and the personal relationships developed by the principal over time with those above him/her who monitored the implementation of mandates.

In addition to district policies, there were also provisions within teachers' unions contracts that may have limited the amount of discretion a principal had with regard to which teachers were cut when enrollment dwindled in specific schools or budgets were trimmed. Additionally, principal discretion may have been significantly bolstered or limited as a result of how much money was allotted for teacher salaries and other resources (improvements to the physical plant, technology, professional development) by the district. In affluent districts it was likely that principals would have had more resources with which to attract and retain "highly qualified" teachers than their less-affluent counterparts and as a result, more discretion regarding staffing.

The achievement level of students may also have served to increase/decrease the level of principal discretion. That is, those principals at the helm of schools with high achieving student bodies were likely to attract more teachers to their buildings on a perennial basis than their counterparts at low achieving schools. With a larger talent pool from which to choose such principals were more likely to have a larger concentration of teacher talent beckoning at their door and thus more discretion in fulfilling the Teacher Quality provision mandate.

It has been documented that teachers avoid or flee schools that fail to make AYP on a perennial basis if there are other options available to them (Guarino, Santibanez & Daley, 2006; Ingersoll, 2011). And, because the best of teachers depart schools that fail to attain AYP, principals of non-compliant schools may have had less discretion than their counterparts at compliant schools because they had perhaps fewer options regarding whom they could hire and who they were successful in retaining.

Principal Tenure and Its Effect on Discretion

Finally, some principals may have been more willing to throw caution to the wind when addressing external mandates such as the Teacher Quality provision than others. Those principals eligible for retirement, as an example may have cared very much about teacher quality and cared very little about federal demands for meeting teacher quality standards. Additionally, others, not yet ready for retirement, yet highly experienced with many years of service may have been given more latitude by superiors who had worked with them for many years in not only interpreting mandates, but all other issues as well.

By contrast, principals new to their positions may have been less likely to deviate from policy mandates. There may have been several reasons for such an approach. Upon assuming a position, principals may have wanted to please their immediate superiors more than their veteran counterparts. Aware of their inexperience, they may have wished to avoid accidentally sailing into uncharted legal waters regarding the legislation as well. Neophyte principals may also have strictly adhered to the mandate as a means by which they might establish the type of trust between themselves and their superiors enjoyed by their more experienced counterparts.

In the study, a third of the principals interviewed were eligible for full retirement benefits with another third being a single four-year contract away from securing a full pension. The remaining third were principals who had assumed their positions within the past five years and would not be eligible for full retirement benefits for at least a decade.

It is conceivable that where principals were in their careers may have influenced how they approached the problem of staffing their schools with “highly qualified” teachers. As a result, how they defined their immediate futures may have served to limit or enhance their discretion in addressing problems such as meeting the Teacher Quality provision.

Organizational Goals and Principal Strategy

The overall organizational goals of schools greatly influenced the manner in which principals chose to address the Teacher Quality provision. The principals I interviewed all acknowledged that teacher quality was important; however, the prevailing thought among all of them was that teacher quality could not simply be achieved in their schools just because they hired fully licensed teachers per the dictates of the law. Instead, principals all viewed the teacher quality issue as dependent on a host of other variables. As an example, principals of compliant schools, who typically had higher levels of student achievement, had a larger pool of applicants from which to choose when hiring. It is likely that these compliant schools with higher levels of student achievement were the beneficiaries of positive perceptions by teachers that such buildings were desirable and secure places to work. This perception might have been achieved largely because such schools routinely achieved AYP and as such were not susceptible to incurring sanctions associated with failing to do so such as prescribed curriculums, reconstitution and eventual closure.

In compliant schools, principals understood that their abundance of resources contributed to their ability to attract and retain teachers of high quality on a perennial basis which, in turn created a positive cycle whereby student achievement attracted the best teacher applicants in large numbers on a perpetual basis. As one compliant principal said, *“It’s really, it’s a great place to be. I’ve been a couple places and I’ll tell you, we’re fortunate.”*

Another principal of a compliant building, commenting on their ability to sustain staffs comprised of fully certified, “highly qualified” teachers, echoed these sentiments offering,

This is a destination district for a lot of people. You know, working conditions are very good. Still challenging; wherever you work, its hard to be a teacher and hard to be a principal and everything else, but working conditions are good. Pay

is relatively good and benefits are relatively good. So yeah, people want to work here and for many people once they get here this is the place they want to stay.

In the aforementioned cases, the ability of principals of compliant buildings to attract and retain “highly qualified” teachers may have been largely due to conditions that existed prior to the passage of the Teacher Quality provision in 2002.

Conversely, an inverse cycle likely existed in non-compliant schools wherein many teachers sought and accepted employment there when it may have been one of few options available to them. There may have been a number of reasons as to why some teachers had few options. The most prominent of these reasons may have been that they had little, if any experience in the classroom, they failed to impress during interviews, or they were not endorsed in high need areas such as Special Education, Bi-lingual Education, Science or Mathematics. In non-compliant schools, there was typically a constant churn of staff that did not exist in compliant schools. As one principal of a non-compliant building said, referring difficulties in staffing buildings that have high rates of teacher mobility,

The standard is not a pool of candidates and choosing the best qualified candidates. The standard is, I don't have the candidates, so this person has two arms, two legs, I mean, can talk and move around, and I say that as a joke, but obviously that's not what I meant. But, what I mean, this person can do the basic job, but let me hire someone who can do a basic job, not the best job just because that is my only candidate.

Another principal of a non-compliant school bemoaned the dearth of teacher candidates applying to his school saying,

I have been to job fairs for teachers. I went to one university in Chicago for a job fair. And, I think they run one every year for teachers. And, if you go there that day what you're going to find is a very long, long, long, long line of teachers applying elsewhere. And then we're lucky if we get someone, a couple of people interested. I mean, there will be no line. It all depends on salary conditions and benefits, and things like that.

Still another principal of a non-compliant building, attempting to fill Bi-lingual positions in her building, pointed out that she found it particularly difficult to staff some classrooms because there existed a shortage of candidates who were both “highly qualified” and were a good fit for the student body. Summing up the problem of encountering teacher candidates that were either “highly qualified” or a great fit for the school and staff, but rarely both she said,

I find problems with supply and demand, but also with the practical application of some of the pieces of NCLB and quite honestly we end up having to eliminate some people who we know have the heart that we’re looking for to be with our particular demographic but they lack a piece of paper and that sometimes makes it difficult to not be able to select those candidates.

As a result of the perennial high turnover, and lack of a suitable number of “highly qualified” replacements, principals of non-compliant schools routinely had a number of positions to fill every year and many times were forced to accept candidates because they were the only ones in possession of full licensure in specific subjects that were available.

Principals’ Perceptions of the Teacher Quality Provision: Non-Compliant Schools

Overall, all principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools said that they were pleased that the Teacher Quality provision existed. Principals of non-compliant schools welcomed it more than their counterparts in compliant schools as they felt it provided some indication that individuals labeled “highly qualified” would be at least, serviceable teachers. As one principal of a non-compliant school explained,

I think it’s a good push. I personally like the law and what it’s doing. It’s truly holding schools, administrators, and school districts accountable in getting the best qualified teachers for the students who need it most. I wouldn’t have it any other way. If my child were in a school I would want the best and the most highly qualified to work with my child.

Another principal of a non-compliant school added,

I would say it's a very good effort in the right direction to try to reform the public educational system. And, in the particular area of the teachers I think it's an effort to try to empower the community, start opening, providing information, making it part of the law so parents can be empowered in the decision-making through choice.

Still another principal of a non-compliant school echoed the sentiment that ensuring that all teachers be held to quality standards was essential and long overdue saying, *"I really believe that all educators should be highly qualified and I don't think it should have been a mandate. I think that should just be the norm."*

Another principal of a non-compliant school said,

"I believe No Child Left Behind is a noble venture because the intent of the law is for every kid to learn, for no kid to sit in the back of the classroom with some kind of parallel, dummed-down worksheet. You know, we don't want that for any kid. And I believe... maybe I'm idealistic, but I believe that was the intent of the law."

In a sense, while having a more difficult time in meeting the Teacher Quality provision, some principals of non-compliant schools felt, that they had an easier time interpreting the problem of staffing each classroom with a "highly qualified" teacher as a result of the legislation compared to their counterparts who headed compliant buildings. For such principals, the interpretation of the problem was the same problem they had been facing all along, namely the need to find a teacher, in some instances any teacher who was willing to work in a classroom in their building for the salary they could offer. What changed as a result of NCLB and the "highly qualified" mandate was that they were forced, in many cases to take the extra step of making every effort to find a fully certified candidate, and if one was not available, arrive at an approximate solution, much like Cyert and March's firm, by hiring individuals who needed a minimal amount of coursework to achieve full certification, and could be placed in a classroom on a provisional basis.

Principal Perception of the Teacher Quality Provision: Compliant Schools

Some principals of compliant schools, while saying that they understood the federal push to credential all teachers across the nation, were critical of the legislation as they felt it limited who they could hire. Many principals of compliant schools felt that “highly qualified” status was a non-issue in their buildings because within their districts, the licensure required by the Teacher Quality provision had been in place prior to the passage of the legislation. However, while the vast majority of teachers staffing compliant buildings had attained state licensure prior to the passage of NCLB, additional requirements under the Teacher Quality provision required that some veteran teachers take additional coursework to gain certification in specific disciplines such as Science or Math. This, despite the fact that they may have been teaching in a content or specialization area quite effectively for decades. As a result, some teachers nearing the end of their careers in compliant buildings chose to retire rather than take additional coursework for the purpose of becoming properly credentialed. Illustrating just such a case, one principal of a compliant school recalled an instance in which a veteran teacher chose to retire rather than jump the hurdles put in place via the Teacher Quality provision.

On the one hand I look at it as she probably should have had the forethought to do that, to get the HOUSSE done. If I've got my time frames correct here, going through HOUSSE and getting everything squared away was available, so realistically she should have done it. It's just the documentation process. On the other hand, it does seem one day you're "highly qualified" and the next day you're not. Nothing has changed so...

In compliant schools, principals indicated that the Teacher Quality provision mandate may have affected teacher quality negatively in their buildings. In some cases, principals bemoaned the fact that the replacement they were forced to hire after a quality, but not necessarily “highly qualified” teacher’s sudden retirement due to the requirements imposed by the legislation,

oftentimes did not compare favorably with the standard set by the departing staff member. One principal of a compliant school addressed the downside of this phenomenon saying, “*We’re hiring new teachers right now primarily to replace retirements. I think we’re about a year or so away from stabilizing.*”

Principals of compliant schools reported that under the Teacher Quality provision they were sometimes forced to choose a “highly qualified” candidate over someone they coveted who may have needed additional coursework to achieve full licensure for a specific position in their buildings. Prior to NCLB and the Teacher Quality provision, principals of compliant schools routinely chose candidates they had known for some time, having kept them on their radar screens as someone they would like to have on their staffs. It may have been someone they taught with earlier in their careers. It may also have been someone who had been cut from a position at another school in their district who they happened upon in some manner. Bemoaning this phenomenon, whereby education policy was applied to all districts across the nation, perhaps to the detriment of those already functioning at a high level, one compliant principal, expressing dismay at what he felt was federal overreach in dictating who he could and could not hire said,

You know, I don’t feel real positive about it, to be honest with you. You know, historically I think one of the ways... schools are a true democracy. We get down to a very small level. We’ve got a community with a school board of people that live right there and they’re running that and I like that and I think that there’s something very American about that. And then, of course, education in the United States is primarily a state function and you know when the feds get involved with different things there’s good reason for it, but, uh, it becomes so broad and so big it’s hard sometimes to see how that applies to us here. And, I think the things they’re most concerned about and most worried about frequently aren’t really a factor in your school district and often you end up with applying rules and regulations to everybody because we have a small problem over here.

In general, principals of compliant schools preferred to hire individuals they believed were known quantities. And, because the Teacher Quality provision limited their ability to hire as

they always had, principals in these schools largely interpreted the mandate as an unwanted intrusion that served as an impediment to staffing their buildings entirely as they saw fit. Repeatedly, principals in compliant schools expressed their disdain for federal mandates in general and NCLB and the Teacher Quality provision in particular. Expressing his unhappiness with federal mandates such as the Teacher Quality provision one principal of a compliant school flatly stated,

I don't believe education is a function of the federal government. I believe it's a function of state government. I think it's a state power and a local power. I'm interested in it being developed at that level and I'm concerned about a national anything in terms of public education.

Expressing frustration at the federal government issuing what amounted to a litmus test for teachers, another principal of a compliant school, said, *"Just because you have the credentials does not mean that you're going to be a fantastic teacher."*

In effect, in some instances principals of compliant buildings may have felt that the quality level in some schools may have been diminished as a result of the Teacher Quality provision. Principals of compliant buildings felt that the mandate to hire only "highly qualified" teachers sometimes got in the way of allowing them to hire and retain those teachers whom they were convinced were effective educators. One principal of a compliant school detailed how restrictions imposed regarding who principals could hire may have served to lower the Quality level of their teaching staffs. As she explained,

You can have someone who does not have the 'highly qualified' credential who is incredibly knowledgeable, more knowledgeable about the Science curriculum, for example, and they are innate, excellent teachers. Sometimes you have to let them go because they haven't attained 'highly qualified' status. You can't legislate how somebody teaches in the classroom. That's not possible. It's like legislating how a person at Starbucks pours a cup of coffee.

Essentially, principals in compliant buildings believed that the Teacher Quality provision was a necessary piece of legislation for other schools and other districts. On the one hand, they believed that stricter standards regarding who gained entry into the teaching profession should be in place. On the other, they felt that by making the Teacher Quality provision a mandate, legislators failed to consider the unintended consequences incurred by schools such as their own that already had teachers of high quality in every subject. As one principal of a compliant school explained,

Because of No Child Left Behind and the “highly qualified” requirement, I am having to hire people who, on paper have the “highly qualified” status, but who are not the best teacher candidate. I am having to let teacher candidates go who I knew could teach the curriculum but didn’t happen to have the paper certification and it’s a shame because I could have hired some really terrific teachers. But, instead I’ve had to go with someone who may not be as good a teacher in terms of strategies, differentiating instruction, just to go with what is deemed certified, “highly qualified.”

In many respects, while believing the legislation was a positive step toward improving the quality level of teachers overall, principals of compliant schools also felt that they could only be hurt by the mandate in that it restricted who they could hire. Referring to the aforementioned unintended consequences as a result of the mandate, one principal of a compliant school said, “*I think it needs to be tweaked. I think in its current form it’s not a final product.*” Referencing the hiring restrictions placed upon him by his district another compliant principal, said, “*Before I look at anything else, I have to make sure they’re certified and endorsed in the areas for which I’m interviewing.*”

As a result of such district policies put in place after NCLB and the Teacher Quality provision were enacted that prohibited them from interviewing highly recommended candidates from university programs they respected, some principals in compliant schools were not even able to

grant an interview to prospective teachers if they lacked even a single course deemed necessary by the State Board of Education.

And yet, while lamenting the restrictive nature of the Teacher Quality provision, principals of compliant schools, to a person said that they never attempted to make an end run around the law. In this sense, principals interpreted the Teacher Quality provision as something they were to obey. They took what they felt was an unwanted intrusion upon their autonomy in hiring in stride, conceding that it was simply part of their job. As one principal of a compliant school said, comparing himself to a juggler, *“We are juggling. And, every once in awhile when they throw in an extra pin to juggle, something falls. You pick it up. You try again. You start over.”*

In order to understand the decisions that principals made, it is important to first gain more insight into how they thought about teacher quality beyond the provisions of the law. The law prescribes basic criteria that are to be met by principals in staffing their schools. However, in addition to these criteria there are many intangible qualities principals may look for when hiring new teachers. When thinking about compliance and decisions to be made, principals may be influenced by a) their interpretation of what the law requires, b) their particular contexts, and c) what they would really like to see in terms of qualities among their staff members.

Intangibles Qualities Not Included in the Teacher Quality Provision

There were numerous qualities possessed by the best of teachers that principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools identified that were not included in the legislation. The most sought after of these qualities included: an ability to relate to children, subject-specific content knowledge, a good work ethic, flexibility and long-term commitment to their schools.

A majority of the principals I spoke with at the helm of both compliant and non-compliant schools believed that the very best of teachers were born rather than made. That is, they believed

that the best of teachers possessed innate abilities that pre-disposed them to successful careers teaching children. However, each of the principals interviewed also acknowledged that all teachers who had been deemed “highly qualified” under the Teacher Quality provision could be taught to forward curriculum and to handle the mundane tasks associated with teaching in a public elementary school. However, principals felt that the very best of teachers not only possessed such qualities as content knowledge, verbal ability, and commitment to the profession, but also exuded a “quality” which was obvious to an observer, yet indefinable. In short, principals felt they were able to readily distinguish the best of teachers in a short period of time.

Cyert and March tell us that organizations seek solutions to problems, and when solutions are not entirely available, approximate solutions are arrived at and implemented. And, just as principals responding to the Teacher Quality provision may have oftentimes arrived at an approximate solution to the mandate, they uniformly felt that in crafting the legislation, policymakers arrived at an approximate solution regarding what constituted teacher quality. That is, principals felt that an approximate solution in the form of requiring teachers to have obtained a bachelor’s degree, to have achieved full licensure in the subjects they were teaching and to have demonstrated competence as measured by administrators was incomplete. Of these three requirements, principals felt that the only one that might be a true indicator of quality was the demonstrated competency component because it gave them discretion in determining what constituted quality. Additionally, along these same lines, principals felt there were innumerable traits particular to their best teachers that were not included in the legislation.

Qualities Most-Valued by Principals of Compliant Schools

Principals understood that many of the qualities they valued could not be quantitatively measured and therefore could not practically be included in such a sweeping piece of legislation.

However, these qualities for many principals superseded the triumvirate forwarded by policymakers that determined “highly qualified” status. As one principal of a compliant school offered, *“Certainly the certifications don’t tell you who’s going to be a great teacher and a great asset to the staff and a good fit,”* while another said, *“Quality teachers understand that the success of students depends upon teachers’ relationships with them,”* while another principal of a compliant school said,

You’ve got to have good people skills. I want teachers to understand that it’s real important that I build a relationship with my students, because I’m going to win them over, I’m going to get them excited, I’m going to do those things. I need teachers to understand that they impact kids, to understand they can destroy a kid just as easily, probably easier than they can build them up.

Another compliant principal, when asked what qualities she looked for in prospective teachers that were not outlined in the Teacher Quality provision said,

I really, usually I know within the first five minutes if I’m going to hire the person or not. Or, if they’re going to be a finalist. They just exude student-centeredness. They are a kid. They’re a kid person. They’re, in their own way, whether they’re an introvert or extrovert or they have intrapersonal skills or interpersonal skills, they are a kid magnet. You can see how kids would vacillate towards them.

Another principal of a compliant school said,

“I think the most important quality in a teacher is that they care about the children that they work with and they communicate that and the children know that. I think that’s pretty hard to measure. You know that old saying that the more important something is, the harder it is to measure? I think that’s probably a good example of that.”

Additionally, another principal of a compliant school said, *“I guess as I think about the excellent qualities of a teacher, the fact that they think of the students first; I don’t think I can think of a quality that’s more important to me than that.”*

Still another principal of a compliant school said,

Probably the overall single most important thing... and it takes in a lot of areas, but it's people that are child-centered, and that's why they're here. And, their actions are consistent with that. It's what's in here (pointing to heart) that matters the most. If you don't know our Math curriculum, we can teach you those things. If you're a good person and are willing to work hard and willing to learn, and you're going to stay open to change because everything we do evolves, you know nothing... certain parts of it are... nothing stays completely the same and it shouldn't. If the second you're sure you've arrived and this is it, that's a dangerous moment because then you may have stopped learning. So those are the kinds of things. I'm looking for people, that are going to advocate for children and... we don't usually have to fight, it's not about fighting for kids. I don't think that's usually the system that we're set up with, but keep that first, you know, 'Why am I doing this? I'm doing this because it's good for kids.' Discipline is a time when I think it really, really comes up. When you're going through a tough discipline situation with a child. In an interview I ask questions... when I'm interviewing teachers and I want to get at that, I ask questions and have scenarios where, you know, a child is upset and you tell him that, 'Any more Johnny and you're in big trouble!' And then you turn around and you're teaching and all of a sudden you hear a big noise and you look in the back of the room, there's books all over the floor and there's Johnny and you say, 'Johnny, I told you if you do this one more time you're going to be in big trouble,' and Johnny swears at you. And usually teachers when they answer... Everybody's different, but beginning teachers will tend to answer by saying, 'Well, I don't allow that. I have rules in the classroom and I'll get the principal to help.' And believe me, I don't want kids swearing at teachers and those are all part of the answer, but what I really want to hear is, 'There must be something going on in this child's life that they would act like that.' And that's the most important issue; not that they disrupted my classroom. So, I would think that's the most important thing that I'm looking for, is people that are here for the right reasons. We all care about kids. Or, we all think we care about kids. But, there's certain situations that I think can really test that.

Additionally, another principal of a compliant school said he valued the ability of teachers to understand how students learn more than what they learn saying, *"Well, quality teaching is definitely... the curriculum is there, the understanding of the curriculum. But I would say most important is the understanding of the students and how the students learn."*

Another principal of a compliant school said he valued the ability of teachers to differentiate instruction for children of various abilities and learning styles saying, *"Multiple methodologies are really coveted by me. No two children are the same,"* while another related, *"I believe, first*

of all that you're not going to... you can't reach a child unless you have at least, I guess, an honest, respectful relationship with them. So that's the number one thing."

Qualities Most-Valued by Principals of Non-Compliant Schools

Principals of non-compliant schools echoed the sentiment that there were many qualities they coveted in teachers that were not, or could not be addressed legislatively. One principal of a non-compliant school said, *"I need people who have the heart for our kids and families."*

Another principal of a non-compliant building, along the same lines said that he wanted teachers with a missionary mindset who chose to teach in his building not because of the ease of the position but rather because of its difficulty, offering,

This is the best place to work in Illinois in terms of if you especially want to go through the challenge of educating children that might not have the best educational opportunities, or that the expectations of the system and the community at large are low for them. So, you can go to a mainstream high/middle class school district to work and that should be easy. This is the real Ground Zero in education when you can come to a school district where your children are the children of immigrant families. They don't have the language skills. You also have poverty and you have other minorities in the mix. And, the expectations are that that school is not going to perform and you come and you work here. And the gift that you get and what you get out of it is the energy that you put in because you're going to make it work. And you're going to defeat the odds. I mean, so I cannot imagine any other place for a person who really has a heart in education. Not just to walk the hallways of the school. Because that's easy to do in any place. But, to really come to a laboratory where we have the opportunity to create practices and to try to define how we do business here in order to be successful.

Another principal of a non-compliant building, listed passion as the trait she most coveted in teachers saying,

I want them to have passion about the subject area that they're teaching. How they feel about children, working with children. Giving more than 100%, because schoolteachers do, there's just no way that you can come in at eight and leave at three and be oblivious to what went on in your classroom or what happens in these children's lives. So, I want teachers that are concerned and caring and passionate about their jobs, the children, each other, being able to know that this

is a family and we operate like that. We find it's okay to agree to disagree, and we have those discussions, but for the most part we care about each other in this building. We take care of each other. When something is wrong with one teacher, another teacher steps in. If something's wrong with a kid, and a family calls and says, "I don't have food," then we do a food drive or collect dollars. So, we do what we can. We do operate... we're pretty close-knit. And so it... once you get in, you know, it's difficult for you not to fit in, because we pull you in.

Describing the type of teacher she attempted to recruit and retain, one principal of a non-compliant school said,

"I look for a team player, someone who is highly motivated, someone who has a sense of humor, and someone who is flexible and not rigid. If the plans change today are you going to flip out and have a total meltdown because your plan...? You know, it's all of those things because I think you can teach the curriculum, you can get into the curricular kinds of things, but before you do that it's those people skills that really, for me are most important."

Another principal of a non-compliant school flatly stated,

"You're either a teacher or you're not a teacher. I think you're a teacher first, and then that other thing, that other content area can come into it, but you know who your strong individuals are as teachers."

Another principal of a non-compliant school said, *"The teachers we bring in are teachers who are passionate about what they do, so I don't think certification really has a lot to do with how they were going to teach their classes."*

Still another principal of a non-compliant building said, *"There are occasions when the person with the best paper isn't the best person for the kids."*

It is of importance to have an awareness of the qualities coveted by principals as they may base their hiring, retention and tenure decisions along with the development of strategies to address problems contingent upon whether or not teachers possess these traits. In many cases

principals who had hired teachers that had attained “highly qualified” status per the Teacher Quality provision did not grant them tenure after four years of service because they found them to be lacking one or more of the qualities they valued, yet absent from the legislation, compelling them to then seek out another “highly qualified” applicant who perhaps did.

Like Cyert and March’s firm, principals learned from their previous experiences in dealing with the Teacher Quality provision. As principals became more familiar with what they saw as this shortcoming in the legislation, some went about hiring and choosing which teachers to retain in a different manner. As a result of their experiences in negotiating the mandate, even principals of hard to staff schools did not always choose to hire a fully credentialed individual teacher who had attained “highly qualified” status even if they were the only option available at the time. After speaking with 12 principals in a variety of circumstances regarding compliance/non-compliance, it became clear that none of them necessarily viewed the “highly qualified” status label acquired by prospective teachers as a true indicator of quality or future success in their schools. Nor, did the simple attainment of “highly qualified” status for their teachers always serve as the singular goal of principals as they considered compliance.

Summary

Principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools believed that the Teacher Quality provision was a positive first step in improving teacher quality and the level of instruction in schools across the nation. However, principals of non-compliant schools welcomed the legislation more than their counterparts in compliant schools. Principals of non-compliant buildings felt that the legislation set a necessary minimal baseline regarding coursework and endorsements that had been previously lacking. Principals of non-compliant buildings sometimes objected to the tenants of the legislation in specific situations, but in an overall sense

these principals felt that a mandate ensuring proper licensure of teachers in all schools was long overdue.

Principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools believed that while the Teacher Quality provision was a good first step toward improving the overall quality of the nation's teaching force, it was no guarantee of quality. Principals felt there were innumerable qualities they sought in teachers that were not and could not be covered under a federal mandate. These qualities included an ability to relate to students, tenacity, passion, a good work ethic, flexibility, long-term commitment to the school, and a desire to be a team player. In addition to simply fulfilling the mandate, the desire on the part of principals to staff their buildings with individuals possessing these intangible qualities influenced the manner in which they interpreted the mandate as well as the strategies they undertook in meeting the Teacher Quality provision.

Principals of compliant schools felt that, while the legislation was a positive step for schools that had long been forced to settle for teachers who may not have been fully credentialed, they found the mandate to be an unwanted infringement upon their discretion in who they could hire. Several principals in compliant buildings had anecdotes to share regarding how they had been prevented from hiring or retaining individual teachers who possessed all the qualities they equated with stellar teaching, yet lacked proper licensure under the Teacher Quality provision.

All principals stated that teacher quality was of the utmost importance in their buildings. However, they also conceded that fulfilling the Teacher Quality provision mandate was not as urgent a priority as other concerns because there were no concrete sanctions attached to a failure to comply as was the case with other aspects of the NCLB legislation such as the demand for adequate yearly progress. Like Cyert and March's firm, principals of non-compliant schools, chose to focus on immediate, short-term concerns, choosing not to anticipate long-term outcomes

that could not be predicted such as possible sanctions that could potentially be imposed upon schools failing to meet the Teacher Quality mandate.

Teacher Quality in Relation to All Other Priorities

As Cyert and March inform us, organizations responding to disturbances in their external environment attempt to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential. Likewise, principals in responding to external policy demands prioritized the many problems they were forced to confront in some manner. Cyert and March also tell us that when solutions to problems cannot be found, an approximate solution is adopted in its stead. Principals in dealing with the Teacher Quality provision and the entire NCLB legislation were also compelled to arrive at approximate solutions in some instances, as they were all that were available.

The issue of staffing “highly qualified” teachers in schools who were fully credentialed and of great quality was intertwined with a myriad of other issues confronting principals.

The Relative Importance of Achieving Compliance in the Eyes of Principals

While principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools expressed the need to find the best available teachers to staff their buildings, they universally agreed that fulfilling the dictates of the Teacher Quality provision mandate was not their number one priority. In fact, it ranked far behind achieving AYP in all schools contained in the study. In essence, there was less urgency to address the Teacher Quality provision of the NCLB in both compliant and non-compliant schools as there were no clear, negative sanctions attached to failing to meet the mandate.

On the contrary, there were numerous, well-defined negative sanctions attached to a failure to make and sustain AYP. These negative sanctions held the potential to reduce student enrollment which would reduce funding and the number of teaching positions as well as ultimately

reconstitute or close the school at a future date if failure to attain or maintain AYP became chronic.

As a result of the negative sanctions attached to not achieving AYP and the lack of sanctions associated with failure to comply with the Teacher Quality provision, principals directed the vast majority of their time and resources toward elevating test scores on annual standardized tests which they hoped would, in turn lead to the achievement of AYP. This is important to understand as principals, in many cases were unwilling or unable to direct funding toward numerous other issues including getting teachers credentialed. In many cases, principals, prompted by their districts, used the vast majority of their professional development dollars funding activities they hoped would promote achievement on these tests. As one principal of a non-compliant school reported, *“Professional development is aimed at the test, ultimately it’s the test.”* Another principal of a non-compliant school concurred saying, *“I would say that 99.9% of my professional development is about state testing strategies, analysis, data analysis.”*

Even when principals identified meeting the Teacher Quality provision mandate, it was never defined as a goal in and of itself, but rather attached to their desire to achieve and maintain AYP. As one principal of a non-compliant building offered, *“Making sure that we have “highly qualified” teachers is a priority because they’re the ones that are going to help us make AYP.”*

At the same time, principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools truly wished to meet the Teacher Quality provision. Not only did principals attempt to address the letter of the law so that they could either attain or remain in compliance, they also sought to address its spirit as well by providing the best teachers available to their students. However, unlike the issue of attaining or maintaining AYP there were limits regarding the time and resources they would direct toward fulfilling the teacher quality mandate.

Goal Setting by Principals of Non-Compliant Schools

Asked what would be the most significant goal for their schools, principals of non-compliant buildings all mentioned adequate yearly progress. One principal replied that her singular goal for the year was, “*To make AYP.*”

Another principal of a non-compliant school elaborated on the degree to which the achievement of AYP was more important than any other goal saying,

Two years ago we didn't make AYP. We've now made AYP two years in a row and we are now coming off the watch list. I keep the test results of the year we didn't make it on my office wall because it reminds me of where I don't want to go.

Another principal of a non-compliant school echoed the single-mindedness with which she focused on the attainment of AYP and how, upon assuming her position, she attempted to make her staff aware of its importance relative to any other issue saying,

When I first got here and we were on the watch list, I prepared my staff. I said, 'If we continue to be on the watch list, the state is going to come in and they're not going to look at me initially. They're going to look at the subject area teachers, and when they do that you can lose your job. I recommend that we need to get on board and make sure that we get as close to AYP as possible.'

Principals of non-compliant schools may also have felt that their ability or inability to attain AYP did in fact, impact their ability to attract “highly qualified” teachers in that it may have served as an advertisement to veteran teachers in particular who avoided applying for positions at schools that were under the threat of immediate sanctions.

Goal Setting by Principals of Compliant Schools

Principals of compliant schools also reported that the achievement of AYP was their top priority as they too wished to steer clear of sanctions. In contrast to their non-compliant counterparts, principals of compliant schools said they took concrete steps on a perennial basis to

insure they would make AYP, whereas their non-compliant counterparts were more likely to have tried many different strategies hoping that one would be successful and that they could then replicate that success. As one principal of a compliant school explained proactive and specific steps that were taken to address the issue of AYP,

In the months leading into ISAT testing, we will cut some minutes out of other subjects to make sure we get extra minutes into the Reading and Math so that the kids have a firm understanding of what they're going to be tested on, because you can't get the year's worth of material in before March 1st.

Managing Public Perception of Non-Compliant Schools

In both compliant and non-compliant schools, principals were also extremely concerned with how their schools were perceived by others. They were particularly concerned with how those above them at the district level and parents regarded the school as they felt the manner in which the school was perceived was indicative of how their competency as a principal was measured.

All principals of non-compliant schools bemoaned the public relations problem they had to face annually when they were forced to send letters home to parents, as prescribed in the NCLB legislation, that their child was being instructed by a teacher who was not yet “highly qualified.” One principal of a non-compliant school, relating a specific incident said,

I don't like having to send that letter home to the parents. When we did that last year, the parents came back to the Physical Education teacher and said to him, 'They're firing you!' And, so he came in really upset, and I said, 'No, no, it's the letter that we had to send out regarding that you're not "highly qualified" because you're not certified.' When the parents see in the letter that the teacher is not "highly qualified," they begin to question, 'Well, can he do the job?'

Another principal of a non-compliant building, explaining the public relations problems he encountered as a result of being out of compliance said,

When parents come to school, if they see documentation that not all the teachers in the school are "highly qualified" their interpretation is that the teachers are

not licensed or certified to teach – that they’re not real teachers. That presents a little bit of a PR situation. Well, then you have to go out there and explain, ‘Yeah, they’re all college graduates. Yeah, they might be teachers in other fields, but they lack the specific credential to teach in X, Y, Z classroom.’ And that really sometimes presents a situation. And, we are obligated under the law to communicate that information to the parents.

Managing Public Perception of Compliant Schools

Principals of schools that had achieved compliance, believed that in the event that their buildings failed to make AYP or fell out of compliance with the Teacher Quality provision it would reflect badly on their schools and their administration. Much of this may have had to do with the fact that when they had assumed the position at the school they had inherited a situation in which AYP and the requirements of the Teacher Quality provision had been met. One principal of a compliant building, describing the school she inherited on her first day to non-compliant schools said, *“I don’t know how they can be under more pressure than me, because all our kids are expected to be above average.”*

Another principal of a compliant school, summarizing the stellar conditions he inherited said,

I’m not sure everyone appreciates how good we have it. Not everyone has a copy girl four hours a day. Not everyone has a 40 minute period to sit and meet to talk about kids on top of your 40 minute lunch, on top of your 40 minute personal planning period. Not everyone has two assistant principals for a school with 600 children. Not everyone has two counselors, a psych, and a social worker and three secretaries.

In the view of compliant principals any failure to maintain a building filled with “highly qualified” teachers or to achieve AYP would be attributed to them as the leader of the school organization. As such they felt great pressure to maintain a high status quo wherein achievement and stellar teacher quality was maintained even when factors outside the control of the principal changed and impeded their ability to meet external demands.

Some principals worried that increasing levels of poverty in their schools might compromise their ability to make AYP and ultimately impact their ability to attract “highly qualified” teachers in some areas. This greatly concerned some principals of compliant buildings as they knew a single sub-group, such as poverty-level students could impact the school’s ability to achieve AYP if they were more than 45 in number. Such a failure to achieve AYP, even if the remainder of the school had achieved far above the required AYP threshold could potentially subject even the best of schools to sanctions. More importantly, in the minds of principals, such an occurrence would be a public relations nightmare that might jeopardize the school’s standing in the surrounding community. As one principal of a compliant school pointed out,

These kids go home to these serious situations socially, familially, and they are expected to come back, take an ISAT test of such high stakes, and do well. And these high-stakes tests determine the property values of this district. I have five or six of these children and some districts multiply that exponentially if they’re large districts.

This principal went on to explain a potential domino type effect in which a high-achieving school might dip a few percentage points in two consecutive years based solely on the underachievement of one sub-group, which in turn could negatively affect the school. In such a scenario, the school would be placed on probation. Subsequently, word would circulate regarding the school’s status in the community and as a result, it might no longer be viewed as an optimal place to raise a family. This, in turn might then lead to the undercutting of home values, in turn leading to a reduction in property tax revenue, resulting in less money to pay for quality teachers, quality materials and a well-maintained physical plant.

Another principal of a compliant school expressed the concern that the current economic downturn, which led to higher rates of poverty in his school, could potentially create a sub-group exceeding 45 that would not make AYP. Should this occur, sanctions could be placed on the

entire building, in turn leading to negative perceptions by not only parents but “highly qualified” teachers seeking employment. This particular principal suggested that increased poverty among students had more to do with new arrivals in the community who may have fallen on hard times and sought assistance from more affluent relatives who lived in the area, staying with them and enrolling their children in the nearest school. As he explained,

Poverty rates in the district have grown in the past year. But, even before that, in the past five years, district-wide the poverty rate has been increasing. There are kids who have grown up here who are on the free and reduced lunch list, but I think it also has to do with kids moving to our district who were on the free and reduced lunch list before and are on it when they get here as well. I think that’s part of the increase in poverty in the district. It’s not just families that have been here for a long time, it has to do with mobility into the district.

Summary

Principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools, while viewing the issue of staffing their buildings with quality teachers as an essential issue, did not attach the same significance to meeting the Teacher Quality provision as other concerns. This was largely due to the fact that no concrete sanctions were attached to a failure to meet the mandate.

The achievement of AYP as defined in the NCLB legislation was the number one concern of principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools. Principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools reported that they spent more time on this issue than any other. The focus on attaining AYP was due in large part to the concrete sanctions attached to a failure to do so, which might include less autonomy for principals, prescribed curriculums imposed by regulating agencies, reconstitution of teaching staffs and eventual closure.

Principals of compliant schools wished to avoid being labeled as a school that failed to make AYP as they felt such a distinction could only serve to decrease their ability to continue to attract, and perhaps more importantly retain teachers of the highest quality. Those in non-

compliant schools, many of whom already had problems in attracting and retaining “highly qualified” staff, felt that if they could make AYP it would enhance their ability to attract and retain teachers they coveted, who were “highly qualified” under the law.

In essence, in both compliant and non-compliant schools, principals believed that the manner in which their school was perceived by parents, district and state officials and teachers seeking positions was essential in determining whether or not they would be successful in maintaining a school organization that was stable, high-functioning and able to mitigate disturbances emanating from the external environment.

Enhancements/Barriers to Achieving Compliance

Principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools identified a number of enhancements available to them that allowed them to more readily meet the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB. Additionally there were a host of barriers that principals of compliant and non-compliant buildings identified as impeding their ability to address the mandate.

Union Constraints Limiting Principals of Non-Compliant Schools

The chief impediment to meeting the Teacher Quality mandate identified by principals of both compliant and non-compliant buildings was hiring and firing restrictions placed upon them by teacher unions. All principals interviewed had at least some negative feelings toward teacher unions and could point to an example where they had either been prevented from making a hire or terminating a teacher by the union. Principals felt that unions, in enforcing decades old “last-hired, first fired” policies, resulting from collective bargaining agreements, undermined the spirit underlying the Teacher Quality provision of placing the best available teacher in every classroom. Principals of non-compliant schools, in particular were frustrated by their inability to terminate ineffective teachers. In most cases, this inability to cull the herd in some schools did

not have a direct effect on a principal's ability to meet the Teacher Quality mandate, as the majority of those deemed ineffective had attained "highly qualified" status. However, some principals said that their inability to dismiss those teachers they felt were a drag on their school's ability to achieve at proficiency levels, whereby they were able to make AYP made it more difficult for them to attract fully certified teachers from the university as well as other schools both within and outside their districts. As one principal of a non-compliant school said, *"I think the union stops reform in schools. The union, in many cases personalizes the frustration with the bureaucracy that we need to follow in order to reform the schools."*

Principals of non-compliant schools felt that "last-hired, first fired" policies, while having little to do with the letter of the Teacher Quality provision, severely limited their ability to address its spirit. As one principal said referring to such policies, established via collective bargaining agreements,

There's nothing anybody can do about it. Seriously. It's out of my control as a building principal. It's all down at the central district office with the head of our teacher union and the little peons out here in the land of the school district really don't have anything to say about it. We don't.

Each principal heading a non-compliant school could recall one or more such incidences when excellent neophyte teachers were cut due to budgetary constraints and ineffective veteran teachers were permitted to keep their positions. Principals believed that these occurrences also were part of a larger domino effect in which ineffective teachers were retained over excellent teachers and the result was that test scores remained unacceptable, AYP was not achieved and they were subsequently unable to attract a sufficient number of applicants when a position became available due to quality teachers gaining employment elsewhere or choosing to retire. Comments regarding the limiting nature of unions upon principal decision-making in non-

compliant schools ranged from, *“I think there are teachers who are able to continue to work here just because they are union members,”* to, *“When you let them judge who is good and who is bad I think that’s wrong,”* to a terse, *“I don’t like them.”*

Recalling a specific instance where the union impeded her ability to staff her building in a manner whereby “highly qualified” candidates would subsequently be enticed to consider seeking her school out, one principal of a non-compliant school said,

“I lost two first year teachers who were absolutely awesome. One came from California as a seasoned teacher but moved to Illinois. The other one was one who had just graduated but student taught with us. But, I lost them because of budgetary cuts. Who I got in their place was somebody else in the district that I really had no say over that got placed here because they were cut out of their building. It was all about the union rules.”

Principals of non-compliant schools, whether correctly or incorrectly, traced difficulties in attracting “highly qualified” teachers to their buildings back to union contracts which dictated who could and could not be staffed in their buildings.

Union Constraints Limiting Principals of Compliant Schools

Principals of compliant schools generally did not have to worry about teacher unions affecting their ability to attract “highly qualified” teachers to their schools. However, they too bemoaned union policies they felt prevented them from keeping nascent “highly qualified” teachers they thought were excellent because veteran teachers with more years of service were given priority when cuts needed to be made. While principals in compliant schools did not report that union interests impeded their ability to meet the Teacher Quality provision mandate, they did feel that unions at times, served as a barrier to their being able to staff their buildings with teachers of the highest quality. Principals of compliant schools also felt that unions representing teachers, while necessary, acted not in the best interests of students, but merely to protect the livelihoods of their

dues paying members. As one principal of a compliant school said, *“Union guys might be making decisions or coming to conclusions based on what’s best for the adults involved.”*

Principals of compliant schools also felt that union officials sometimes engaged in a practice of sowing discord in their buildings by convincing “highly qualified” staff that conditions at the school were not optimal. As one principal in a compliant school noted,

I think often they’ve convinced their members who often, maybe this is the only place they’ve worked or they’ve been here a long time and they’ve forgotten, they got them convinced a lot of times that they’ve got a bad deal. And they don’t have a bad deal. It’s just teaching is hard no matter where you are, and I think sometimes they have them wanting or unhappy about things that really aren’t that bad as far as working conditions and pay and benefits.

Another principal of a compliant building echoing the sentiment, regarding the negative influence of unions, said, *“I think that when teachers come here... well, if they come here and they have never been in another district, that’s a problem. They don’t know what a good gig they’ve got.”* Still another, addressing the same issue said, *“I would like it if teachers who’ve worked in other places would speak up a little more. I’m not sure everyone appreciates how good we have it.”*

The Impact of Poverty on Recruiting and Retaining Teachers in Non-Compliant Schools

Principals of non-compliant buildings reported that the second most concerning issue to them as organizational leaders was the effect neighborhood poverty had on their schools. Like the issue of attaining AYP, principals felt that rates of student poverty in their schools could have a negative effect upon their organizational goals. In essence, principals felt that poverty led to underachievement on standardized tests, which led to a failure to achieve AYP, which in turn, led to fewer “highly qualified” candidates seeking employment in their schools. As one principal with a poverty-level rate of just over 50% described,

You see, in this building we have a high population of poverty-level second language learners, immigration – things like that, then you will be able to identify that the reality in this school and many, many schools just like mine is that we cannot recruit adequate staff.

Another principal of a non-compliant school, addressing the impact of poverty on their ability to attract and retain “highly qualified” teachers in her building said,

We have huge poverty in the district. We have some schools... we have one building where our poverty rate is 80%. Eighty percent of the children in that building live in poverty. All of the buildings in our district are Title I.

The Impact of Poverty on Recruiting and Retaining Teachers in Compliant Schools

Principals of compliant schools also reported that increasing poverty in their buildings were one of their chief concerns as it had the potential to affect their ability to meet their organizational goals.

As with principals of non-compliant buildings, principals of compliant buildings expressed concern that rising levels of student poverty in their schools might lead to a failure to attain AYP and, in turn make it more difficult to attract and retain “highly qualified” teachers. However, while principals of non-compliant schools were more concerned with the overall effect of poverty on their ability to achieve AYP, principals of compliant schools expressed the concern that one subgroup of poverty-level students could cause the entire building to fail to attain it.

Under NCLB, schools fail to make adequate yearly progress if a single sub-group of African-American, Bi-Lingual or Special Education students, as an example do not make AYP on the ISAT (Illinois Standards Achievement Test) exam given in the Spring of each year. In order for a sub-group to be counted regarding AYP by state and federal regulating agencies, there must be at least 45 students belonging to particular groups such as those mentioned above. Principals in compliant schools expressed a great deal of concern over the possibility that one sub-group

might fail to achieve AYP, thus placing the entire school on academic probation. Speaking to this issue, one principal acknowledged that she and her staff spent a great deal of time and energy hoping to keep a small minority of students from causing the entire school to be labeled as having failed to achieve AYP.

We know that we've got at least 10% of our population that's low-income and they're usually single moms as well. We're collapsing under the weight of this thing. It's a grave concern. There are kids who are not Special Education students who still have some type of deficiency or disability, maybe not fit into one of the categories. They're working as hard as they can.

Another principal of a compliant building suggested that the recent downturn in the economy had served to increase the number of poverty-level students attending his school. According to this principal, many such students suddenly found themselves in suburban schools when their parents and guardians could no longer afford to live in Chicago as an example. The recent influx of such students had presented this principal with even greater challenges regarding the attainment of AYP. Describing the recent spate of students and their families who had arrived in the district he said,

The neighborhood across the street has 155 town homes. And, at least a third, and that number is growing all the time, is Section 8. So, as you probably realize, a lot of the Section 8 homes... people in poverty tend to be pretty generous. What I mean by that is they tend to take in their friends and families and so I'm sure that the village code people would have a field day going through some of the homes. So, we get a lot. We have a lot of kids from the city coming here. We keep talking to our state legislatures about... we're not opposed to Section 8 housing. We're opposed to concentrations of Section 8 housing because that breeds the gang issues that Chicago has. We now have it. Our neighborhood has Thirteens and Latin Kings and Vice Lords and Gangster disciples. They're right here. And they came from someplace. Obviously, some of them were homegrown and some of them came from the city or elsewhere. So, I think when you bring that kind of concentration together, it breeds a certain... I don't know if you want to call it negative, but it's a different attitude people live by.

Funding

The amount of funding available to schools from district to district varies widely. As a result, some districts are able to offer teachers significantly larger salary packages than others. Additionally, these districts have more money for supplies, field trips, improvement to the physical plant and technology. As an example, generally speaking, such schools have gained compliance with the Teacher Quality provision and have also maintained AYP over a long period of time. Consequently, as a result of having achieved AYP, and having more resources available to address problems, such schools typically were able to attract more “highly qualified” teachers and to retain them over time than their non-compliant counterparts.

Inadequate Funding In Non-Compliant Schools

Principals of non-compliant schools felt they were at a distinct disadvantage in their ability to attract and retain “highly qualified” teachers to their buildings when measured against their compliant counterparts because of funding disparities. The issue of funding went beyond principals of non-compliant schools being able to offer teachers a competitive salary package, health care, and retirement options. In several cases, principals of non-compliant buildings felt they were unable to compete with compliant schools in more affluent areas, not simply because of salary considerations, but also because of the dilapidated nature of their physical plant and a lack of money available for items such as computers, Smart Boards, and even copiers for teachers to use in their daily practice. In effect, principals of non-compliant buildings said that teachers avoided seeking employment at their schools if more attractive options in higher paying districts with superior physical plants and accoutrements were available. Complaints of this nature by principals of non-compliant buildings largely centered not merely on their ability to

attract “highly qualified” teachers, but also on their ability to retain them over the course of their teaching careers.

As an example of the financial challenges facing principals in non-compliant schools and how fiscal realities put them at a disadvantage, one explained, “*You can hire someone, and they’ll tell you right up front, ‘Well, I’ve got an offer. I’m interviewing here. I interviewed over there. I’m waiting for a call...’ And a lot of times those districts have a lot more money.*” Another principal of a non-compliant school, providing an example of not only the difficulty she had in attracting “highly qualified” individuals, but also in retaining them said,

I think it was one teacher, wow... but she got married, so she moved to a different state. It was more money. I couldn’t match what they were offering her because what they were offering her was too good. She was a wonderful lady but they offered to pay for school law classes. So, how can I compete? You know, what can I offer?

Still another principal of a non-compliant school, speaking to the same point said,

We do have a wonderful staff and they use this as a stepping stone. One year, two years and they’re gone. They go to districts where the salaries are higher. And that’s something you can’t blame them for you know?

Funding as an Enhancement in Compliant Schools

In contrast to principals of non-compliant schools, their counterparts in compliant schools reported that it was a rare occasion when they were unable to meet salary demands of “highly qualified” teachers or were unable to retain staff members who sought better compensation elsewhere. In general, the compliant schools studied and the districts in which they were located were highly sought after destinations for “highly qualified” teachers that had gained many years of experience and were looking for a district, if not a specific school where they might end their careers. As one principal of a compliant school explained, “*This is a destination district for a lot*

of people. You know, working conditions are very good. For many people, once they get here this is the place they want to stay.” Another principal of a compliant school added, “I don’t have to sell. They’re glad to have a job, number one. We have a great salary package here.”

Hiring Restrictions as an Impediment in Non-Compliant Schools

Overall, principals of compliant schools hired earlier than those of non-compliant schools. There were a number of factors that made this the case. However, the chief cause of late hiring in non-compliant schools typically had to do with the uncertainty of funding for teaching positions in cash-strapped districts. Another significant cause of late hiring in some schools was due to the fact that many principals of non-compliant buildings were unsure in the spring what their staffs would look like in the ensuing fall. This was due in large part to higher rates of teacher mobility out of non-compliant schools late in summer just before school began. Commonly, principals of non-compliant schools were forced to hire at the last minute and took chances on individual teachers they may not have employed had they had more time and larger numbers of candidates seeking positions in their buildings. Principals of non-compliant schools pointed out that such time constraints limited their ability to hire the teachers they wanted when they wanted. As one principal of a non-compliant school said, recalling just such an occurrence,

Two years ago when I first got here I needed, I can’t tell you how many teachers – about 5 or 6 teachers because there was a huge turnover with retirement and people leaving because a new middle school opened and all of those kinds of things. So, people wanted to go. But to get the new people in, I needed science people, I needed reading and math. And sometimes you get people that have worked a different career, but in their college life they have enough classes to get the, you know... to become a teacher. And, all of a sudden it’s like... And, you read these applications online and its like, ‘Oh yeah!’ Because at first you look and see ‘Okay, do they have the qualifications?’ You look online. They have all these science classes, they have all of these things and then you look to see if they’re “highly qualified.” And, you call these people in, you interview them, you talk to them and you do all those kinds of things. Then you make your phone calls, your reference checks and things like that and then you send it downtown to the district certification person. That person then goes through... gets in a little

bit deeper into the qualifications of that person and then they call and tell you, 'So and so doesn't quite have such and such and such and such.'

In some cases, time constraints were the result of stipulations in union contracts. In other instances they were due to the unforeseen circumstances that led to the hiring of someone of lesser quality or a teacher who had not yet been fully credentialed. One principal of a non-compliant building recounted one such hire saying,

It was last minute. Somebody had just left so I had to hire someone in a hurry. It was a fourth grade sheltered classroom and she spoke Spanish. We did an interview in a hurry and it showed. She needed to take some classes to be fully certified in that classroom, but she received a waiver. However, she didn't follow through with taking the classes and was let go.

Another principal of a non-compliant school, who opened a new building, recalled having to hire all fifty-five of her teachers in three days saying,

Through the union there was a timeline that I could only interview during the voluntary transfer process, which ended up being three days. Three days. That's it! Those were the guidelines and that was the agreed upon system that was put into place. So, anyway I conducted, I think it was 115 interviews over that three day period.

Hiring Practices as an Enhancement in Compliant Schools

In each of the compliant schools in the study, principals finished the interviewing and hiring process by June. There were no instances of funding being in jeopardy and principals knew how many positions they would have in what grades and subjects for the upcoming school year.

Additionally, because there was very little mobility out of compliant schools, principals could generally count on retaining their entire staffs. The only major exceptions were retirees which varied from year to year. Also, principals of compliant schools typically had hundreds of resumes on file for every opening that materialized. As one principal of a compliant school said,

“We have a ton of applicants. In fact, we just hired for a language arts position. There were 1,000 applicants.”

As a result of unwavering funding, low rates of mobility and a long line of potential candidates at their disposal, principals of compliant schools generally had a distinct advantage in hiring over their non-compliant counterparts because they were able to hire earlier, with greater funding allowing them more access to the very best teachers seeking positions. As one principal of a compliant building said,

One of the really nice things about our district is that our pay structure...because of the K-8 district, a pay structure in a K-8 district is lower than a K-12 district or a high school district. But, so, you know, if you were a fifth grade teacher and you'd been teaching 10 years in a K-12 district, you'd be making more money than you would in this district with the same, you know, with the same certifications and everything, just because it's a K-8 district, that's just the way it is. But because it's this district, and the way it's borders are, we have a real...they have a pretty nice tax base. So I've never...this has been a really sweet gig for me too because I have never...the first year, I didn't even use up my whole budget. Then the building, the person that does the budget for the district, she said, 'If you don't use your budget, you're telling me you don't need the money.' So, the last two years I've used my money. But we don't...the teachers don't want for anything. They have everything. So financially, it is the district that is completely solvent, always operates in the black, and so there are no financial restrictions.

Summary of Enhancements and Barriers to Compliance

There existed a number of enhancements and barriers to achieving compliance with the Teacher Quality provision. In a general sense, principals of compliant schools reported having more enhancing factors at their disposal than non-compliant principals. As might be expected, principals of non-compliant schools experienced more barriers relative to their compliant counterparts when attempting to hire and retain “highly qualified” teachers.

The one barrier to attracting and retaining “highly qualified” teachers that was widely encountered by principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools, had to do with teacher

unions placing restrictions on when individuals could be hired and more prominently who was to be retained in the event that positions were cut as the result of funding issues or dwindling enrollment. All principals cited the negative influence of unions as the most prominent barrier they faced as they sought to gain or attain compliance. Principals were particularly contemptuous of “last-hired-first-fired” policies negotiated by unions through collective bargaining that forced them to let promising neophyte teachers go, while concurrently ensuring that veteran teachers of dubious quality were allowed to remain on staff. While union policies did not directly affect the percentage of “highly qualified” teachers in a particular school, principals felt that such policies impeded their ability to make improvements that would potentially lead to increased student achievement which in turn, might lead to a more robust supply of “highly qualified” teachers available to them to fill positions as they became available.

Principals of non-compliant schools said that student poverty greatly impacted their ability to attract and particularly to retain “highly qualified” teachers in their buildings. Principals of non-compliant buildings could recall numerous instances when a valued teacher received tenure after four years and subsequently left for greener pastures in a nearby school or district with lower rates of poverty and higher levels of achievement among its students.

In compliant buildings, although principals did have small pockets of poverty among their students, they believed the relative affluence of their student body served as a magnet for “highly qualified” teachers seeking employment. Typically, many of the teachers hired in compliant schools were those who had previously worked in non-compliant buildings serving poverty-level students.

In every non-compliant school in the study, principals reported that they were at a disadvantage in attracting and retaining “highly qualified” teachers compared to their compliant

counterparts as a result of funding issues. In general, compliant schools paid their teachers much higher salaries, had superior physical plants, better curricular material and superior technology than non-compliant schools. Largely speaking, these disparities could likely be traced back to the fact that compliant schools, located in more affluent areas had a larger local tax base with which to fund schools.

Principals of compliant schools felt they had more access to “highly qualified” teachers than their non-compliant counterparts chiefly because of their ability to offer handsome compensation packages. In most instances these compliant schools were destination schools for teachers. Once they gained employment in such schools it was likely they would remain there until retirement.

Related to the funding issue was the matter of when schools were able to hire teachers. In compliant buildings, principals typically finished their hiring months before the opening of school in August. They were able to do this due to uninterrupted funding provided by their districts. As a result, since they hired before non-compliant schools, they were able to choose from a larger pool of “highly qualified” applicants than principals in non-compliant buildings. Consequently, they were able to hire those whom they believed to be the cream of the crop.

In non-compliant schools, principals were often forced to make last-minute hires as the result of funding uncertainties. Largely speaking, the teachers they were forced to choose from were those who had been unable to gain employment over the summer. In several cases, principals of non-compliant buildings were compelled to hire teachers who had yet to become fully credential and had yet to attain “highly qualified” status.

Decisions Made and Strategies Employed to Achieve and Maintain Compliance

Principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools invoked a number of strategies to achieve and maintain compliance with the Teacher Quality mandate. At the same time, principals also attempted to imbue in their teachers those qualities they felt were most important in achieving and maintaining instructional quality in their schools. Most prominent among the strategies was the establishment of partnerships with local universities, who would subsequently provide the necessary coursework to teachers who were out of compliance. Also, in some cases principals provided professional development that would satisfy the Teacher Quality provision mandate if possible. Principals also directed some of their teachers who were out of compliance to on-line programs that would facilitate compliance as quickly as possible. Additionally, some principals chose to reinterpret data in a manner most favorable to gaining compliance for their teachers.

Most, principals included others in the decision-making process for the purpose of further informing the choices they made regarding teacher quality. Principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools used side-payments to individual teachers as a means of demonstrating appreciation, courting favor and perhaps reducing the likelihood that they would migrate elsewhere when opportunities became available. Also, principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools attempted to remove ineffective teachers if they felt they were an impediment to the achievement of organizational goals.

Having successfully addressed the Teacher Quality mandate, principals of compliant schools focused their efforts on retaining the teachers they valued most and developing their abilities. Principals in all the compliant schools included in the study imparted that although they had achieved compliance, they were constantly taking actions they hoped would allow them to

maintain their status. All principals of compliant schools felt that this could be achieved by providing professional development and creating working conditions in their buildings that promoted loyalty to the organization. Additionally, like Cyert and March's firm, these principals attempted to reward their most favored teachers with "side-payments" as a means by which they could retain their most stellar staff members and decrease the likelihood that they would entertain offers from other schools and school districts.

As previously outlined, the actions taken by principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools mimicked those of Cyert and March's firm in responding to external threats in that they focused on short term solutions to problems, distinguishing the essential from the non-essential and placing secondary status on long term goals. Additionally, like the firm, school principals attempted to find available response options to the problem of meeting the Teacher Quality provision in close proximity to where solutions to like problems had been found at a previous time.

There were numerous ways in which principals attempted to address the call to gain compliance and "highly qualified" status for their teachers. The most common way that principals gained compliance for teachers on staff who had yet to attain "highly qualified" status was via some form of professional development, which was usually, but not always obtained through an association that had been established by themselves or their districts with a local university or other outside provider.

Professional Development and University Partnerships in Non-Compliant Schools

With assistance from their districts, principals in non-compliant schools, most often sought to get their teachers who had yet to attain "highly qualified" status, credentialed via partnerships created with local colleges and universities. Since the passage of the NCLB legislation and the

Teacher Quality provision, some schools and their districts have established partnerships with colleges of education for the express purpose of obtaining certification for their teachers who had yet to achieve “highly qualified” status.

Principals of non-compliant schools reported that after passage of NCLB they relied upon their Regional Offices of Education to make them aware of the finer points of the Teacher Quality provision as there was often at least some ambiguity regarding what was necessary to get specific teachers certified in particular classroom assignments. Similarly, these principals reported that they also relied upon their Regional Offices of Education as well as their superintendent to establish partnerships with local colleges of education. In some cases, local colleges of education approached principals and districts first, wanting to know what types of programs were needed to facilitate the attainment of “highly qualified” status for teachers.

One principal of a non-compliant school described just such a program established by a local university with the goal of providing full certification for teachers with Type 29 provisional certificates, which allowed them to teach in Bi-lingual classrooms though they had yet to achieve “highly qualified” status.

I was fortunate enough to be approached by the university because we do employ – in this count; we probably have employed the largest number of Type 29 teachers. And, so the university came to me and said, ‘How can we develop a program? We want to be able to develop a program.’ I worked with an administrator at the university and they developed what’s called ARC – which is the Alternate Route to Certification which is specifically for Type 29 teachers. You have to have worked a year on your Type 29 certificate and then they have an intensive 27 month program, by the end of which you have your certification and your Bi-lingual approval requirements completed. Lots of coursework, lots of mentoring. And, during that period of time, when people are enrolled in ARC they are considered “highly qualified” even though they don’t yet have full state certification.

Another principal of a non-compliant school, describing a similar arrangement with a local university said,

A lot of my bi-lingual teachers were not “highly qualified,” did not have all of the certification and one of the things I did as an administrator was to bring in people to help them and to set up classes so they could be “highly qualified.” A local university comes in. If you have a number of staff in the building they would actually come to your building and provide the classes for you. The other thing that universities have been very willing to do is, if our district has 12-15 students in a cohort and I guarantee them that we’re going to have 15 students in the cohort for the next 2 ½ years, they’ll freeze the tuition rate for that 2 ½ years. For example, at the university we’ve been using, tuition has gone up considerably since we started this cohort, but they’ve held our tuition steady.

Another strategy employed by principals of non-compliant schools, attempting to facilitate compliance with the Teacher Quality provision, was to direct their teachers toward online programs that they largely felt were of dubious rigor, but valued them nonetheless as a quick and convenient way for their staff members who were not certified to achieve “highly qualified” status. As one principal of a non-compliant school confided, *“Online universities have been great. If you want to get people whatever they need quickly they can do that. After certification they can go on to a better program, a university program where they can continue the learning process.”*

Professional Development in Compliant Schools

In compliant schools, principals did not have to seek out professional development for their teachers for the purpose of their obtaining “highly qualified” status. Like their counterparts in non-compliant schools, these principals had a sizeable chunk of their professional development funding appropriated by district policies that focused on achievement on standardized tests. In all instances, compliant schools had made AYP and were in no danger of immediately encountering sanctions tied to lack of achievement on annual assessments. However, principals

in compliant schools and their districts largely devoted a great deal of their time doing all they could to maintain high levels of student achievement on standardized tests.

Unlike principals of non-compliant schools, principals of compliant buildings were able to fund professional development activities that were not expressly designed for the purpose of immediately elevating or maintaining test scores. As an example, outlining her professional development for the previous year, one principal of a compliant building said she chose to focus on writing skills – an area of study that was not a factor in determining whether or not a school achieved AYP. As she recalled, *“This year we did content area writing. Writing was one of the things that we’re really, really working on for our building goals.”*

Another principal of a compliant school chose to focus on increasing the technological prowess of his staff via long-term staff development aimed at implementing the use of Smartboards in every classroom. As he explained,

When we bought Smartboards it came with training. So, we had training for the teachers due to the purchasing of the Smartboards. We also brought two middle school teachers over and did some training. And, realistically, we need to follow up with the staff development on that some more and do some of the higher level Smartboard activities now, because when we were doing those it was more, ‘Here are the basics.’

As a result of the professional development funds in compliant buildings not having to be spent exclusively on activities tailored toward certification issues or maximizing test scores which were already typically high, principals in these schools were able to take on long-term concerns and to address what they believed were the deficiencies and needs of both teachers and students. Additionally, because short-term concerns were few, long-term concerns could be met in a meaningful way, perhaps helping to sustain high levels of student achievement and concurrently maintaining and perhaps elevating the level of teacher quality in the school.

Rewarding Most Favored Employees in Compliant and Non-Compliant Schools

Another manner in which principals attempted to retain “highly qualified” teachers was to reward them in proportion to their value to the organization. Like Cyert and March’s firm principals in both compliant and non-compliant schools issued side-payments for their most valued employees, rewarding them with praise and tokens of appreciation. Like the firm, principals in both compliant and non-compliant schools also withheld side-payments from those staff members deemed expendable.

As teacher rates of pay were fixed as the result of collective bargaining agreements negotiated by teacher unions, principals attempted to express their appreciation for valued staff members via many small gestures they felt aided them in both motivating and retaining teachers over the long haul. Principals in both compliant and non-compliant schools used small “gifts,” or side-payments to express appreciation to their teachers for a job well done, and also to promote the retention of their best teachers. While perhaps insignificant on the surface, this practice was implemented uniformly and was deemed important by principals in that it created an opportunity whereby a small gesture could pay significant dividends at some future point. In short, what principals were hoping to accomplish in presenting small tokens of appreciation to teachers was to not merely hang on to their most valued employees, but to also negate the need to search for a “highly qualified” replacement when a stellar teacher sought greener pastures. In this manner, principals felt they were addressing both the spirit of the law by providing excellent teachers for their students while concurrently assuring that they remained in compliance or, in the case of non-compliant schools maintained the status quo so that they fell no farther behind in attempting to address the Teacher Quality provision mandate.

Side-Payments in Compliant Schools

One principal in a compliant building, recalling the small tokens of appreciation he bestowed upon selected staff members said, *“Sometimes, I’ll give them a little... I’ve got some little apples that are little timers, it’s a clock and it’s a timer. They’re kind of cute. They’re kind of funny. I’m giving those out this year with ‘Thank you,’ in there.”* Another said,

We buy them a couple of gifts and feed them lunch and things like that. We do it because we want them to know that they are important enough that we’re going to take the time to make their jobs a little bit more comfortable.

Another principal of a compliant building said, *“I’ve done where I’ve given them soup, you know... like for a super job you know? Flowers, gift certificates, Starbucks cards. I buy a lot of Starbucks cards. I do a lot of gifting. It’s the personal recognition, it’s the personal touch”*

While conceding that the tokens of esteem presented to teachers were of little material value, principals of compliant schools felt that teachers valued such gestures greatly. As a principal of a compliant building pointed out,

It’s not a matter of just gifting. It’s the personal recognition, it’s the personal touch. It’s like going to them and saying, you know, I mean, I have an art teacher that is just, I mean, she’s young, she just absolutely amazing. I tell her. I go, ‘If I had to work next to you, I would have to work harder, and I was a really good teacher.’ So, she knows.

Another principal of a compliant school equated the recognition, in the form of small “gifts” or side-payments made to teachers to the manner in which he would manage students when he was a classroom teacher saying, *“Some students just require a pat on the back and hey, ‘Let’s take a walk and talk, see how things are going.’ And with teachers sometimes it’s the same thing. Give them a pat on the back. Tell them, ‘Thank you! I appreciate it!’”*

In addition to presenting their most valued employees with small tokens of appreciation for a job well-done, principals of compliant schools also attempted to create conditions in their buildings that made the task of teaching as rewarding as possible by allowing their employees to focus on instruction. As one principal in a compliant school explained,

“The work is being done in the classrooms, though I work very hard and long hours. But, the work is not being done in my office. This is not where it happens with the kids. It happens in the classrooms. And, so in order for it to happen in the classrooms I have to remove as many barriers and hurdles as possible.”

Another principal touched on the issue of removing barriers and hurdles for teachers as well, saying, *“I feel like sometimes a part of my job is to run a little bit of interference between the district office and the classroom teacher.”*

Side-Payments in Non-Compliant Schools

Principals of non-compliant schools demonstrated their appreciation to teachers for a job well done in manners similar to their counterparts in compliant buildings. Principals of non-compliant schools, like their counterparts in compliant buildings also saw their demonstrations of appreciation as a means by which they could more readily comply with the Teacher Quality provision mandate in that “highly qualified” teachers who felt appreciated were less likely to exit the school when opportunities presented themselves.

Virtually all gestures in this vein made by principals of non-compliant schools were made with the knowledge that the best teachers in their building would at some point, as a result of their excellence be given opportunities to move to other districts with better benefits and higher salaries. Knowing this, principals of non-compliant schools attempted to foster loyalty among such teachers via small gestures as they felt they meant a great deal to them.

As an example of the way in which principals of non-compliant schools expressed their gratitude to teachers they valued one said, *“I have a little card and it says, ‘A job well done! You will have a five minute break and I’ll take over your class.’”* Another said, *“Sometimes, I try to bring them breakfast.”*

Hiring in Non-Compliant Schools

Principals of non-compliant schools viewed the interview process and the subsequent hiring of teachers as paramount in gaining compliance with the Teacher Quality provision. These principals were generally highly focused on improving their interviewing techniques. Typically, principals in non-compliant buildings felt that they needed to become as proficient as possible in conducting interviews with prospective teachers so that they would not only hire “highly qualified” candidates as prescribed by law, but that they would also hire individuals who were resilient, flexible and committed to the profession. Describing interviewing techniques he had honed over several years, one principal of a non-compliant building said, *“When you’re talking to them you see what they feel. I mean, you ask questions and you put situations in front of them. ‘What would you do here? What would you do there?’”*

Another principal of a non-compliant school spoke of bolstering her technology skills prior to interviewing candidates so that she might be more prepared and interview only those whom she might truly consider hiring, saying,

The district has incorporated this system that is applications online and you get to see all the information in there. For me, thinking in my first year as principal that I had to go to human resources and get the files. This system is, for me, very easy. I have it online and I can look at the resumes, certifications. I can see the whole... even their statement... of you know, what they want to teach, and what position.

In seeking out teachers who possessed qualities they coveted, principals of non-compliant buildings hoped to employ teachers who would assume a position in their schools and remain there over a long period of time. As one principal of a non-compliant school said,

I definitely think long-term. I don't just hire people to hire them. I hire people who are going to fit and who are passionate about the job and who want to work with the children in this building. I don't think about putting a person in the position just to meet the mandate. The people that are here are the people that needed to be here, that wanted to be here, that I wanted to be here.

Another principal of a non-compliant school echoing the sentiment of hiring teachers who were a good fit in their buildings and thus were more likely to stabilize a position for the foreseeable future said,

Any principal, when they hire new staff, they're always going to look to see if that new staff is a good fit for the team, for the school, for the children, for the parents and everything. I want to know personally his or her capacity to come and be part of the effort and be able to be successful at dealing with the particular intrinsic issues that we are faced with when we come to school.

In hiring such individuals, principals felt they could obtain momentum moving forward as there would be one less position in the school to fill on a perennial basis. They could then move on to solidify other positions in the building that had a constant churn of personnel and address them. Particularly prized were teachers with certification in high-need areas such as Special Education, Bi-lingual Education, Science and Math.

Attempting to shore up their staffs, principals of non-compliant schools lamented the mistakes they had made in hiring teachers based on what they felt were excellent interviews only to find that skills associated with the interviewing prowess of prospective teachers did not necessarily translate to proficiency in the classroom. All principals of

non-compliant schools expressed regrets at hires they had made. As one principal of a non-compliant school said recalling a hire she made,

As I think back, it's like... because every time I tried to call to get a personal reference on her from her previous employer they were never available, but her recommendations, her evaluations were good. Very disorganized in the classroom. Instruction, if any, was haphazard. Couldn't communicate with her peers. Just totally, totally, totally confused about everything. Even the simplest things – just classroom management, classroom setup, couldn't keep up with the materials. And, I'm thinking, "How could this person do such a great interview and none of these things come out?" And, then again, maybe it was me because again you get in this time crunch, she's been deemed "highly qualified," but at the same time she's missing all of these pieces.

Another principal of a non-compliant school recalling a hire she regretted said,

It was middle school Science. An eighth grade Science position. It's a shallow pool of candidates to begin with. And there were many, many red flags with a particular candidate, that had he been a Social Studies teacher or a Language Arts teacher, would not have gotten the job. He ended up resigning in December. I was not surprised.

As a result of such errors in judgment, some principals of non-compliant schools acknowledged that the mistakes they had made in hiring had, over time impeded their ability to meet the Teacher Quality mandate as they were subsequently forced to seek out another teacher for the position. Still, principals, while attempting to hone their interviewing skills so that they would become more adept at choosing the best long-term fit for their schools, admitted that there was always an element of chance at work when they made hires. One principal of a non-compliant school, putting this sentiment very succinctly said that any hire made by a principal was simply “*an educated guess.*”

It may be likely that the hiring of employees is “an educated guess” in any field of endeavor. However, principals felt that the hiring of teachers in particular had become even more problematic in recent years as the result of challenging economic times and

the ensuing career switching of individuals seeking to obtain a position in education which has traditionally been one of the more secure positions in the nation's economy. Addressing this phenomenon of candidates who, through their years in other professions had developed interview acumen, one principal of a non-compliant building said, *"You could have that one person out there that doesn't interview very well, but they've gone through enough now that they've gotten better at it."*

Referring to hiring career switchers who had gone back to school and obtained a certificate in a high-need area in order to make themselves as employable as possible, another principal of a non-compliant school said, *"I can tell you that I hired people based on the interview that I had who took off their interview faces when they came in here to teach."* Still another principal of a non-compliant school who was reluctant to hire a career-switcher had her misgivings confirmed when she took a leap of faith in hiring just such an individual only to regret doing so almost immediately. Recalling the hire she said,

I was looking for a Bi-Lingual teacher. Awesome interview. She had a gorgeous portfolio. I mean, looked very child-centered. I mean, she talked the language you know? It was great. I'm thinking, 'Wow, this is really good!' Her recommendations were good. And it's like, 'Okay! I've really got to hire somebody because we're year round; school is getting ready to open. I'm going to take a chance on this person.' Well, within the first 30 days its like, 'I need to shoot myself. This is bad!'

Hiring in Compliant Schools

As a result of not having to concern themselves with increasing the supply of "highly qualified" teachers, obtaining compliance with the Teacher Quality provision or having to concern themselves with the achievement of AYP, principals of compliant buildings generally had more time to focus on the hiring process as opposed to their counterparts in

non-compliant schools. However, principals of compliant schools also encountered some challenges as they attempted to fill vacancies on their staffs.

In some cases, principals in compliant buildings struggled to find what they deemed the “right fit” for their buildings, their students and their communities. As one principal of a compliant school explained,

“Well, any principal when they hire new staff, they’re always going to look to see if that new staff is a good fit for the team, for the school, for the children, for the parents and everything. I want to know personally his or her capacity to come and be part of the effort and to be able to be successful at dealing with the particular intrinsic issues that we are faced with when we come to school.”

Additionally, principals of compliant schools sought out particular types of teacher candidates with an eye toward diversifying their buildings while concurrently providing a “good fit” with existing staff. At times, finding such candidates proved elusive for some principals. As one principal of a compliant school said,

I’ve made a concerted effort, and I’ve not hidden this from anybody... I’ve made a concerted effort to look for minorities. I’ve been very unsuccessful with minorities. Very concerted effort to hire male teachers. Now, I will never hire a male over a better qualified female, but the advantage of being male guarantees I’m going to look at your resume. It almost guarantees that I’m going to call you in for an interview. That’s the advantage a male has. But, I’ve made those concerted efforts, but I’ve still been hiring some females because I cannot in clear conscience take a male over a better qualified female. I won’t do that. But, they definitely have the advantage of having the door open for them to come in, yes. Minorities are a whole other issue. I struggle. I talk to the universities where I have partnerships. And we’re trying to get minorities, specifically African-American, but looking for Hispanic teachers too.

Furthermore, principals of compliant schools, like their counterparts in non-compliant buildings said that no matter how well they honed their interviewing skills, how many individuals they included in the interview process or how well they were prepared, each

hire was a judgment call they hoped would bear fruit. As one principal of a compliant school said,

I think nearly every hiring decision I've made has been a gut call at the end of the day. I do. Many, many times there have been candidates with more years of experience, for instance, which did not mean to me on paper that they were necessarily more qualified. But, I think each call is a gut call I think.

Actors Included in the Decision-Making Process in Compliant Schools

Cyert and March inform us that when organizations look for solutions to problems they engage in a biased search wherein the specific talents and abilities of coalitions within the firm or the internal environment are utilized to address external disturbances.

Often when principals made decisions, they too included at least one other person on their staffs in the decision-making process. Like Cyert and March's firm, those included in the decision-making process regarding the achievement of "highly qualified" status for all staff members were typically those with talents and abilities germane to the solving of the problem at hand. Additionally, like the firm, principals also looked to their external environments for input as to how they should proceed in the era of NCLB and solutions regarding how the problem of staffing their schools with "highly qualified" teachers could best be achieved.

Typically, the first person principals of compliant schools turned to for input regarding maintaining compliance via the hiring and retention of teachers were their assistant principals. This could have been for a variety of reasons. The most often cited reason for relying upon their assistant principals by principals was that they were experienced, trustworthy and exercised discretion. As one such principal said, "*I rely on my associate principal because she's been here a really long time.*"

However, some principals had other reasons for leaning heavily on their assistant principals for advice regarding teacher quality. As one principal of a compliant school, a male offered, *“She’s a woman. And, I think that in a profession where most people are female she relates and gets information that I never will even if I’m sitting in the same room. I won’t hear it the same.”*

Another principal of a compliant building spoke of including teachers in the hiring process for the purpose of allowing them to feel a sense of empowerment, be it real or imagined, while concurrently allowing himself the benefit of different perspectives saying,

It’s a smart move politically. Let them have some input. First of all, they – some of the classroom teachers, on the front lines, they really do, in some cases, hear answers differently than I do. It’s been awhile now. I’ve been an administrator longer than I was a teacher now. And, I appreciate the kind of widening of the perspective that I get by having them involved. One of the things I have to factor into the equation is, it doesn’t have to be the perfect candidate that they would pick, necessarily, but I do have to know that they can work with this team of three or four other teachers every day for 40 minutes a day, share the same kids, work on projects together. I’ll ask in our discussion after a candidate leaves the room, you know, ‘Do you think this candidate could work with your team? Do you see conflicts? Do you think this would work?’ So, I’m looking for that information.

Several principals of compliant schools also sought advice from former principals who had mentored them at some point in their careers or current principals within their district. Routinely, principals would turn to other principals in their district who were facing the same pressure to comply with the mandate, their immediate superior or an administrator with whom they had once worked who served as a mentor when called upon. Explaining succinctly why he solicited advice from a former principal who had become a superintendent in another district, regarding the fulfillment of the Teacher

Quality provision, one principal of a compliant school said, *“I’ve seen his work. I’ve seen the quality of his work.”*

Actors Included in the Decision-Making Process in Non-Compliant Schools

Generally speaking, principals of non-compliant schools, in addition to including their associate principal in decision-making regarding teacher quality also tended to rely on more members of their staffs when making decisions than their counterparts in compliant schools. Principals of non-compliant schools typically assembled teams of teacher leaders to participate in the hiring and evaluation process rather than consulting a single individual. Articulating the process at her school, one explained,

When hiring a person, looking at a teacher I have a team of teachers who also sit in on the interview. Because sometimes, again I can be totally swayed and skewed by one thing and other people can see the other set of eyes, other set of ears. So, I rely a lot upon that.

Another principal of a non-compliant school said, *“There’s a cadre of teachers here that I trust. If I’m having a tough decision to make, my assistant and I talk about it and we may pull in one or two of those cadres and bounce our ideas off of them also.”* Still another principal of a non-compliant school said,

There are a group of teachers, yes. They have the experience, the knowledge, I mean the proven record, let’s put it like that. And, it’s not that I confide in them. It is that if I need to make decisions I always want to make sure that my decisions are balanced with the reality of the teachers. So, I think that’s how it works better. And, so I normally take those teachers and it’s like I pull them in to make the decision. Or, sometimes they make the decision for me because on every other word I feel that it should be their call, not my call. I will sign on the dotted line. But, it’s whatever they feel is what I will go with.

Principal-District Relationship Dynamic

In addition to the formal relationship between principals and the district hierarchy there was also an informal relationship. In these informal relationships, a dialogue regarding how best to address the Teacher Quality provision often took place that was “off the record.” In some cases principals may have taken their cue from the district office by what he/she did not hear from them. As an example, some principals routinely insisted that they had no “highly qualified” candidates to fill a position so that they could hire a person of their choosing. Several of the principals interviewed in the study indicated that they engaged in this practice in league with district officials.

In order for such maneuvering to work, the principal must already be confident that officials at the district office would not present “highly qualified” candidates of their own, or suggest any alternatives to hiring a teacher for whom a waiver would have to be obtained. On the other side of this equation, officials at the district level must have had a high enough opinion of the principal that they would have trusted that he/she was engaging in activities that may have circumvented the letter of the Teacher Quality provision while still addressing its spirit – to provide students with the best possible teachers.

In other cases, principals presented an organizational chart to district officials in which all teachers were placed in positions for which they were “highly qualified” when in fact the day to day assignments given to teachers were significantly different than what the principal committed to paper. In this manner, a principal could get the teachers they wanted in the positions they wanted them (regardless of their certification or endorsement status) and still appear to have rigidly adhered to the mandate. For such an approach to work there would also need to be an implicit understanding between the principal and district officials.

In addressing the Teacher Quality provision, those principals who established a sense of trust and understanding with district personnel were likely to have had more flexibility regarding the manner in which they chose to meet the mandate, or in some cases simply giving the appearance of having met it. It would make sense that such relationships took some time to build and cement, perhaps giving principals with many years of experience working with the same district personnel (assuming they were well regarded) an advantage over their counterparts with fewer years at the helm of their schools in gaining this perhaps necessary autonomy in staffing their schools.

Principals of Non-Compliant Schools Working Around the Teacher Quality Provision

There were some instances in which principals went around the mandate in order to get the teachers they wanted in specific positions or to avoid placing the only available candidate they did not value in a position in their schools. In some cases, principals appeared to do everything they could to meet the mandate, when in fact they attempted to get around what they felt were rigid prescripts of the law. As an example, several principals said that they refused to hire “highly qualified” candidates they viewed as pedagogically weak, or a bad fit for their buildings and instead claimed to their superiors at the district level that they’d not received a resume or an inquiry about the position from a properly credentialed applicant.

In the districts represented in this study, a provisionally assigned teacher or substitute could be placed in a vacancy only when a “highly qualified” teacher was not available. In such cases, where they determined after interviewing all available “highly qualified” applicants that none of them would be an effective teacher in their buildings, principals would subsequently tell the district office that their hands were tied with respect to filling

a particular position due to a lack of available candidates. The district would then routinely seek and obtain a waiver from the state for a teacher of the principals' choosing to teach on a provisional license. Recalling such an instance one principal of a non-compliant school said,

A Science teacher left the position. We were able to hire a substitute. When you hire a substitute the person doesn't necessarily have to be "highly qualified." We hired a young woman who had done student teaching with us whose background is Language Arts and she's doing a phenomenal job. She's bright enough to learn the eighth grade curriculum. Now, clearly she wouldn't have the breadth and depth of understanding that a person with that content area... with the content area background has. But, is she bright enough to learn the Science and to use her tremendous Language Arts skills to bring Science concepts to kids in maybe a different way? Yeah. And, the kids are having a much, much better experience.

Another principal of a non-compliant school, explaining how he routinely was able to hire candidates who had yet to achieve "highly qualified" status by feigning an inability to recruit someone with sufficient licensure offered a rationale for the practice saying,

People who are hard-working it doesn't matter – you love them. Because that's exactly the people that you want... even if they're not completely effective, you know that because they have that standard, they're hard-working; they want to do their jobs, they like what they do. They like to teach. I mean, they take it seriously. They have that energy inside. Not because physically they have a lot of energy, but because this is something that they really feel for. I mean, when you get candidates like that or you get teachers like that what happens is that we principals, in my case I mean, we protect those people. We are around them. We don't let anything happen to them. We want them to continue.

Another principal of a non-compliant school described how she filled a position with an individual who was not yet fully certified when a candidate who was certified was available. In this specific instance, the "highly qualified" individual who was available and willing to accept a position at the school failed to impress the principal during an interview that was conducted in June, prior to the opening of school in August. Knowing

that this teacher was the only certified person available and feeling that the teacher, though fully credentialed would not be a good addition to her staff, she played what she called, “the waiting game.” As she explained,

I think that’s the game of roulette that sometimes you play. I can play the game... the game being that I can wait if I have the candidate that I want who may not be certified. If I can find somebody that I think will be a good fit, and they may not be certified, I’ll play the waiting game, until it’s the last minute and then I’ll hire the person. I will do that if I feel the candidate will be the best fit and will do the best for the kids.

As a result of this “waiting game,” the principal did not hire the certified person with whom she was not impressed and waited until the last minute before school was to begin to report to the district that she was unable to find a “highly qualified” candidate to fill the position. In August, she informed the district that she did have a candidate who was lacking a handful of classes that she thought would be a good fit for her staff and who would eventually be an outstanding teacher. At the conclusion of her conversation with district officials, she was able to persuade them to obtain a waiver from the state for the teacher she wished to add to her staff, thus paving the way for the hiring of the teacher who lacked certification. It was the opinion of all principals who engaged in such practices that administrators at the district and state levels were aware of what they were doing and gave their tacit approval by never investigating beyond the principals’ word.

Principals of Compliant Schools Working Around the Teacher Quality Provision

Looking back at how they had achieved compliance, several principals in compliant buildings could recall an instance between 2002 and 2008 when they loosely interpreted the law so that they would remain in compliance and not disrupt existing programs in their buildings. As an example, one principal of a compliant school who wanted every teacher in his building to teach

at least one Reading class, simply changed the title of some courses in order to remain in compliance. The name change became necessary after the passage of NCLB and the Teacher Quality provision which demanded that anyone teaching Reading in the middle grades have a subject-specific endorsement, something only 10% -15% of his staff had attained. As he explained,

For several years every core subject teacher in this building was teaching Reading. No Child Left Behind comes along and says, 'You've got to have an endorsement it.' So, our superintendent tried to get reading classes into the building, graduate classes and so forth, but he was unsuccessful in getting that done. So, somewhere along the line, we came up with a new strategy, because we weren't going to get it done. So we changed the name of the class to "Strategic Learning." And, we changed the focus of the class a little bit. The focus of the class is still Reading strategies, but it's all, a bit more study skills and higher-level thinking. We provide 80 minutes a day of "Strategic Learning" and we have probably four teachers on a staff of 40 that are certified or endorsed in Reading. Our superintendent is on board; the Board of Education is on board. They understand exactly why we're doing what we're doing. I don't know if they would deny it or not deny it.

Another principal of a compliant school described how she also invoked semantics when confronted by superiors regarding a teacher they felt was out of compliance.

The Regional Office walked in one time and didn't like that I had a teacher teaching half of her day in an area she didn't have an endorsement in. And, I interpreted; I read the regulations to them. At the time, it was, you can't teach more than half of your day outside of your main subject area. So I said, 'She's teaching half. That's not more than half.'

Faced with the prospect of losing compliance, another principal of a compliant school simply chose to terminate a program rather than deal with attempting to find a "highly qualified" teacher in a high-need area. "We've let our Spanish go," she said, "Because it's too hard to find a "highly qualified" person to teach three periods a day of Spanish. We've gotten rid of that curriculum as opposed to not complying with the law."

Removal

Principals of both compliant and non-compliant buildings felt that perceptions of their schools by “highly qualified” teachers greatly impacted their ability to recruit and retain the best of teachers. Their relative success in recruiting and retaining teachers of quality, they felt, would facilitate the attainment of AYP in their schools. The attainment of AYP in turn would lead to a larger supply of teachers wishing to work in their schools which would bolster the number of quality teachers available to them.

With an eye toward locking their schools into this positive cycle, principals attempted to rid themselves of teachers they found to be ineffective, reasoning that such teachers were a drag on the entire school organization’s ability to achieve AYP which would ultimately lead to impediments with respect to their being able to always have “highly qualified” teachers in all disciplines who wished to gain employment in their buildings. How principals went about removing teachers they found to be ineffective depended upon the administrative style of the principal, whether or not targeted teachers had achieved tenure and, in some instances, how close the teachers in question were to being eligible for retirement.

Removal of Ineffective Tenured Teachers in Non-Compliant Schools

None of the 12 principals interviewed in both compliant and non-compliant schools said they had even attempted to formally dismiss a tenured teacher outright. All of them agreed that the effort necessary to dismiss a tenured teacher in the State of Illinois would likely diminish their effectiveness in dealing with other issues. The research bears them out on this point. The presence of Teacher Tenure Acts in many states, including Illinois, protects public school employees, making it extremely difficult for principals to remove teachers they find to be ineffective. Before a teacher can be terminated administrators are often forced to negotiate

several cumbersome and time-consuming layers of bureaucracy (Joyce, 2000; Poston & Manatt, 1993; Tucker, 1997). In the state of Illinois, which has a teacher population of roughly 100,000 in 876 districts typically fires only two teachers a year for incompetence, while an additional five are terminated for misconduct on average (Chicago Tribune Online, 2005). Illustrating the difficulty in attempting to remove an ineffective teacher, one principal said,

Five percent of the time when you really do have bad people, then I think you need to, along the way, you need to document. You need to document, document, and document. Eventually, if it's an established teacher they'll be on a remediation plan.

However, there were several principals who reported at least one instance when they encouraged teachers to leave the building and in some cases leave the profession via retirement. Generally speaking, principals attempted to remediate tenured teachers they felt were unsatisfactory. If remediation failed, they then more actively monitored the teacher in question sometimes attempting to make the teacher's work environment as uncomfortable as possible while still complying with the union contract. One principal of a non-compliant school who wanted to dismiss a tenured teacher but could not, due to union constraints said, *"I have one teacher that I believe is toxic for kids, and she's on the evaluation cycle next year and she's going to be taken to task. She's tenured and I'm going to make her, like, really miserable."*

Other principals chose to address the task of bringing about the departures of tenured teachers they found to be ineffective in a more direct fashion in the form of a one-on-one meeting in their office. The tone of such meetings depended upon the managerial style of each principal. Some feigned support for the teacher while expressing their concerns. Others simply told the teacher that it would be in their best interests to leave the building at the conclusion of the school year

via transfer or retirement. Recalling how she routinely conducted such a meeting, a principal of a non-compliant building said,

I usually start, 'Are you really happy doing what you're doing? Life is too short.' So, we talk about things like that and then sometimes I'm very direct and I say, 'Have you looked at your retirement options?' And then if they haven't I direct them to how they might want to look at their retirement options and see how close they are and what it might mean.

Another principal of a non-compliant school, recalling one such conversation said,

It's my job as an administrator to say, 'You know what? You're not right for this position. You're not right for this building. You're not good for kids here. And, let me help you figure out where you need to go and what else you need to do because it's pretty obvious it's not working here.'

Recalling a specific instance in her school, another principal of a non-compliant school recalled,

It was in a situation a year, two years ago when I first got into this building. And, there was a teacher that was in this building that people had tried a number of ways to get rid of. And, of course when I come in, everyone knows that she's a horrible instructor, not doing her job, just all of these issues like, 'Oh thanks! It dumps on – it falls on me.' Well one of the first things that I do is have a conversation with this person, let her know what my expectations are and really, 'Okay, here we are. These are my expectations. How can I help you meet these expectations? Because there is no grey area here. I'm very sincere. You lay it out and then it's up to them. 'Are you going to accept this challenge?' And then for me, it's like, 'These are my expectations, this is... if you do this, these are the things I'm going to do to help you. If you choose not to...' And, at that time she chose not to come back. She left the field.

Removal of Ineffective Non-Tenured Teachers in Compliant Schools

Like their counterparts in non-compliant schools, principals of compliant schools were not compelled by collective bargaining agreements negotiated by teacher unions to grant tenure to staff until they had completed four years of service. After four years, teachers either had to be granted tenure or dismissed. Typically, though, principals in both circumstances made decisions regarding the long-term prospects of teachers well before the four years leading up to tenure had

elapsed. However, principals of compliant schools may have felt that they were able to spend more time in developing teachers over several years, because they were not under the threat of immediate sanctions regarding AYP. Conversely, principals of non-compliant buildings were quicker to pull the trigger on teachers they felt were substandard, even if there was no “highly qualified” replacement available than their counterparts in compliant schools. However, this luxury of having more time to develop teachers could still be a risky proposition in the minds of principals in compliant schools, potentially rife with pitfalls. As one principal of a compliant building who made a habit of investing in the potential of neophyte teachers explained,

I can think of one that I hired in particular and I stuck with her for three years, and I suppose I stuck with her because I believed she was the right kind of person. And that didn't change. She was the right kind of person, but she not only didn't have the skills, she wasn't really willing to work at it.

Another principal of a compliant school pointed out the additional hazards of sticking with a non-tenured teacher too long in terms of the message it sends to both internal and external parties saying, “*The longer you stick with a person the harder it is public relations wise. Especially if it's a classroom teacher and that person gets let go after their third year for example. The parents might say, 'Well, gee if she was so bad, why did you keep her on?'*”

Removal of Ineffective Non-Tenured Teachers in Non-Compliant Schools

Principals of non-compliant schools differed from their counterparts in compliant schools regarding how long they would grant a non-tenured teacher employment if they were dissatisfied with their performance. Generally speaking, principals of non-compliant schools were less patient with underperforming teachers and were more likely to dismiss them before they achieved tenure than principals of compliant schools. It may have been the case that principals in schools that had yet to achieve compliance felt they could not afford to be patient with

teachers given the pressure to attain AYP on annual standardized tests. In their minds, principals of non-compliant buildings may have reasoned that even a single ineffective teacher might immediately affect their ability to achieve AYP and thus trigger real sanctions. And, because the sanctions attached to the failure to achieve AYP were tangible and the failure to achieve compliance with the Teacher Quality provision was not, principals of non-compliant schools were likely to terminate ineffective “highly qualified” teachers even if they faced significant hurdles in recruiting a replacement.

Such actions are in keeping with the manner in which Cyert and March’s firm emphasizes short-term reaction over long-term feedback. In short, principals in non-compliant schools cared little about whether or not they were in compliance with the Teacher Quality provision if they felt that compliance did not produce desired outcomes with respect to the attainment of AYP. However, a situation in which compliance with the Teacher Quality provision had been attained, but the realization of the goal of attaining AYP had been diminished in the process was untenable.

Principals of non-compliant schools reported that in their first year of employment non-tenured teachers could expect a great deal of support from both themselves and fellow mentor teachers. In all non-compliant schools in this study, teachers were observed by the principal and other staff members often and provided one-on-one follow-up conferences in which they were provided feedback of their performance and given recommendations as to how best improve their practice. However, because this nurturing had been provided, neophyte teachers were also held accountable with regard to how their students achieved on standardized tests given in the spring. If their students did not do well, non-tenured teachers were generally not asked back the following year. This, in stark contrast to principals of compliant schools who all said they would

not terminate a teacher after one year of employment. As one principal of a non-compliant school said explaining their thought process,

When you give all the information to that staff member and you tell them, 'Look, these are the things that I have seen.' You go again and you don't see improvement there you know... and you know they have mentors... we have mentors. I also talk with the mentor and the Reading specialist to support them. And, with all the support there's still nothing? I do not have the luxury to continue to have someone like that. So, I just tell them, 'I'm sorry, but I can't consider you for next year.'

Had they not been under the threat of sanctions regarding student achievement on standardized tests, each of the principals of non-compliant schools said they would have given some of the non-tenured teachers they had let go after a year or two more time to improve. While they felt conflicted at having to terminate non-tenured teachers without providing them a reasonable amount of time to meet expectations, they generally felt that the need to make AYP effectively tied their hands. One principal of a non-compliant school, outlining the moral dilemma she encountered responding to pressure from several external threats and subsequently feeling compelled to dismiss teachers who may not have performed up to expectations immediately, but held potential down the road said, *"The human side always hurts. But if I'm going to be letting the human side overcome me, I'm not doing my job. Then I'm going to be a very ineffective principal."*

Summary of Decisions Made and Strategies Employed by Principals

Principals of compliant and non-compliant schools invoked a number of actions for the purpose of both attaining and remaining in compliance with the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB. These actions included using professional development, developing partnerships with local universities, encouraging teachers to attain "highly qualified" status via online programs, rewarding most-valued teachers, maximizing the effectiveness of hiring practices, including

others in hiring/retention decisions, working around the mandate while stilling keeping within the letter of the law, encouraging ineffective tenured teachers to consider retirement or exit the school through coercion and dismissing or refusing to grant tenure to non-tenured teachers.

Professional development and university partnerships were used as a means to achieve compliance for principals in non-compliant schools who had teachers who were on the verge of attaining “highly qualified” status. Principals in non-compliant schools also encouraged their teachers to take online courses regardless of their rigor or pedagogical relevance as a quick fix solution to the problem of attaining compliance. Any additional professional development funding in such schools, located in districts with average to high levels of poverty among their students, was used for the express purpose of increasing scores on standardized tests. As a result of limited professional development funding, principals of non-compliant schools also encouraged their teachers to gain “highly qualified” status by taking online courses at institutions that provided the quickest route to certification.

On the contrary, principals of compliant schools were able to use funds appropriated by the district for professional development that focused on student outcomes, not only on standardized tests, but on disciplines not tested and not included in AYP such as writing. Typically, principals of compliant schools were located in districts that had more funding for professional development overall.

In both compliant and non-compliant schools, principals rewarded their most-valued teachers with side-payments as a means by which they might increase retention and decrease the likelihood of their best staff members migrating elsewhere when they were inevitably enticed by a promising job offer. The vast majority of side-payments in both compliant and non-compliant

schools consisted of small tokens of appreciation such as a nominal gift card, or recognition by the administration of a job well done.

In the same vein, principals also failed to provide side-payments to employees they did not value, hoping perhaps to send the message that such staff members were not held in high esteem by the administration.

Principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools, aware of the requirements of the Teacher Quality provision, invested in improving their interview techniques so that they might become better equipped to recognize teacher candidates who would not only be excellent teachers, but would also be a good fit for their staffs. Principals in both compliant and non-compliant schools also included a select number of teachers as well as fellow administrators in the hiring process so that they might be exposed to other perspectives they had not considered. Principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools considered the hiring process as key in not only gaining “highly qualified” status for their teachers, but more importantly in maintaining compliance. Principals largely wished to avoid making bad hires as they would then be forced to dismiss the teacher in question and risk losing compliance until a suitable replacement could be found. And while locating a “highly qualified” replacement in compliant schools was typically not a problem, in non-complaint schools locating a successor to a terminated teacher could be extremely difficult, especially in high-need areas such as Science, Mathematics, Bi-lingual Education and Special Education.

In several instances, principals of compliant and non-compliant schools worked around the Teacher Quality provision, loosely interpreting its mandates as far as possible without actually failing to adhere to it in a legal sense. Principals of compliant schools hired part-time teachers and let them teach for the maximum number of minutes allowed under the law before their

employment would be counted against their compliance percentage, as an example. Other principals renamed classes so that specific endorsements, required under the law, were no longer necessary. In non-compliant schools, principals staffed their classrooms with substitute teachers who were uncertified rather than hire “highly qualified” candidates who failed to impress them during the interview process. In each case, such maneuvers made by principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools were made with the tacit approval of their immediate superiors at the district level.

Principals of non-compliant schools did what they could to remove tenured teachers from their buildings. In each of the non-compliant schools however, no principal even tried to dismiss a tenured teacher outright using available formal processes. Instead, they would attempt to make conditions uncomfortable so that the teacher in question would migrate elsewhere. If specific teachers were eligible for retirement, principals might subtly encourage them to do so.

In ridding themselves of teachers they felt were ineffective, principals of non-compliant schools thought that they were making progress toward fulfilling the Teacher Quality provision. That is, these principals felt that if they were able to encourage underperforming teachers to leave they could hire a replacement that would, at the very least, be a modest improvement. In turn, the ensuing improvement in teaching quality would perhaps increase test scores and the likelihood that AYP would be increased. And, once AYP was achieved, more “highly qualified” individuals would be attracted to their schools, increasing the pool of excellent teachers available to them.

Principals of compliant schools did much the same as their non-compliant counterparts, albeit on a much more infrequent basis. For the most part, these principals were satisfied with their staff members who had seen to it that AYP had been maintained on a perennial basis.

In both compliant and non-compliant schools, principals were very discriminating regarding the issue of who was granted tenure. In all schools surveyed, teachers who had been employed for four consecutive years were granted tenure. Before achieving tenure, they could be terminated at any time. However, when this was necessary it was typically done at the conclusion of the school year, with some exceptions. Under less pressure to achieve AYP and compliance with the Teacher Quality provision, principals of compliant schools were far more likely to give a neophyte teacher several years to develop, while principals of non-compliant buildings occasionally dismissed teachers in the middle of their first year or at its conclusion.

Chapter V

Interpretations, Conclusions and Implications

In authoring the NCLB Act of 2001, legislators were attempting to level the playing field for students in schools with high rates of poverty who chronically failed to meet state prescribed standards on annual tests. In order for improvement to occur in such schools, legislators reasoned that teachers in every classroom should have obtained a college degree, have been fully licensed, and have demonstrated competency in the subjects they were assigned to teach. Legislators felt it necessary to invoke the aforementioned requirements as a bounty of research indicated that low-income, underperforming students were often taught by the least credentialed teachers who typically either exited the profession within five years or moved to more desirable schools both within and outside their districts (Baber, 2007; Brownell et al., 2002; Druffin, 2006; Gewertz, 2002; NCES, 2007; Peske & Haycock, 2006; Samuels, 2005).

This study focused on how the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB was implemented by principals at the school level. I sought to understand how principals of schools that had achieved compliance with the Teacher Quality provision and those that had not, went about fulfilling the mandate and how they perceived their ability to successfully address the legislation.

From the literature several actions to be taken by principals in attempting to meet the mandate were identified. These actions included the use of professional development to obtain certification for teachers out of compliance, removing, recruiting, hiring and replacing teachers, retaining “highly qualified” teachers, invoking principal discretion in interpreting the mandate and simply waiting for changes in the legislation to occur. All of these strategies were used to some degree by principals. Additionally, factors influencing principal decision-making including the input of school-level bodies, teacher mobility, district policies regarding hiring

timelines and teacher compensation, federal funding of the mandate, union rules and overall workforce dynamics were identified. To some degree, all of these influencing factors shaped principal decision-making in all schools included in the study.

The Principal's Role in Improving Teacher Quality

The degree to which principals felt they could improve teacher quality in their schools was highly dependent upon the context in which they find themselves operating. In some cases where principals had a productive relationship with district officials, local College of Education officials, had reasonable levels of academic achievement, had longstanding tenure at the school, enjoyed a sufficient number of teacher applicants in all subject matter areas applying for openings and had the support of parents, such principals generally had a significant amount of discretion. In other cases, neophyte principals with little information regarding the web of relationships both inside and outside the school walls had a much more difficult time addressing the problem. In some cases principals were able to do little but follow district, state and federal policy mandates per the letter of the law. In the end, discretion and creativity was either enhanced or limited depending upon the above mentioned factors.

The Teacher Quality provision of NCLB may have served to both limit and enhance principals' ability to elevate the level of quality in their buildings. This may have been the case because the Teacher Quality provision not only affected how principals were forced to look at the problem of staffing their schools with who they thought were the best available instructors, but also mandated how they were to go about doing so. The policy itself changed the contextual factors that may have either supported or constrained principals as they attempted to make good decisions about teacher quality.

Role of AYP

Much has been learned about the efficacy of the Teacher Quality provision to increase the effectiveness of teachers both across the nation and specifically in schools and districts that have perennially underachieved on standardized tests. There were several unintended consequences as a result of the manner in which the NCLB Act and the Teacher Quality provision were constructed and forwarded to states and districts for implementation. The most prominent of these unintended consequences was that the law inadvertently perhaps, discouraged “highly qualified” teachers from seeking employment at underserved schools as a result of sanctions imposed upon them regarding AYP. Additionally, in the same vein those teachers employed at schools not making AYP were provided an incentive migrating elsewhere (Ingle & Rutledge, 2010; Sunderman & Kim, 2005). In linking AYP and teacher quality in the NCLB Act, lawmakers may have provided an incentive for the best of teachers to seek out positions in schools and districts that made AYP. Teachers likely engaged in this type of migration to avoid sanctions associated with a failure to make AYP, but there were other reasons as well. These reasons included generally higher rates of pay, higher achieving students with which to work, and well-maintained physical plants. In school after school, principals recalled numerous instances where they had lost their best teachers to other districts that were almost always higher achieving were able to more adequately compensate their employees and perennially achieved AYP.

At the heart of this dilemma is a chicken and the egg scenario. Should a school be asked to make AYP each year until it is able to attract and retain teachers of the highest quality or should they be allowed to assemble staffs that are “highly qualified” first and subsequently be held accountable for making AYP? As the NCLB law stands, the federal government has mandated

that schools must meet AYP regardless of whether or not they have the capacity in terms of adequate resources to recruit and retain the best of teachers. If they fail to attain AYP they then suffer sanctions that may likely diminish their ability to lure teachers from the university or other schools. Currently, in Illinois where this study was conducted, only one-third of all schools managed to achieve AYP with the other two-thirds failing to do so (ISBE, 2011). As a result, in Illinois, like many other states “highly qualified” teachers have an incentive to seek out schools that have made AYP before considering those that have not. And, as ever more schools suffer sanctions associated with a failure to make AYP, the problem of staffing schools with historically underserved students may likely to become more difficult.

If the goal of the Teacher Quality provision was to place “highly qualified” teachers at the head of all the nation’s classrooms, in some cases a reality emerged that ran counter to that goal. Specifically, the increased demand for teacher licensure along with increased accountability with respect to student achievement and the desire to teach at schools that perennially made AYP, may have discouraged teachers from seeking positions in classrooms with the very at-risk students the legislation was designed to benefit (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Lai Horng, 2009).

If teachers are to be motivated to teach at schools with populations that have been historically underserved, it only seems reasonable that they should be provided with incentives to do so. There are ways in which this might be accomplished. When the NCLB legislation is reauthorized, policymakers might want to establish long-term incentives for “highly qualified” teachers to seek out and retain positions in schools most in need of their services. One incentive might be to provide an additional stipend for working in hard to staff schools. However, there is no guarantee this would prove effective as research has demonstrated that monetary

considerations are not the primary motivating force of teachers seeking a new position (Bacolod, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Fowler, 2003; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2001; Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2003). Instead, teachers state that they value superior working conditions over compensation when they consider employment opportunities.

Lawmakers should be mindful of the factors that teachers appear to take into consideration when applying for a position such as the physical condition of schools, available technology, class sizes, order and predictability, and job security.

In order to address the factors that motivate teachers, the role of AYP and its effects on teacher supply and retention should also be considered as reauthorization of the legislation moves forward. In place of the current law, teachers and the schools in which they teach might perhaps be evaluated using longitudinal data from a variety of sources. One source could be value-added test scores over the course of a career. Another could be principal evaluations of teachers. Still another might be rudimentary measures such as attendance and scores achieved on entry level tests. Of course, the assembling of such data would have to be thoughtful, compiled in a manner that controlled for the myriad of variables that influence teacher and student performance. It may not, in the end be possible to control for the host of factors that influence teacher performance. However, if done with great care such a system might be a significant upgrade from the yes/no binary choice of AYP that labels teachers oftentimes precipitating their seeking shelter at the best of schools rather than where they are most needed.

Principals' Experience Informing Perception of the Problem

In many cases, as a result of years of experience in hiring and replacing teachers, principals were acutely aware of their relative ability to attract and retain teachers of high quality. They were able to accurately gauge the number and quality level of those teachers available to them

both on a short-term and a long-term basis. All principals understood that if they headed schools located in affluent districts that had achieved compliance they could always attract and retain more teachers than their counterparts at the helm of schools situated in districts with high levels of student poverty that were habitually out of compliance. This reality meant that patterns of response differed among those principals heading compliant schools and those of non-compliant schools. Principals of compliant schools typically held numerous advantages over their non-compliant counterparts. These advantages included, not having to be overly concerned about making AYP, having more financial resources to recruit new teachers, being able to attract stellar veteran teachers, buildings composed largely of veteran staff members to mentor and develop new teachers, a longer period of time in which to hire, and a substantially larger number of applicants in all subjects immediately available to replace departing staff.

All principals included in the study held the perception that the stated goal of the Teacher Quality provision, mandating that a “highly qualified” teacher be placed in every classroom nationwide was not entirely achievable. While this may have been the case, there is also evidence that the promotion of such a lofty goal by the federal government may be beneficial to students even if not achieved in its entirety (Betts, Rueben, & Danenberg, 2000; Nye, Konstantopoulos & Hedges, 2004; Suh & Fore, 2002). On the contrary, there is also evidence from this study, along with other studies, that suggest that the Teacher Quality provision may have actually diminished the level of teacher quality overall in the very schools the legislation sought to improve as a result of numerous unforeseen and unintended consequences (Garcia, 2005; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Roellke & Rice, 2008; Walsh, 2004).

Cyert and March (1963) contend that the manner in which organizations interpret problems is predictive of the responses they subsequently develop to address them, responding to

disturbances from the external environment, practicing organizational slack, rewarding its most valued employees through the use of side-payments, and engaging in problemistic search while concurrently adhering to standard operating procedures.

It is important to understand how Cyert and March's firm responds to disturbances emanating from the external environment. In so doing, we might be able to more clearly interpret how and why principals responded to the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB in the ways they did. Subsequently, we may interpret how their actions affected implementation and to what degree their actions ultimately improved teacher quality in their schools.

Interpretation of Findings

In general, principals in compliant schools felt they had few problems in attracting and retaining teachers of high quality. However, these principals also voiced the complaint that the legislation, while providing standards for teacher candidates, was too rigid as it did not allow them to retain or hire individuals they felt were exceptional because they may have lacked subject-specific certification.

Principals of non-compliant buildings, in many cases experienced a great deal of difficulty in attracting and particularly in retaining "highly qualified" teachers in some subject areas, specifically Math, Science, Bi-Lingual Education and Special Education. Principals in these schools felt they were at a disadvantage in attracting and retaining the best of teachers because they had precious little to offer prospective candidates with respect to compensation packages, high-achieving students with which to work or state of the art technology and physical plants. These principals were largely resigned to the idea that the teachers they most coveted, should they be fortunate enough to hire them, would migrate to other schools in other districts when opportunities became available to them.

Principals' Perceptions as a Precursor to Actions Taken

The perceptions of principals of compliant and non-compliant schools regarding their ability to successfully meet the Teacher Quality provision mandate greatly influenced the actions they took regarding the staffing of their buildings. As an example, principals in compliant schools were less willing to grant tenure after four years to a teacher they felt was no better than average. Principals of compliant buildings had the luxury of doing so because, unlike their counterparts in non-compliant schools they typically had both a long line of experienced and neophyte teachers waiting to fill any opening that became available. On the contrary, principals in non-compliant buildings oftentimes granted tenure to teachers they felt were less than stellar, in large part because they believed they would have difficulty in attracting and retaining another individual of equal or greater quality who had attained “highly qualified” status. In essence, in many cases principals in non-compliant schools felt they had to take what they could get.

Implications of Hiring and Retention Patterns In Compliant and Non-Compliant Schools

There are numerous implications that might be associated with such hiring and retention patterns in compliant and non-compliant schools. As an example, the ability of principals of compliant schools to deny tenure to teachers allowed them more flexibility regarding staffing. While principals of non-compliant schools also had the ability to deny tenure, they typically did not have the luxury of hiring a “highly qualified” replacement immediately. As a result, a cumulative effect whereby compliant schools not only had more teachers from which to choose when hiring, but also had a great many more tenured teachers on staff that were in possession of qualities principals said they coveted such as an ability to work with children, class management skills, tenacity and resiliency. This is important to note in that research suggests that the best of teachers, possessing qualities coveted by principals have achieved tenure, and have many years

of experience at one school (Chingos & Peterson, 2011; Jacob & Walsh, 2022; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). In effect, the “highly qualified” label achieved by teachers entering the profession may have been indicative of some level of quality, however it did not necessarily provide principals with the assurance that such teachers were on a par with their more experienced counterparts who had earned tenure in schools where the bar regarding quality may have been significantly higher in the eyes of principals. As a result, the most “highly qualified” teachers remained in the highest achieving schools, ensuring that, even with the Teacher Quality provision in place, the best of teachers remained unevenly distributed.

Implications Around the Use of Principals’ Discretion in Interpreting the Mandate

Principals in both compliant and non-compliant schools sometimes loosely interpreted the Teacher Quality provision in ways that would most easily facilitate compliance. As an example, some principals of non-compliant schools, would report that they could not find “highly qualified” applicants for positions when in fact there were numerous candidates available. This was done so that they could hire a candidate they coveted who lacked proper certification on a provisional basis. Some principals of compliant schools changed the name of classes so that specific endorsements would not be required of teachers standing in front of them. These principals reported that such actions were commonly undertaken with the tacit approval, but never the official endorsement of districts who then reported data on teacher quality to the state, which in turn forwarded the information to the federal government. What this meant was that principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools were likely to interpret the Teacher Quality provision in a manner that would allow them to most easily meet the mandate. However, this practice may have bolstered the level of teacher quality in compliant schools more so than in non-compliant buildings. This was largely due to principals of compliant buildings loosely

interpreting the law so they could hire veteran teachers, whose work they knew well who lacked some form of certification, while principals of non-compliant buildings were typically attempting to hire unproven, neophyte teachers from the university with no experience who lacked certification in a high-need area. As a result, loose interpretation of the mandate by principals of both compliant and non-compliant schools may have served to increase the level of teacher quality in compliant schools and to perhaps decrease the level of quality in their non-compliant counterparts.

Unintended Consequences of the Legislation

When the NCLB legislation containing the Teacher Quality provision was enacted in 2002, much was known regarding the problem of traditionally underserved students in the nation's schools not having access to "highly qualified" teachers. Numerous studies pointed to existing inequalities in which students in schools with high rates of poverty were disproportionately exposed to teachers lacking subject-specific certification (Boe et al., 1996; Darling-Hammond, 2000a; Ingersoll, 1999; Ingersoll, 2001a; Ingersoll, 2001b; Shen, 1997). Since that time much has been learned regarding what constitutes quality. Much has also been learned about the efficacy of the Teacher Quality provision to increase the effectiveness of teachers both across the nation and specifically in schools and districts that have perennially underachieved on standardized tests. There were several unintended consequences as a result of the manner in which the NCLB Act and the Teacher Quality provision were constructed and forwarded to states and districts for implementation. These unintended consequences included discouraging "highly qualified" teachers from seeking employment at underserved schools as a result of sanctions imposed upon schools regarding AYP, the exclusion from schools of veteran teachers who chose to retire rather than obtain additional certification, and the promotion of creative

interpretation of the law itself by principals and district officials in which those charged with implementation found means to get around the spirit of the law while technically adhering to its letter.

Restrictions placed on principals, particularly in compliant buildings, may have served to prevent principals from hiring or continuing to employ teachers they greatly valued who may have lacked subject specific certification. As a result of the legislation, principals were compelled to hire only those with full licensure if they were available. Consequently, many veteran teachers who some principals would like to have hired in specific subjects were ineligible for employment as a result of their having been suddenly labeled as being out of compliance, perhaps despite years of experience and consistently stellar performance.

An additional unintended consequence of the mandate may have been that it invited principals to respond in any manner that was legal regardless of the implications for improving the quality of instruction in the nation's classrooms. This, coupled with the fact that full compliance was to have been achieved by 2006, only four years after the advent of NCLB and the Teacher Quality provision, left principals scrambling to fulfill the dictates of the law, perhaps inviting mischief as to how they determined "highly qualified" status and how they went about achieving compliance. In effect, some principals may have merely been able to address compliance over actual quality. As an example, principals of non-compliant schools reported that much of the professional development and coursework used for the purpose of getting teachers certified was of poor quality. Still, principals said that they encouraged their teachers to engage in such activities as they provided the most expedient path to certification.

The reality that creative interpretation of the tenets of the Teacher Quality provision would occur might have seemed inevitable given the absolutism of the policy. As such, this likelihood

could perhaps have been anticipated by its authors. Like Cyert and March's firm, some principals may have chosen to rely upon previously invoked responses to similar problems, perhaps inhibiting the reform sought by the authors of the mandate.

The Facilitation of Modest Improvement

Whether or not the aforementioned consequences were in fact, anticipated by policymakers remains unknown. It may have been the case that policymakers, like Cyert and March's firm, chose to address short-term concerns they considered profound, that is, elevating the quality of the nation's teaching force without perhaps accounting for every possible consequence. It remains possible that education policymakers at the federal level did not attach concrete sanctions to the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB because they understood, given widely documented realities regarding teacher supply and demand particularly in high-need areas, that the mandate may not have been achievable in its entirety (Brownell et al., 2002). While this notion is speculative, it would go a long way toward explaining the perception held by all principals included in the study that absolute compliance in all schools at all times was not realistic. Such perceptions were important in that they served as a precursor for their actions.

It remains possible that legislators hoped to achieve what they could in terms of elevating teacher quality by controlling what they could on the front end of the teacher quality equation. Specifically, authors of the legislation may have sought to limit the numbers and types of teachers as they entered the profession by more tightly regulating licensure and, as a result placing limits on administrators as to who they could hire. And, while this may not have produced the transformational reform the authors of the legislation touted when the law was enacted in 2002, it resembled moderately positive outcomes of other government reforms such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and health care reform (Sowell, 1984; Simbeck, 2010) in that some

incremental progress in addressing problems may have been achieved over time. The federal government, like Cyert and March's firm, may have sought approximate solutions near where they had been found previously. This strategy, if it was actually undertaken by federal policymakers was met by principals likewise locating approximate solutions near where they had been located at a previous time. In this way, the actions of Cyert and March's firm were invoked in both the forwarding of the policy on the one hand at the federal level and in its implementation by principals and their districts on the other hand at the local level. In the end, all principals held the perception that the mandate had, in a general sense, elevated the overall quality of the teaching force in the nation's schools, individual circumstances in their own buildings notwithstanding.

An Absolutist Policy and Implications for Principal Response

Since 2002 when the Teacher Quality provision was first introduced to the present day, the mandate has evolved significantly (Birman et. al., 2009). It is likely that as a result of this evolution, principals' responses may have changed as well. In effect, principals' perceptions may have been altered as the mandate was repeatedly amended. In response to the goal posts being moved ever closer, making "highly qualified" status easier to achieve, principals may have recalibrated the threat level associated with achieving compliance. As outlined earlier, the federal government may have opted to amend the policy once it was able to gauge what level of compliance might reasonably be expected. As an example, policymakers at the federal level may have created an absolutist policy demanding complete compliance by 2006 so that they could then; armed with data regarding levels of compliance, more accurately understand what modicum of success they could accept as sufficient progress in attempting to improve the level of quality among the nation's teaching workforce. The numerous changes made to the Teacher

Quality provision over its lifespan attest to this possibility. As an example, under the initial version of the mandate, Science teachers were required to have certification in specific areas such as Chemistry, Earth Science, Biology, Physics etc. When it became apparent that there was nowhere near the number of certified teachers available in the specific Science disciplines, the law was amended so that a “broad field” Science endorsement would be sufficient (USDE, 2004b). In 2004, rural districts and their schools were given an additional year to meet the mandate when it became obvious that the vast majority of them would still be out of compliance by the 2006 deadline (Eppley, 2009). In 2005, when it became apparent that 80% of states would be unable to meet the mandate, they too were given additional time (Keller, 2005). In adding such amendments to the legislation, policymakers were perennially reestablishing a baseline for how success in improving the level of quality of the nation’s teachers would be defined.

Principals’ Priorities and Limited Capacity

The types of principal responses to the Teacher Quality provision and also the levels of responses may also have been influenced by the amount of time administrators had left after dealing with other issues they felt were more pressing. Chief among these issues was the need to make AYP. And, while it has been demonstrated that the path to achieving AYP might best be facilitated by staffing a school with “highly qualified” teachers (Colias, Pajak & Rigden, 2000; Sanders & Horn, 1994; Sanders, Saxton & Horn, 1997; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997), principals, in several cases may have felt that they did not have enough time to recruit and retain “highly qualified” teachers and wait several years until they achieved proficiency, at which point they could then be expected to elevate test scores and thus achieve AYP. Additionally, principals in some schools may have believed that they could not keep a high quality staff intact

over several years, given teacher mobility rates in some buildings (Ingersoll, 2011; NCES, 2007). So, some principals, like leaders of Cyert and March's firm may have opted not to focus on long-term ambiguous consequences regarding meeting the Teacher Quality mandate, and instead chose to emphasize short-run feedback by concentrating their efforts on the attainment of AYP, which did have clear sanctions attached.

Adjustments Made by Principals in Response to Adjustments Made in the Mandate

Principals perhaps took note of what occurred regarding the Teacher Quality provision and may have adjusted their strategies for achieving or maintaining compliance accordingly. Thus, just as Cyert and March's firm constantly responds to differing levels of threat from the external environment, principals in dealing with the mandate constantly gauged external threat levels and either increased or decreased their focus on the issue of teacher quality depending upon how they perceived the severity of the threat.

Additionally, some principals may have unwittingly influenced policy, causing the federal government to lower expectations as a result of their inability to fully comply with the mandate. This is borne out upon review of the lifespan of the legislation, and seeing that standards regarding teacher quality were never made more rigorous, but rather, at several key junctures were relaxed (USDE, 2009a). As Lipsky (1980) points out via the phenomenon of street-level bureaucracy, those charged with implementing policy may actually, over time construct policy themselves through their actions or inaction. In responding to the Teacher Quality provision in various manners, with varying degrees of success, principals in schools across the nation through the aggregate of their actions in meeting or failing to meet the mandate may have intentionally or unintentionally changed its tenets.

Issues to be Addressed by Policymakers

If it was the case that the Teacher Quality provision served to both improve and diminish the quality of teachers in specific schools at specific times, as reported by principals charged with its implementation, then further research is need to determine the overall efficacy of the mandate. If, at some point, it may be demonstrated that the mandate has done more harm than good, or at best has proven ineffective in promoting teacher quality, such a finding must be addressed by policymakers who may then amend the provision, strike it from the NCLB Act or replace it with a model better informed by facts on the ground (Choi, 2010).

While principals' perceptions regarding the efficacy of the mandate are subjective, such perceptions have implications with respect to the importance placed on addressing its dictates by those implementing policy in schools across the nation. If it was the perception of principals that the law served no real purpose or that it was of little significance, the rigor with which it was implemented likely suffered.

Contribution of the Study

The manner in which organizations typically respond to external policy mandates is well-documented. There are examples of both resistance (Bohte, 2001; Chubb & Moe, 1990) and compliance (Dierks et. al, 2001) when change is mandated. As a result of this study, future researchers will be informed by a perspective which begins with the premise that some federal policy interventions are authored in absolutist language that makes the assumption that best-case scenarios are realistic and ultimately possible.

At the same time, it may be the case that such policies are authored so as to never truly expect the best-case scenario outlined in its tenets to ever be fully realized. What the policy portends to be and what it actually is may be two divergent matters. Differentiating between what a policy is

and what it portends to be may be similar in nature to determining the existence of a black hole in the universe. That is, one cannot see a black hole but rather its existence is known because of the activity observed going on around it. What is seen around the Teacher Quality provision is the fact that no clear sanctions have been prescribed should schools fail to meet its mandate. As the Teacher Quality provision, along with the entire NCLB legislation heads toward reauthorization, this study, and others in the same vein, may inform policymakers of the likely responses and implementation as well as the unintended consequences inherent with the mandate as it currently stands.

Effectiveness of the Teacher Quality Provision

It would be difficult to gauge whether or not the Teacher Quality provision has improved the level of quality among teachers across the country. However, there are some assumptions that can be made regarding the effectiveness of the mandate. It would seem a fair assumption, for example, to say that the demand that teachers in middle school grades and high schools gain endorsements in specific subject areas to maintain their positions after passage of the law served to promote more content area knowledge and inherently improved student achievement to some degree. Likewise, it would also be a fair assumption to say that the worst of schools that are routinely staffed by neophyte teachers from the university have benefitted in that their classrooms must now be headed by individuals who, at the very least have had to jump through more hurdles to gain employment than their predecessors prior to the law's passage. These would seem to be, on the surface level, two known benefits of the Teacher Quality provision.

However, if we might visualize for a moment a balance scale on which the positive aspects gained by the Teacher Quality provision are placed on the left hand side with drawbacks being placed on the right hand side an argument could be made that costs have slightly outweighed any

benefits gained by the legislation. And, the costs have been numerous. As an example, as a result of the Teacher Quality provision, many excellent teachers may have chosen to retire earlier than they might have otherwise done rather than go back to school to gain an endorsement in a subject they had, in some instances been teaching for decades. Additionally, the Teacher Quality provision may also have inadvertently provided a negative incentive for the best of teachers to migrate to high-achieving schools that routinely achieve AYP. In many respects the best of teachers may have become even more motivated to migrate to high-achieving, affluent districts after the passage of the mandate than they had been prior to its implementation due to sanctions associated with failure to make AYP. Furthermore, in many cases, as a result of the mandate, some principals may have been unable to hire teachers they believed would be a good fit for their schools. In describing what would be a good fit, principals never mentioned certification, but rather such intangibles as an inherent ability to work with children, tenacity, loyalty, and ease in becoming part of an established school culture. If the Teacher Quality provision was designed to be a gatekeeping mechanism, in some cases it may have served its function all too well, indiscriminately limiting the availability of teaching positions for effective and ineffective teachers alike.

Local Variation in Policy Implementation

This study demonstrated that there was at least some variation in the manner in which the Teacher Quality provision was implemented across twelve suburban Chicago schools. And, while a sample size of twelve is insufficient to make overly broad claims about the effectiveness of the mandate, there was evidence from the interviews that dovetailed with what was predicted in the relevant literature regarding how principals would respond. In many cases, response was solely focused on simply complying with the policy in any way possible with little thought to

actually improving teacher quality. As pointed out previously, some principals felt that the mandate of the Teacher Quality provision actually decreased the level of teacher quality in their buildings. Still, they did all they could to meet the mandate.

Principals, along with district personnel, as street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1980) have a sizeable amount of influence regarding the manner in which policy is implemented. To some degree, principals and their districts have some control over how closely recommended guidelines within the policy are adhered to, the sense of urgency given to the policy and overall strategy for meeting the mandate. As such, there is bound to be variation in the way in which districts and schools respond to mandates such as the Teacher Quality provision. There are likely to be schools and districts more effective at addressing policy mandates than others. However, those principals who were seemingly more effective at meeting the mandate than others were likely to have started with more capacity to not only address the Teacher Quality provision, but to address all problems as well.

If federal education policy is to be more effective, it may prove beneficial for policymakers to consider an approach to reform that is both more longitudinal and focused in scope. By longitudinal, I refer to an approach whereby struggling schools might be given more time and resources to meet prescribed standards. By focused I refer to the notion that one aspect of NCLB be met at a time. Demanding that schools staff each and every classroom with a “highly qualified” teacher while concurrently telling them that AYP must be made on an annual basis may facilitate a great many schools to be labeled as “failing.” And, it seems likely that “highly qualified” teachers will continue to avoid schools that have not made AYP (Boyd et. al., 2009; Fuhrman, 1994; Ingersoll, 1999; O’Day & Smith, 1993; SCTQ, 2004a, Smith & O’Day, 1991). In Illinois, that is two-thirds of all schools. When two-thirds of schools in a state are under the

threat of sanctions as a result of the NCLB Act, it would seem likely that teachers in the state will seek to migrate to greener pastures in the most high-achieving and typically the most affluent schools and districts as a matter of self-preservation. Such a reality, it would seem, may not bode well with regard to elevating levels of teaching and student achievement in our nation's schools.

Future Research

This study demonstrated that principals respond to mandates from their external environments in different ways. Manners of response were generally influenced by principals' perceptions and their capacity to address the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB. Other factors, included financing available to help solve the problem, the number of "highly qualified" teachers available in the workforce who would consider working in their schools, as well as student poverty levels and impediments such as competing policy goals within the NCLB legislation.

The staffing of all schools with "highly qualified" teachers was far easier to achieve in some schools than in others. This was clearly predicted in the literature (Berry, Rasberry & Williams, 2005; Druffin, 2006; Gewertz, 2002; Harris & Ray, 2003; Ingersoll, 1999; Moore-Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Peske & Haycock, 2006; Shen, 1997; Walsh, 2001) and illustrated in this study. If this, in fact, is the case, future research might focus on how the playing field could somehow be leveled so that teacher candidates would consider working and remaining at hard to staff schools. Currently, many teachers have similar career goals. These goals consist largely of attaining a tenured teaching position at a school with the highest overall compensation package, an aesthetically pleasing physical plant with an abundance of resources populated by students who perennially make AYP targets (Ingersoll, 1999; Ingersoll, 2001b; Moore-Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Unfortunately, schools that are successful enough to meet all these goals are

in the minority. Understanding how this chasm between what the majority of teachers say they want and what current policy makes available to them might then be bridged and could subsequently prove essential in addressing how “highly qualified” teachers might be induced to seek out and remain in all schools.

Previous research has presented few, if any, solutions to this dilemma. As an example, some research suggests that in most cases, if districts hope to lure the best of teachers to the worst of schools they would have to pay them 50% more than their current salary (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2001). Additionally, in some instances monetary inducements alone would not be enough to persuade the best of teachers to work in the worst of schools. In South Carolina as an example, at the dawn of NCLB and the Teacher Quality provision, the state offered teachers an \$18,000 bonus to relocate to challenging schools. However, the program managed to attract only 20% of the workforce necessary to fill the positions (SCTQ, 2003). Similarly, in Massachusetts, in the early stages of NCLB and the Teacher Quality provision a similar bonus of \$20,000 failed to attract anywhere near the number of teachers necessary to staff the worst of schools (Fowler, 2003). Such figures suggest that an issue as complex as teacher quality cannot be significantly addressed with simple solutions.

If it is already known with some certainty that monetary inducements alone will not attract the best of teachers to the nation’s most challenging schools, research should seek to uncover what types of inducements and what conditions, if any, might compel “highly qualified” teachers to seek out and remain in schools that most need their expertise. If such inducements are demonstrated not to facilitate the improvement of overall teacher quality in hard to staff schools, this reality needs to be outlined as well. It is important that this issue be investigated as many of the current reforms and initiatives of the recent past forwarded by both researchers and

policymakers have involved merely paying teachers more in hard to staff buildings (Odden & Wallace, 2004). This trend has now evolved into a drive by many states and districts, with encouragement from the federal government to create incentives for teachers to staff the most challenging of schools by offering “merit pay” (Smarick, 2011). In districts where merit pay is either current policy, or is being considered, teachers are typically given bonuses for accepting positions in the most challenging of schools and may also be given bonuses at the conclusion of each school year. Such bonuses would be forwarded to teachers in such schools if their students meet benchmarks as determined by the previously discussed value-added methodology applied to student achievement on standardized tests, which in many ways has been shown to be dubious in determining achievement (Podgursky & Springer, 2007).

If merit pay is to be forwarded by policymakers as the means by which “highly qualified” teachers will be motivated to seek out and retain positions in schools that are difficult for principals to staff, the relative short and long term benefits of simply throwing money at the problem should first be ameliorated by researchers and forwarded to policymakers.

Longitudinal studies may also focus on the influence the Teacher Quality provision or similar mandates have had on the number and types of credentials obtained by prospective teachers in pre-service. Such studies might provide an insight into whether or not pre-service teachers have become more motivated to obtain endorsements and other credentials, thus perhaps raising levels of content knowledge and implicitly overall quality. There is some evidence that indicates that this may be the case (Kersten, 2008). Additionally, research involving whether or not the attainment of credentials has a positive effect on teacher quality and student outcomes might prove useful in determining the degree to which the mandate’s assumptions are well-founded.

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Appendix A

Principal Interview Protocol

Opening Questions

1. What does the Teacher Quality provision of the No Child Left Behind Act mean for you and your staff?
2. In your opinion what do you believe federal authorities are attempting to achieve via the Teacher Quality provision of the No Child Left Behind Act?
3. What does the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB ask of you as a principal?
4. What specific goals have you set for your school?
5. How does your level of non-compliance affect your ability to meet the goals you've set for your school?
6. How has the percentage of non-compliance fluctuated in your building?
7. What factors do you believe contributed to these fluctuations?
8. How have these factors contributed to the fluctuations?

Principal Choices/Decision-Making

1. What strategies did you employ to facilitate gaining compliance with the Teacher Quality provision?
2. Of the choices you made how many were made with the sole purpose of complying with the Teacher Quality mandate?
3. In characterizing the choices you made, which if any, were made with an eye toward long-term improvement with respect to teaching and learning in your building?

4. Were there choices you made regarding teacher quality that served the dual functions of complying with the law and improving the quality of teaching in your building?
5. What teacher qualities are most coveted by you as a principal?
6. To what degree are these qualities present or are capable of being developed in your teachers?
7. Were there choices you were forced to make that you feel diminished the level of quality among teachers in your building?
8. Why did you make the choices you did as opposed to pursuing other options?

Search

1. Which of the following internal/external influences can you point to as having affected the decisions you made regarding fulfillment of the Teacher Quality provision?
 - a. Previous experience in this school
 - b. Previous experience in a different school
 - c. Readings on the subject
 - d. Individuals within the school
 - e. Individuals outside the school

Internal

1. In addressing the problem of compliance with the Teacher Quality provision of NCLB, where did the idea to either wait, ramp up staff development, have teachers test out etc. emanate from?

External

2. Of the following to whom do you look for guidance as you attempt to address the Teacher Quality mandate?
 - a. Principals at schools who have reached compliance
 - b. Fellow administrators in your building
 - c. Teachers and other staff in your building
 - d. Area Instructional Officer
 - e. State Board of Education
 - f. The District Central Office
 - g. Federal Government
3. Is there a specific model of success in dealing with mandated change that you would seek to replicate?

Previous Response to Change

1. How did you address the call under NCLB that your students make adequate yearly progress?
2. How did you achieve racial compliance amongst your staff?
3. How have you gotten/kept your school off probationary status?

Slack

1. What resources (financial, human, community) are available to aid you in attracting, developing and retaining quality teachers?

2. To what degree do you feel the resources available to you in addressing the mandate for teacher quality are adequate?
3. In your view, what do you have to offer “highly qualified” teachers that other schools do not?

Organizational Goals

1. What are your primary goals, in order of importance with respect to the Teacher Quality Provision of the NCLB Act?
2. How do the goals regarding the Teacher Quality provision interact with your overall goals for the school?
 - a. Do they mesh?
 - b. Are they at odds?
 - c. Does neither impact the other?
3. What are you trying to achieve in making the decisions you’ve made?

SOPs and Decision Rules/ Internal Organizational Environment

1. What is the percentage of fully tenured teachers on your staff? In your view, is the degree of tenured teachers in your building a help or hindrance as you strive to fulfill the mandates of the Teacher Quality provision?
2. Is your staff in racial compliance? To what degree do you feel racial requirements affect your ability to meet the Teacher Quality mandate?
3. How does your relationship with your Local School Council limit/enhance your ability to improve teacher quality in your school?

4. Of what benefit is your relationship with your teachers and fellow administrators in meeting the demands of the Teacher Quality provision?
5. How would you characterize your Parent/Teacher organization's ability to assist your recruitment and retaining of "highly qualified" teachers?
6. Going back to the year 2002 when NCLB was in its infancy, what is the rate of turnover among your teachers?
7. Do you find this an acceptable level of turnover?
8. If you do not find this level of turnover acceptable, what can be done to diminish it?
9. What actions/inaction by your teachers has assisted/impeded your ability to staff your building with only "highly qualified" teachers?
10. What percentage of teachers was inherited from a previous administration?

External Environment

1. To what extent do factors outside your school limit/enhance your ability to address the Teacher Quality Provision of the NCLB Act?
2. Are there competing policy issues in the NCLB legislation?
 - a. Does the demand for Adequate Yearly Progress in your school environment decrease your ability to attract and retain "highly qualified" teachers?
3. To what degree is the teachers union a help/hindrance regarding your ability to meet the Teacher Quality provision mandate of NCLB?
4. How do funding issues put your school at an advantage/disadvantage with regard to staffing your school exclusively with "highly qualified" teachers?
 - a. Have budget delays affected your hiring decisions?

- b. To what degree do you feel that you suffer a disadvantage compared with to schools located in more affluent areas of the city and state as a result of Central Office hiring policies?
- 5. In your opinion is there an adequate supply of “highly qualified” teachers who actively seek a position at your school?
- 6. How do Central Office policies assist/impede you in hiring “highly qualified” teachers?

Closing Questions

- 1. What impact will the Teacher Quality provision have on the principalship in urban high schools?
- 2. To what degree do you believe the Teacher Quality provision will increase/decrease educational opportunities for students in urban high schools?
- 3. What factors inside or outside your school, that I have not addressed have affected how you have responded to the Teacher Quality provision?

Appendix B

1. Principal interviews – lasting between 60-90 minutes
2. School report cards containing the following school characteristics:
 - a. Student mobility
 - b. Drop-out rate
 - c. Average class size
 - d. Average daily attendance
 - e. Total school enrollment
 - f. % of minority students
 - g. % of low-income students
 - h. Average standardized test scores
 - i. Average state test scores
 - j. % of parental contact
3. The percentage of teachers on staff who are not “highly qualified” for each year the teacher quality provision of the NCLB Act has been in existence. Specifically, I refer to the academic years 2002-2008.
4. The percentage of teachers on staff who are operating on provisional certificates.
5. Teacher mobility rates in the school for the years 2002-2008
6. Teacher mobility rates for the city, state and nation for the years 2002-2008.
7. School improvement plans

Appendix C

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH CONSENT LETTER

University of Illinois at Chicago

Letter of Informed Consent

June 18, 2008

I, (print name in full) _____ agree to volunteer in the dissertation research project being conducted by Michael L. Flynn of the University of Illinois at Chicago between July 1, 2008 and July 1, 2009. I understand that the research being conducted has to do with how organizations and their leaders respond to external policy mandates, specifically the teacher quality provision of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. I understand that excerpts of my audio recorded interviews as well as other verbal communications may be quoted in a doctoral dissertation and in future papers, journal articles and books that may be written by the researcher.

I grant authorization for the use of the above information with the understanding that every effort will be made to protect my anonymity. Furthermore, I understand that confidentiality between myself and the researcher will be preserved at all times. I understand that my full name, the name of my school or other identifying information will never be disclosed or referenced in any way in any written or verbal context. I understand that notes, and transcripts relating to my interview(s) will be secured in the privacy of the researcher's home office and that any audio record of my conversation(s) will be erased no later than July 1, 2009.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw my permission to participate in this study at any time.

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix D

Approval Notice Continuing Review

July 15, 2010

Michael Flynn, MEd
Policy Studies
2855 W Grace St
Chicago, IL 60618
Phone: (312) 282-5051 / Fax: (773) 534-7672

RE: Protocol # 2008-0625
“Principals' Response to the Teacher Quality Provision of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001”

Dear Mr. Flynn:

Your Continuing Review was reviewed and approved by Members of IRB #2 by the Expedited review process on July 6, 2010. You may now continue your research.

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

<u>Protocol Approval Period:</u>	July 27, 2010 - July 26, 2011
<u>Approved Subject Enrollment #:</u>	40 (12 subjects enrolled; enrollment closed)
<u>Additional Determinations for Research Involving Minors:</u>	These determinations have been made for this study since it has not been approved for enrollment of minors.
<u>Performance Sites:</u>	UIC
<u>Sponsor:</u>	None
<u>Research Protocol(s):</u>	
	a) Principals' Response to the Teacher Quality Provision of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
<u>Recruitment Material(s):</u>	N/A – Subject enrollment closed
<u>Informed Consent(s):</u>	N/A – Subject enrollment closed

Your research continues to meet the criteria for expedited review as defined in 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) under the following specific category:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including but not limited to research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural practices and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies

Phone: 312-996-1711

<http://www.uic.edu/depts/ovcr/oprs/>

FAX: 312-413-2929

Receipt Date	Submission Type	Review Process	Review Date	Review Action
07/01/2010	Continuing Review	Expedited	07/06/2010	Approved

Please remember to:

→ Use your **research protocol number** (2008-0625) on any documents or correspondence with the IRB concerning your research protocol.

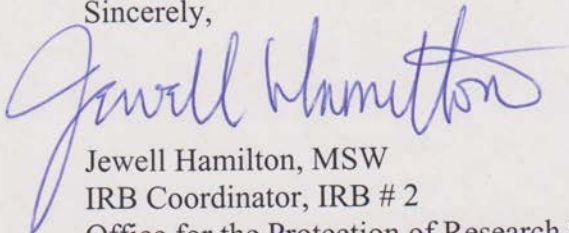
→ Review and comply with all requirements on the enclosure,
"UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects"

Please note that the UIC IRB has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Please be aware that if the scope of work in the grant/project changes, the protocol must be amended and approved by the UIC IRB before the initiation of the change.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research. If you have any questions or need further help, please contact OPRS at (312) 996-1711 or me at (312) 355-2939. Please send any correspondence about this protocol to OPRS at 203 AOB, M/C 672.

Sincerely,



Jewell Hamilton, MSW
 IRB Coordinator, IRB # 2
 Office for the Protection of Research Subjects

Enclosure(s):

- 1. UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects**

cc: Mark Smvlie, Faculty Sponsor, Policy Studies, M/C 147

VITA

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American Educational Research Association 2001- present

Chicago Teachers Union 1993- present

Teachers' National Policy Institute 1998- 2003

AWARDS

Golden Apple Awards finalist 2003